



EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY

Anthropologists have found that the ancient wisdom of healing practices of all indigenous tribes have one thing in common: they believe in five healing 'salves' or 'ointments' to promote health and vitality. These 'salves' include singing, dancing, storytelling, sitting in silence and art-making. When tribe members fall ill the healers inquire whether and where the person has stopped participating in one of these activities. Each is seen as integral to the soul's health and the body's well-being. We look at the creative arts as a healing and vitality modality.

The idea of Expressive Arts Therapy traces its roots to the healing and creative 'ointments' of a variety of indigenous or First Peoples. In its current form it has developed over the past 50 years and can be described as an integration between two or more forms of art expression: visual art; movement/dance; writing/poetry; music/sound and drama in a supportive setting to experience and express feelings. It allows one to delve deeper past mental blocks and preconceived ideas to explore unknown facets of oneself. It accesses non-verbal communication and facilitates insight.

Through creative expression we utilise all the senses and the imagination and in the process we are able to integrate different aspects on more than one level. We tap into our own authentic creativity and we use our bodies and minds to draw from within. We access the verbal and non-verbal, and integrate the emotional and cognitive on the levels of the

personal, the collective and the vital unconscious. It is in this process that creative expression opens a door to the unifying experience of mind-body-soul: as the mind, the body and the soul participate and work together as a whole. When mind, body and soul/spirit are being brought into balance the result is healing and the experience of it would be vitality – a feeling of aliveness and connection.

Numerous art and expressive therapy books have been written with titles such as *Art as Medicine* (Shawn McNiff), *Creative Connection* (Natalie Rogers); *Art is a Way of Knowing* (Pat B Allen), indicating art as a healing resource. It is an exciting time now as we are becoming aware and reclaiming the possibility of healing in holistic ways. The intuitive and the rational aspects of humanity can reunite in the celebration of our artistic expression. By using art and other forms of self expression (movement, voice, writing and mindfulness), there

is a realignment of left and right brain, old and new, pre- and post-rationality resulting in healing in the psyche that has a rippling effect on all we come into contact with. It gives us access to new – for us – but ancient ways of knowing and partaking in healing.

Eleen Polson (counselling psychologist) and Jolena Strobos (occupational therapist), trained with Natalie Rogers (renowned Expressive Art Therapist and daughter of Carl Rogers) in the Creative Connection. It is a process where the different arts are engaged in a sequential manner towards a therapeutic integration and deeper connection with the core self. The outcome is not planned, the intuitive expressions are facilitated to reconnect the participant with his or her own inner wisdom and resources. They present a 2-day journey in which to explore your creative self through the expressive arts. It is an experiential course designed to give participants a taste of these healing agents of movement, art, music, writing and silence in a safe and non-judgmental space where the emphasis falls on the process, the connection with creativity and the outcome of rejuvenation and vitality.

During this self-discovery process, Eleen and Jolena share more about the theory as well as their personal experience of the healing journey and the role expressive arts have played in their lives.

The expressive arts course is accredited with the HPCSA for continued development points (15 CEUs) and is presented

quarterly in Pretoria and Johannesburg and yearly in Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Durban. It is also a great modality to experience for a morning or a 1-day session. Although it is mainly focused on adults and people that would benefit from reconnecting with their inner child, expressive arts therapy groups for children are also available to foster spontaneous expression without any outcome or judgment.

Who benefits from the courses?

Over the past three years they have had people from many different walks of life: professional care-givers feeling depleted and reconnecting to inner inspiration, people who would no longer sing after being forced to do so in front of others as children, men realising how creative they are, woman who found how harsh their inner critic was; parents and artists finding new ways of doing old things. Unexpected guests in the form of special memories, spontaneous stories and liberating experiences encouraged them. It is a privilege to see the creative connections enhancing people's experience of body, mind and soul in unique and transformative ways.

Expressive Art Therapy opens a whole new world of possibilities to maintain the feeling of being alive, of being integrated and whole. The journey takes us through different avenues to a place where one can discover not only oneself, but also the divine creativity in and outside us. □

For more info see ad below

RECONNECT WITH CREATIVITY & VITALITY

Explore Your Creative Self Workshop
info@explorecreativeself.co.za

A 2-DAY WORKSHOP: experience the integrative power of expressive arts therapy (using art, music, voice, movement, creative writing and contemplation) to enrich your personal & professional life. CPD accreditation (HPCSA: 15 CEUs SACCSP: 8 CEUs)

www.explorecreativeself.co.za

Quarterly in /Jhb & Pretoria.
 Yearly in Bloemfontein, Cape Town & Durban

Eleen 072 212 1719 or Jolena 084 803 8904

Join our mailing list for Creative Inspirations or to arrange team buildings

