

The arts were an important part of community healing in Christchurch.

As Peter said, “The arts provided a way to deal with and manage the trauma of the present, but they also provided the way to re-imagine the future. People can’t live without hope. It will be in re-imagining the future that hope will return.”

The Use of Art Therapy after the Storm

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Mississippi Gulf Coast after Katrina



Mississippi Fairgrounds - Shelter for Evacuees



Arts-Based Psychological First Aid

Reduce initial distress & foster short and long-term adaptive functioning

Therapeutic art making focusing on emotional containment and grounding with non-regressive material when and if appropriate

Provide safety and comfort and attend to immediate needs

Mississippi Trade Mart Center

Catholic Charities Long-Term Hurricane Recovery Program

- Program initiated in October 2005
- Free services
- Provided services to 76 counties in MS
- 8 case managers, 4 outreach case managers, 4 therapists

LTHR Program Treatment Models

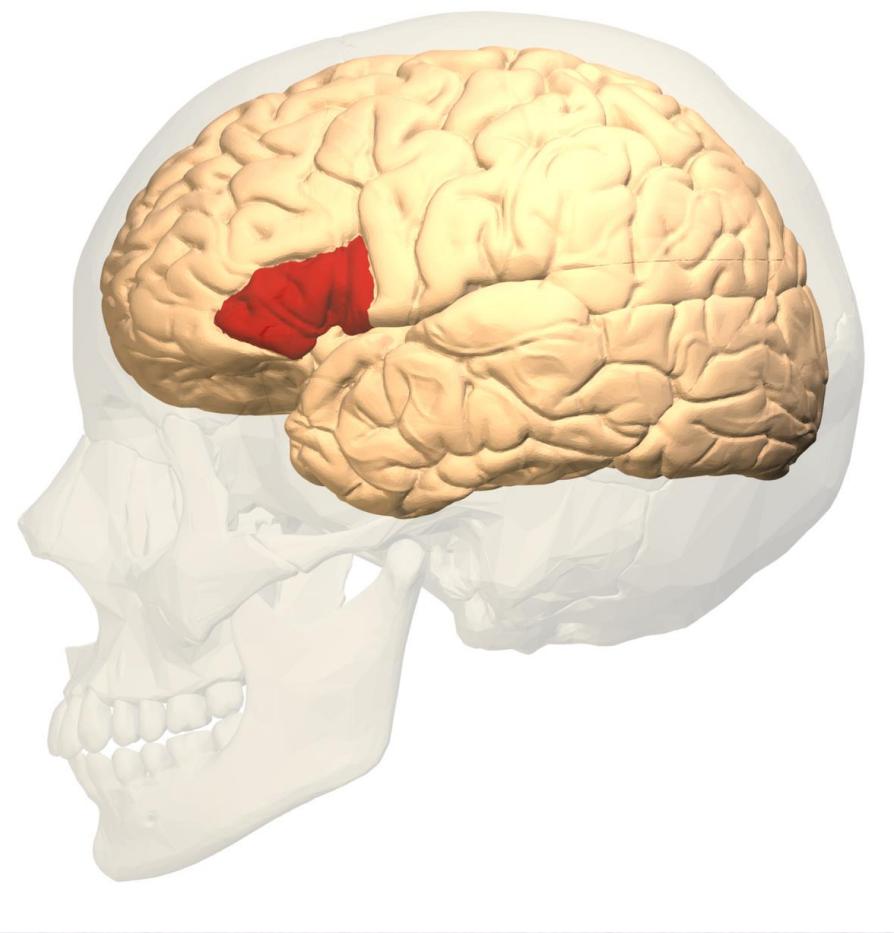
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing - EMDR
- Instinctual Trauma Response Model (Tinnin & Gantt)
- Art Therapy and Play Therapy

Definition of Art Therapy

A human service profession using art media, images, the creative process, and patient responses to artwork as reflections of an individual's development, abilities, personality, interests, concerns and conflicts.

Involves a therapeutic relationship with a trained art therapist.

From brain imaging studies and neuroscience, we know that when trauma occurs there is structural damage to the Broca's area (or verbal processing area) of the brain.



How Art Works with Trauma & Memory

- The process of art therapy bypasses the speech/language issue with the brain
- Art making accesses the same sensory area of the brain that encodes trauma memories
- Patients/clients can use artwork to work through experiences in a non-threatening way
- Can apply words to artwork thus reintegrating the right and left hemispheres of the brain

Trauma as Imagery

Since trauma is stored in memory as imagery, expressive art processes provide an effective method for processing and resolution.

Art Therapy Disaster Response Model

- Instill feelings of safety
- Promote resiliency
- Build on strengths, often in community settings
- Deal with multiple traumas
- Work towards post-traumatic growth

Mardi Gras Celebration

February 2006

Sponsored by several local agencies including the
LTHR Program at Catholic Charities

Resilience Strategies from APA, “Road to Resilience”

- Relationships
- Opportunities to feel competent and in charge
- Notice strengths and abilities
- Develop skills in communication and problem solving
- Engage in practices which help you manage strong feelings and impulses

Discovery and Reconstruction

Through the process of art therapy, resilience is supported as people utilize their strengths in meaningful activities that restore identity and contribute to a reconstruction of self.

Displacement can lead to feelings of disorientation that affect one's well-being and sense of belonging.

- M.T. Fullilove, 1996

According to Seligman (2011),
well-being has five elements:

1. Positive emotion
2. Engagement (flow)
3. Meaning
4. Positive relationships
5. Accomplishment

A state of well-being encourages:
Feelings of contentment and satisfaction
Feelings of safety and trust
Feelings of being connected to others

When we feel a sense of well-being, our actions will be kind nature, which encourages others to act accordingly, which adds to our feeling of well-being.

Puppets, Books, Narrative





Puppet Story

- Comfortable place
- Problem
- A gift or ability
- Resolution
- The End (a new comfortable place)

“Art therapy is about having a relationship with your visual world. So there you are, creating, and you have no choice but to be in the present moment.”

- Amy Lynn, LCPC, ATR

When one is fully absorbed in creating, they experience what art therapists call “flow”, a near meditative state that produces many of the same benefits as traditional meditation.

“Making the journey together with our clients as we rebuild community is how a moment of crisis becomes a moment of grace.”

- Sister Donna Gunn
LTHR Program
Catholic Charities

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