



INTEGRATING ART

INTO MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

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IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND
MASTERS OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

WHO IS THIS GUIDEBOOK FOR ANYWAY?

This guidebook has been developed for social and healthcare professionals and lifelong learners who have an interest in the arts. This guidebook can be helpful for community workers, peer support workers, therapists, counsellors and other mental health professionals. It is worth noting that though this guidebook is intended for any social and healthcare professional it will draw heavily on social work theories, values, ethics, and worldviews. This is due to this guidebook being developed in partial fulfilment of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Masters of Social Work program. You do not need to be a professional artist or art therapist to use and explore this guidebook. All you need is an interest in integrating the arts into your professional development and professional practice. My hope is at the end of this the guidebook you will be able to use the arts in some way, whether it be with clients, communities, in the classroom, or for your own personal self-care journey.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Taylor Barei (She/her) and I am the author of this guidebook. I am a white settler with Ukrainian and Italian heritage who lives on unceded Mikmaq territory in Kijipuktuk (Halifax). I am a practicing social worker and mental health professional as well as a lifelong artist and learner. I completed my Bachelor of Social Work at Dalhousie University. Some of my experience in mental health includes mental health hospital-based social work, and crisis intervention. I have also worked as a music and art facilitator for a drop in youth mental health program for many years. Some of my artistic experience includes being a pysanky writer, which is the traditional art of Ukrainian eggs that I hope to pass down to future generations. The arts have not only been a professional activity, they have also been a way for me to express myself and overcome personal challenges. The arts have grounded me and connected me to my cultures and identity. It is my passion for both the arts and the mental health field that led me to develop this guidebook.





COLLABORATORS AND SPECIAL THANKS

I wanted to take a moment to offer a special thank-you to Dr. Julia Janes who is the Memorial University of Newfoundland faculty supervisor of my pathway project. Without Dr. Janes supervision, support, and guidance this guidebook would not have been possible.

Dr. Julia Elizabeth Janes is a first generation scholar, second generation settler to Newfoundland, and a guest on the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. Julia received her PhD from York University, and a MSW and BA in English Literature/Economics from the University of Toronto.

Julia's professional experience includes community practice to promote the well-being and inclusion of marginalized older adults, and clinical practice in crisis intervention, social enterprise, psychiatric patient advocacy, and health promotion among refugees. Her activist work contests the violence's of neoliberal late capitalism, contemporary colonialism, white supremacy and racism, psychiatric systems, and housing/income insecurity.

I also wanted to extend a thank-you to the guidebook's graphic designer Amanda Hobbs. Without her this guidebook would not have been possible.

Amanda Hobbs is a multi-disciplinary artist with a background in visual arts, graphic design, and circus arts. Amanda received her diploma in Graphic Design from McKenzie College - School of Art & Design. She has received numerous awards such as the David Hawkins Design Scholarship, and graduated as valedictorian.

As a person who has lived experience with mental health, I was excited to work on this project because art and mental health practices combined are near and dear to my heart. I have channeled my emotions into various art forms which has been an extremely helpful outlet. I truly feel that art has improved my life and mental health significantly.



WHAT POPULATIONS CAN THE ARTS BE USED WITH?

It is the belief of this guidebook that the arts can be used in any setting so long as there is interest expressed by the client, participant, or community as well as the social and healthcare professional. That being said, there are some communities or populations that the usage of arts in mental health or community settings has been more researched and established in practice. This includes but is not limited to children and youth, survivors of childhood trauma, older adults and seniors, the disability community, disaster survivors, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the homeless community. In some instances, the use of arts is more suited to micro practice such as individual counselling or group therapy. In other contexts, usage of the arts is more suited to community-based work with broader social justice aims. In many instances art-based activities are well suited for both micro and macro practice. The social work profession has long sought to bridge micro and macro practice through both providing counselling and facilitating broader social change. Arts-based researchers and mental health social workers Sage & Chan (2019, p.9) highlight that the arts are a useful tool to the process of bridging multiple levels of practice. This guidebook will provide information about various communities and levels of practice that the arts may be beneficial for. It will also provide instructions for arts-based activities that will be woven throughout, that you may want to integrate into your practice.

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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Within this guidebook many terms and various language will be utilized. The terms clients, service users, those with lived expertise, and participants will be used interchangeably throughout this guidebook to describe the individuals and communities that social and healthcare professionals provide services for and work alongside. The term participants and communities will predominantly be used during activities as this encompasses the broadest range of circumstances of practice. The terms mental health professionals, practitioners, and social and healthcare professionals will also be used frequently throughout the guidebook. These terms are all meant to reference the researchers, academics, and practicing professionals who have written about the usage of the arts. It will also be used to address you as the reader.

In some instances, throughout this guidebook terms will have accompanying definitions. Be on the lookout for these to enhance your knowledge further.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a paintbrush, dipping it into a small glass cup filled with yellow paint. The background is a wall with various colors, including orange, green, and white. The overall lighting is warm and yellowish. A large white circle with the number '1' inside is positioned in the upper right corner of the image.

1

THE ARTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MICRO PRACTICE

SECTION I

THE ARTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MICRO PRACTICE

THE THEORY OF ART IN MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE AT THE MICRO LEVEL

This section of the guidebook will provide a theoretical overview of the benefits of the arts in mental health practice at the micro level. It will highlight the theory of art in mental health practice and provide an overview of research from both positivist (evidence-based practice) and post-modernist and narrative therapy worldviews. This section of the guidebook will include instructions for activities. Some of these activities will link more closely with direct mental health practice. In other instances, the activities are simply fun arts-based activities to spark creativity. This section will conclude with critical and ethical considerations for the use of arts in micro level mental health practice.



Photograph Taken By Taylor Barei (The author of this guidebook)

WHY ADD THE ARTS INTO YOUR PRACTICE?

A wealth of research has been completed on the benefits of integrating the arts into mental health practice. For the purposes of this guidebook, I will summarize some key pieces of information to help you as a social and healthcare professional. Broadly speaking, the arts have been found to increase a positive sense of identity, relief from symptoms of mental health and grief, and can help individuals through symbolic expression to reimagine their futures and create hope (Dunphy, et al. 2019, p.11; Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.2; Thomas et al., 2011, p.430, 434).

Arts-based mental health researchers Reynolds, Nabours & Quinland (2000, p. 209) completed a meta-analysis of arts-based interventions in therapeutic contexts. In one study they reviewed (Theorell, et al., 1998) a cohort of 24 service users that participated in arts-based interventions found significant improvement on an anxiety- depression scale 2 years later.



Photo by Sierra Koder on Unsplash

“The arts have been found to help express pain and adversity and can lead to increased resilience and a sense of empowerment”

(Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.2).

Using the arts in therapeutic settings can lead clients to gain “...valuable distance and enable externalization and visual communication of inner subjective experiences,” (Dunphy, et al. 2019, p.11).

The arts are a “communicative medium” (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.2) and have been found to be a useful tool for social and health care workers to gain deeper understandings of their clients’ emotions and feelings (Huss & Bos, 2018, p.15). Clients can bring sketches, photographs, collage, or other art mediums to sessions to develop a visual journal for what they “seek for themselves” (Moxley & Feen, 2015, p.11).



Photo by Dulcey Lima on Unsplash

ART CART AND SUPPLIES

General Information about Materials:

If you are looking to get started with running art groups in your practice, consider purchasing an art cart to store your supplies and to easily transport them around! Pictured below is a great example of a place to store materials.

Some general materials to consider purchasing to get art programming up and running include:

- Acrylic paints in a variety of colours
- Paint brushes of a variety of sizes
- Canvases of a variety of sizes
- Watercolor paints and watercolour paper
- Sketchbook paper
- A variety of pencils and erasers
- Pencil crayons
- Markers including liner markers
- Adult colouring books
- Scissors, consider child safe scissors if working with children/youth
- Glue sticks, Elmer's glue (a few squeeze bottles of glue)
- Multicolor tissue paper, mod podge and some sponges



ART ACTIVITY: VISUAL JOURNALS

Activity Sourced and Adapted from Art Therapy Sourcebook (Malchiodi, 2006, p.104)

Author of Art Therapy Sourcebook Cathy Malchiodi (2006, p.104) states,

Journal keeping, recognized for its psychological benefits has been used in therapy for emotional expression and reparation. It has helped many people through difficult emotional periods, serious illness, or traumatic loss. It is also a creative process of self expression and exploration of one's relationship to the world. A journal is a trusted confidant that helps us discover and express what is important in our lives.

Instructions:

Encourage the participant(s) to draw in between sessions once to a few times per week what ever comes to their mind. Let them know this does not require experience or skill with art. Rather, art journaling is about open ended expression Encourage the participant(s) to name the artwork or to write a short response to the image that was sketched in their sketch book. Explore with the participant(s) the images/sketches drawn as a catalyst for content in the next session.

Materials:

- Sketchbook
- Pencil or Pen

Key Notes:

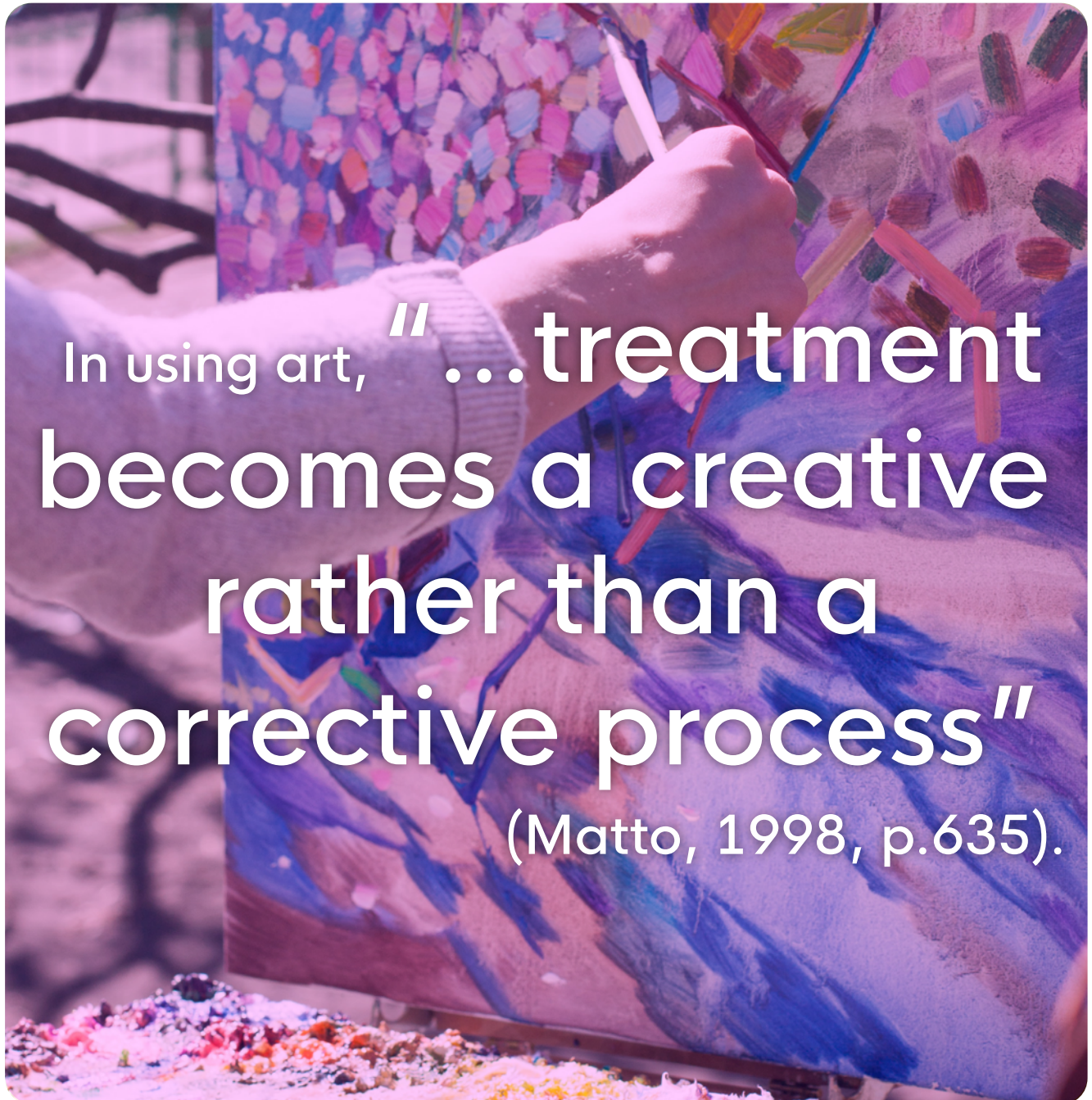
Please note: Many of the key considerations outlined in this activity are applicable to subsequent activities in this guidebook.

- Art works and journaling (much like deep interpersonal experiences shared in the therapeutic setting) can be very personal. Let the participant(s) know that they are free to share only what they are comfortable sharing. Some participant(s) may want to keep parts of their journal private and it is important to let participant(s) know that this will be respected
- As is the case in any therapeutic setting, homework in between sessions including artwork, and discussion of mental health can be distressing. Have a plan in place to support participant(s) if they become distressed by the process in between sessions such as a crisis plan
- As is the case in any group therapy setting, ground rules must be established if the group is going to come together to share, especially artworks. Special attention to confidentiality, respecting other group members sharing and limits to graphic/ personal details may be required. You're current practicing agency will likely have guidelines and expectations around group therapy work that can be implemented when using activities in this guidebook

MORE ON THE ARTS IN MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

The usage of art aligns with strengths-based approaches to practice as practitioners can highlight and help clients to see their strengths which are depicted in their art (Matto, 1998, p. 635; Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.2; Chan & Sage, 2019, p.4).

In this way the arts can be used to collaboratively develop a plan for desired goals for mental health and a catalyst for conversations towards healing (Chan & Sage, 2019, p.3).



In using art, "...treatment becomes a creative rather than a corrective process"

(Matto, 1998, p.635).

BLENDING THE ARTS WITH OTHER THERAPEUTIC MODELS

If you do not feel prepared to dive completely into using just the arts in mental health settings, that is okay! The literature indicates the benefits of blending of arts-based activities with traditional therapies, for example cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). A cohort of service users that received both CBT and arts-based modalities expressed feeling a better sense of their "locus of control" (Reynolds, Nabours & Quinlan, 2000, p.212).

Researchers Reynolds, Nabours & Quinlan, (2000, p.211) found that self esteem and sense of self improved when verbal therapy was provided in combination with the arts. Further, traditional therapies that do not integrate the arts solely target cognitive processes. However, the literature notes blending the two approaches can

"...engage clients holistically across somatic, cognitive, emotional/intrapersonal, cultural (creative/aesthetic), and social/interpersonal aspects of the self (Dunphy, et al. 2019, p.2)."

Huss & Bos (2018, p.8) note the arts are useful in blending with other modalities and knowledges and they state "If addiction is understood as a defense against traumatic memories or is understood as a lack of hope due to social marginalization, then art will be used in a different way. The good thing about art is that it can hold all of these understandings simultaneously, thus providing a broad hermeneutic and integrative space for social workers to implement their interdisciplinary understandings."



Photo by Tina Floersch on Unsplash

ART ACTIVITY: "LOCUS OF CONTROL"

Activity Sourced and adapted from Counselor Keir (n.d) and Newton, C. (2022).

Materials:

- Paper
- Markers
- Pencil Crayons

Instructions:

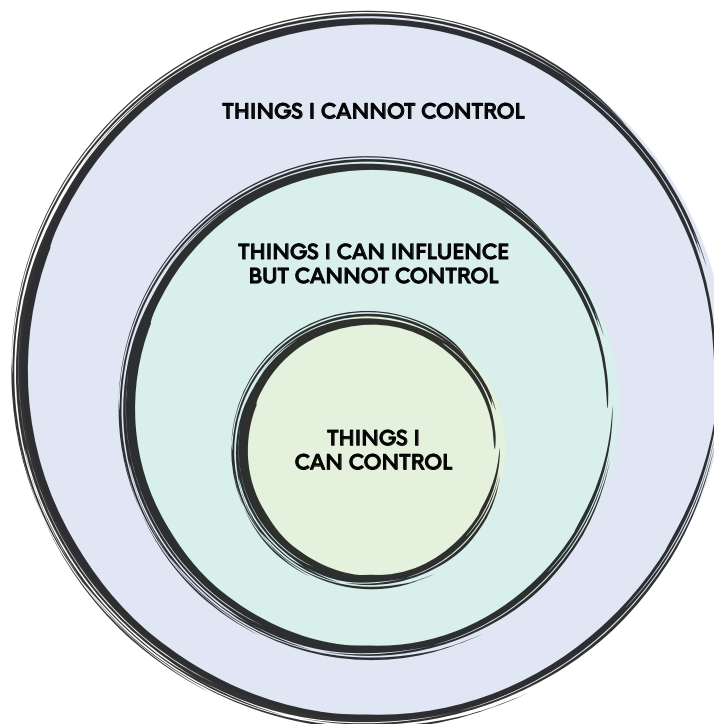
Have participant(s) draw the shape of their hand. They may want to trace their own hand or make the hand larger than their actual hands to have more space. Have the participant(s) draw or write outside of their hand shape aspects of their life that are out of their locus of control. Subsequently have participant(s) draw inside of the hand aspects of their life that are within their locus of control. They can use words, phrases, symbols and images. Allow space for flexibility and creativity in this process.

If participant(s) are seeking guidance and struggling with determining areas within their locus of control, some examples provided by Counselor Keri (n.d) include:

- I can control my breathing
- I can control my thoughts
- I can control my words to myself
- I can control my words to others
- I can control my body

Consider facilitating a discussion where participant(s) share their artworks and comment on their experience with the activity.

This activity can also be adapted to involve spheres or circles (see below)



ART ACTIVITY: "CREATING OBSTACLES"

Activity Sourced from the Book Paint Yourself Calm (Haines, 2016, p.50)

Materials:

- Watercolour Paper
- Watercolour Paints
- Paint Brushes

Instructions:

Encourage the participant(s) either during sessions or in between sessions to paint several "obstacles" on a page.

These can be circles, squares or other shapes that connect and do not include paint in the centre.

Have the participant(s) soften the outside of the obstacles/shapes with water and more watercolour paints being added.

Encourage the participant(s) to be mindful and present during each brushstroke and while making their artwork.

In describing this activity, the author of Paint Yourself Calm Jean Haines (2016, p.50) states "your outlines have prevented colour running into the dry space, so your obstacles will remain dry. In a way you are protecting these spaces. In fact, instead of being obstacles these are now the safe zones - places to feel secure from each colour application. So, we have accidentally turned negative obstacles into a positive space".

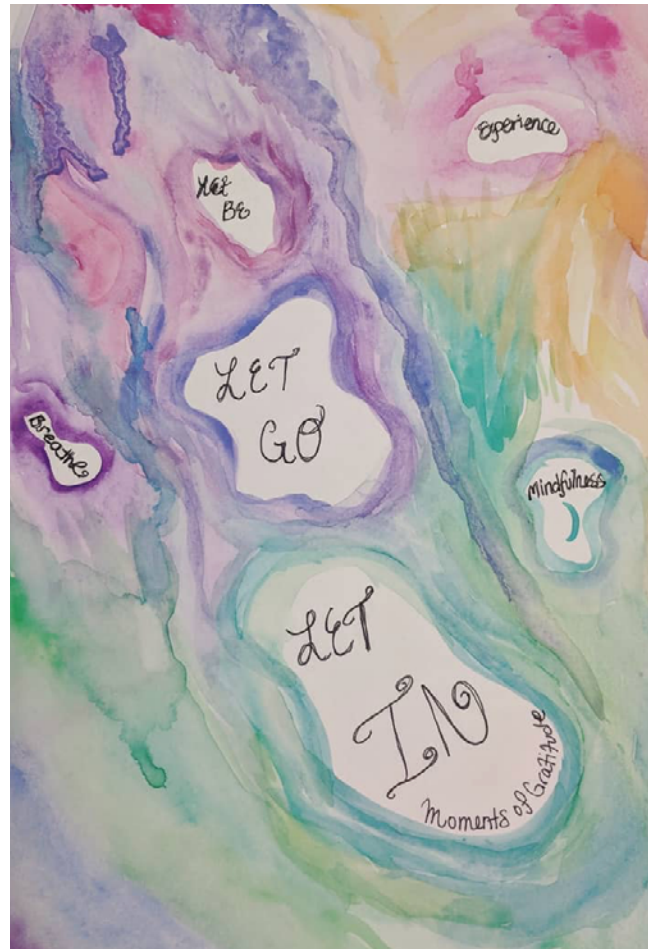
Consider facilitating a discussion after the artwork has been created.

Consider asking:

- What was this experience like for you?
- What colours did you choose and why?
- How did it feel to create the obstacles/safe zones?

Key Notes:

- This activity can be done with one participant or in a group setting
- This activity can be helpful for participant(s) to gain a sense of power over obstacles in their life
- This activity is a tool for participant(s) to use watercolour for mindfulness



Original artwork Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook) based upon the "Creating Obstacles" activity from Haines (2016).

I included mindfulness affirmations that ground me and guide me in the obstacles/safe zones

THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, AND SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

A wealth of the research on arts-based mental health has focused on children and youth who have faced trauma and adversity. In their meta-analysis Reynolds, Nabours and Quinlan, (2000, p.212) identify that more than 50% of the research they reviewed on the arts in mental health focused on children and adolescents. Mental health and arts-based researchers Coholic et al. (2012, p.355) note youth who have experienced trauma who used art found it helped them to work through feelings of self-blame, relieved tension and the arts assisted them to express their wishes.

For survivors of childhood sexual abuse, the experience of trauma has been noted to

“...interfere with synthesis and processing of new experiences and can impede traumatic memory integration... Therefore, girls who have experienced childhood sexual abuse are much more likely to benefit from therapeutic interventions that include nonverbal memory retrieval and expressive communication methods, which can be integrated with verbal methods. (Matto, 1998, p.633).

Arts-based activities including drawing self-portraits can lead to development of a new sense of self and can lead to increased coping skills.

Further art can help foster a sense of the youth/child feeling in control over their life (Matto, 1998, p.636). Matto (1998, p.633) states

“Detailing imagery, sensory stimuli, and affect, with an ultimate goal of identity integration, focuses therapy sessions. Further, the client plays an active role in the alteration, elaboration, and integration of the trauma experience. Art therapy techniques can help identify core constructs that underlie personal meaning, establish coping responses to overwhelming feelings, and instill a sense of control through indirect methods of expression. A sense of empowerment can be achieved in helping the client develop her ability to both imagine and implement change. Specifically, self-portraits can challenge clients to explore current self-constructs, offering a safe outlet for confronting held beliefs, (Matto, 1998, p.636).

SECTION 1 - THE ARTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MICRO PRACTICE

In an arts-based group activity for youth who experienced trauma, one youth drew a heart with a jagged line through the middle, and a second heart with a line not as wide. Below “closer to healing” was written (Matto, 1998, p.636). This speaks to art assisting the youth to move through their traumatic experiences to hope, healing and recovery (Matto, 1998, p.637). In a group-based therapy program that used the arts for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse the participants noted benefits of the art such as increased self-esteem, and the value of catharsis through art (Reynolds, Nabours & Quinlan, 2000, p.210).

Another major benefit of utilizing arts-based intervention with children and youth is that the youth themselves have noted these processes were both enjoyable and fun (Coholic, et al., 2012, p.354).

Art-based mental health services were offered with adolescents with severe emotional distress and the findings were that the youth had a significant reduction in feelings of depression with an increase in positive emotions. Further the youth expressed pride in self-identity (Reynolds, Nabours and Quinlan, 2000, p.210).

In a study of male youth in the 6th grade who participated in art-based counselling there was an increase in self-esteem that remained present 14 months later (Reynolds, Nabours & Quinlan, 2000, p. 211). A Canadian-based arts and mindfulness program for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth was found to increase resilience and strength. This program was so successful the researchers have goals to integrate it into local high schools as a macro public health initiative (Lander, 2019, p.6). Lander (2019, p.6) states “For example, in the “Me as a Tree” activity, one participant drew two trees. It looked like an hourglass of sorts. Yet, the insight was that there were two sides to him. One that exists to the world and one that is hidden inside. He needed encouragement to bring the two trees out into the open.” This speaks to the power of using arts to understand and reimagine identity.

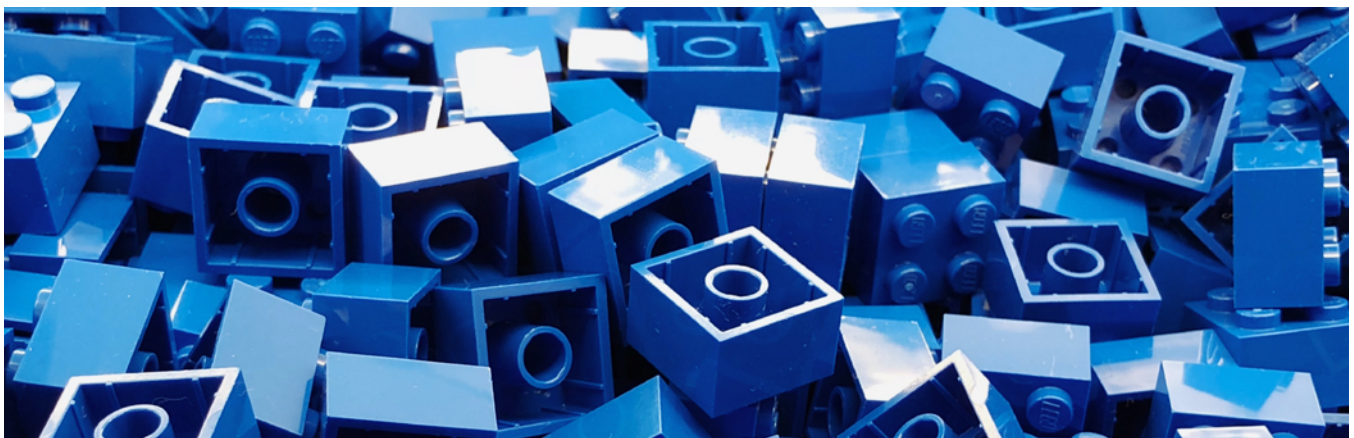


Photo by Ryan Quintal on Unsplash

ACTIVITY: ME AS A TREE

Activity Adapted and Sourced from Mental Health Researcher (Lander, 2019, p.6) and YouthRex (2019)

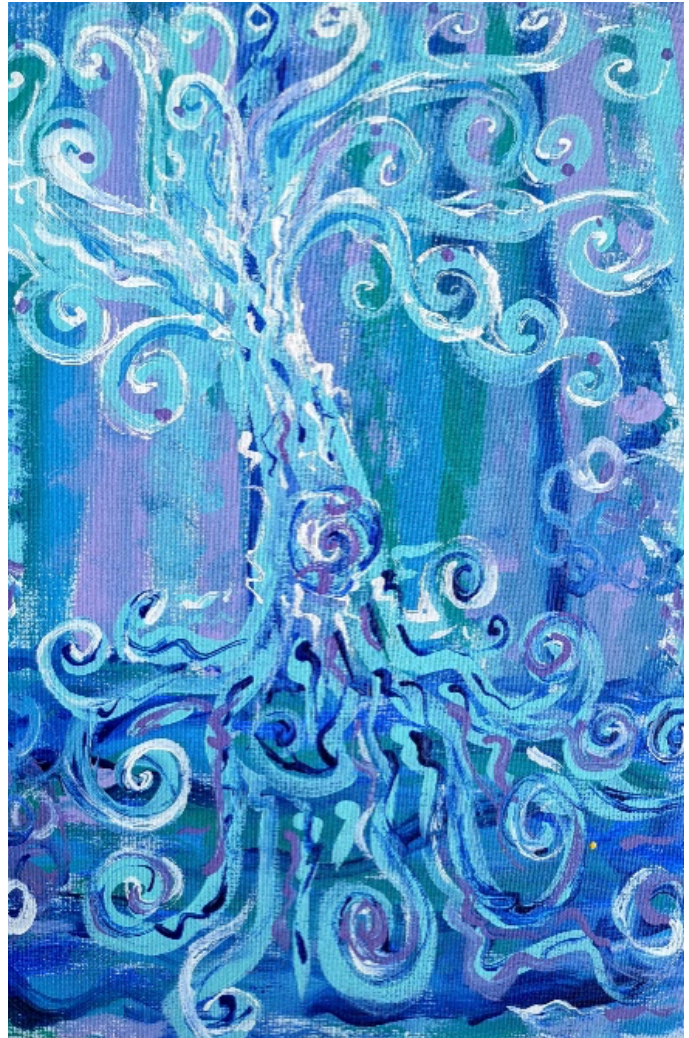
Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Paint/Paint Brushes
- Pencil Crayons
- Canvas

Instructions:

Ask the participant(s) to draw or paint themselves as a tree. Highlight that the trees will be unique and diverse (YouthRex, 2019). After the participant(s) have completed the exercise facilitate a one-to-one or group discussion.

YouthRex (2019) states that this activity can engage a group or individual by "... Representing oneself as a tree, it enables the youth to talk about themselves in a more abstract and 'safe' way that may be more comfortable for them."

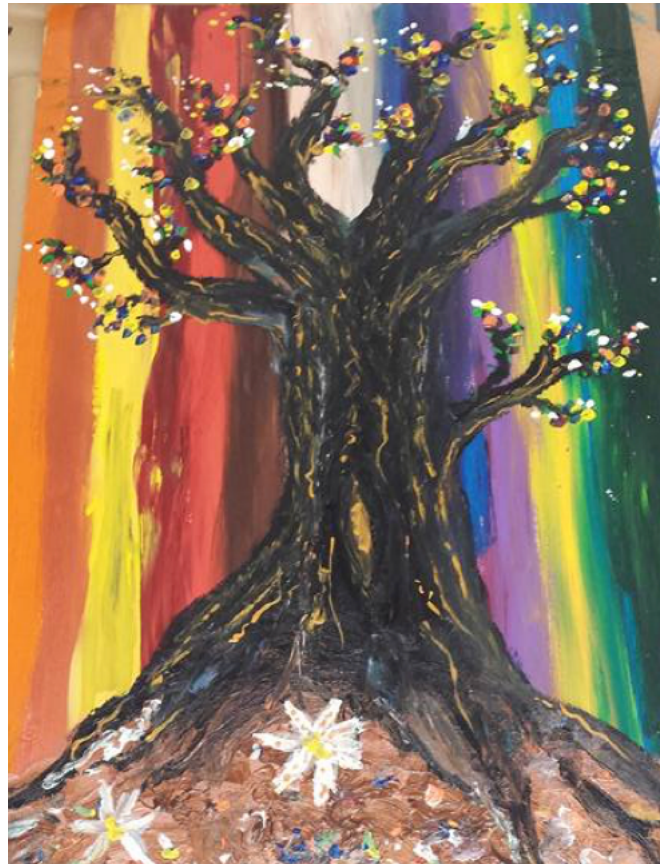


Original Art work "Me as a Tree" by Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook) based upon the Me as a Tree activity sourced from Lander (2019, p.6) and YouthRex (2019)

Sample questions to facilitate dialogue sourced from YouthRex (2019) include:

- Please tell us about your tree.
- What kind of tree is it?
- Your trunk appears... (adjective – solid, strong, small, colorful) Can you tell us about that?
- Your tree has lots of... (objects – roots, branches, leaves, animals, fruit). Can you tell us about that?
- If you gave a title to this drawing, what would you call it?
- It looks like your tree is in a (season – winter, spring, fall, summer) scene. Why did you decide this?
- You used a lot of colors to draw your tree. Why did you choose these colours?
- How do you feel about your tree?

In my practice for a youth mental health drop-in program, the Me as a Tree activity was adapted for a collaborative group setting.



Artwork "Us as a Tree" Co-Created by a group of youth and Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook)

Key notes:

- This activity is well suited to youth but can be used with all ages
- This activity can be used in individual therapy
- This activity is also well suited to group mental health or family therapy sessions and can lead to the group becoming familiar and learning about one another
- This activity is also well suited to a classroom setting (for example a social work classroom icebreaker)
- Consider using this activity in the initial stages of group or individual sessions
- Consider re-using this activity at the end of multiple weeks long group therapy process and use it to encourage reflection on evolving identity and sense of self since the program began

ACTIVITY: BUILDING A COMMUNITY HOME

Activity sourced from the author of this guidebooks practice experience

If you have a group of youth that you are working with (perhaps you are running a group therapy program) and you are looking for a fun arts activity to build a sense of community, you may want to consider building a Venn Diagram community home.

Materials:

Essentials:

- An extra-large cardboard box (think big) that can be cut into a ven diagram shape
- Scissors
- Glue Gun/Glue Sticks
- Scrapbook or Constructions Paper
- Popsicle Sticks
- Magazines

Extra supplies that are non-essential:

- Pencil Crayons
- Paint
- Paint Brushes
- Scrap Pieces of Fabric
- Tissue Paper
- Tin Foil
- Self Drying/Hardening Clay
- Additional fun items that you may want to add
- You ask the participants if they would like to bring in special items to add to the interior



Instructions:

Step 1: Build the House

Take your extra-large box and cut it in half vertically.

Cut the remaining pieces of cardboard and place it horizontally to make floors and an upstairs. You can secure all the walls/floors with a hot glue gun.

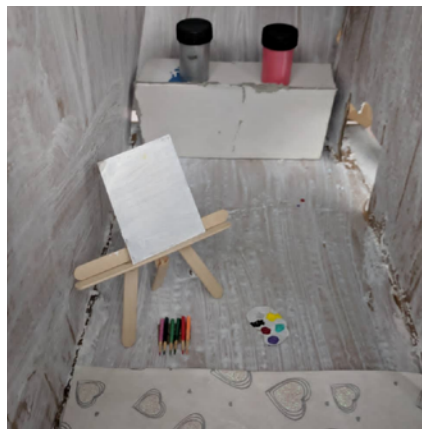
Cut up the remaining pieces of cardboard for making the walls in your Venn diagram home. Place these cardboard pieces vertically into your box and cut slits so they can slide into place. You can reinforce this with a glue gun to hold it in place.

Make a roof structure for the top of your Ven diagram home. You can do this by cutting two pieces of the leftover cardboard and placing them on top on an angle and gluing them in place.

SECTION 1 - THE ARTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MICRO PRACTICE

Step 2: Design the interiors.

After the structure of the house is set up have the participants design the insides of the rooms. You may want to consider painting the entire interior a solid colour to cover the cardboard colour. Our group chose to do a layer of white paint, but it is not necessary. Encourage creativity and let the participants know they can put whatever they want in these rooms. Figurines of people can be created through cardboard and popsicle sticks or any other medium. Encourage collaboration between participants.



All photographs were taken by Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook)
Original artwork co-created by a group of youth and Taylor Barei

Key notes:

- This activity is simply a fun way to build connectivity and a sense of community for a group of people
- It can be applicable towards to beginning stages of the group of youth gathering, or it can be used at anytime as a fun activity
- Ensure everyone feels they can contribute and design the rooms of the home
- Have the participants think about how this home represents the group as a community
- If you are a facilitator of weekly programming, you may want to allow the participants to work on this project over a few weeks
- After the activity is completed consider facilitating a discussion on how the process/ experience was for the participants

ART ACTIVITY: PAINTING WITH NATURE

Activity adapted from my own practice experience

Materials:

- Paints/Paintbrushes
- Paper
- Glue Gun/Glue Sticks
- Source leaves or any other natural or plant-based items

Instructions:

- Prep for the activity by going out and sourcing fallen leaves or other natural items
- Flatten the items with large books to even out the textures
- Have the participant(s) paint on the items

Key Notes:

- This activity may be easier to complete in the fall where there is easy access to fallen leaves
- This activity is simply a fun activity that you can do with a group of youth (or adults) for self-expression and to spark creativity



Photographs and Original artwork by Taylor Barei (the author of the guidebook)

THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING ILLNESS, CHRONIC PAIN, AND IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS

The usage of the arts can also be beneficial for those who experience chronic pain, chronic illness, and those who are experiencing hospitalization. In describing the increasing usage of arts programming in hospital and physical health settings Malchioidi (2006, p.181) states "Although art programs, exhibitions and specifically designed interiors are not always defined as art therapy, many aspects of this use of art in hospitals are therapeutic. Making art within the confines of a hospital room can improve quality of life and provide meaningful activity during long hours of boredom or recovery."

This links back with the belief of this guidebook that any social and healthcare professional can integrate the arts into their practice and that they do not need to be an art therapist or professional artist to have the arts be beneficial for the clients and communities we serve.

The usage of arts in hospital settings have been noted to be beneficial for all ages. Malchioidi outlines that children who have been hospitalized due to severe illness have used digital art making which has been noted to lead to increased coping (Malchioidi, 2012, p.120).



Photo by Valerie Titova on Unsplash

ARTS-BASED ACTIVITY FOR CHRONIC PAIN - "BODY DRAWING"

Activity Sourced from Malchiodi (2006, p.185).

Materials:

- Pencil/Pencil
- Crayons
- Paper

Instructions:

Have the participant(s) draw a figure in the outlined shape of their body. Encourage the participant(s) to close their eyes for a couple minutes to scan their body to explore how it feels. Ask the participant(s) to make note of bodily sensations, tension, or pain. Then encourage the participant(s) to fill in the outline of their body with colours, lines or shapes.

In describing this activity, Malchiodi (2006, p.185-186) states "Try to do this spontaneously and intuitively, and don't worry about being realistic. Your goal is to represent feelings about your body rather than actual characteristics"

Malchiodi (2006, p.186) recommends after the activity is completed that the participant(s) write a few short sentences about their work.

Some questions sourced from Malchiodi (2006, p.186) to prompt discussion or journaling around the image include:

- "Where is the symptom (pain, swelling, itchiness, wound, inflammation, and so on) the greatest? For example, if you have pain in a specific part of your body, where is it the most painful?"
- "Does the pain or other symptom have a specific shape and colour?"
- "Are there any other sensations present in your body, and how did you depict them through colours, lines or shapes?"

Key notes:

- This activity may be helpful for participant(s) experiencing chronic pain to help them "explore, understand and cope with symptoms," (Malchiodi, 2006, p.186)
- This activity (which is like a somatic drawing journal) can be used on an ongoing basis by participant(s) and can be create during or in between sessions
- Remember that this process may be distressing for participant(s) and that it is important to have a plan in place for supporting participant(s)

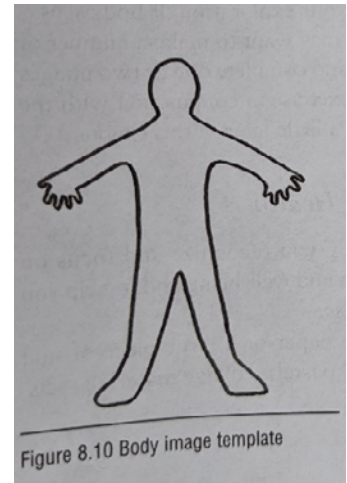


Figure 8.10 Body image template

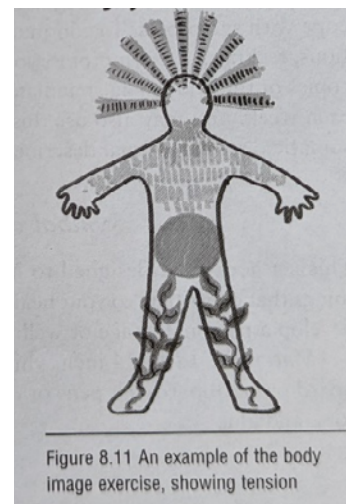


Figure 8.11 An example of the body image exercise, showing tension

Image sourced from Malchiodi (2006, p.185).

ARTS-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS AND GRIEF

Research indicates the benefits of the arts for older adults including reduction of loneliness, anxiety and depressive symptoms and improving social connections, quality of life, self-efficacy, and meaning in life (Johnson et al., 2020, p.2). Mental health and arts-based researchers Johnson et al. (2020, p.8) studied the benefits of the arts with older adults.

They state, "satisfaction with the interventions was high, suggesting that these visual and literary arts interventions are feasible and acceptable for older adults from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds," (Johnson, et al. 2020, p.12).

Johnson et al (2020, p. 12) identifies one limitation is that the majority of their research sample included women. They identify a gap in the literature more broadly for arts-based mental health treatment for older adults who are male (Johnson, et al. 2020, p.12). Other research indicates the benefits of integrating the arts into grief therapy with older adults is consistent with benefits found in traditional forms of grief counselling (Reynolds, Nabours & Quinlan, 2000, p.211).



Photo by Eddy Klaus on Unsplash

ART ACTIVITY- "THE EVOLVING EMOTIONS OF GRIEF"

Activity sourced from whatsyourgrief.com (Williams, 2022).

Materials:

- Tissue Paper (purchasing a variety pack with many colours will be helpful)
- A Journal or Some Paper
- Mod Podge
- Paint Brushes or Mod Podge Sponges

Instructions:

Have the participant(s) create a list of emotions they are feeling. Let the participant(s) know it is okay to feel a variety of emotions both good and bad (Williams, 2022). Then, have the participant(s) assign each emotion to a colour of tissue paper. Have the participant(s) create a code page where each tissue colour is labelled with the emotion to help the participant(s) remember if they choose to re-use the activity in the future.



Code page: image and artwork sourced from (Williams, 2022)



Image and artwork sourced from (Williams, 2022)

- Have the participant(s) rip up the pieces of tissue paper according to the amount they are feeling that emotion.
- Then have participant(s) use the mod podge to glue down the tissue paper to a page.
- Have the participant(s) do this until the page is filled.

Key Notes:

- This activity is suitable for all ages experiencing grief, from children to older adults
- This activity can be beneficial for individual counselling as well as grief counselling group
- This activity can be beneficial to facilitate a discussion with the participant(s) about the emotions they are feeling
- This activity can be done during or in between sessions

USAGE OF THE ARTS ALONGSIDE POST MODERN AND NARRATIVE THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

In a shift in epistemology to postmodernism, much of the arts-based literature describes the power of art as a mechanism for storytelling. The literature highlights the linkages between arts-based interventions and approaches such as narrative therapy including how stories are constructed rather than finding a singular Truth (Sage & Chan, 2019, p.6). Many arts and narrative therapy based mental health workers have shifted from the position of the professional expert knower and have worked to resist privileging professional discourses to make room through their client's artwork to co-construct meanings (Huss in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.120; Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.4; Levy in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.45).

Sage and Chan (2019, p.7) are social work mental health practitioners that approach practice from a post-modern epistemology through art-based narrative therapy. In their work their service users are the co-authors in the therapeutic process, and they use art as a catalyst for crafting a preferred story. For survivors of childhood sexual abuse, a person's life story may be interrupted and fragmented. Art-based narrative practice can focus on co-constructing a story with continuity (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.4 ; Matto, 1998, p.635).



Graphic sourced from Counseling Theories (n.d), and redesigned by Amanda Hobbs

Arts-based mental health practitioners Moxley and Feen, (2015, p.7) state **“Social activist art therapists contend that art is a way of knowing (Allen, 1995) and that the role of the art therapist is to help people ‘see’ through evocative portrayals or portraits of situations society as a whole may readily ignore.”** In this way the arts can be used from a postmodern lens with narrative therapy techniques that unearth and deconstruct societal norms.

ACTIVITY: A SELF PORTRAIT COLLAGE

Activity sourced from my own practice experience

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Glue Sticks
- Magazines
- Scissors

Instructions:

Have the participant(s) draw on paper the outline/shape of their head (this can be literal or abstract). Then direct the participant(s) to go through magazines to source images, letters or words that they will cut up and glue on the collage to create a self-portrait. After the Activity is completed consider facilitating a discussion.



Photo by Marc Newberry on Unsplash

Some example questions could include:

- What did you create and why?
- How does your collage represent your identity or who you are?
- Explore whether the challenges/reasons for coming to therapy, dominant discourses, including diagnosis are present or absent in the art. Ask: What does it mean for you that these narratives are present/absent?
- What was the process like in making a collage about yourself? Did you learn anything about yourself?

Key notes:

- Collage is a user friendly easy to access medium that requires minimal materials and technical skills. It can be a great way to begin using the arts with participant(s) as it does not involve painting or drawing which can be overwhelming for some
- Arts-based activities including drawing self-portraits can lead to development of a new sense of self and can lead to increased coping skills
- This activity can be used during initial sessions to help the social and healthcare professional get to know the participant(s)
- This activity can be used several times during a therapeutic process to see if there are changes over time in identity and if a new self or preferred future is visible within the art works (this ties in with narrative therapy techniques to work towards finding a narrative of a preferred future/story that is linked with identity and sense of self)

ACTIVITY: ARTS-BASED NARRATIVE THERAPY TOOLS FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES - USING GENOGRAMS

Activity Sourced from Malchoidi (2006, p.208-209)

The genogram is a common visual tool used when working with families from a narrative therapy model that helps to make connections and understand relationships among family members spanning several generations

- Materials:**
- Pencil
 - Pencil Crayons
 - Paper

Instructions:
Facilitate the family drawing a family tree together. Encourage the family to create with specific colours or symbols to represent members of the family and their relationships/how they are connected. Malchoidi (2006, p.208-209) states " The purpose is not only to construct a family tree that describes family members and dynamics but also to use material to create personal symbols of parents, siblings, and relatives, which may reveal unconscious beliefs or perceptions."

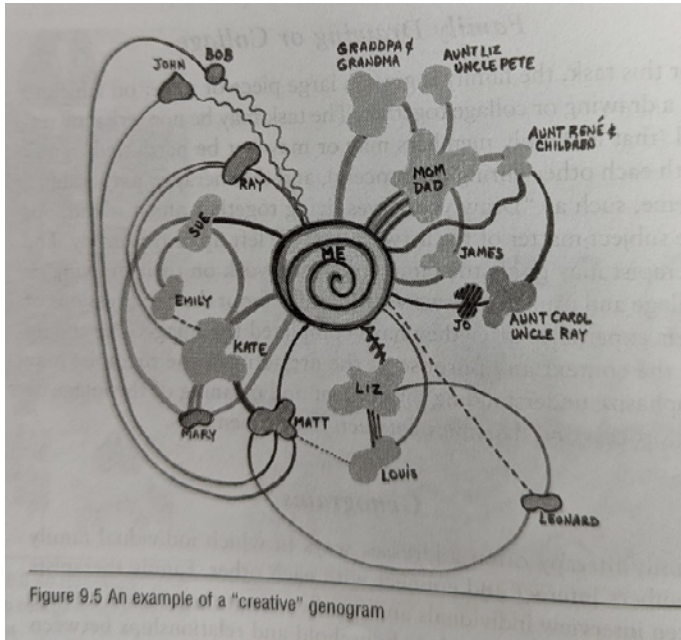


Image and artwork sourced from Malchiodi (2006, p. 208).

- Key Notes:**
- This activity can be useful in initial sessions/stages of family therapy
 - The genogram is a family tree that records history and can help the social and healthcare worker to understand better some of the families' relationships, narratives and challenges (Malchiodi, 2006, p.208)
 - It is beneficial as several generations can participate in the activity

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND NARRATIVE ARTS-BASED THERAPY

Narrative therapy has been cited to allow for social justice practice at the micro level due to its understanding of power in the helping relationship and shifting social and healthcare workers including mental health workers from being the expert knowers. Further, narrative approaches make linkages to oppressive discourses that shape the clients' lives (Kahn & Monk, 2017, p.8).

Huss and Sela-Amit (2019, p.2) state "The shift to the arts may enable marginalized groups and individual clients to counteract the verbal supremacy of specific "professional" narratives as well as restricting traditional, collective narratives that often hide social-structural problems of lack of resources and legitimize oppression (Dominelli, 2006; White and Epston, 1990). Furthermore, the arts can help to map the lack of resources and space"

Researchers Moxley and Feen (2015, p.5) outline the social justice-based benefits of utilizing arts-based narrative approaches with women who have faced homelessness and incarceration. They state,

"In other words, shifting to visual language means giving up the professional power-infused acculturation of social workers to define a problem and solution mediated through Western abstract psychological and social concepts. Members of less powerful groups in society often express themselves through symbolic, narrative, and visual forms rather than through abstract concepts. As Lippard (1990) stated, "Educated Westerners use language as control, while poorer, less educated people, especially those from rural backgrounds, control language through expressive formulations"

"On this level, the arts can become a meeting place that does not privilege social work discourses" (Huss & Sela-Amit 2019, p.4).



Photo by Gayatri Malhotra on Unsplash

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CROSS CULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE

Despite some of the benefits for arts for social justice at the micro level of practice as mentioned above, social work, psychology and arts-based therapies are still rooted in Euro Western ways of knowing (Kuri, 2017, p.119). McCauley and Matheson (2018, p.298) as well as Freeman (2017), highlight the need for Black, Indigenous and other racialized clients to be the experts of their own experience and the value of storytelling and narrative approaches. Though sovereign Indigenous-led, and other racialized community-led services should be the main focus for mental health and cultural services, there is a good possibility that social and healthcare professionals from a broad range of disciplines will work with Indigenous and other racialized communities in practice in colonial Canada.

Prominent Gitxsan Indigenous activist, and PhD of social work, Dr. Cindy Blackstock (2009, p.31) comments on this and states "This does not mean that non-Aboriginal social service providers get to walk away. As Elders have said "we did not get here alone, and we are not leaving alone."

With intentional **critical reflexivity**, it is the belief of this guidebook that art-based narrative approaches can make room for anti-oppressive practice at the micro level.

Definition for critical reflexivity:

IGI Global (2022) defines critical reflexivity as the following thought processes:

- "The act of reflecting on how a person navigates the world through understanding location positionality, and intersectionality"(IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 1) (for a definition of intersectionality please visit page 39 of this guidebook).
- "The act of questioning and challenging one's assumptions, thinking, and actions especially as it relates to engagement with others and the power dynamics that are embedded in those interactions." (IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 2)
- "The ability to analyze the contextual and historical processes that contribute to personal reactions and feelings which impact behavior," (IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 3)
- "The ability to think about the ways in which your culture influences the development of the acceptance of norms and how attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviors, and expectations are related to this acceptance," (IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 4)
- "The ability to understand how one's actions and being exist within the social relations of production and the process of neutralizing that power," (IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 5)
- "The capacity to see one's own perspective and assumptions and understand how one's perspective, assumptions and identity are socially constructed through critical reflection," (IGI Global, 2022, paragraph 6)

In understanding this, **critical reflexivity** it is important to remember that the arts like any other mental health approach are rooted in westernized ways of knowing and have the potential to replicate power dynamics and colonial harms.

Huss and Sela-Amit (2019, p.2) highlight this and state,

"Art is not a magic language that bridges power issues or transcends methodological problems. The suitability of art as a methodology for clients is an issue inherent in all social work methods."

Despite the highlighted benefits of postmodern, narrative and arts-based interventions it is important to remember there is no one universal approach to working with Indigenous, Black or other racialized communities and that **critical reflexivity** and positioning oneself as the nonexpert knower is crucial to practice from a decolonial and anti-oppressive stance.

ADDITIONAL CRITIQUES OF THE USAGE OF THE ARTS AT THE MICRO LEVEL OF PRACTICE

Consistent with critiques of micro social work and mental health practice more broadly, the context of neoliberalism has led the social work profession to shift to interventions with individuals as opposed to addressing social injustice and reducing systemic barriers (Levy in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.47). This is echoed in the arts where the arts are increasingly being used for individualistic therapy and decreasingly being used for social justice (Gray & Schubert in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.69; Levy in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.47).

Wehbi (2017, p.48-49) states

"Adding to this uneasy relationship between art and ethics is the fact that social work codes of ethics in western contexts do not typically address such concerns and in fact have been critiqued for an overemphasis on social work practice with individuals and families, as opposed to a broader perspective that encompasses community (Hardina, 2004; Reisch & Lowe, 2000), which is a key site and sets of relationships where activist art plays out. Notably, as social workers, we need to have a conversation about how ethics, which are at the heart of our practice, need to continue to guide our arts-informed and arts-based methods and approaches..."

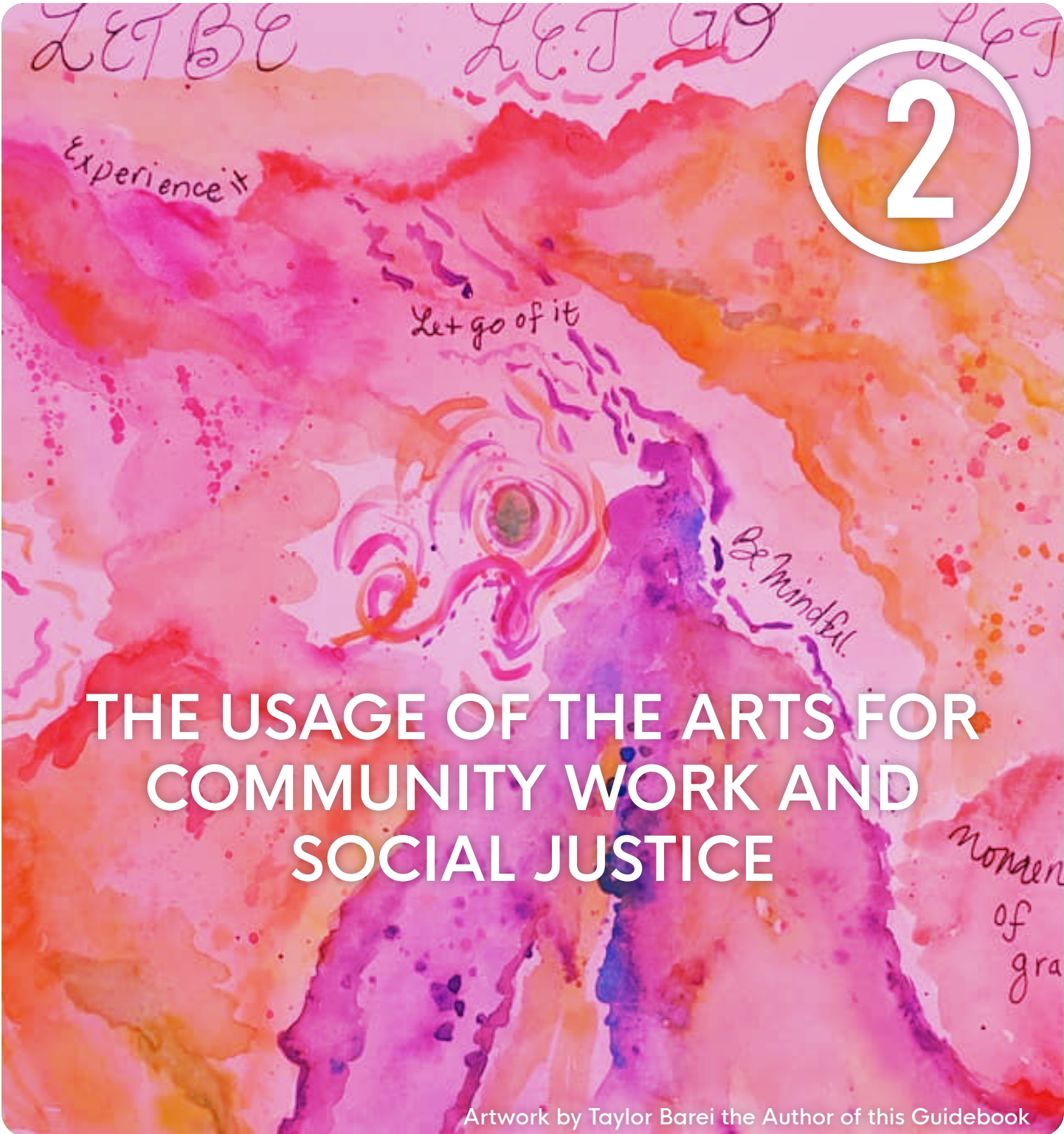
SECTION 1 - THE ARTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND MICRO PRACTICE

Critical arts-based theorist and social worker Levy (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.47) call for social workers to integrate the arts to disrupt and challenge normativity. Further the arts can be used for practitioners to link client experiences within broader structures such as neoliberalism and oppression and the way this shapes the client-practitioner relationship (Kuri, 2017, p.118).

Therefore, subsequent sections of this guidebook will shift from a focus on micro practice to an exploration of macro and community-based practice to outline the usage for the arts for broader social justice aims.



Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash



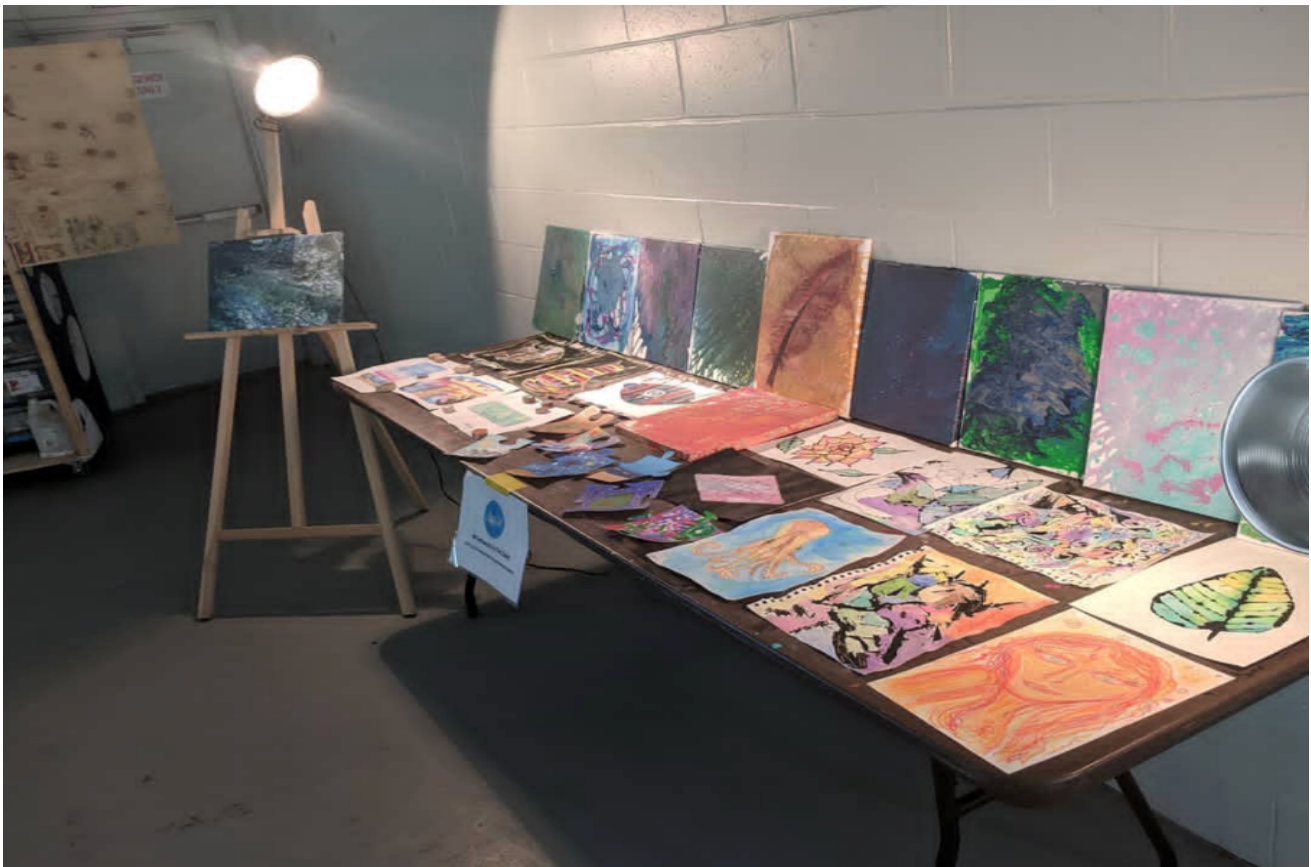
THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Artwork by Taylor Barei the Author of this Guidebook

SECTION II

THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

If you are a social or healthcare professional doing community-based work and looking to use the arts for activism, making change, or for social justice, this section of the guidebook is for you. This section outlines the benefits of using the arts for mezzo and macro social justice-based work. This guidebook does not cover all social issues, populations, or communities, the arts can be used for. Instead, it covers a few social causes or communities with activities that can be transferrable depending on the social justice aim. This section of the guidebook concludes with ethical and critical considerations in using the arts for broader social justice aims.



Photograph by Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook)
Artworks created by many artists throughout the term at a youth drop-in mental health program and displayed for the end of year public show (artists names are not provided due to confidentiality)

HOW CAN I USE THE ARTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?

General Overview

Art can shift social and healthcare professionals beyond individualistic therapies to instead link individual experiences to broader systems of oppression and to use this to propel social action (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.4; Moxley & Feen, 2015, p.2). One such way is for communities of people with lived expertise to put on public exhibits, performances, or events, creating a space for their stories to be shared in the broader community.

This section of the guidebook will offer some insights for as you as a community worker, as you may be in a role as a facilitator or program leader to help support these processes. The usage of the arts for social change and the activities selected will vary greatly by community, context, and social issue. In many instances in the literature, these exhibits or events were developed by and for the community directly experiencing the social issue or oppression.

Using the arts for social justice will likely result in multidisciplinary collaboration. Arts-based researchers Moxley and Feen (2015, p.2) state “Social workers and artists may partner in a broader form of social action, which for us involves efforts on the part of individuals and groups to bring about social betterment. Professionals outside of social work, particularly in the arts and humanities, can engage in social practice in which action flowing from a critique of social arrangements influence social action. Thus, it is likely that social workers engaging in the arts will do so through collaborative inter-disciplinary arrangements—ones incorporating the efforts of artists and humanists.”

Moxley and Feen, (2015, p.2) go on to describe the benefits of the arts for broader social change. They state,

“Inherent here is how people who experience a social issue directly can then express their own conceptions of action through creative engagement, dialogue and interpretation.”

The gathering of a collective of people to make such art can lead to community cohesion and social action driven by those who experience the marginalization directly (Moxley & Feen, 2015, p.3; Sage & Chan, 2019, p.6).

THE IMPORTANCE OF CO-FACILITATION AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNITY

It is important when using the arts for social change to have the ideas develop organically from those with lived expertise or to have community members be co-facilitators of exhibits or projects. If you are an outsider to a community facing oppression, we recommend in this instance that you wait to be invited in or that you participate in a great deal of community consultation and involvement of the community.

If you are given a green light by a community to proceed, you will want to engage in **critical reflexivity** and be mindful of your identity and the power dynamics involved. If your project has a steering committee or board, you may want to have those with lived expertise to be members for meaningful participation. You may also consider having an equity policy for those who experience **intersectional** forms of oppression within your community to be given priority to hold positions on steering committees or boards.

Definition of Intersectionality:

Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality is a theory and analytical lens to understand oppression and social injustice. Taylor (2019) cites the definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary which defines intersectionality as,

"...the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression, and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc."

In an interview with Columbia Law School, Kimberlé Crenshaw comments on what intersectionality means to her 20 years after developing the theory. Crenshaw (2017) states, "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times, that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things."

SECTION 2 - THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

You will want to think about **intersectionality** and who faces multiple axis of oppression within the community you are working with when you are using the arts for social justice aims. This is important whether you are a member of the community with lived expertise, or an outsider helping to facilitate. You will want to ensure the voices of those who face intersectional layers of oppression are heard.

Setting up equity policies, community consultation and co-facilitation with **intersectionality** in mind are small steps to amplify marginalized voices and by no means exhaustive. It is also important to avoid appointing community members for tokenism and to truly involve the community for a process of meaningful participation.

It will also be beneficial to allow a range of options for community participation and to be mindful that you do not want to place an undue burden on marginalized folks to be on steering committees or boards. Rather, you may want to establish an equity policy and allow those who fall within it to express interest if they wish to sit on a committee or board.

In addition, it is important to credit and pay participants/community members accordingly if financial compensation is available. All these considerations will be applicable to the activities outlined in this guidebook going forward (Janes, 2016).



Photo by Erika Giraud on Unsplash

General key notes for macro activities:

These key considerations will be applicable to all other community-based art exhibitions or projects in this guidebook.

- In a group setting, with the intention of an exhibit/community display an overview of consent to participate (including potential requirement of signed consent) may be needed. Outline to participants they can withdraw consent at any time in the process
- Remind members of the group that it is important to respect the confidentiality of others in the group. Provide a range of options for anonymity if participants express they would like this. This can include naming or not naming the creators of pieces
- Consider setting up a community meeting prior to the exhibit to determine if the group would like photographs or artworks to be available for sale
- Consider budgeting for transportation for the artists to attend the programming and final exhibit
- Consider budgeting for expenses in hosting an exhibit and consider an event on opening night with refreshments where the community can gather

SOME TIPS TO HELP GUIDE YOU IN USING THE ARTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Consider you now have a collective of people that have gathered who want to create social change using the arts on a given cause, but you are not sure how to tackle it. Before you begin you may want to clarify your project aims a bit further. This section of the guidebook will offer a few exercises and tools amalgamated from social activists and experts in groupwork.

ACTIVITY: FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Activity sourced from , Mullender, Ward and Flemming (2013, p.118)

This first activity can help a community to understand better their social justice cause or aims. Further it can help a community to uncover the facilitating or hindering factors to their social issue or concern. Mullender, Ward and Flemming (2013, p.118) recommend using a Force-Field Analysis activity.



Force-field analysis activity sourced from (Mullender, Ward & Flemming 2013, p.118), and redesigned by Amanda Hobbs

Instructions:

Have participants draw on a flip chart a square in the middle. Write inside the square the goal or desired change. Then draw a line on either side of the square. Have participants write, or draw the helping factors above, and the hindering factors below. The participants can do this activity through the use of words, symbols or images. After coming together to complete this consider facilitating a discussion with the community about what was created. Either the community can decide on strategies to further enhance the helping factors, or approaches to try to mitigate the hindering factors, or both. Either way there is clarity gained and a strategy beginning to unfold (Mullender, Ward & Flemming (2013, p.118).

ACTIVITY: BULL'S EYE EXERCISE

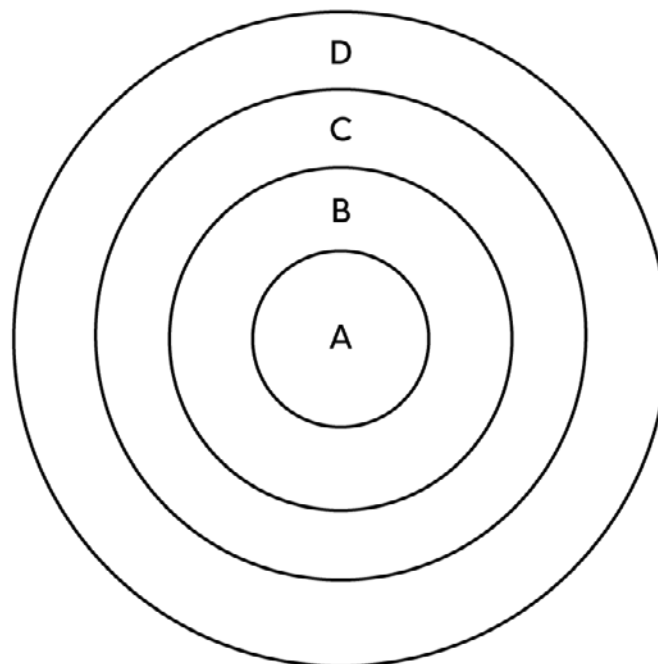
Activity sourced from , Mullender, Ward and Flemming (2013, p.118)

Instructions:

The Bulls-eye exercise breaks down area of action even further and recommends community members coming together to collectively fill in the bull's eye chart as is below. Consider using a flip chart for this. Have participants write or draw areas that are changeable and areas that member can change somewhat. Also, fill in areas that members cannot change, but influence is possible. Finally, complete the section on areas that are not changeable or influenceable.

Key notes:

You may have noticed this activity has many parallels to the locus of control activity previously outlined in the micro section of the guidebook. This speaks to the flexibility of many of the activities of this guidebook to be translated from micro to macro purposes and vice versa.



Circle A represents situations that can be changed completely by members;

Circle B represents situations that members can change with help;

Circle C represents situations that members cannot change, but where they can influence others to do so;

Circle D represents situations out the influence of members.

(Mullender, Ward & Flemming, 2013, p.117)

SECTION 2 - THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Say you and the community that you are working in collaboration with now have gained some clarity on what the community feels are targeted areas of change. Advocacy and policy analysts Coffman and Beer (2015, p.2) provide a useful advocacy strategy framework to help guide you in the activism process for a targeted audience or specific approach. A particular arts-based strategy (for example hosting a public exhibit, using photovoice, or making a mural) can be located and positioned within the grid below.

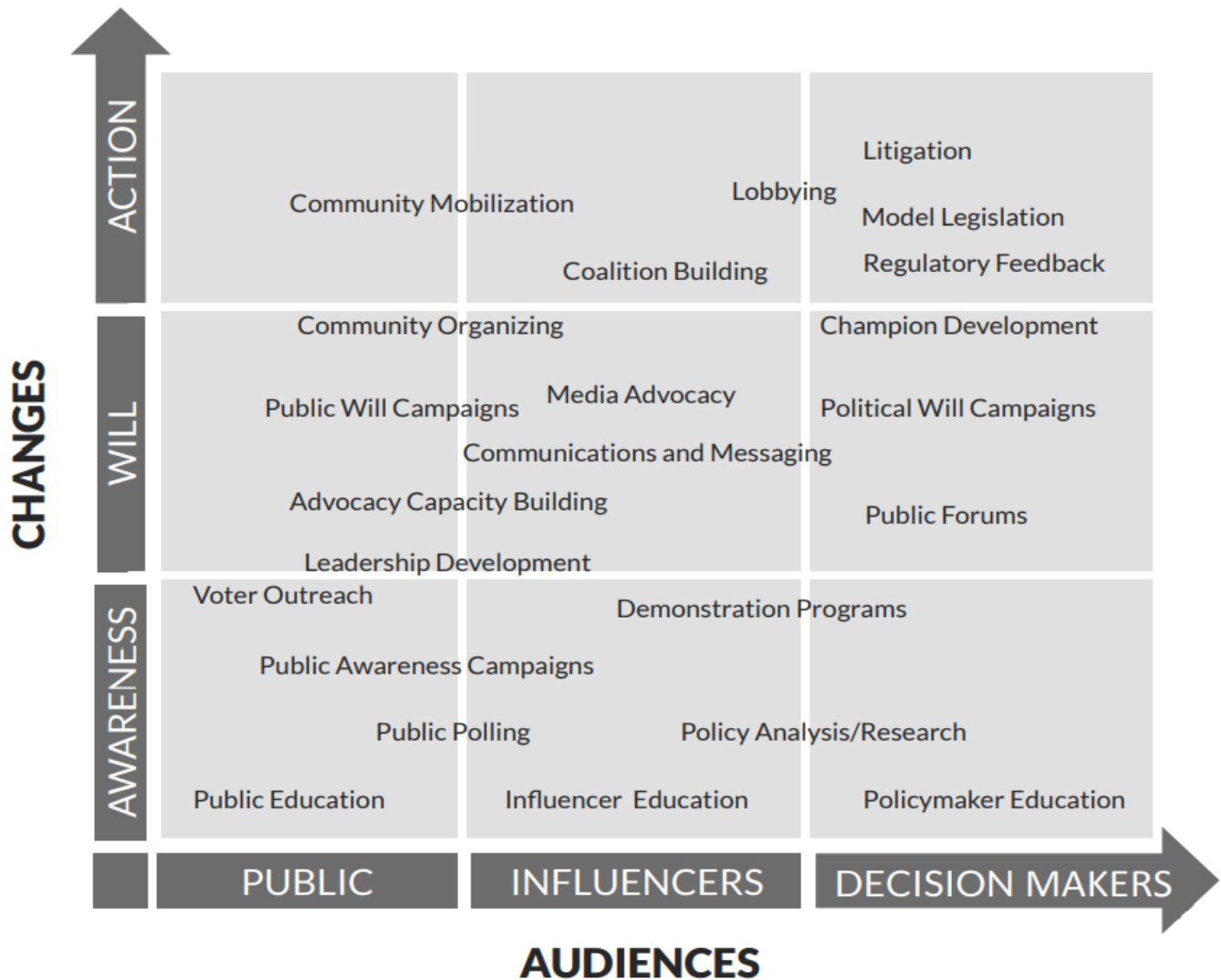


Image sourced from Coffman and Beer (2015, p.2).

You will want to consider what level of change you are looking for and who your target audience is. Do you want to raise awareness with the public or do you want to have decision makers like policy makers and politicians take action?

SECTION 2 - THE USAGE OF THE ARTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Coffman and Beer (2015, p.6) highly recommend selecting strategies that aim towards moving people toward action. Raising awareness of a social issue and sparking public dissent can be beneficial (including if that dissent becomes widely expressed putting pressure on politicians and policy makers). However, in many instances research shows raising awareness may not be enough. You and the community you are working with may want to also consider orienting your project to the action section of the grid. Consider ways you can integrate into your project steps for how others (depending on the targeted audience) can get involved to mobilized further action (Coffman & Beer, 2015, p.6).

Some examples could include:

- Social media infographics that can be disseminated with key information about your cause and how to get involved
- Options for donations that raise funds and give back directly to the community
- Advertising about volunteer positions so others can get involved (you can use social media for this as well)
- Hosting protests the public can attend alongside your group with art being used to create consistent imagery
- Gathering signatures on petitions or your community prewriting letters that others can sign and forward to politicians/key policy makers

There are many other strategies, tools and exercises to mobilize action. This guidebook has only outlined a few. It is by no means exhaustive and there are other resources about effective activism more broadly. For example, the book *Changing Communities: A Guide for Social and Community Activists* (Spindel, 2021) can provide further depth in this area.

Now that a general overview of the theory for using the arts for social justice and activism has been outlined, this guidebook will shift gears to different communities and arts-based activities. In some instances, the activities will be described for a particular community based upon the literature. In most instances these activities are malleable and can be transferrable to a variety of social causes you are interested in using the arts for.

FORUM THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Created by Augusto Boal, forum theatre is a tool where learners come together to act out a scene that does not typically end in a way that is socially just. Audience members comprised of other learners who are observing then shift to becoming actors and jump in to act out solutions (Sage & Chan, 2019, p.6). An example of this in action is Bedouin youth who face marginalization. They created images of a bad day and then discussed how to fix it, sparking discussion of broader social issues they were facing and how to take action (Ganayiem et al. in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.181). They used the theatrical arts to facilitate a process of hope. During my own practice experience working with newcomer youth, the team I worked within collaborated with forum theatre facilitators to create forum theatre on the topic of how newcomer youth can be leaders for change in gender-based violence prevention. The youth provided feedback that the forum theatre process profoundly impacted their sense of being able to respond to xenophobia and sexism at school.

Ducca Cisneros (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.89) states,

"At a community level these techniques can help to increase participation of disadvantaged social groups in order to challenge the established power relations in the structure and affect social change."

Activity/Action: Forum theatre requires training for facilitators. You will need to bring in professional forum theatre trained facilitators and experts into your practicing agency (Ducca Cisneros, in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.85).



Photo by Kyle Head on Unsplash

ARTS INITIATIVES FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

Usage of the arts has been found to increase a sense of identity within the disability community (Levy in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.48). In another community driven arts initiative, a participant with a physical disability completed a photovoice project (photographs combined with recorded oral or written dialogue) of a location that was inaccessible with recommendations for accessibility. Chan & Sage (2019, p.4) state the benefits of photovoice are for people to reflect on their communities' strengths and to promote critical dialogue. Further, photovoice can act as a participatory needs assessment and for advocacy. Arts-based social workers and mental health professionals Chan & Sage (2019, p.4) also cite that photovoice has been targeted to reach policy makers for macro social justice purposes. Chan and Sage (2019, p.4) state,

"In short, photovoice aligns with social work practice strategies to support collective individuals to advocate for their agendas in broader contexts. Photovoice offers a unique intervention approach that may not have been possible without using photos. A key difference between photovoice and other media practices, relevant to social work, is its emphasis on using images and groups to magnify marginalised voices, and hence support social change. This approach aligns with social work practice goals related to empowerment, self-determination, and fostering social justice."

During the disability activists photovoice exhibit an executive that attended commissioned modifications for accessibility at the site location (Moxley & Feen, 2015, p.14-15). Though a critique of this process is that the burden of activism fell on the disability community (as is a critique with activism initiatives more broadly), art was a communicative channel and catalyst that led to change.

COMMUNITY ARTS INITIATIVES FOR NATURAL DISASTER SURVIVORS

Another photovoice project was used by survivors of the 2011 earthquake in Japan. The photovoice process was so impactful that over 40 public exhibits and 20 public forums with photovoice projects have occurred in Japan. As a result, in 2014 the National Women's Education Centre in Japan included the photovoice art works into its national archive (Yoshihama in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.63). Further, a similar project using the photovoice and the arts occurred in Nepal as a part of their earthquake response (Bonnycastle & Heinonen in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.191). Photovoice aligns with many professional healthcare practice standards and ethics including social work values of **"...meeting clients where they are, supporting personal insight and self-expression, and improving mental health outcomes,"** (Chan & Sage, 2019, p.3-4). These arts-based projects have been found to help survivors debrief and process environmental disasters and can help build hope at the community level.

ACTIVITY: PHOTOVOICE PROJECT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

If you are working with a community that is seeking increased visibility, targeting social policy change, or is seeking to have their stories heard, consider doing a photovoice project. The topics and issues being addressed will vary greatly depending on the community and context. First collaborate with the community to see if this type of project is appropriate and applicable to the given social issue and if participants would like to proceed.

Instructions: Have participant(s) take photos over the process of several weeks on a given topic or social cause. Have participant(s) submit the photos to the co-facilitators and have participant(s) include short descriptions either through written word, or audio recorded oral narration. Consider displaying these images with their descriptions in a local gallery, public library, or virtually.



Key Consideration:

- Exercise caution as the photovoice facilitator and avoid re-narrativizing participant's voices. Avoid as the social and healthcare worker centring your own analysis of themes
- If extrapolating themes, bring them forward to the group/community/steering committee or board to ensure these themes are accurately reflecting the intention in the artworks/photographs

Below is an example of a photovoice piece create by me for my own self-care for illustrative purposes for this guidebook.



Original Photograph by Taylor Barei Titled "Serenity Place"

Photovoice description of Serenity Place:

11 years, grounding place, still waters wash over uncertain times. I come to this place for stillness and quiet in a noisy and bustling urban life. All seasons I have a connection, coming to this place to reflect on past, to be present, and to think of the future.

COMMUNITY ARTS INITIATIVES FOR OLDER ADULTS

There is much potential for the usage of the arts in community work with older adults. This guidebook will offer an overview of some of the activities that have been carried out in practice. Arts-based researchers and community workers de Bruijn and Jansen (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.32) describe a community development-based group art project that was facilitated with older adults titled visual thinking strategies. The community of older adults came together and used art works/art objects to spark discussion and reflection, which connected to narratives of their lives and the world (de Bruijn & Jansen in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.38).

In another arts-based community project, The Hidden Legacy Project in the Netherlands was developed to bring together multiple generations through art. Older adults created art as visual testaments of their legacies and came together with younger generations to share their stories. The project had a focus on older adults who were racialized immigrants to the Netherlands and LGBTQ+ elders sharing their stories. This is one way this project used an intersectional framework in action. The broader social justice aims of the project were to demonstrate that older adults are valuable members within the community and to challenge paternalistic dominant modalities of programming for older adults (van der Lee & Wei in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.125). Projects like these challenge narratives of agism in society and can lead to a sense of community cohesion.

In commenting on a similar arts-based program building generational bridges in the United States, Brown, (2017, p.55) states

"When multiple generations come together to make art, something magical happens. The act of creation gives a powerful voice to young and old Americans alike and builds a sense of shared community pride."

Further, the arts can be used to draw attention to concerns predominantly affecting older adults included Dementia and Alzheimer's. For example, the service-user led advocacy group titled No Limits Dementia does lobbying and campaigning work in Ireland. This has included meeting with the Secretary of State for Health to voice their concerns about available services for those living with Dementia and to share their experiences (Mullender, Ward & Flemming, 2013, p.177-178). The usage of art has been instrumental in their social justice and activism work

"...to help communicate things that are difficult to speak about."

The No Limits Dementia group put on a public exhibition titled "No Limits – Re-imagining Life with Dementia" This exhibit focused on

"the individual and collective strength of people living with this condition and brings to life ideas around community, empowerment and friendship,"

(Mullender, Ward & Flemming, 2013, p.177-178).

ACTIVITY: BRIDGING GENERATIONS ART PROJECT

Activity sourced from The Hidden Legacy Project-
(van der Lee & Wei in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.125)

If you are working in a community setting where there are multiple generations/many ages accessing programming (like a local community centre), this activity may be applicable for you. You may want to speak with community members who are already involved in programming to get a feel for if this project will be applicable to your current practice setting.

Instructions:

Have older adults create pieces of art that are visual testaments of their life/story. You should provide time during the actual workshop/event(s) for the artworks to be created. Remind participants these artworks are being developed with the intention of sharing them with younger generations/others. The content of the art is open ended and can include anything from depicting one's home or family life, culture, self-portraits, career, or any other key piece of the participants lives that they want to share. Remind participants this is not a test in fine arts technical capabilities but more so about the process and experience and to share stories through art across generations.

Materials:

- The artworks can be created with any medium including collage, painting photography/photovoice

Key Notes:

- Consider having the activity be a one-off workshop, or consider a multiple weeklong program depending on your current practice context
- Consider facilitating a closing discussion or activity for all participants to reflect at the end
- Consider displaying the artworks in a public exhibit or online forum if the group consents
- Make space for participants that are older adults to bring supports (family, friends, or professionals).



Photo by Nathan Anderson on Unsplash

PROTEST ART

Protest art is a form of art that has been used for centuries to disrupt the status quo. Protest art can include anything from murals (which will be explored in depth in the subsequent section of this guidebook) to banners, signs or posters that are used during protest. It can also include art that lives in the public sphere that sparks discourse and challenges hierarchies of power.

Writer and art historian Ruth Millington (2020) writes **“The 20th century philosopher Theodor Adorno famously wrote that “all art is an uncommitted crime”. What he meant was simply that by its very nature art challenges the status quo. Throughout history, artists have reacted against oppression, violence, injustice and inequalities. They have stood up for the voiceless and marginalised. Protest art challenges traditional boundaries, hierarchies and rules imposed by those in power. It’s an act of defiance. And it is hugely important as it can influence the thinking of the general public, as well as leaders and politicians. Often images speak louder than words. Art can make a message accessible and universal.”**

Millington’s art history blog covers famous artworks that have been used in protest throughout history. Millington (2020) highlights the late AIDS activist Keith Haring coined the slogan **silence=death** and who used art to generate discourse and dissent about the lack of action taken by the those in power to address the AIDS crisis.



Artist: Keith Haring, artwork sourced from (Millington, 2020)

ARTS INITIATIVES FOR CHALLENGING RACIAL INJUSTICE

Like other social causes, the arts can be used to challenge racial injustice and to bring awareness to racialized communities' histories. Researchers and educators Vickery et al. (2019) highlight from an intersectional perspective that the arts can be used to re-centre the contributions, voices, and experiences of Black women within the Civil Rights Movement (Vickery et al. 2019, p.224).

For example, The Black Lives Matter Movement (founded by three Black women named Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi) facilitated a Martin Luther King Jr. artist series.

In commenting on this series, Cullors and additional facilitator Limar (n.d) state, **"This MLK artist series asks us to collectively remember Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. not just as an iconic Civil Rights leader, but as a human being full of love, joy, play, and healing. Each of these works reflects on what is possible for Black life. Who are we when we are relaxed, reflective, rested, and leisurely? Who are we when we are LIVING? Our movement is not about Black death, but rather, Black Life. This series reminds us of the joy, play, and leisure of our community. We will not let white supremacists steal our joy, bind our faith, or destroy our love. This series reminds us of who we fully are."**

(Black Lives Matter, Cullors & Limar, n.d).



Artwork Titled "MLK's Tropic Interlude (Martin and Coretta), 2021 (mixed media on paper)
Artist: Derrick Adams, artwork sourced from Black Lives Matter (n.d).
You can find more of the original artworks from the Martin Luther King Jr Artists Series at:
<https://blacklivesmatter.com/blmgn-mlk-artist-series/>

MURALS

Murals, a visual medium where art is typically painted onto walls, outdoor buildings, roads or other spaces can be a useful tactic for using the arts for social justice. It is an artform that intentionally takes up space in the public sphere and forces those who pass by to think. Murals have been utilized by the Black Lives Matter Movement to spread the movements messages.



Mural by Gaia WXYZ (@gaiaw.xyz)
Photograph taken by Vjeran Pavic sourced from Holowaty Krales & Pavic
(2020) from TheVerge.com



Mural by: Matthew Mazur, @leggomymeggoz and @diegolawler
Photographer unknown, sourced from Holowaty Krales & Pavic
(2020) from TheVerge.com



Mural by: Artist unknown/not disclosed
Photograph by: Amelia Holowaty Krales sourced from Holowaty Krales & Pavic (2020) from TheVerge.com



Mural titled "Hope" by: Fabio Esteban Amador
Photo by Amelia Holowaty Krales sourced from Holowaty Krales & Pavic (2020) from TheVerge.com

In commenting on his mural, the artist Fabio Esteban Amador (sourced from Holowaty Krales & Pavic, 2020) states

"The power of the image in times of uncertainty becomes the impetus for change in our society."

ACTIVITY: PUBLIC MURAL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Activity sourced and adapted from Learning for Justice.org (2021) and Turner (2021) from SkillShare.com

If you are looking to facilitate a community-based project to challenge a social issue using the arts, you may want to consider co-facilitating a mural project in your local area.



Photographer Unknown, sources from pixabay.com

Materials:

- Industrial level paints that are self priming. Source waterproof and weatherproof paints like acrylic latex paints suitable for outdoor use (Turner 2021)
- You may want to consider using spray paint- however ensure that you wear a mask to prevent inhaling chemicals and consider this in your budget as spray paint can be more costly (Turner, 2021)
- Paint brushes (of many sizes) and paint rollers if your design has large areas with blocks of colour
- Paint containers for pouring paint into
- Acrylic emulsion or spray varnish to seal your artwork (Turner, 2021)
- Ladder or lifting equipment such as a forklift or scissor lift to reach high areas (remember to practice putting safety first and ensuring the needed training is obtained if operating any machinery)

Instructions:

Step 1: Designing the mural

- Meet with the community (possibly multiple times) and establish the core concepts and ideas/vision for the mural.
- Consider having participants freely draw images and come together as a group to discuss the contents of the mural. Remember to pay attention to marginalized members within your community/working group to ensure their voices are heard.
- After this, sketch mock ups and rough drafts of the mural as a community.
- A great deal of pre-planning about the mural's design will make the process be smoother during the period where the final mural is being painted.
- Turner (2021) recommends practicing the mural on a smaller canvas to prepare for the final larger piece.

Step 2: Prepping the wall/area

- Turner (2021) recommends cleaning and washing the wall first using sponges and soap/water to remove any dirt. This is especially necessary if doing an outdoor mural.
- It can help to paint the entire surface of the wall with a base colour, however Turner (2021) highlights this is sometimes not the most cost-effective method for large areas and is not required. This will also depend on the overall design.

Step 3: Scaling the design

- When you go to paint the actual mural consider that you will need to scale up your design from the practice murals you have made. This way it will fit the larger space and will be proportionally consistent with your smaller canvas model.
- The easiest way to scale up your design is to use a projector on the wall. If you do not have access to this, you can use a grid method.
- Start by drawing a grid on the smaller canvas rough draft you created. Then, you can either draw on (with chalk or light paint) or use string to mark the same grid on the area the mural will be (Turner, 2021).
- Using the grid method will give you a sense for where sections of your design should be when blown up to a bigger surface area.

Step 4: Outline the large shapes of the mural

- You will want to start by outlining the larger shapes of the mural.
- A tip from Turner (2021) is to step back away from the wall regularly while painting to see how it looks from a distance.

Step 5: Add details

- Add in the details and then final touches to the design.
- Make sure to get up close and personal with your mural but to also step back to ensure that the design looks good from a distance during this step as well.

Step 6: Seal your design

(this step may not be necessary for indoor murals that won't be exposed to harsh weather)

- Turner (2021) recommends a final step of sealing your mural with a coat of acrylic emulsion or spray varnish even with weatherproof paint. This will ensure the design will last.

Key notes:

- Depending on the location where the mural will be you may be required to speak with your municipality for permits. Sometimes there are grant funds available for community-based mural projects to help get a project of this nature up and running
- Consider reaching out to artists in the community who have experience with mural making and the techniques required for assistance to collaborate

ART INITIATIVES FOR THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY

There are numerous peer reviewed studies as well as grey literature which notes that art exhibits with the homeless community have been found to reduce stigma and marginalization for a community of people who struggle to have visibility (Thomas et al., 2011, p.434).

In an article written by Stewart (2020) in My Modern Met, artist Lucas Joel MacCauley who experienced homelessness states,

"My art is reflective of my own experiences completely. I am giving people that look at my art a direct look into my mind, my past my memories, and my pain. I have one goal with my art and that is to tell the truth."

Lucas Joel Macauley hopes people who view his art will question their attitudes about those living on the street (My Modern Met, Stewart, 2020). As many social and healthcare professionals know, facilitating space for individuals or communities to have their stories heard can be empowering.



Artwork by Lucal Joel Macauley (sourced from Stewart, 2020)

Another example includes an exhibit in the USA titled “Homeless Not Hopeless” which consisted of 30 pieces of artwork created by 13 local artists who were currently or recently had experienced homelessness. This exhibit was “the brainchild” of a jewelry maker who experienced homelessness (Urban Libraries Council, 2017). Another example of an arts-based exhibit with artists from the homeless community includes the Arts from the Streets Initiative.

In describing their projects mission statement, they state

“The mission of Art from the Streets is to provide a safe and encouraging environment in which the positive spirit and creativity for those experiencing homelessness are nurtured through their own artistic expression. These artistic endeavors form a pathway to self-determination by means of the sense of achievement, social connections, and income generated through the pursuit of their art. Because focusing on housing alone does not achieve other equally important goals that are relevant and motivating to improving and sustaining a quality of life.”

(Art from the Streets, 2022).

Art exhibits co-facilitated by individuals who have experienced homelessness can lead to increased public recognition and have been found to improve mental health by individuals who expressed they enjoyed participating in a meaningful activity (McGee & University of Toronto, 2010; Thomas et al., 2011, p.434).

There are also economic benefits to exhibits through opportunities to sell the artworks if all involved consent to this (Art from the Streets, 2022; Thomas et al., 2011, p.434). The exhibits have been found to have an impact on audience members who through the stories in the art, can link personal experiences to broader systems of oppression and can become allies.

In describing an art-based program with a community of people who experiences homelessness researchers Moxley and Feen (2015, p.11) state

“Using story telling in which women verbally sketched their own stories about their entry into homelessness revealed multiple pathways, many of which implicated some kind of structural or environmental factor (such as house fires in aging household infrastructures). What emerged were eight pathways into homelessness in which the participants offered narrative details of their lived experience and life course.”

Ultimately there is the hope that these exhibits will increase public discourse and motivate community members to action (Thomas et al., 2011 p.434; Moxley & Feen, 2015, p.7-8). Moxley and Feen (2015) state this was the case in a public art exhibit featuring the lived experiences of homeless older African American women.

Moxley and Feen (2015, p. 7-8) state,

“The audiences’ strong emotional experiences, were a measure of knowledge-of awareness that can move people first to understanding and second to action.”

As I have outlined previously in this guidebook, there are additional steps you can take in your project to consider mobilizing action specifically (please see the section titled *“Some Tips To Help Guide You In Using The Arts For Social Change”* from pages 42-45 of this guidebook.

ACTIVITY: ART EXHIBIT FOR THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY

Activity sourced from Thomas et al. (2011, p.434).

Instructions:

If you are a social and healthcare professional working in a housing or shelter setting this activity may be relevant for you. Begin by consulting with the community you are working with to ensure there is interest and the community feels such an exhibit would be appropriate for them. Remember that just because this activity was suitable for one community does not mean it will be applicable or desirable for all/other communities. Consider setting up a steering committee or board for the project.

Consider facilitating a weekly drop-in program for one day per week for 6-8 weeks where the community can gather to create their artworks (Thomas et al., 2011, p.430). Provide a broad range of materials. In describing enacting this project with the homeless community researchers Thomas et al. (2011, p.430) state "The range of artistic styles included landscapes, still life, portraits and traditional Aboriginal artwork; each participant is encouraged to participate in their own way and assistance is provided as required."

After the 6-8 weeks of creating, consider using a public library or other community hub (or online forum) to display the artworks as an exhibit. Consider having an opening night for the public to come.

Key Notes:

- Let the participants know they can attend such programming even if they do not want their artwork to be displayed in the planned exhibit. This allows for a menu of participation
- Consider having a consent form/consent process if the art works are to be displayed in an exhibit with options around whether names/identifiers will appear on the artworks
- Let participants know they can create artwork on any topic they desire, and that artworks do not have to directly comment on their experiences of homelessness

CRITIQUES AND CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ART FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Many arts initiatives for community development and social justice have led to an increased sense of community cohesion. However, art alone does not address the structural forces that create homelessness, colonialism, ableism, racism, global warming and increased natural disasters, the marginalization of older adults, and many other forms of oppression.

Further, consistent with critiques in community development and activism more broadly, there has been an increased demand on communities to have community-led solutions to their problems. **This includes amounting pressure on the arts to build communities** (Gray & Schubert in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.72). This can be situated within neoliberalism where the state increasingly puts pressure on communities to resolve issues and avoids acting on systemic inequities.

In a **critical post structuralist** critique of sport recreation being introduced in Indigenous Communities as a decolonizing strategy, community workers Occhiuto and Todd (in Savard & Todd, 2020, p.325) outline these programs work to regulate the bodies of Indigenous youth so that they do not resist structural inequality and colonialism.

In understanding these critiques, it is essential that social and healthcare professionals continue to engage in **critical reflexivity** (Kuri, 2017, p.120)

Critical post structuralism is a critical way of theorizing. From a social and healthcare perspective critical post structuralism doesn't just look at the ways that problems in society exist for our clients/communities due to macro systems of oppression. Additionally critical post-structuralists look at the ways power exists at multiple levels, and that community workers are embedded within these power systems and act to regulate and control clients and communities.

Definition of critical post structuralism:

Critical post structuralism looks at how **"...community workers are a part of social institutions linked to a state that is intent on achieving certain goals of managing society."**

(Occhiuto & Todd in Savard & Todd, 2020, p.322).

How critical post structuralism relates to practice:

Occhiuto and Todd (in Savard & Todd, 2020, p.326) state **"The implication this has for the community practitioner is to encourage the interrogation of all our practices, even those that we had previously understood as radical or heroic, and to recognize how they might also be implicated in governing people."**

with attention to power dynamics embedded in all levels of the work they do including community work. Social and healthcare professionals co-facilitating art exhibits should actively resist constructing those who participate and co-facilitate as “good service users/citizens” provided by “good community workers.” A participant not attending such programming could be considered an act of resistance. It is also important to note that art should be used as a tool to disrupt, raise awareness, and bring issues to the forefront but it cannot be a tool used in isolation (Gray & Schubert in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.73).

A critical consideration is that there is a risk that public exhibits can create a power dynamic where community members voyeuristically consume art exhibits on oppressed communities and tokenize their experiences (Yoshihama in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.65). It is important this be explored with the community you are working with if putting on a public exhibit and to discuss with the group these risks. Consider exploring with the community what steps need to be taken by the community and co-facilitators to minimize this.

Additionally, art (for example photography and other mediums) has the potential to replicate colonialism through the camera (Wehbi, 2017, p.49). These ethical considerations are important and may result in necessary censorship and restriction on art making. For example, you may want to limit art that contributes to cultural appropriation or replicates harmful stereotypes about a particular community.

Definition of Cultural Humility:

The concept of Cultural Humility was developed in 1998 by two Black women, Dr. Melanie Tervalon and Dr. Jann Murray-García. They are both academics, physicians, public health educators and critical theorists.

Social workers Fisher-Borne et al (2014, p.171) cite Tervalon and Murray-García (1998) directly who state cultural humility is defined as **“a process of ‘committing to an ongoing relationship with patients, communities, and colleagues’ that requires ‘humility as individuals continually engage in self-reflection and self-critique. Cultural humility takes into account the fluidity and subjectivity of culture and challenges both individuals and institutions to address inequalities. As a concept it challenges active engagement in a lifelong process (versus a discrete endpoint) that individuals enter with clients, organizational structures, and within themselves.”**

If an issue comes up with a particular artwork, it can be reviewed by the board or steering committee and decisions around steps to take can be decided at the community level. These conversations are typically taboo in the Euro Western art world, which values individuality through artistic expression, but are necessary to avoid replicating harms (Wehbi, 2017, p.48).

In thinking about power dynamics in community work Thomas (2011), Johnson, et al. (2020, p.8), and Chan and Sage (2019, p.10) facilitated art groups with participants from diverse backgrounds including Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities. Much of the research in this area contends that if the focus remains on diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism without acknowledgment of intersectional marginalization faced by members of the community it can replicate harmful dynamics of oppression (Kuri, 2017, p.119).

Art facilitators and practitioners must be willing to act with **cultural humility** and learn from participants in all areas of practice and celebrate cultural artworks. All of these power dynamics must be taken into consideration when being a facilitator using the arts for social causes and approached with critical care in practice.

Attention to these power dynamics should also be considered in both micro practice and in the world of professional education. The messiness of this work, which is found in all areas of practice can make using the arts for social justice challenging. It is the belief of this guidebook that the messiness is a place where solutions are created and can be used as a source of inspiration.



**THE USAGE OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION,
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SELF-CARE**

SECTION III

THE USAGE OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-CARE

If you are a social or healthcare educator or looking to integrate the arts into your professional development and self care this final section of the guidebook is for you. This section outlines an overview of using the arts in education. It also provides example activities of how you can integrate the arts into your classroom to enhance the education experience for your students and for yourself as an educator. This section is also beneficial for those who are lifelong learners who do not teach in a formalized setting. This section of the guidebook concludes with how you can integrate the arts into your professional development and self-care.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING THE ARTS IN SOCIAL WORK AND OTHER MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION?

The arts are increasingly being utilized in social work and other educational spaces and have been found to holistically increase students' empathy and link students' educational experiences to social justice and anti-oppressive practice (Brodinski & Evans in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.18; Cohen Konrad & Power, in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.97; Kuri, 2017, p. 118; Wehbi, 2017, p.48).

"From a critical theory standpoint, integration of art as a pedagogy challenges modernist foundations of mental health and privilege, contextualizing people within circumstance and culture rather than codifying and compartmentalizing them according to diagnosis, class or population. Stories play a prominent role within critical theory. Narratives being truth to power and witnesses, in this case social work students, must confront the messiness of treatment, recovery and the injustices that often overshadow the lived experience of those who become clients,"
(Cohen, Konrad & Power, in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.97).

In one instance in the literature, a Canadian social work program had students make collages on themes such as violation, fear, and oppression. They used these artworks to spark group dialogue for solutions in the classroom. Bonnycastle and Heinonen (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.196) state **"classroom exercises like these constitute powerful learning experiences that are not easily forgotten."**

The usage of visual journaling where students draw can be useful to prompt students reflective thinking, gain insight into challenges they experience, and to process and release inner emotions (Deaver & McAuliffe, 2009, p.623-624).

ACTIVITY: COLLAGE OF CENTRAL SOCIAL WORK (OR OTHER ALLIED HEALTHCARE) THEMES

Activity Adapted from Bonnycastle and Heinonen (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.196)

Materials:

- Paper
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Old magazines or Newspaper

Instructions:

Provide a list of social work or healthcare themes that you feel it is imperative students critically reflect on. Some topics could include social justice, oppression, anti-oppressive practice, or empowerment. This activity can also be tailored to specific concepts that are being explored in a particular unit in the curriculum. You can either have students select a topic from a list that you provide or have the activity be open ended. Have student cut up images and words from the magazines to create a collage of their selected theme. Facilitate a discussion afterwards where students share either with the class or in small groups.

Some questions to help facilitate the discussion include:

- How does your artwork represent your chosen theme?
- Why did you select the theme you chose?
- What images, words or colours did you choose and why?
- What was this experience like for you?
- What are some potential solutions or ways to enact your theme in practice that you discovered while making your collage?



Photo by Zainul Yasni on Unsplash

MORE ON ART IN EDUCATION

Another educational tool, image theatre is a technique built from Augusto Boal's practice that can be facilitated in the classroom and does not require formal training as is required with forum theatre which was previously discussed in this guidebook. Students take up a physical image with their bodies that represents a critical incident. Image theatre can help students to "...unearth their ethical scripts and critically explore the role they play in their day-to-day practices," (Brodinsky & Evans in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.27).

ACTIVITY: IMAGE THEATRE IN THE CLASSROOM

Activity sourced from David Farmer (2022) of DramaResource.com

Materials:

- Open space in classroom
(consider pushing desks to the side, consider having some chairs in a circle)



Photo by Erik Mclean on Unsplash

Instructions:

Have students sit in a circle. Then have the students create physical images connected to a theme (a tableau). David Farmer (2022) from DramaResource.com provides the example topic of bullying. In a social work classroom similar themes could apply. Students should create the image without a lot of pre-thought. Students that are observers are then invited to step into the centre of the circle to join in, change or reconstruct the image or brainstorm solutions. Farmer (2022) states "This could lead to an abstract group image or a tableau that is "dynamised" or brought alive.

Key notes:

- Though image theatre does not require trained facilitators as a formal forum theatre process does you may still want to consider bringing in trained facilitators into your classroom setting (Ducca Cisneros, in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.85)
- Image theatre can help students to understand issues, attitudes and emotions and uncover taken for granted narratives. Image theatre does not require drama experience (Farmer, 2022)
- Discussion with the group of students around personal physical boundaries, and processes around consent when touching one another during the image making are essential prior to beginning this activity. There may be different comfort levels with activities of this nature which involve physical bodies in spaces. As an educator you may want to explore with the students if they feel comfortable proceeding with this activity after outlining the process and what boundaries/limits/community guidelines are required to proceed
- As the process of creating image theatre around topics such as oppression, mental health or other social work related subjects can be distressing for students it is essential to establish community guidelines and a dynamic of community care. Special attention must be given to group care before and after the process. A facilitated discussion, check in and support should be offered throughout the process. It should be made clear when the activity has ended to ground students and orient them back to the classroom space
- Students should be made aware they are only required to participate as much as they feel comfortable and may choose to sit and observe or step away as needed

MORE ON ART IN EDUCATION

The University of New England has taken the knowledge that the arts can aid learning in the classroom and has begun offering a specialised applied arts and social justice social work degree (Cohen Konrad & Power, in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.99). This program along with the infusion of arts in social work education elsewhere has been noted to increase students' critical reflection and to help them construct alternate meanings (de Bruijn & Jansen in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.30). Cohen Konrad and Power, (in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.106), state students **"...search to find meaningful ways to make sense of suffering and inequality, problems that seem so immense and overwhelming as to propel them to pause and take stock of whether social work is indeed the profession for them. We have learned, however, that arts and social work service to ameliorate doubt and counteract fear."**

I, too, have felt the problems of our world to be so vast that I did not know during my Bachelor of Social Work Education if social work was the right path for me. Arts-based educators and researchers Deaver and McAuliffe (2009, p.616) found that art-based reflective journaling helps students to integrate and construct new knowledge as well as application of that knowledge.

Deaver and McAuliffe (2009, p.616) state **"Student-generated artwork has been used in both counselling and art therapy education and supervision, with the aims of clarifying case conceptualization (Ishiyama, 1988), understanding countertransference (Kielo, 1991), and improving counsellor and therapist well-being (Harter, 2007). Therefore, it follows that integrating art practice and reflective journaling can be potentially beneficial to internship students"**

The arts have grounded me through doubts or challenges and through my own educational processes including my previous and current practicum placement.

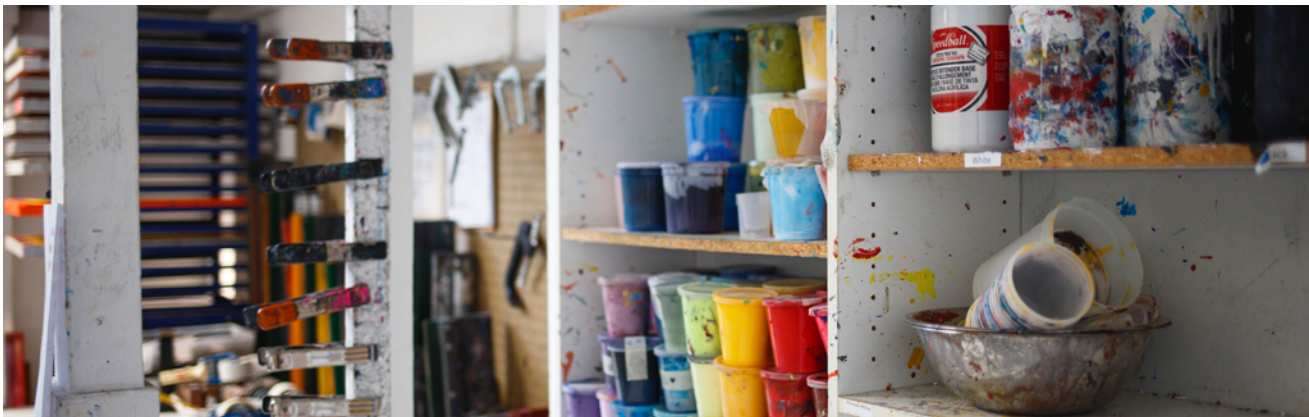


Photo by Katya Ross on Unsplash

ART ACTIVITY: A REFLECTION OF PRACTICUM PLACEMENT THROUGH ART

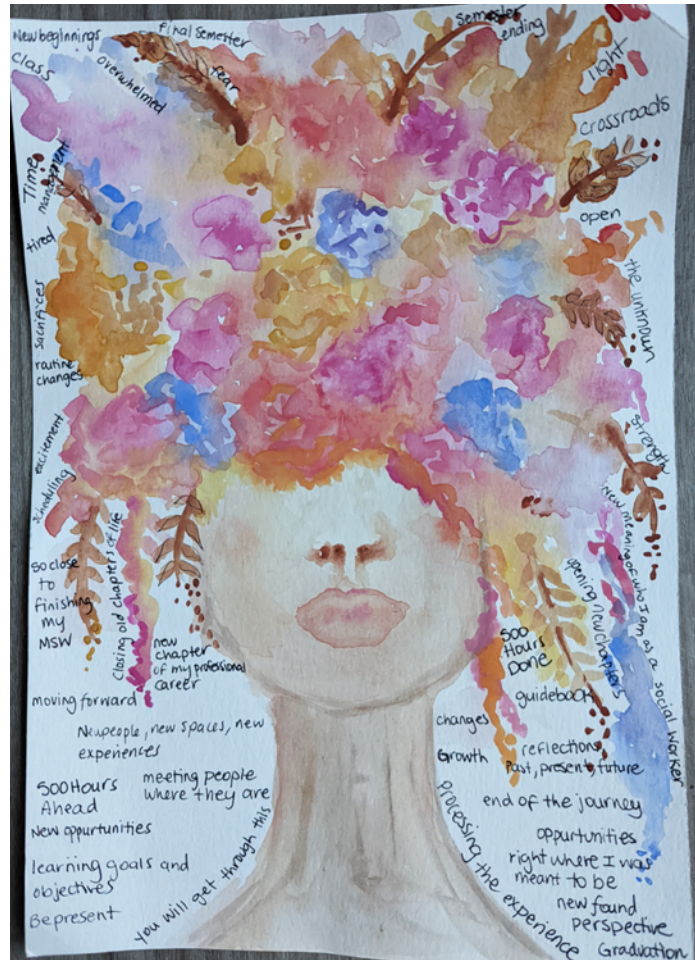
Activity sourced from my own personal practice experience

Materials:

- Paper
- Watercolour Paints or Canvas/Paper
- Acrylic Paint
- Paintbrushes

Instructions:

Have students before entering their practicum placements draw or paint a self portrait. Remind the students that the self-portrait can be literal or abstract and does not require the students to have technical artistic experience. Encourage students to write out words or draw symbols describing their emotions and feelings before their first week of placement on half of the paper/canvas. At the end of their placement encourage students to revisit their artwork and to write words or symbols on the other side of the paper or canvas that describe how they are feeling at the end of their placement. Consider facilitating a discussion and sharing of the artworks for the final day of class.



Original artwork by Taylor Barei (the author of the guidebook)

Key notes:

- This activity is best suited for students to start just before entering a practicum placement and again at the end of the placement/final days of the course
- This activity is well suited for online learning as students can choose to post their artworks and a short description to a course discussion page
- This activity can prompt/help students to reflect on the experience of their placement and education overall

THE ARTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-CARE

The literature speaks to the high degree of **burnout**, **secondary trauma** and compassion fatigue that social and healthcare professionals experience due to the social problems they routinely face (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.3).

Definition of Secondary Trauma:

Secondary Trauma is a part of compassion fatigue. "It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event."

Definition of secondary trauma Sourced from (University of Buffalo, 2009).

Definition of Burnout:

"Burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment"

Definition of Secondary Trauma Sourced from (University of Buffalo, 2009).

Definition of Compassion Satisfaction:

"Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society."

Definition of Compassion Satisfaction Sourced from University of Buffalo, (2009)

If you would like to learn more on compassion satisfaction and wish to take the Professional Quality of Life Scale by the Center for Victim Research (Stamm, 2009) feel free to visit: https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/id/2065/ProQOL_IR_508.pdf

Many social and healthcare professionals have long been aware of the need for self-care to avoid **burnout** and compassion fatigue and to increase **compassion satisfaction**. The arts as a tool for self-care and professional reflection have been found to regulate social workers emotional responses and to cope with compassion fatigue, **burnout** and **secondary trauma** (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.3; Huss in Huss & Bos, 2018, p.121).

Huss and Sela-Amit (2019, p.3) state,

“Social workers are exposed to sensory experiences of trauma. As a sensory medium, therefore, the arts provide an accessible source for retrieval and also interpretation and reinterpretation of these experiences (Nelson and Fivish, 2004; Sarid and Huss, 2010; van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, and van Dijk, 2001). The arts help enhance meaning making, and on this level, they can enhance post-traumatic growth in social workers.”

I reflect on my own longstanding practice of visual journaling where I source materials online with content that has prompted me to critically reflect, is uplifting, inspiring, or motivating. I print these images out and often draw and write around them to process. This tool has helped me through some of my most challenging times as a social worker leading to an increased sense of **compassion satisfaction**.

Visual journaling can be hours that a practitioner claims for annual professional development requirements (for example the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers, where I hold a registration allows professional development in the informal professional development/personal category). The benefits of lifelong learners such as myself using the arts in this way is especially necessary in increasingly neoliberal work contexts (Kuri, 2017, p.118), where supervision is focused more on risk managerialism, surveillance, and audit culture, and less on supervision for growth (Huss & Sela-Amit, 2019, p.3).

Though social workers and other allied healthcare professionals should also work together to resist neoliberalism in increasingly bureaucratic environments in which they work, the arts have been a coping strategy for me to support my sustainability in all areas of activism.

Huss and Sela-Amit (2019, p.3) state **“Managerialist and task-oriented supervision can prevent social workers from accessing their own tacit knowledge, blind theories, or inner experiences, which are valuable sources of knowledge (Narhi, 2001). Thus, the arts can provide a space for social work students, as well as for service users, to excavate their own emotions and understanding of their work.”**

Huss in Huss and Bos (2018, p.121) echo this and state **“Just as arts have intense resilience-enhancing factors for service users these are important also for social workers who need to develop active self-care skills of resilience. While the need to address compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and other types of social worker stress is clear there are less specific methods for doing this... creativity for social workers will help to protect from secondary trauma but also from mechanistic social work as shown with other groups in the helping professions.”**

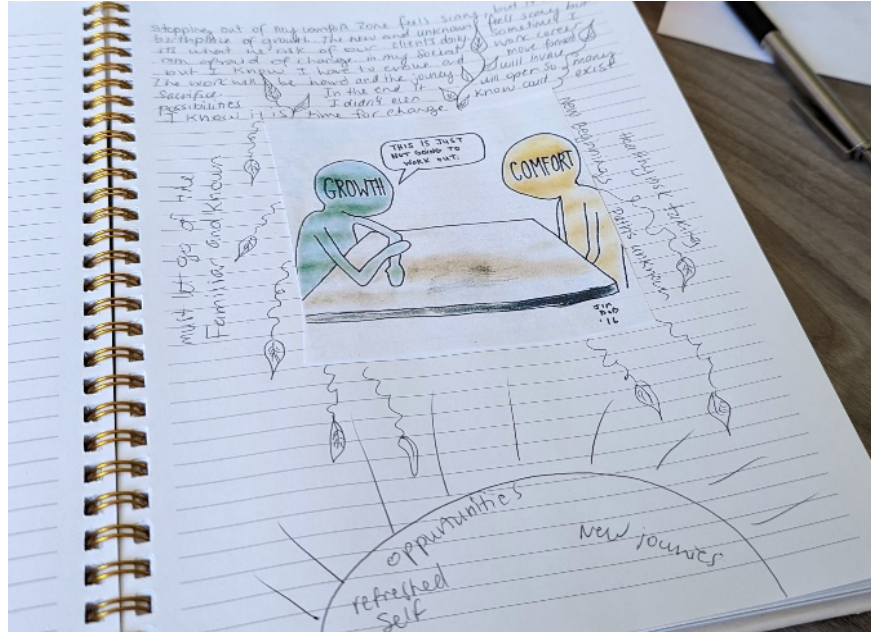
I have used the arts to reflect on my individual practice and the systems that I have worked in. This has led to a deeper reflexivity and led me to a sense of me being able to challenge “mechanistic” aspects of my day-to-day work. Alongside this, visual journaling has prompted my own personal growth outside of my professional identity and enhanced my self-care.

ACTIVITY: VISUAL JOURNALING FOR COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND REFLECTION

Sourced from the authors practice experience

Materials:

- Journal Book
- Scissors
- Glue Stick
- Printer (optional)
- Pens
- Pencils
- Pencil Crayons



Original Artwork by Taylor Barei (the author of this guidebook)

Instructions:

Use key search terms such as “uplifting social work quotes” “uplifting nursing quotes” “uplifting counselling quotes” into google images to source some inspiration. You may want to come up with your own key search terms and these are just a few examples. If you use social media and access social and healthcare related or arts content, you may want to consider keeping a saved folder where you store any uplifting or thought-provoking content that you happen come across. If a particular quote or image speaks to you print it and use it as a catalyst for journaling or response via images or art making. If you do not have a printer, you can draw your own rendition of the uplifting or thought-provoking content (as the printer is optional for this activity)

Key notes:

- If you feel you need of reflective journaling, going through a challenging time personally or professionally, or practice journaling on a consistent/regular basis this activity may be helpful for you to process
- Try to not think too much about what you are drawing or writing and freely engage in the exercise
- Consider a mindful and reflective period where you think about what you created after completing the exercise

ACTIVITY: A SELF-CARE WHEEL

Activity Sourced from Olga Phoenix Project (2013)

Materials:

- Pen or Pencil
- Paper

Instructions:

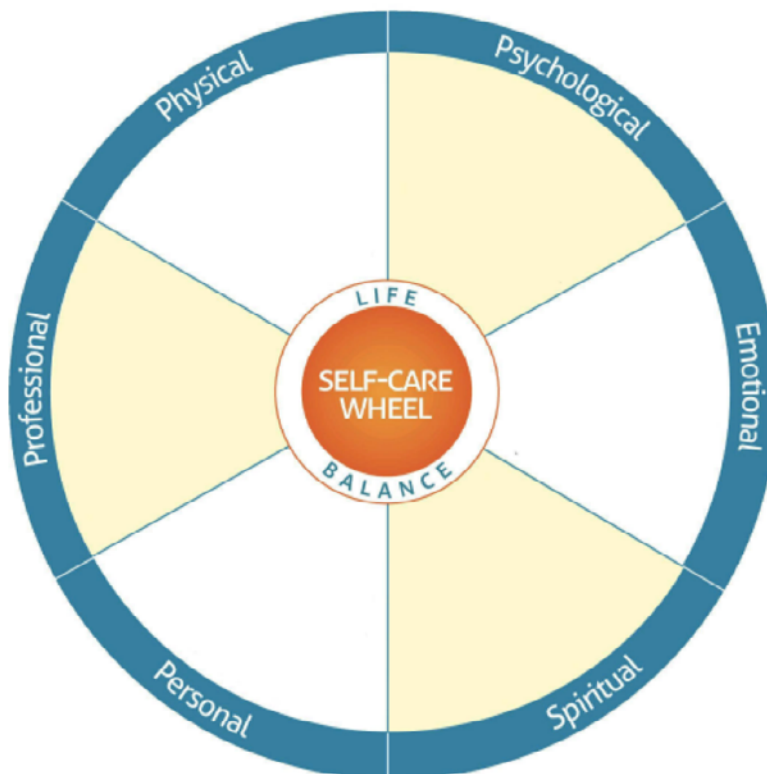
Consider printing out this self-care wheel. If you do not have access to a printer, you can re-draw it for yourself. Feel free to write or draw in this PDF document directly. Draw words or symbols for each section of the self-care wheel.

Key Notes:

- Creating a self-care wheel can help you to identify what is important to you and how to take care of yourself to maintain a healthy work life balance and to increase **compassion satisfaction**
- Having the self-care wheel to re-refer to in the future can be helpful for you to identify steps to take when you are observing signs of **burnout**, or feeling out of balance

You can download and print the self care wheel at the link below:

www.OlgaPhoenix.com



GUIDEBOOK CONCLUSION

This guidebook has covered a broad range of applications for the arts for social and healthcare professions including community work and mental health practice. I began by describing the benefits of using the arts in micro practice and shifted to looking at the arts for macro practice including social justice and macro activism aims.

This guidebook concluded with the benefits of the arts for education and professional development and self-care. This guidebook is by no means exhaustive of all the communities, populations, and activities that the arts can be useful for in practice. If you feel inspired, you may want to continue doing your own research to find an activity that works for you in your particular setting.

To conclude this guidebook, I will end with a poignant quote that summarizes why the arts now more than ever are needed in practice. Citing Konrad in Levy in Huss and Bos, (2018, p.54) **“is it perhaps vital now more than ever to use the arts to disrupt the status quo in social work education, research and practice? The arts have the potential to expand the social work imagination to co-creatively transform the lives of disabled people and other marginalised groups. If social change is to remain fundamental to social work the role of the arts must be reconsidered.”**

I would argue that this quote is applicable to any allied social and healthcare professional looking to practice from an anti-oppressive lens with the goals to bring the arts into the work they do for social justice. I thank you for taking time to read this guidebook and I hope that there is at least one area or activity that can enrich your professional practice or personal life vis-à-vis the arts.

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