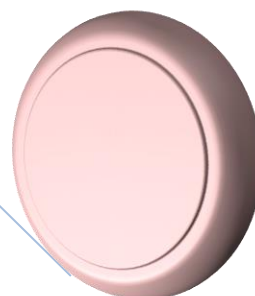




Erasmus+

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CREATE IMPACT REPORT

CREATE

1. Introduction

This project focuses on how effective creative therapies -specifically art therapy- can help asylum seekers acclimatise. The Create partnership evaluated the effectiveness of the approach and measured the impact. The project was client centred, partners piloted over a 6 month period and its aim was provide a safe and stable environment for clients allowing them address resettlement issues. As all participants are experiencing various mental health issues it is hoped that through engaging with this programme they will grow in confidence and become able to act as their own advocates.

2. Community Needs and Partner Approaches

<u>CESIE</u>	<u>Clonakilty Community Arts Centre</u>	<u>Associazione Sementera</u>	<u>Compagnie Arti-Zanat</u>	<u>Institut fur Theatertherapie</u>	<u>SOLA ARTS</u>
<p>Young migrant mothers, dealing with depression, trauma, displacement, most displayed high level of social, psychological & physical instability (illness)</p> <p>Poverty/lack of economic stability</p>	<p>Varied cultural backgrounds of participants- Africa, Asia, Middle East. Language barriers.</p> <p>Lack of confidence and trust in the system/how to access local services</p> <p>Childcare issues hindered full participation</p>	<p>Extreme uncertainty about future due to displacement. Lack of connection with current country of residence.</p> <p>Physical & psychological issues due to past traumas.</p>	<p>Isolation, create a positive environment to live in breaking down barriers. A desire to express themselves</p>	<p>Engage with host country on equal footing. Develop coping mechanisms for physical and emotional barriers- Insomnia/headaches, stress, lack of self confidence.</p> <p>Assimilation into new country and environment</p>	<p>Managing deep traumas, resilience, understanding other cultures, exploring alternative therapies, effectively managing group dynamics</p>

Summary of Outcomes

	<u>CESIE</u>	<u>Clonakilty Community Arts Centre</u>	<u>Compagnie Arti Zanat</u>	<u>ITT</u>	<u>SOLA ARTS</u>	<u>Sementera</u>
Number of Therapists/Facilitators	2	3	1	4	6	6
Number of Participants	23	28	12	20	30	22
Number of male participants	8	7	7	5	25	12
Number of female participants	15	17	5	15	5	10
Number of participants in the following age groups:						
• 0-18	15	1	0	1	3	0
• 19-25	3	11	2	5	2	20
• 26-40	4	16	6	14	13	2
• 41-60	0	0	4	0	10	0
• 61+	1		0	0	2	0
Number of sessions/workshops that have been delivered by your partners organisation	15	28	26	24	30	19
Average time devoted to each participant	3 hours	5 hours	4 hours	2.6 hours	4 hours	5 hours

3. Outcomes achieved by participants:

- Relief from the burden of trauma caused by the exile, freeing from repressed emotions
- Recovering pride and dignity, gaining self-confidence through raising one's voice and being heard, expressing oneself,
- Reconnecting with one's home country, recognizing the values of its traditions, including personal skills transmitted through those traditions
- Overcoming of the language barrier to communication
- Feeling of communion with other participants through shared emotions
- Intercultural exchange causing mutual enrichment
- Opening oneself up by creating and nurturing new relationships and friendships
- Resilience through finding peace and patience within oneself, supported by the desire to keep up the journey, to move ahead, to seek new challenges (hope and bravery)
- noticeable relief of somatic symptoms
- breaking down isolation/ contact/ sharing hopes, fears and experiences
- gaining self-confidence (i.e. feeling confident enough to travel on one's own within the city)
- discovering new ways to handle one's children
- limiting transgression of one's individual space
- (re)discovering ways of emotional self-support
- Unearthing personal issues in a contained surrounding
- They found a safe space to express themselves;
- Learnt how to express themselves in a new creative way;
- They felt more included in the local community;
- They dedicated time to oneself and to the needs of peers;
- They expressed ideas and feelings and shared their culture with others through the body.
- They increased their communication skills and openness to communicate with others, especially in transmitting their culture and traditions to others;
- Improved mental stability
- Taking up exercise
- Having capacity to see options and make informed decision
- Have improved self-agency
- Sign-posted for additional support
- Support with achieving longer term accommodation.
- Evidencing of mental health needs- impact on context of need for asylum
- Improved socialisation and integration
- Sensing self-value and times of shared happiness

- Exploring unspoken thoughts/feelings which other cause significant distress
- Having a sense of connectedness and safety
- Having improved sense of self and being heard/recognised
- Making spontaneous music and dancing were great tools to build up the group, getting to communicate deeper and get to trust each other. We felt that also many prejudices could be abandoned when there was a chance to dance and play music together.
- The group was enthusiast of making music and dance, especially women expressed a lot of gratitude for this opportunity.
- Sharing images and talk about themselves made people remember, talk about their country, and tell the group about their relatives and family.

4. Lessons Learned

- Acknowledging trauma of displacement is vital
- Maintaining an element of detachment is important to provide effective support
- Humility, respect and a deeper understanding of the would-be participants' inner situation
- Counterbalancing the identity of the clients (which includes cultural identity) and the idea of overcoming barriers to inclusion with the uttermost care.
- Trust and patience essential
- Sharing culture with others gave participants stability to express themselves
- Cultural dynamics are important and working with people from other cultures means opening up to understand other codes, observing and respecting them without neither judging or identifying yourself.
- Intergenerational groups benefit through symbolising of social, cultural and familial set ups lost due to displacement
- Important of therapist working in variety of Arts Therapies modalities to share approach and experience in order to 'see' and reveal the therapeutic experience and open up the therapists mind to new ways of exploring and working with trauma as it is easy to become embroiled in client trauma and get into a rut (their rut) of impossibility of working through this
- Need to learn other EU languages of therapists/supervisor of key descriptive language (adjectives, key nouns, key verbs), nuisances of aesthetic and emotional expression) to be able to fully convey message in Supervision
- It is really important to give choice as this is of the most significant things taken away
- Recognising the previous capacity of the person and drawing on this in order to explore their 3D self and no resigning to the label of refugee or a dismissed identity
- Importance of working with key resettlement agencies and not in isolation as a service
- Creative tools are powerful to overcome linguistic barriers and share something about our culture and story
- We learned to be flexible about the setting (beginning-ending times, participation);
- When we interacted verbally we found out that often they avoid to talk about personal and relational difficulties and talk instead about difficulties in finding jobs and other primary needs

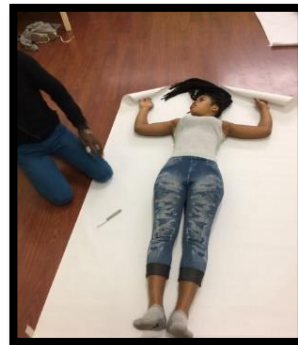
Conclusion

- The lack of childcare support seriously impeded parents' ability to engage in adult group activities and educational opportunities. However, advocacy has resulted in an increased awareness of the problem of childcare
- Two-hour group therapy sessions are too long for most participants. However, the drop-in sessions seemed to overcome this issue
- Some participants favoured individual therapy to address their issues
- The use of creative writing in a language of preference allowed more flow and ease of expression for participants with language restrictions who did not engage in visual art making.
- These sessions have resulted in a collaboration with the local education board to provide ongoing advanced English classes
- Early year/winter is the preferred time to start programme from management and staff perspective due to less festivities, distraction
- Participants may feel unable to trust people until they get to know the person/practitioner and therefore continuity is important
- The convenience for the participants of having the sessions in their accommodation centre was important as they did not have to travel
- Art therapy is useful for asylum seekers with depressive and somatic symptoms and experiencing psychological difficulties during the resettlement phase

CESIE

The African Mermaid

Quote/Testimonial from therapist: Agustina was very quiet. She was expressing a lot of elegance in her way of moving. Never too much, never too few. She was a perfect combination of strength and delicacy. She was considering herself very lucky to be alive after a long way to Europe.



The beginning: Agustina at the beginning was very shy and she needed to be encouraged to take a role in the activities. Nevertheless, I could see in her a strong desire to learn and to express herself.

The process: Agustina became confident to express herself through movement. Like Karim, she was not willing to speak that much, rather she was happy to communicate through movement. She is the one who made a proposal that became an institution at the end of our meetings: a moment of free dancing: Everybody was free to propose his/her own music and dance freely. This activity became an important moment of socialising among participants.

The impact: Proposing this very simple activity, Agustina reminded me of the importance of how spontaneous things sometimes work better than structured ones. I enjoyed very much these moments where I could see participants really being themselves. Agustina improved her Italian skills at the end of the process. Moreover, she was much more confident in communicating with the other participants.

Title: Oh my little Joy

Quote/Testimonial from therapist: When I think about Joy, I get into my mind an innocent little girl in need of support and attention but playing the role of the strong woman. Joy was very sweet but she could also be quite rude towards me and the other participants.



The beginning: It was hard to motivate Joy to participate. She used to sit in a corner and join in the group from time to time. She was easily showing her disappointment.

The process: She liked the activities where she could be in the centre in the middle of the circle. During these activities, she felt safe to express herself, any time that we were breaking the circle she didn't want to take part anymore in the activity.

The impact: Over time, Joy learned how to take part in the activities without putting herself at the centre and without complaining too much. She started to take part even if I proposed not to be in circle but in small lines, spread in the space etc... At the end of the workshop, Joy improved her capacity to be part of a group and explored how the group could sustain her. This allowed her to get in contact more easily with the other participants.

Street party (free dance at the end)

Quote/Testimonial from therapist: Observing them in these moments was really important to understand their cultures.



The beginning: As mentioned above, after a few sessions took place, participants encouraged by Agustina proposed to me to have a moment at the end of each session where they could put on their own music and dance freely. I liked this idea because I saw their enthusiasm in sharing their dance and music with others.

The process: At the end of every session, we used to take 20 minutes to dance freely. They were very enthusiastic about this moment because they could share with the others the movements and music they liked. Therefore, each of them were happy to share some personal aspects about themselves and their own culture and the others were happy to imitate.

The impact: During these moments, participants were expressing themselves and I learned how in their culture people dance to get to know each other. The mood of these moments was like being at a party!

Compagnie Arti-Zanat'

Mina” -“Going through her childhood was a way to indirectly deal with the exile.”

Introduction

“Mina” is a young African woman, who speaks French. At first, she was shy and she did not want to participate through acting. Rather she took care of another participant’s baby. Her difficulty was low self-esteem. “Mina” had just arrived from another asylum seeker’s center.

The process “Mina” followed the musical invitation to join the theater session. That made her feel safe because the collective music play let her simply be present without getting too much involved.

Later, she chose an image of a woman alone in a bar, approached by an older man. According to her, the young woman was lonely and sad, she needed attention, and the man was her father who never took care of her. Through associations evoked by the image, “Mina” was able to express her own sadness, feeling of abandon, and rage. The therapist used her particular reading of the image as a material for a theatrical situation where “Mina” participated actively: she played scenes of disputes, making reproaches to the father.

Later in the process, she played a scene where another man tried to pick her up while she didn’t want it, and where she was “saved” by the figure of the “father” who protected her and, by doing so, took the place that a father is supposed to take (the role was played by a social worker).

This helped “Mina” elaborate on her relationship to her absent father and on the issue of men who want to have relations with her while this is not what her real needs are.

At the same time, she has become a member of the symbolic community, where she took a special place by singing a song on “neglected Africa” while being supported by the whole group. Finally, it was as if through the issue of the father absence, she has also spoken about the exile in an indirect way, as if the exile has reactivated other, anterior sufferings or ruptures and void.

The Impact “Mina” gained confidence, she was able to express her feelings, and to build a positive image of herself, beyond being a surface for men’s projections. She was no longer passive, but rather started taking an active role in building new relationships.

From the therapist’ point of view, “Mina’s” case illustrated the point that working on someone’s childhood and the relationship to parents, is another way to address the trauma provoked by the exile itself.

“Halima” - “Music was a means for transmitting her culture to her child.”

Introduction

“Halima” is a young woman who comes from West Africa. At the beginning, her attitude towards the workshop was ambiguous. In the first few sessions, she came and entrusted her baby to somebody amongst the participants and then left in order to attend various appointments. Her presence was first mediated by her child, who went from the arms of one participant to the arms of another.

The process

“Halima’s” process was launched through her demand addressed to the group to attend to her baby. By doing so, it was as if she was unconsciously reconstructing her home country environment, where the whole community is taking care of the baby. That is how she was progressively able to feel “at home” in the workshop, to stay and to participate.

She then showed particular interest and sensibility for drum playing. One day she simply took the drum and started playing very skillfully, varying rhythms from her traditional culture. From that moment, she participated in the collective musical play with other participants. Little by little, she released her voice and started singing.

During the process, she chose the image of Don Quijote reprimanding Sancho Panza. For her, it represented a younger brother being chided and lectured by his older brother. Starting from there, she proposed to play a scene where she would enact a young woman who decides to leave and who has to face her elderly sister telling her that she cannot abandon her country and her family, and that she ought to stay.

The place of the music in “Halima’s” process was essential. The more time passed, the more she was present, within the rhythm, amongst the others, through playing her instrument. Music sessions in the workshop could last up to 30 minutes. When she was singing, her gaze was almost hypnotically riveted to her baby, who was placed in front of her and her instrument, and who gazed back at her mum playing and singing.

Finally, “Halima” was able to share her story with the group. It was her grand-mother who was the chief of her village, and who passed their strong musical tradition on her. Ever since she came to France, two years ago, she hasn’t touched a drum. The workshop gave her the opportunity to reconnect with her culture.

Impact

By reconnecting with her culture, “Halima” was also able to reconnect with her childhood, what enabled her to work on her connection to her child. She endorsed her role of a mother by transmitting her culture to her baby. In the same time, she was valued as an ambassador of her rich cultural heritage that she has never shared with people from the outside until that moment. She got aware of the fact that she made an important contribution to the collective construction of the play.

The therapist was just following her by engaging on a path that she herself had opened by playing music. He had a role of a catalyst to a process where all the ingredients were already there.

“Henri” - “Rediscovering the music of his childhood”

Introduction

“Henri” comes from central Africa. He speaks French and has two children. He is very open and very anxious at the same time. From the beginning, he was looking for contact, and the contact with him has been easy and warm. He had some health problems but besides that he participated in workshops on a regular bases. His main challenge was to overcome isolation and idleness.

The process

The story of Minotaur was the first thing that made a strong impression on “Henri”. Beyond the hope for the future that he clearly expressed, the story reminded him of his own loneliness. Consequently, he chose the image of the warrior who would fight the monster, and, later, played the warrior.

In the same time, he reconnected with his childhood by playing the drum – the instrument that his father has forbidden him to play at the age of 12. That was very important for the whole group, because the symbolic community was first created through playing music. “Henri” was the driving force during the creation of the musical community. Whilst becoming a leader, he also enabled everybody to engage in the creative process. He actually musically supported the individual creative processes of the others.

The Impact

The theater workshop helped “Henri” rediscover the pleasure of playing music, what connected him with the source of vitality, while in the same time being a support for the others. That also made him recognize the value of his hidden skills and share them with his children at home. By transmitting competences and values to his children, his role as a father was reinforced. He also built a strong and lasting relationship with another participant, who is a father like him.

As for the therapist, “Henri” was a fulcrum from the start. It became clear that therapist’s readiness to reverse roles and to become an equal member of the musical community, giving “Henri” the place of a leader, was a part of the therapeutic process. The therapist engaged in the creative process as well as the participants, through the medium that he was not familiar with (music). By his risk-taking implication and confidence put in “Henri’s” skills, the therapist helped raise this participant’s self-esteem. Through giving something of himself into the collective process, the therapist encouraged the participants to give something of themselves in return, what engaged them indirectly in the creative process.

Institut für Theatertherapie

Lightness and a safe place in memory

“A warm loving wind moves us back in time and back to ourselves. Do we need solid ground?”

Ms A. is in her late thirties and is the mother of three school-age children. She has successfully completed several German courses so communication with her is relatively easy. After being abused by religious fanatics, she twice lost unborn children and her legs were broken several times. On the run she was separated from her husband and reached Germany together with her children in a wheelchair. She is undergoing therapeutic treatment for PTSD and attends the workshop because she likes the idea of meeting other women and being creative together. She makes it very clear in the beginning, that she is looking for relaxation and a joyful experience. A massage exercise, dancing and painting find her approval.

The Process After a short ballgame to get to know our names, we worked on grounding, breath and orientation in the room. Everyone chose her favourite spot and settled there, a guided tap-massage followed that evolved into a mutual massage. We moved on to self-chosen dance movements with scarves, exploring the possibilities the scarves offered, dancing on the spot, using the space and connecting with other scarves. Finally, we took turns to touch the one standing in the middle of a circle formed with ropes and such moving her. As the movements of the participants grew gradually bolder and more joyful I took them one step further, asking them to express what they felt in a solo-dance, eyes closed (if possible), while the others were protecting the dancer from harming herself. Up to that point I had participated in the process, in the latter part I assumed the role of the witness. To preserve and reflect the previous experiences we used oil pastels to create an image and each found one word (no matter which language) as a headline. After sharing our pictures, we created a clapping and stomping rhythm with our names (grounding) and closed with a small ritual (“The enchanted well”).

Impact on the participant: She reported, that being guided to sense and “listen” to her body and to attend to parts that needed care, had helped her to ease tension and to feel light and warm. The dance improvisation had brought back memories of joyful movement, of feeling light and being safe and loved. She had discovered a safe space and a source of strength within herself, had been able to express, appreciate and share these resources. She felt strengthened by the sensations and memories she had gone through during the workshop and even arranged a meeting with another woman from the workshop.

The therapists point of view: Ms. A. kept sending me pictures of flowers and hearts for several weeks but didn’t return. Though she had made a helpful experience, she had good reasons not to carry on. Reducing tension may have a scaring effect on (traumatized) clients as it can provide protection against more threatening feelings that show themselves when tension eases.

On opening doors and the air to breathe

"Standing on the threshold. There is a door. Where is that door and what does it take to open it?"

Ms. G is the mother of 9 children some of them adults some of them still of elementary school age. She fled to Germany two years ago with her husband and younger children and is currently attending a German course. She wants to improve her language skills and is ready to 'do anything'. Other motives for participating in the workshop are unclear. She gave me the impression of being very disciplined, tense and inflexible.

The Process That day, she arrived one hour late with three of her children, so I spontaneously developed a therapy session for the four of them. With the help of picture cards everyone told a fairy tale (a hero's story), which we then performed together at the request of the children. Both, children and mother wanted me not only to give an example, but to join in and tell my story as well and at first.

Ms. G grew more and more playful during the session. This setting seemed safe enough to release control and join in on the playfulness of her children. In the first ever session she had acted in a restricted, controlled way and chosen a very enclosed space as her favorite spot. Yet her drawing had shown a large house in bright sunlight – breathing the spirit of peacefulness and freedom. This time again she expressed in her story the wish to feel safe but also free to move on.

She invented and told a story in which the main character ,Ali Baba, had to flee from enemies, was threatened by iron men and finally escaped with the help of a wicked (!) witch. At the end of the story he finds himself in the dark in front of a huge open door. Behind the door is a bright warm light. He opens the door and goes into the light.

When I asked what he could find in this light, she replied, "Freedom" and "Air."

When we had finished telling and playing our stories the mother searched for an Arabic music piece on her mobile phone and started to move to the music. The children danced in the garden and made us join in. We finally stopped when the garden instructor arrived.

Impact on the participant: This sequence helped the mother express some of her inner and existential issues. At the same time it gave her the chance for self-regulation. The setting was secure enough that she could follow her own impulses, move to Arabic music and find emotional support in dance. Although this session contained more than enough issues for further therapeutic sessions the family did not return. This suggests that the issues that had surfaced were too threatening to be pursued as part of a public group.

The therapists point of view: The factors: equality within the game, playfulness being legitimated through the notion of playing with the children, the protection of the story (after all, it was just a story) - enabled the start of something like a therapeutic processing. The family could be sure I was part of the playing group and not an outside observer (teacher or therapist) and they could use me as a role-model.

A dark forest can be a beautiful landscape

“When I was on the run, I felt safe, I felt free and strong, here I am useless.”

Mr H. was a young man, about mid-20s, from Syria, fled alone. Very open and at the same time uncertain. Constantly on the move he could not stand still. He was very muscular from fitness training. He had his own flat, lived alone and had a job. He was interested in art and liked to paint. Dealing with the body, except for sports activities, was foreign to him and rather unpleasant. He took part in all the exercises, but first waited to see what the others did before he became active himself. He wanted to "get it right" and apologized for not doing the exercises the way the therapist wished. He spoke good German and was very contemplative.

The process. After a warm up (ball games in a circle to establish the group) and an introductory round (name, origin, why am I here, what do I want from the session today?) the group were lead into a embodied imagination exercise: running at different speeds, on different surfaces (sand, mossy forest floor, mud, snow, water / sea, grass), in different weather conditions (warm sunny day, rain, thunderstorms, mild spring day) and various landscapes (meadow, mountains, forest, clearings), then the changing combination of surface, weather and landscape. After a sharing-round "What did I experience, what was especially beautiful or particularly intense?" the participants painted their individual landscape. Mr H. reported by presenting his picture that even a "beautiful landscape" can be a dark forest in the mountains in which one is hounded because one feels "alive" and "free". Negative associations were made more with life in Germany („Here I feel like a sack of potatoes“, „I do nothing“, „I'm nothing“). The acknowledgment and appreciation of these accounts by the therapist was found reassuring („I will not be rejected, even though I broke the law when I was on the run“).

Impact on the participant: Mr. H. found landscape painting easier than physical expression. The discussion about his image and the experiences he expressed helped him to relax. The exercises were quickly connected to his experiences of escape: “When I was on the run, I felt safe, I felt free and strong, here I am useless. I do what I am told, I work, in the evening I sit on my couch and think about what to buy next. Out there, I was a man, walking all across Europe, just with my water flask, I did not obey the law, I was free. I miss that, the adventure, the strength, the freedom. With all the danger and fear I felt, I felt much better than here and now”.

The therapists point of view: All participants found landscape painting easier than physical expression. The discussion about the images and the experiences they expressed helped them to relax. The understanding and compassion of the other participants encouraged them to tell more about themselves and did them good (relaxed facial expression, livelier storytelling, smiling at the end of the story). In the beginning the participants felt like playing children's' games, but during the session they became aware that the method could actually help them. They explained that the calm and warm voice of the therapist did them good, that they had become calmer, more relaxed, that the tension and the constant brooding had subsided or disappeared altogether. So they apparently had less fear of contact and less fear of doing something wrong.

SOLA ARTS

A man jumped into a life experience of torture relearning trust

“Living with a dis connect, a dissociation from emotions can be a distress difficult to identify and a world of emptiness. But this can be a place where emotions of pain both physical and mental that abuse trust brings can hide behind and it is in therapy that all of this becomes real, emotions come to life and pain can be processed through a non-verbal shared visual processing space” Art Therapist SOLA ARTS

Introduction

- I will call this middle aged quiet and mostly timid man Imran. Imran lives alone and this is how he can cope with life. After having experienced being trafficked he was left emotionally verbally unstable and had been in individual therapy for some years with the Art therapy developing trust and capacity to feel others emotions and understand this, before he joined the Create closed Art Therapy men’s group.
- It was a big step for Imran to connect with other men but knowing the therapist and having a trust in the therapy process and the with therapist enable for him to make this important step in his psychological and social development. He coped because only 3 other man accessed the group, it was smaller enough for him to cope with his constantly hypervigilance and fear of others.
- Imran wanted to use the group and processing to find his emotions and find a way to connect and break down the fog that had become his psychological defence mechanism with closeness to others.
- Imran came into the group with one other man as ‘the wise ones’ experienced in the journey with Art Therapy processing. This enabled him to have some ownership over the space and sense of agency and status in the group, which he found difficult at first but worked well with the share and support others.

Your process

- Imran came regularly most weeks. He drew, he knew how to articulate his feelings and was able to explore some of his own and others emotions and his lack of capacity to empathise of tolerate others distress. He would rock on occasion when particularly distressed and preferred to absorb himself in his creative processing where he could look down into a piece of paper or container he would add to in order to avoid direct contact with the other in the group.
- Imran worked a lot with the space between people and found initially the coproduction challenging due to not trusting his own decision making.

The Impact

- By the end of the programme Imran has begun to take some agency in his role in the group and took risks to explore a range of emotions and express this in the group to the other man. He became firmer in his desires and was not always so timid.
- It was evident that Imran would benefit from continued therapy in a men’s group and it was decided he would continue thus at SOLA ARTS in a different therapy programme.

- Imran really pushed himself through this therapy and took some control back of his choices and ability to tolerate his social anxieties. He was also able to take risks expressing and sharing his emotions and put some very difficult emotions into containers which he didn't have to look at again until ready. This was powerful for him and gave him some capacity to move to the next stage of his journey of healing which included applying to be a volunteer in a local theatre.

A man in search of his soul

"Art therapy can be a space where spirituality can be explore through the metaphor of symbolic image and through this culture and self-identity can be explored, found, shared and a sense of belonging establish" Art Therapist SOLA ARTS

Introduction

- I will call this man Peter, originally form South East Asia and was brought up Buddhist. He was a timid man, with limited walking mobility using a walking stick and required assistance to be transported from place to place. He giggled a lot initially and dismissed his own thoughts and feelings, finding it difficult to settle into the group and process.
- Peter didn't always attend as sometimes he felt unwell. An aged man looking more years that his age itself, weathered by torture and distress, displaced in a country that he said didn't seem to care.
- Although Peter came through the accommodation provider we worked with, he self-referred almost jumping into a group initial assessment session and stating his need to self-express and be acknowledged and have a sense of nurture and connect with therapy and image making.

Your process

- Peter for the first few sessions found it difficult to settle into therapy processing. HE built using printing blocks in initial warm up activity and group sharing, but then would reject sitting with or looking towards the groups by either reading and exploring books in the room on a shelf away from the shared table, or simply sitting and looking around.
- Then Peter found a sense of place in the room. He grounded himself. The therapist had begun giving out oils to smell and choice which to use and this brought him to talk about Eucalyptus, Lemongrass and the plants in the room- aloe vera in particular.
- Peter began to watch with intensity a YouTube relaxation video and sounds the therapist put on in the background and he allowed himself to drift into its space. This gave him opportunity to choose this to be played each week and eventually he made his way over to the computer and with support from the therapist found images of waterfalls that brought him with his home country again and provided a space for him to begin connecting with image making. He drew the waterfall and then a Buddha and threw it away

- Through the sessions Peter became more confident and was able to explore his cultural heritage with the group and then he began to talk about his pain and psychological distress. He did this through his image making and more and more through verbal exchange to the point that he came to dominate some sessions and needed to use the image making as a way of meditating himself from the anxiety he was expressing. He used his image making of Buddha for this again and again and finally in the last session made a Buddha he felt proud of this he did not throw away. For the first time he shared it with the group and took pride in himself.
- By the end of the therapy programme Peter didn't giggle when he spoke, he commanded space and demanded in a gentle way to be heard.
- He shared and emotionally expressed and worked through some very difficult thoughts and feelings.
- Peter developed a stronger self-identity and affirmation of his capacity to work through and hold difficult emotions and experiences and tools that he had in his former life 'back home' that he had used to relax his mind. HE had found through image making and reflection, self-expression and exploring his processing psychologically without words and with that he could do this and feel positive about himself as a result whilst cope better on a daily basis with his struggles.

The Impact

- Highlight the difference it made to the therapist, the supervisor, and the participants (You can use a selection of the Impact Evaluation Tool questions here to highlight the main outcomes of the therapy)



A man with a family from Iraq

"The distance travelled geographically, physically and psychology for a refugee is something incomprehensible even for those who have been through it. No one story is the same. Add a family with husband, wife and 4 children as this narrative, no funds just still power, escape, the sea, loss, a traverse over weeks in the winter across Europe and finding the UK only to feel disbelieved. This is the beginning of Kamal's narrative made more complex by severe PTSD and intense constant bodily pain as reminders. Our work together in Create was a beginning of a much longer journey of healing."

(The beginning): Introduction

- Kamal was encouraged to come to the British Red Cross Drop-In Art Therapy programme by the Red Cross staff. He was living over 6 miles away with his family, not speaking English and very isolated. He was confused, pained in many psychological and physical ways and although he was a strong and sturdy looking man he presented as weakened and emasculated, submissive to his fate.
- Kamal didn't speak initially and found it very difficult to engage. All the classic symptoms of PTSD were obvious in his behaviour and presentations. The Creative Mentor from SOLA ARTS focused on making a connection with him through a sharing of drinking tea.
- The dropout provided an initial space for assessment in a separate room and became an ongoing assessment space. It was clear the vulnerability he brought that had initially be felt and seen by the Red Cross staff and their reason to refer him to the programme.

(The middle): Your process

- Kamal only missed one of 12 therapy sessions, to go to his solicitors. He was an interesting man, clearly having been involved in physical labour in the past and a family man with his sole purpose and focus in life to protect his family and be a good enough dad. He took to the visual process on board immediately and found an opportunity to have some control and articulation from the first time he touched the materials.
- He mainly worked with clay and pipe cleaners, having worked previously as a labourer he had stated I thought about his need to use his hands and be able to make in 3D. This process of making seemed to offer him a self- validation and allow him to take some space in the room and group.
- A Communist from a Christian part of his country, which was itself a Muslim state and having been persecuted for his beliefs, now in the UK in an isolated and predominantly white demographic of population. But that's not what he needed to explore. During an initial assessment Kamal showed a disturbing video of the family crossing by sea in a deflating dingy from Turkey. Both therapist and mentor understood there was something he couldn't say that he needed to be known and this was the opening.
- Kamal used the art materials to express in an intensity and will the transference of vulnerability yet resilience that touched the therapist, creative mentor and the group in a very strong way. There were people in the group who spoke a language he could just about use which became important for him to feel grounded.
- Kamal experienced constant intrusive thoughts and on occasion presented a need to self-harm (often when the only attendee). This made the open group scenario complex and risk present which therapist understood was his sense of risk to himself and of the danger he sensed through his experiences. The

therapist provided Kamal with a safe enough space to use the materials to express this whilst finding a strength to stop himself from acting out the self-harm. With therapist and group he was able to have this distress recognised and hold his emotions.

- The image making gave Kamal a space and process to articulate his psychological distress. However it was seen by the 4th session that he was benefit from this open more social group as well as a closed group. As the Create approach by SOLA provided both approaches, Kamal was referred to a men's closed group at SOLA ARTS and began attending that as well as the drop-in. He need both spaces, to be able to negotiate and navigate his social identity and personal internal worlds.



The Impact

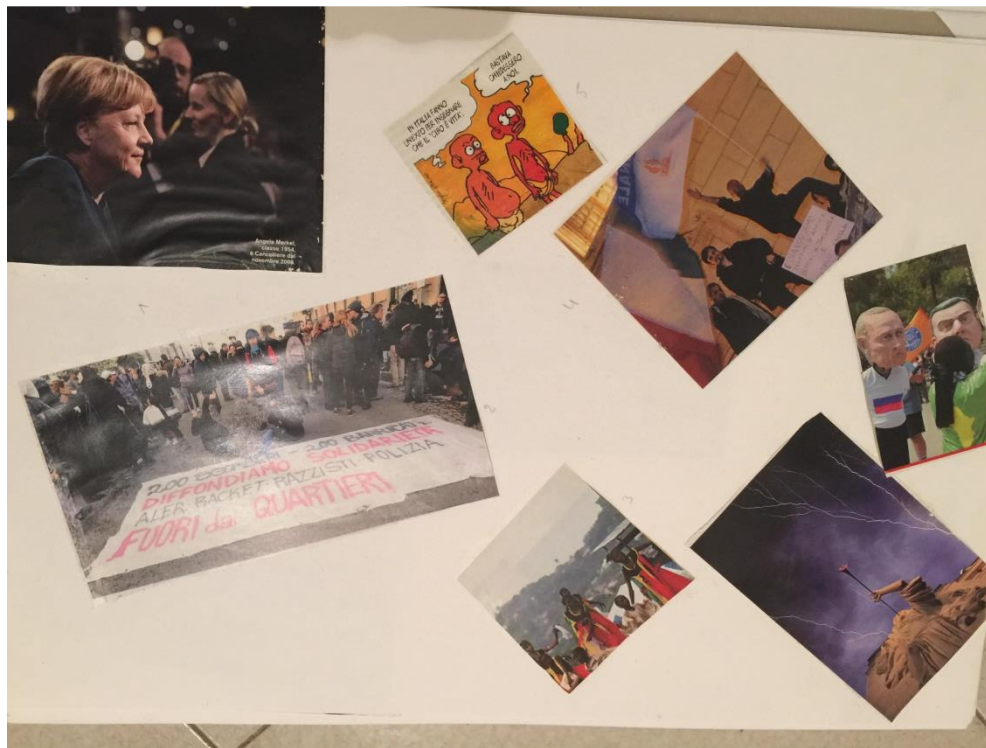
- Through the open group, Kamal was able to find his emotional voice and have this heard and witnessed. Yet this was only the beginning of a much longer journey of trust and processing for which he still received therapy at SOLA. A significant outcome for Kamal was the beginning of this journey and the connection into the closed group.
- Through therapy, Kamal has now been referred to a hospital consultant about continuous and chronic debilitating back pain to investigate whether physical or psychological and he now finds opportunity at times to smile. His family still awaits status permission to stay in the UK, his need to be a good enough father is still at the forefront of his mind and the potential of deportation is the toxicity that won't let him find a safe enough space to fully process his distress.

Associazione Sementera Onlus

A refugee's knowledge about his place in the word

D. proved to be a resourceful young man, willing to learn and understand. He didn't participate to the last session because he received as a prize a job training for becoming a "pizzaiolo".

He was very proud, but his capability of understanding his present situation made it even more painful.



Introduction

D. is a young man from Senegal, he had to leave his country to survive. He didn't tell us much about his past, but since the beginning of our meetings he was curious, open, and helped us in translating what we said, making sure that everyone could understand.

In the WhatsApp Group he shared many photos: from Senegal, his friends, his relatives, music and people, also trying to add written descriptions.

He always made very careful drawings with his name on and objects from his Country, as a way to introduce himself and try to develop a relationship with the therapist and facilitators.

The process

Slowly he developed trust and was able to express his ideas verbally and non-verbally in the setting.

He spoke about the feeling of prejudice from Italian people, the experiences of receiving angry looks, and since he was studying Italian he was able to understand what the media (especially) told about migrants.

The Impact

During one of the last sessions we proposed a collage from magazines. He produced a collage with images about protests against migrants in the streets. Politicians seem ineffective and there is a satirical vignette about the Italian Expo dedicated to food and the experience of food (lack) in Africa.

The collage is a strong representation of what a migrant understands as being part of big picture related to economy, where his own difficulties and hopes seem of little importance.

The long-time of empty waiting in a foreign country slowly seems to destroy hopes and increases fears and apathy.

D. Was very collaborative in the group, he seemed to understand that participating to our sessions was a valuable opportunity, the therapists and facilitators appreciated his presence but got aware that his intelligence and capability to understand represented a burden in comparison to other less knowledgeable mates.

It was painful to see how the long time spent in just waiting affected his goodwill and hopes.

My name is Amina

Introduction

Amina is a young woman from Somalia with a deep voice and a bossy attitude. During the first sessions she remained close to the other women from Somalia and bad looks were often exchanged with the groups coming from other African countries. She was often chitchatting with her conationals, watching her smartphone, laughing and showing little respect for the therapists and the setting.

Your process

Slowly the possibility to have a space for nonverbal activities changed her attitude toward the other women. The music and dance let her open up and she participated to the group activities with more and more joy and trust. Toward the therapists group she started showing sincere gratitude and respect with little words but a completely different behaviour.

The turning point in her behaviour was our suggestion to use the phone to share music with the group. Then she also asked permission to take photographs of the group activities with her smartphone and the group allowed her.

The Impact

During one of the last sessions she made drawings on both faces of the paper.



She wrote in bad Italian: My name is Amina, I'm from Somalia, I've been in Italy for six months. The therapists were impressed by the drawings: they seemed to express her urge to share her story, the traumas, the uncertain present in Italy.

She felt at ease to show more about herself in the group. We regret the impossibility of arranging an individual session with Amina at the end of the group sessions because she received her papers and was transferred to another location. We felt we could have a bigger impact shifting to individual sessions because she demonstrated that she was ready to share more about herself.

However we noticed the impact of our sessions in the improvement of cohabitation between women coming from different countries. The Somalian group become more integrated with the others. We felt the gratitude in the sincere hugs Amina and the other women gave us when we finished the sessions.

I'd like to come but the pain in my leg doesn't make me sleep

Introduction

When we met M., a young man from Senegal, he was very thin, walked slowly and painfully and told us he was shot in Lybia and still had a bullet in his leg. He was very curious and wanted to participate to our sessions. He expected to have a surgery soon to remove the bullet and feel better.

Your process

M. arrived always late to the sessions, showing pain but also that he cared about participating. His drawings represented objects from his Country. He was happy to let us know more about him. Over time we noticed he was suffering more, having more difficulties in walking and sitting. When he stopped coming we decided to visit him. We found him in deep pain: it seemed impossible to get the surgery because there were many risks and his situation of being with no permit to stay made it worse. He told us that he would have liked to participate to the sessions but the pain didn't even let him sleep.

The Impact

Meeting M. had a strong impact on the therapist group: we tried to do our best to contact physicians and try to have him properly treated. Actually nobody wanted to take the risk of performing a very difficult surgery on someone without permit to stay, and months passed worsening his conditions.

The therapists group talked about the idea of projecting the image of the Xray of M's leg and having a group session going "inside" his leg, with a drama action projecting on the background the Xray, where no physician wanted to "go". When he stopped participating we missed him a lot.

We could touch his desperation and just imagine the violence he experienced, although he didn't want to tell us about it.

We felt our impotence in front of the slow bureaucracy.

Clonakilty Community Arts Centre

Mabel

'It is only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.'
- Donald W. Winnicott

Introduction

I first met Mabel during an informal meet and greet session, chatting to herself, her friend and her child. Mabel subsequently put her name down to attend the sessions and came to first series of sessions mostly with her friend and children/child. Initially Mabel identified some goals including developing a sense of self in this new country. A major challenge that transpired was the lack of childcare as her children were needing to be minded. Scheduled external appointments also impacted on Mabel's ability to attend sessions, combined with starting a level 5 education course in September, which meant some sessions were missed due to college assignments and family commitments.

Process

Mabel attended sessions as she was able. During these sessions she interacted and worked well and seemed to enjoy the process. We worked with 2D drawings/mandala's, Card, Collage, 3 D structures and clay materials. Paint was also used however Mabel seemed to favour dry materials and the sessions with clay and materials which could be held and squeezed seemed particularly significant. While working with collage and card there appeared to be a lot going on though only few items were placed on the background. Creating a safe space was completed over two sessions with work left unfinished. I wondered if it is difficult to create a safe space in such an unstable living environment. Mabel chose to take her work away at the end of the session series. Subsequently we met at intervals to check in and had two final sessions almost a year since our first meeting. During this time Mabel stated that the art making was different to talking therapy and she felt free during the art therapy in a way that she felt was not possible with talking. However due to time constraints and her college work it has not been possible to explore this further yet. Mabel said she felt listened to and she valued the therapist care and approach to working with residents.

Impact

The therapist enjoyed the experience and although the children coming to sessions caused some concerns re impact on them and because the project was for adults, it was very interesting to observe how the young child acted out some of what was unspoken in the room. It illustrated how absorbent the children are and how the full effect of living in the limbo of seeking asylum will only become apparent in future years.

The supervisor could empathise with the client through discussions around the work processed during supervision using creative methods. This was reflected back through the supervisor's image of the supervision session.

Mrs B

"No one is listening"

Introduction

Mrs B came to the pre programme sessions in the community centre. She was friendly and spoke of the need to have childcare to allow her to attend the sessions. The support worker had agreed to mind the children. Mrs B would discuss her goals when the sessions started without the children. Mrs B came to the room with children as the support worker had decided on the first day sessions were due to start that she could not offer childcare support if the sessions were at the Accommodation centre. Mrs B voiced her concerns around childcare support and mothers needing to be able to attend without children. It seemed to be a very important issue to her.

Process

As the weeks progressed and we sought to find childcare support, Mrs B would say hello and check in, asking if there was someone to care for the children. Despite approaching many sources and external agencies no one was willing to mind the children collectively (15 children from 8 mothers). I felt Mrs B was not being adequately accommodated as she had indicated a willingness to engage with the programme and had also identified her family needs for that to happen. I noticed a resigned distance develop after with Mrs B had stopped one time and sat in with youngest child after a session, she again requested that the childcare issue be addressed. I offered some materials to make some art but she declined and mentioned something about an image being open to so many different interpretations. It felt as if this may have related to a past experience. When the drop in sessions started Mrs B joined in again and expressed through writing how she felt about her situation. She again joined in some of the psychosocial discussions over winter

Impact

As a therapist I felt I had failed this lady and her needs however she understood I had attempted to seek childcare support. Interestingly, during the impact assessment Mrs B stated she had felt heard. Also she appreciated the small amount of time being able to escape into another space that was a sensory sanctuary. I brought the issue of childcare to supervision and how the children absorb what is in the room so it is vital women can have some respite and space for confidential conversations.

Amira

Why are they always late?

Introduction

Amira arrived several months after the programme started however she quickly became central to the psychosocial group meetings during the winter. She seemed friendly and open and was relieved to have been transferred from her previous accommodation. Amira came to most sessions with her young child as she did not have any childminding support. Amira always arrived on time and with full makeup. She was clear about her goals and what she hoped to achieve. She was hopeful for the future.

Process

Amira became the catalyst for the Creative Salon group having explored creative writing also. As part of her process Amira developed a list of materials that might be needed for a salon and explored posters and menu's. Amira offered to make up other ladies and did demo's. One husband complained and so the sessions went back to a private area with access to women only. These sessions became very interesting with lots of discussions and a melting of cultures all focussing on adornment and feeling good about oneself.

Impact

Amira's child did not like being closed in the Salon room and often times refused to stay, still there was no one she felt comfortable enough with to leave him. Amira sometimes just sat and chatted opening up interesting conversations. Months later some women from her home country were unpleasant about her once she had received her papers. This appeared hurtful and Amira retreated to her room more and more. It felt like they may have been treating her unfairly and she was encouraged to discuss the issue with management but chose to keep it quiet and focussed on moving out. The impact of the sessions allowed Amira to socialise when she first came however there were ups and down's. We continued to chat in passing and she is still awaiting moving out. She has discerned what she wants to do business wise and has support awaiting her in another location. There is a strange space for those who have their papers as there seems to be an unconscious resentment from those who feel they have been waiting longer. It would be interesting to explore this further.

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Associazione Sementera Onlus – Italy

Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd – United Kingdom (Coordinator)



SOLA ARTS – United Kingdom



Clonakilty Community Arts Centre – Ireland

For more information about the Project and to learn more
about the CREATE method please visit www.create-eu.com

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Theatertherapie e.V. - Germany



Compagnie Arti-Zanat' – France



CESIE – Italy



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