

***Case Study: Pathway to Hope***

*Traumatic Brain Injury Unit, Morriston Hospital.*

Organisation name: Swansea Bay Health Board

Author: Heather Parnell, Capital Arts Manager,

Lead artists: Sian Hughes & Sarah Jane Richards

Staff lead: Clinical Nurse Specialist: Carole Saunders

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This project was delivered in the Traumatic Brain Injury Unit of Morriston Hospital from September 2017- February 2018 during the refurbishment of the Unit. Many patients following [brain injury](#) suffer feelings of isolation, a lack of connection and a sense of hopelessness. Attendance at outpatient clinics can also be affected by a lack of motivation.

The TBIS clinical team worked with the Capital Arts manager to devise a project as part of the patient rehabilitation programme, to create artwork which would directly involve patients in the enhancement of the Unit, creating a sense of identity. Artists Sian Hughes and Sarah Jane Richards were selected for their experience and track record in this area. They were commissioned to design and co-create artwork for the Unit through practical engagement with 30 TBIS patients.

Everyone took part in weekly workshops planned and facilitated by the artists and clinical nurse lead with the support of OT staff. They worked with a range of processes including cyanotype printing, ceramics, dough modeling, book making and collage. Patients got to know each other in this safe space, clinical observations were taking place in an informal setting and as they worked, there was lots of 'sideways' talking; about the artwork, about life, daily challenges, achievements, discoveries, frustrations and insights.



“My memory doesn’t stretch as far as the weekend – there was a time I’d burst into tears - now I just say it.”

“It’s only when you’ve experienced the darkness that you truly appreciate the light.”

The project helped patients consider the future with greater optimism and resilience. Patients said they really valued the workshops and learning new skills. They viewed it as an opportunity to create artwork as a metaphor for their experience of living and coping with a brain injury. One patient was motivated to enrol on an Art Foundation Diploma. Patients developed a new network, support, greater confidence and hope. The groups continued to meet for craft workshops with staff after the project ended, sustaining the positive



outlook and opportunity to develop art skills. There was good attendance during the workshops and also, improved clinic attendance. The project demonstrates how the Arts and authentic projects can contribute meaningfully and positively to rehabilitation through careful planning and sensitive co-delivery.

“It’s been brilliant....Don’t know what I’d do without this workshop....I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it – really locked into the creative thing.... They’ve saved my life”.

Watch the patient and staff story here:

<https://www.artsinhealth.wales/traumatic-brain-injury-unit.html>

