

COMMUNITY ARTS & HEALTH

THE 'MOVING ON' PRINT- MAKING ART GROUP



Introduction

The National Centre for Arts and Health at the Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Dublin, (AMNCH) have established a broad programme of participative arts activity for patients in hospital and in the local community. A new project is presented here, it was carried out in 2010 and was carried out in collaboration with the National Gallery of Ireland and RUA Red Arts Centre.

Print Making Art Group

This group built on our experience of providing out patient art groups to patients from the Rheumatology and Cardiac Rehabilitation Programmes. Patients who had attended this sort of group before told us that they learned new skills, met people in a similar situation to themselves, gained confidence and that the art helped them relax. The group was thus targeted especially to people living with a long term illness and people who have had to cope with major life changes due to their illness.

We aimed to offer an eight week art project for patients living at home but attending the hospital. The group was held in RUA Red arts centre, aiming to assist people to gain confidence in art making, find a new interest and facilitate them to join art groups in the community on completion. The group was part of the National Gallery's outreach programme and represented a new departure for the hospital arts programme. The group concentrated on the art of printmaking and cards. No previous experience or skills were required. The tools were adapted according to individual needs and the artist provided full assistance throughout the creative process.

Patients were identified for the group in 3 ways –

- Posters and flyers around the hospital
- Staff referred suitable patients to the group
- Letter to all patients who attended Cardiac Rehabilitation programme in the year prior to the art course.

An evaluation was carried out to assess benefit of the group and a follow up telephone interview was conducted three months after the group to assess whether patients have continued to do art in other community settings post group

RESULTS

20 patients took part in the evaluation. The results indicate positive experiences for all participants.

The majority of participants were over 50, had been a patient for at least two years and most were from the cardiology, oncology and rheumatology department.

Patients reported the following (anecdotal) benefits:

- > - Patients with long term illness found benefit from the social experience of sharing an activity with others in a similar condition
- > - Gained confidence which is lost as a result of living with a major illness.
- > - Found a spark of new creativity which comes from trying a new art form
- > - Stimulation and satisfaction from achieving their own art making, despite disability or illness.

The greatest benefits we observed from facilitating this course, talking to participants and carrying out the evaluation were:

- ✓ Social support from others in a similar condition
- ✓ Making the arts accessible to people who do not normally engage in any artform
- ✓ Having fun and enjoying oneself, despite major health worries
- ✓ Stimulation of mind
- ✓ Confidence building



A participant during the print making class

Do you think the print making workshops improved your health or well being in any way? If so how? Participants feedback:

- ✓ Eased away pain
- ✓ Very sociable
- ✓ Reduce stress levels & created time for self
- ✓ Relaxing time out for self
- ✓ Forgot my pain
- ✓ Stimulated latent art interest
- ✓ Got me out of the house
- ✓ Very informative
- ✓ General improvement of my health
- ✓ Learnt new skill

As part of the programme, we organised a trip to the National Gallery of Ireland for patients with a tour and refreshments provided. There were three aims to this trip:

- Encourage participants to explore the cultural institutions on their doorstep and to gain confidence in visiting galleries.
- To increase the social network of the group
- To introduce participants to other groups on offer to them at the National Gallery.

The group made their own way to the gallery on the LUAS tram. Some participants were nervous and wanted a bus to be arranged but it was felt that if participants made the journey on public transport they were more likely to do so again. Many of the participants admitted privately that they had not been to the gallery in over twenty years and a large number did not travel into Dublin anymore since they were ill.



Deborah Ando (facilitator) with a participant showing off her final product during a session

Recommendations post group

- ✓ Further research to further explore health gains as identified by group
- ✓ Follow up group after 3 months to see if participants did continue to make art in community settings and/or visited the gallery or other cultural institutions
- ✓ Secure funding to run this group next year
- ✓ Explore further the role of the National Centre for Arts and Health in the community

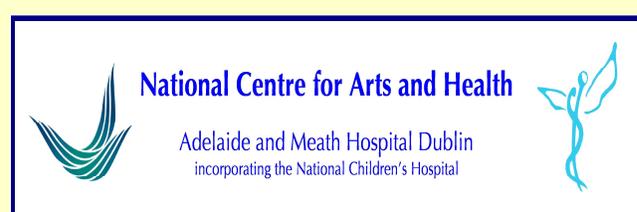
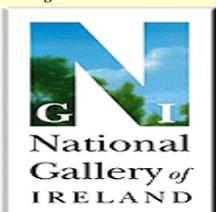
When I am painting I sit perfectly still, hours can go by and I don't notice them. My doctors have been urging me to do this for ages, as normally I can't stop going and this aggravates my condition. PK, Patient and Artist.



Hands-on during in the print making art session

FUTURE WORK ON THE NATIONAL CENTRE

The National Centre for Arts and Health aims to improve the hospital experience for patients, to explore the therapeutic potential of the arts, to build positive links with the local community and to make the arts accessible to patients who cannot access traditional arts venues. The current arts programme includes exhibitions, live performances, creative writing classes, arts therapies, design projects and participatory art sessions on wards and in waiting rooms. This group was a new departure for patients who struggle to adapt to life in the community following major illness and/or long hospital stay. We intend to run another group like this in the future and are conducting research in this area at Trinity College Dublin.



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