



**Nurture A.R.T. (Autonomy, Resilience & True)Self**  
**Adolescent Mental Health And Art Therapy Conference 2016**  
**28-29 Oct 2016 (Fri - Sat)**

**28 Oct 2016 (Fri) Day 1**

**Keynote**

**Art therapy in a Changing World: New Developments in Research and Practice**

**Dr. Neil Springham**

The practice of art therapy is over eighty years old and has always been an exciting, innovative and fascinating approach to mental health. In many countries art therapists are now building on that heritage by using their practice as the basis for research enquiry. New methods for developing our theory and communicating the value of what we do to those who commission our services are being developed. Moreover, this new phase is happening at a time when the traditional divisions between research specialisms are changing around us. This leads to exciting possibilities of using insights from neuroscience, attachment theory and social sciences to strengthen our art therapy practice.

This presentation will explore these new developments and ask how art therapists worldwide might combine their efforts so that we can be increasingly confident that what we offer to those who come to us seeking help for very real and painful forms of distress is effective and ethical.

**Creative, Playful and Art Therapy for Adolescent Mental Health and Well-Being**

**Prof. Ming Fu WU**

Adolescence is considered not only a tumultuous period of confusion and stress, but also one of separation and individualization (Barnes, 1995). Adolescents respond to their inner turmoil by experiencing intense sexual curiosity, along with extreme ambivalence between their need to "fit in," their effort to achieve a sense of self, and their feelings of loneliness. Thoughts about the future, questions about who they are, and the limitless choices that confront them, create distress and anxiety in adolescents which tend to overwhelm the young individual (Erikson, 1968).

Adolescence is also viewed as the time in human development during which people reach their maximum physical and mental potency, however, the quality of their inner life is often at its lowest point. During this challenging transition, adolescents often feel depressed and become less strong, active and motivated than adults when they encounter loneliness. They lose their self-direction and lack the strength that is necessary for fully experiencing life. Without proper guidance, many adolescents, therefore, are unable to involve themselves in more legitimate and positive activities that can channel their enormous energy and reduce their feelings of solitude and depression (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984).

The presentation aims to show how expressive arts can assist therapists and counselors in building a positive therapeutic alliance, facilitating metaphorical communications and exploring identity formation with adolescent clients. The personal account of utilizing painting, drawing, writing, origami (paper folding) and photography in art therapy to aid the applied population in expressing negative emotions, reducing stress, strengthening social skills, processing traumatized experiences while establishing rapport with the therapist will be presented through storytelling.

In addition, the concept of existential art therapy and theories of Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC) and Media Dimensions Variables (MDV) will be discussed in the presentation as the theoretical foundation for various art materials and creative arts activities designed and applied for enhancing the mental health and well-being of youth.

**Plenary Sessions**

**Fostering Emotional Wellbeing: Treating Emotional Problems of Children and Youth with Art in the Framework of the Expressive Therapies Continuum**

**Prof. Joshua Kin Man NAN**

The rapid rising rate of youth suicide in Hong Kong arouses widespread concern on mental health and psychological resilience of children and youth. Multiple life stressors developing into dysregulated psychophysiological responses could create long-term difficulties in regulating emotion and behavior. Art therapy literature shows that various forms of art making with the guidance of art therapist can help regulate emotion (Nan & Ho, 2014), reduce stress, anxiety, and depressed mood for children/youth (Slayton, 2012). As a distinct art medium, clay-work has been found effective in raising ego-resilience for youth (Jang & Choi, 2012), strengthening mental and emotional adaptation in adversity, and raising reflective ability in understanding complex thoughts and feelings.

This presentation will show how the Expressive Therapies Continuum (Hinz, 2009; Riccardi, et al., 2014), as an assessment and treatment model, can guide art therapy intervention, and especially clay work, on treating emotional problems of children/youth, with the illustration of clinical cases.

**Adolescent Depression and Art Therapy**

**Ms. Ivy Yim Fun FUNG**

It is always a challenge for an individual to transit from the stage of being a child to adulthood. When one's appearance changes,

endocrine issues, mental growth, existential curiosity happen all in a sudden, it is not surprising that young people would experience big or small emotional turmoil all along. Feelings like worries, shame, uncertainty, self-doubt, restlessness, just to name a few, are powerful enough to put a youngster into a state of anxiety. When the adjustment is not favorable, condition of depression may occur. Hong Kong is facing an ever inflating problem in adolescence mental health. Anxiety Disorders and Depression Disorders are the most commonly diagnosed psychiatric diseases. However, the ambivalence to seeking help from adults and the strong resistance to therapy make it so difficult to offer appropriate assistance to this population. Art Therapy, on the other hand, proves itself as an effective modality with adolescence anxiety and depression (Connor, 2002; Kendall, 2000). Through Art Therapy, therapists can enter teenagers' world of emotion via their own illustrations and narratives, and young people can also choose to communicate back through art or verbal expression. By working through disturbing issues in such a creative and non-judgmental space, adolescents are often able to gain insight and energy to carry on with their unique path of growing.

**Image Writing: The Inner World of Child Victims of Family Violence Prof. Sophia Suk Mun LAW & Ms. Sarah Ming MunTONG**

Children living with family violence are constantly stressed by fear, anger, pain, and insecurity. Their still developing cognitive and language abilities cannot possibly allow them to comprehend their situation. Their very confused and repressed emotions can affect their development growth particularly their self-regulation, self-concept and interpersonal functioning. Without early intervention, many of them will develop personality and behavioural disorders as they grow older. A fundamental focus of intervention for these children is to help them to liberate and recognize their inner feelings.

Art is a language written in images. As evidenced by neuroscience, our thoughts and memories exist mainly in the form of images. Art as image writing is therefore particularly valuable to children with traumatic experience. It creates a non-verbal platform from which they can disclose their abstract thinking and feelings in images. The ways in which they create and the final products reveal their perception of the world, providing us with a better understanding of their developmental needs. Based on some actual examples, this presentation shows why and how art can be integrated into the social service designed for these children.

**29 Oct 2016 (Sat) Day 2**

**Parallel workshop (1)**

**Art Therapy in Treating Childhood Sexual Abused Clients to Bridge the "Wall of Fear"**

**Ms. May Siu Mei CHAN**

This presentation attempts to expand the concept of a "Wall of Fear" (Oz, 1999) in understanding child sexual abuse which Furniss (1991) first introduced. In the first part, nature of child sexual abuse will be introduced. Then, the stages of therapy, and how the process of "ART" making can provide a non-verbal form of communication where the child or adolescent finds it difficult to verbalize their traumatic experience; and through art can help clients beginning to look at the reality of the world.

**Therapeutic Empathy in Art Therapy: A Pathway towards Healing and Wholeness for Adolescent Females who Self-injure**

**Ms. Julia BYRNE**

Self-injury has been a rising clinical issue in therapeutic practice particularly prevalent in female adolescents. Self-cutting is the most commonly seen form of self-injury in recent times. Overwhelming feelings around a loss of meaning, anxiety and isolation, are cited as culminating reasons that self-injury transpires with this population.

This presentation will focus on a case study that embodies the intricacies of therapeutic empathy cultivated within the art therapy process to bring about healing and wholeness for adolescent females who self-injure. This case presentation highlights the positive impact of empathetic attunement in cultivating the therapeutic relationship.

It explores the visceral understanding of the client's emotional state and difficulties and how this understanding leads to a bonding therapeutic relationship where empathetic reflective space is formed. In this process meaning out of images made was gleaned, anxiety was reduced, and emotional regulation was strengthened, resulting in enhanced awareness, a greater sense of self in this world was understood and proclaimed.

**Creative Arts for Patients at E.A.S.Y**

**Art In Hospital**

"I re-gain my passion of life" a E.A.S.Y patient shared the feeling after a series of creative arts workshops in hospitals. It sounds unbelievable, but this is exactly the tangible effects of creative arts on health and quality of life.

Art in Hospital (AIH) carried creative arts workshops for E.A.S.Y. patients in various hospitals. By connecting creative arts, patients can express their feelings via this non-verbal communication tool, build up self-esteem and develop interpersonal skill by sharing creative idea especially for cooperative art creation.

In this presentation, AIH will share the experience and ideas of creative process.

**Parallel workshop (2)**

**Using Strengths Based Art Facilitation to Open the Window into the Adolescent's Internal World**

**Ms. Petsy Sin Yee CHOW**

This presentation introduce the mixed use of strengths based approach and art making process to improve the mental health status of adolescent with mental disorders. In her clinical practice, it is not difficult to find that clients harbor at different negative emotions such as anger, fear, loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, uselessness.....etc. By using strengths based art facilitation, it serves as a vehicle for the conscious and unconscious identification and articulation of affect and conflict that the youth encountered to such forms of verbal expression. Art making also provides a container for emotion and express those negative emotions in a safe and distance

way. Besides resolving the emotion, strengths based art facilitation not only express and release the negative emotions, but also focus on identifying and recognizing their strengths and past successes as well as affirming the possibility of change through the art making process, those of them can be an “asset” for them to face the life adversity and instill hope in their lives.

### **Art Therapy and Body Image**

**Ms. Hoi Lam TANG**

Adolescence is a stage of physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. In this stage, adolescents increase preoccupation with their physical appearance. With media messages, peer influences, family matters, and personal vulnerabilities, adolescent gains pseudo-messages that the body size is the answer to interpersonal problems and negative emotions. As a result, adolescents might become vulnerable in developing distorted body image and lethal eating patterns. While many might not fully develop into a clinical diagnosis, they are at a higher risk of developing this life threatening disorder.

This presentation will address what eating disorder is and how art therapy can be used to treat this disorder. In addition, this presentation will also address how to use creative art engagement to prevent adolescents from developing distorted body image and implementing a positive view on their body image while they are engaging in this stage of uncertain changes in their youthful life.

### **Using Art Therapy on Strengthening Attachment and Family Resilience between Cancer Patients and Their Children in Treatment Stage.**

**Ms. Tristan Nga Chee CHAN**

Cancer patients quite often have anxiety issue. It becomes very difficult for cancer patient and their family, especially their young children to go through the treatment stage while the patient would be in and out hospital, and have unexpected separation.

The presentation will focus on a clinical case that the art therapist have been supporting with them for about 1 year, and in between, the patient came across different treatment and surgeries. By supporting both parent and child during the period, using art therapy not only releasing their anger, negative emotion and anxiety about physical not be able to see each other during treatment stage. This also disturbs the security of attachment which happened commonly among cancer patients and their children. Using art therapy to repair attachment loss during separation, and strengthening family resilience has been proved to be successful in this specific case, and some other similar cases.

The presenter will discuss the use of art, the relationship of artwork and transitional objects which might help reducing separate anxiety, for both cancer patients and their children during treatment stage.

**The End**

**Nurture A.R.T. (Autonomy, Resilience & True)Self  
Adolescent Mental Health And Art Therapy Conference 2016  
28-29 Oct 2016 (Fri - Sat)**

**Notes**