

Arts and Minds

Creative Transitions Project

A CTMHUB project with funding support by ACW & The Baring Foundation

Introduction

"To my great delight, the 'Arts and Minds' Creative Transitions project has been a huge success, with so much positive feedback relayed back to me from the artists running the sessions at various locations."

We decided to take an innovative approach to mental health issues by running these creative workshops so that both patients and staff attended.

Staff attendance was dependant on them joining a workshop on an equal footing with patients to help give them an insight into how individuals respond in a non-clinical setting. Such insights provide a vital tool for better understanding of the day-to-day issues facing people with mental health problems, and how best staff can support them on their road to recovery.

For patients, the workshops provided participants exploring positive transitions from mental health services with an important stepping stone in the rehabilitation process, helping them gain self-confidence, improve communication skills and motivation, while enhancing well-being in a relaxed, supportive and informal setting.



I was both pleased and touched by the heart-warming responses to the workshops, and the positive impact they had. I'd like to thank all the artists who lead these sessions for providing such a safe and supportive environment where everyone felt relaxed and cared-for.

The feedback will inform our next year's project, so that these sessions can be even better.

Esyllt George

**CTMUB Arts and Health Coordinator, and
Project Coordinator at Cwm Taf
Morgannwg University Health Board.**

For further information about this work, please contact Esyllt: esyllt.george@wales.nhs.uk

The workshops

...take place in a range of venues, including 2 community centres. One of the artist facilitators is Kate Verity, a community artist and arts development officer, who has an MA in Arts & Health, and believes in the power of using the arts as a tool to promote health and wellbeing and change lives.



Messages of hope to liven up the ward walls

These lovely leaf decorations and words of affirmation were created in a session run by contemporary artist Caitlin Flood-Molyneux. The cheerful paintings are destined to be added to a larger piece of work to be hung on the ward wall. The expressions of optimism are heart-warming: respect, peace, love, hope, fun, connection. All the things we all want – and deserve – in our lives.

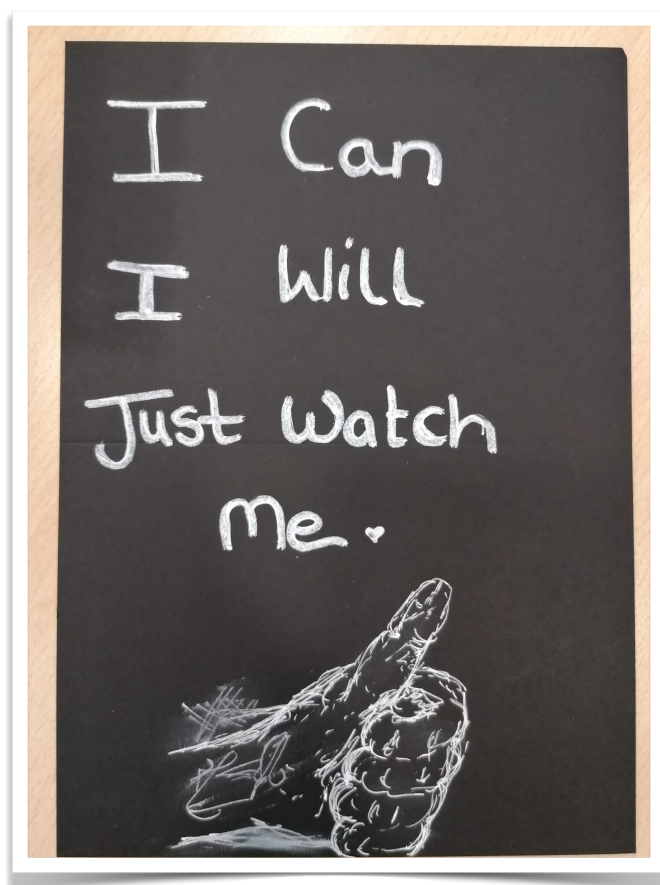
Caitlin has an MA in Fine Art from Cardiff Metropolitan University. The session took place at the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) in Bridgend.

HAIKU AT ARC (ASSISTING RECOVERY IN THE COMMUNITY)

A haiku is a short poem originating from Japan. This one expresses the writer's feelings about autumn, as the nights draw in, and the weather cools. The poems were accompanied by leaf rubbings, collected as trees in the area shed their leaves as winter approaches.

**Wood from the fire
Crackle, crackle. Roar.
Smell of cinnamon from
My cup on the floor**

Other sessions across the locations have included cut-out collages, card collages, painting ceramics, felt soap making, metal plate artwork, glass paintings and collaborative collages.



FEEDBACK FROM THE ARTISTS RUNNING THE WORKSHOPS INCLUDE COMMENTS SUCH AS:

“The effort it took for this person to attend our session when they hadn’t been out of the house for years was truly humbling”

“I was delighted that this person stayed for the whole session and enjoyed it, when I had been told that they usually only stay for a few minutes, then leave.”

“I got to see another side of ‘S’. I felt I was with a friend not a patient.”

Uschi, leader of the creative writing group at ARC, commented on one of her sessions.

“Leaving the house to attend the workshop was a huge milestone for some who said they hadn’t really been out socially for many years. It was fantastic to see the support and understanding between the group.”

Initially, some participants were overwhelmed and found focussing difficult – especially working with writing, saying they were more comfortable listening to others. However, by the end of the session all but one (of a group of nine) had written something they were willing to share.”

Comments after the session included: “That was really calm”, and “It’s just really nice to have something to come out to.”





THE 'ARTS AND MINDS' CREATIVE TRANSITIONS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY
THE BARING FOUNDATION AND ARTS COUNCIL WALES.



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf Morgannwg
University Health Board