

Let's Connect!



Supporting well-being through the Arts

Held on

7 JUN 2022 (TUE) 3 - 5PM

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

Key Takeaways

Rosemary McGowan

To Create, Perchance to Heal



Rosie works with youths, teachers, and community workers through applied theatre to explore difficult topics such as mental health issues.

She shared on a range of projects (*Self:Harm*, *Broken Pieces*, *Bigger Picture: Identifying Trauma in the Classroom*, *The Light Within*), and how she ensured a sense of safety and trust among participants.

Participants felt they understood others who faced mental health challenges more, and were more equipped to support them.

The arts **offers safety through distance** and allows us to **build empathy and understanding**, by providing us a space to sit with other people's feelings.

When working with communities, it is crucial to **listen and hold space** for others, to **ask** when in doubt, and to work with others with the **relevant expertise** if necessary (e.g. therapists, trauma-informed practitioners).

Amanda Chong

The Feelings Farm: Social Emotional Learning for Children through Art



Produced and commissioned by Esplanade for *March On 2021*, *The Feelings Farm* uses music, movement, poetry and multimedia to help children name and understand emotions with compassion.

Amanda worked with director Edith Podesta and composer Julian Wong, conducting devising workshops to give children language to share, validate and manage their feelings, and process complex real world issues like social inequality, marital conflict, grief.

The show was accompanied by a resource, developed by trauma-informed practitioner Lee Yoke Wen, to support post-show reflections for adults and children.

Art helps children **understand abstract concepts** by linking them to **concrete multisensory experiences**. It gives people the right language **to process their feelings** – to distill them for children without dumbing them down.

Chang Mei Yee and May Wong

In the Here and Now: Supporting Dementia Care through Drama



Here and Now was a improvisatory drama project with seniors with dementia that incorporated reminiscence work, allowing them to share thoughts and feelings with one another by taking on different character roles or deciding the plot.

The programme supported the seniors' sense of agency as they were active agents, not passive audiences, e.g. they could interact with props and construct a story, engaging their long-term memory. It also gave them an opportunity to socialise and work as a group, and with younger volunteers. It allowed staff to shift their perspectives of what the seniors could or could not do.

By encouraging a spirit of experimentation, seniors have a suitable environment to think and create, which **upholds a sense of personhood and agency** for them. In this way, they are actively improving their own physical, social and emotional well-being.

Yvonne Farquharson

Creative Clinical Care – A Merging of Sectors to Create Life-Changing Results



Breathe works with artists, scientists, healthcare staff and patients, delivering a diverse range of evidence-based participatory programmes across a range of art forms (e.g. *Melodies for Mums*, *Sing for Lung Health*, *Dance for Strength and Balance*). Their work is recognised by NHS England.

They have two main approaches:

- Starting from a healthcare need, they pilot a creative programme, and if promising, embark on larger scale research and randomised control trials
- Translating existing arts health research into practice, they pilot a study to replicate research

By combining **arts with robust research**, it is possible to co-design arts programmes to be included in **mainstream healthcare provisions**. This also allows people to opt for arts programmes to meet clinical needs, which proves beneficial their physical health, confidence and mental well-being.