Art Therapy- For Survivors of Domestic Violence

(Tutor Diana Sawaya)
Art Therapy – Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence

• Art Therapy is a process of self exploration.

• Expressing thoughts and feelings creatively

• Participants are encouraged not to view themselves as victims of Domestic Violence, but as “SURVIVORS” and “Creative Individuals”

• My role, as a tutor, is to re-establish a feeling of self-belief and self-worth, within each participants and guide and support them.
Art Therapy Helps

• If you feel distanced from your feelings
• If you find it too upsetting to talk about painful experiences
• If you feel shy or withdrawn
• If you have a difficult time coping in social situations

• It lowers stress levels
• It reduces negative thinking
• It encourages positive feelings
• It stimulates concentration
• It increases confidence and commitment issues
• It heals you from within
Art Therapy & Art-Making

‘Art marking’ within an art therapy group provides opportunities to experience all types of art forms and all kinds of artists materials

I believe everyone has an artistic trait inside them. I say:-

“If you can Dream, then you are already Creative”.

When participants express and explore their own creativity, it helps them realise and better understand their own thoughts and feelings, therefore, they begin a process of self-healing.

‘I would take a deep breath...my pencil became my voice...and my paper... my story. My creativity became a promise to myself, that life’s not all bad’. (Anonymous)
**Activity 1**

Type: Icebreaker Activity

Duration: 1-2 sessions

Theme: Palm Designs (Past & Future)

Assessment:
- Suspending the palm designs from the class ceiling unified the group.
- The group felt welcome and shared a common understanding
- They embraced the activity and enjoyed exploring the artists materials to hand.

Objective:
- This activity is designed to facilitate self-exploration.

Aim:
- To assure the group that there is ‘no wrong way or right way’ with Art, just to use this activity as a tool to get comfortable.
Palm Designs
Activity 2

Type: Group Painting

Duration: 1-2 sessions

Theme: What is Domestic Violence?

Assessment:
• The group felt relaxed with the idea of ‘no boundaries’
• Freedom of speech and free artistic license encouraged trust amongst the group
• The group worked and bonded as a team

Objective:
• This activity is designed to encourage participation within a group
• It is an opportunity to explore and express one’s innermost feelings with the support of others in the group

Aim:
• To encourage the group to be daring in their artistic approach
• Time to let go of any negative thoughts and build up trust within the group
Activity 3

Type: Individual interpretation on canvas

Duration: 1-2 sessions

Theme: “SURVIVOR” – The Human Tree

Assessment:
• This activity aids in the healing process and strengthens an understanding of oneself
• Participants gained a real sense of achievement
• The satisfaction on completion of each artwork on canvas was very rewarding to the individual

Objective:
• To interpret the example painting by the tutor in their own individual way
• To encourage self-praise

Aim:
• For the group to embrace the symbolism behind the example painting
• To believe in the concept of strength, growth and change
The Human Tree
Activity 4

Type: Self Portrait

Duration: 1-session

Theme: “This is me”

Assessment:
- Participants individuality evident within this activity
- At this stage it is evident that self confidence and artistic confidence has grown

Objective:
- Participants have reached a stage where they have increased their own artistic abilities.
- A self portrait is a vision of how you want to be seen, it is a very powerful statement for the individual.

Aim:
- At this stage it is crucial participants have acknowledged their own potential and feel confident enough to believe they can work towards achieving their own personal goals.
- A self portrait symbolises self-worth, self-belief; two qualities vital with in Art Therapy
Summary & Conclusion

In future sessions, I hope to expand the range of artistic activities.

Introducing ‘Clay’, as a medium is something I intend to explore. Allowing the group to touch, mould & shape the clay promotes change. Change, is a valuable commodity in Art Therapy that should be embraced.

Another area I would aim to introduce to the group is photography. Photography can relate to past experiences, but it can also capture a desire to ‘break through’ into a more positive light.

A goal, to aim for in 2014 would be Exhibition of Art Works from the Art Therapy sessions. Exhibiting artwork to the masses is a fabulous way to build up confidence in such aspiring and talented artists.