



Creative Journaling - Expressive Arts Programs

Intended Audience

All members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

Program Description

Expressive arts, defined as any creative activity involving deep personal expression, are consistently linked to empowerment, personal growth, resilience, and self-fulfillment. In Creative Journaling, participants use words, visualizations, and a variety of mixed media techniques to unearth, explore and document their thoughts and emotions. In addition to profound growth gained from processing and understanding their experiences, this program unites participants in hope, support and camaraderie as they journey toward wellness.

Benefits and Impact

A plethora of research backs the innumerable benefits of incorporating some form of expressive arts in the journey toward wellness. Creative Journaling is associated with such benefits as enhanced self-esteem, personal growth, reduced stress and anxiety, decreased physical symptoms, improved memory and positive outlook. This program is particularly effective for individuals seeking healing and wholeness, as it encourages them to acknowledge their thoughts, express their emotions, free unhealthy obstacles and reclaim their sense of joy and well-being.

What to Expect at a Session

After an initial session of introductions, participants set out on a journey that promises to awaken the creative spirit and coax it to life. Each class begins with voluntary sharing of work and thoughts, and as connections are made, inspiration thrives. The facilitator, well-versed in the profound role of expressive arts in healing, guides the process with word prompts, themed projects and affirming discussion. In this safe creative space, negative thoughts and judgement are banished, leaving only room for meaningful connection, dynamic expression and healing.

Participant Comments

“Art put me firmly in the moment; my fears of cancer were quieted.”

“(This course provides a) very creative process to start exploring feelings and thoughts; opens up the depths in a very non-threatening way.”

What the Research Says:

“A growing number of studies underscore how art therapy increases the perception of quality of life including individuals with cancer <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19473224>, dementias <http://www.alzheimers.net/2014-04-29/art-therapy-for-alzheimers/>, and other challenges; perception of quality of life is a central component of personal resilience, despite physical health or psychosocial challenges.” Malchiodi, C. (2015, August 31). Art is about resilience, it always has been. Retrieved August 31, 2015, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/arts-and-health/201508/art-is-about-resilience-it-always-has-been/>.

A randomized controlled study in the Journal of Advanced Nursing found expressive writing improved the quality of life of early breast cancer survivors (Craft MA, Davis G C, Paulson RM, 2012).

Program Frequency:

2 hours per week
4 weeks per program
2-4 programs per session
Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum Class Size: 12

Related Programs:

Ceramics
Dancing on Paper: Chinese Brush Strokes
Drumming
Find Yourself in Found Objects
Mosaics
Story in the Photo
Watercolour