



Fresh Art@ NHS House Creativity Works & Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust

Arts & Health South West Prize 2016 Shortlisted Case Study



Name of organisation: Creativity Works & Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Title of project/programme: Fresh Art@ NHS House

Dates of project/programme: 10/03/2015 - 16/05/15

Summary

Fresh Art@ is a socially engaged creative project providing 'fresh art work' that promotes positive wellbeing, conversation and inspiration within AWP NHS Trust environments. Fresh Art@ supports participants to develop new creative transferable skills as well as a sense of pride by exhibiting their work and participating in local arts events. This is vital in helping participants explore opportunities to develop new skills and grow

through creativity. Creative engagement sessions which run over 12 weeks courses within Bath museums and on ward, are for participants with experience of mental health challenges plus friends, family, carers and staff. Fresh Art@ present's mental health in a positive light, breaking down the stigma often associated with mental health. The project is a partnership between Creativity Works, AWP (Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust), Sirona Care & Health and Bath Museums (The Holburne Museum, The American Museum in Britain and No1 Royal Crescent).

Overview

During 2015 the Fresh Art@ project ran a 12 week project with the aim of creating new artwork for NHS House, a mental health facility based at the Royal United Hospital. From February to June the project Fresh Art@ NHS House engaged 14 people with lived experience of mental health in B&NES. Participants learnt a range of new visual arts skills and were encouraged to create pieces of artwork that would be displayed within Bath NHS House.

The Fresh Art@ NHS House project was developed in response to an experience based design project run by the AWP to find out how AWP could improve their services. One point that came up several times was the environment and how uninviting it was. With this information the Fresh Art@ steering group started to plan Fresh Art@ NHS House, an opportunity to create artwork that can be rotated every few months within the main reception and the clinical rooms at NHS House replacing the old faded pictures/reproduction prints with 'Fresh Art'. The aim was to transform the clinical settings within an AWP environment and make the environment less clinical and more inviting. The project provides opportunities for service users, staff and carers who participate on the project to donate some of their artwork to the project and help improve the AWP environments. The creative sessions take place within Bath museums and are inspired by the museum collections. The aim is for artwork in NHS House to promote conversation, ideas and inspiration between service users and staff. This project has developed further opportunities and exhibitions at other venues and events in B&NES including Bath Festival in May/June and at The Bath Guildhall July/August.

The project has been developed by a wide steering group team including service users and volunteers, staff from AWP, Creativity Works, Sirona and Bath Museums. This joined up approach has enabled a wide number of people to participate safely within a community project and receive appropriate support as required whilst developing strong links with the museums of Bath and other cultural activities across the city.

The project was created in response to an identified need to provide a safe and supported environment for creative activity for people experiencing or with experience of mental health challenges and their carers. The project aimed to raise self esteem and pride through facilitating a multi artform approach to creativity and linking with Bath museums as inspiring settings and inspirational objects. The project also provides a structured journey for participants who take part in the project. Beyond the project there are opportunities to exhibit artwork with Bath festivals and other events. There are also opportunities to join peer led creative art groups supported by Creativity Works or to start up a group of their own with support. This approach to progression beyond the initial 12 week engagement enables friendships that have been formed to continue and a desire to be creative to be supported beyond the 12 weeks Fresh Art @ project. Some participants have also been supported to become volunteers within the project and other community activities locally.

Fresh Art@ works with multi skilled socially engaged artists who facilitate 12 creative community workshops within the Museums of Bath (The Holburne Museum, No1 Royal Crescent and The America Museum in Britain) and 4 creative sessions on ward. The museums provide access to their historical exhibits and handling collections to inspire creativity, reduce social isolation, enable participants to develop their creative and social skills and encourage a new way of engaging with the Museums within Bath.

The 4 on-ward sessions linked with Sycamore Ward at Hillview lodge are also facilitated by a professional socially engaged artist and supported by the Fresh Art@ worker and an education officer from each museum. This link to on-ward sessions enables anyone to access the museum's collection and by bringing the museums to the ward enables the project to be fully inclusive. Further support within the on ward sessions as well as the artist included the Fresh Art@ worker and a museum representative. The ward sessions focused on short, accessible creative practices such as Polly block printing. Creativity Works decided to take this approach due to feedback from staff and service users regarding short attention span due to multiple factors such as severity of illness, medication, lack of sleep and environmental adjustment for new ward admissions.

The socially engaged artists were chosen for their multi artform and flexible approach to creativity that supported participants to explore and develop their won ideas. Mainly 2D art forms were developed due to the nature of where the artwork would be displayed. The sessions were responsive and organic with the introduction of new materials and a range of interesting museum collection objects at the beginning of each session. This approach enabled a wide range of new techniques to be explored and

developed. Participants were also encouraged to explore the museums within the sessions to source ideas and inspiration.

The team of support around each session which included artist, Fresh Art @ worker, volunteers, Sirona support worker and museum staff enabled 1-2-1 support where needed and individual ideas to develop with support and encouragement.

Innovation

Fresh Art@ Provides participants with access to meaningful and inspiring creative activities which assist them to develop

- Sense of purpose
- New transferable skills
- Strong links with statutory mental health services which explore the extension of the service to address prevention initiatives.
- Meaningful links with community and culture
- Open further education and employment pathways

Fresh art@ is a partnership between statutory sector and voluntary sector that promotes creative wellbeing by engaging with cultural community settings to create artwork to enliven NHS trust environment.

Fresh Art@ promotes the Five Ways to wellbeing which are Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

- Connect: Fresh Art@ is a group project connecting participants together through Art and culture
- Be Active: All participants are encouraged to explore the grounds of the museums as much as possible encouraging them to explore
- Take Notice: all Fresh Art@ participants were given the opportunity to access the museums of Bath for free. In each museum participants were encouraged to engage with the museum staff by going on personal tours of the Historical buildings.
- Keep Learning: Throughout the project the participants were encouraged to explore new avenues of creativity and techniques with the support of the facilitating artist and volunteers. The participants throughout the course have expressed an interest in the museums of Bath engaging with the collections and their history
- Give: at the end of the project all participants donate a body of work to the project.

Participation

Fresh Art@ has a lot of involvement from participants and volunteers.

Fresh Art@ has a malty disciplinary steering group who program the project. Within this group we had members of the last project, help program Fresh Art@ NHS house helping with publication, advertising and general running of the sessions.

Participants were also encouraged to be involved in the framing and curation of their own artwork which gives them transferable skills.

Over the whole project there were 14 participants within the community project and 10 in on the ward sessions who were all supported to have input into the project from the begging in the set up to the end evaluation.

On Sycamore ward at Hillview Lodge the residence was also involved in the selection of the artwork that would go on display.

We are also looking to interview the participants from the project and create Audio image recording to go onto YouTube these recordings will comprise of the Fresh Art@ participants personal views of the project and their work that is now on display at NHS House.

The project has also had involvement from an ex-service user from Sycamore Ward who is running the Fresh Art@ social media pages with support from creativity works.

Outcomes

- Displays of artworks at NHS House
- Over 50 items of work being created in all sessions
- 2 exhibitions of all the artwork in the community (Fringe Arts Bath & Guildhall Bath)
- Involvement of wide selection of stake holders
- Improved links between The Avon and Wiltshire mental health partnership NHS Trust and wider (creative) community.
- Improved environment for staff and at NHS House
- Valuable professional experience and improved skills for volunteers
- Programing of further training courses open to all participants and volunteers

Evaluation:

The project was evaluated throughout using the following methods

- Evaluation forms/ focus group

- Workshop evaluation forms
- Comment-box at Exhibitions
- Artist and Volunteer Artist Session Log
- Workshop evaluation forms
- AIRs (Audio image recordings of participants, staff and service users)
- Evaluation forms and participant focus group (Experience, satisfaction, skills learning by Participants and Volunteer roles: project assistants, exhibition management)

Learning

Learning from the project it was discovered that Fresh Art@ is not just about creating artwork for some participants, sometimes the biggest thing for the participant is just arriving to the session. Allowances were made for this further into the project but enrolling another volunteer to help co-facilitate with the Artist. This made the sessions and people's individual needs easier to manage, delivering a more rounded project.

What would they do differently next time?

- More tutorials to help people who don't have the art experience.
- More of an induction about what's available across the project.
- Maybe run some sessions elsewhere for introduction to technique.
- Make a questionnaire about what you want to learn

The project broke for Easter and it lost momentum, some people didn't come back. With this in mind the next Fresh Art@ project has been programmed to run without any breaks.

The sessions were commented on being too short with not enough time to work on an individual image. With this information 3 hours' time has been programmed into the next Fresh Art@ project

Critical success factors

The project has achieved

- being part of two exhibitions
- Planning, preparation and exhibition skills.
- Setting up and running a twitter account. .
- Meeting regularly as a group
- Participant creating art work and expressing themselves
- Offering support whilst going through creative ideas
- Building friendships and mutual support
- Participant working alongside professional artists to nurture existing creativity

- Participants showing increased confidence and pride in themselves.
- Participants being confident answer questions about work and their creative process
- Participant being told by others that their creative work has inspired others
- Networking with other creative groups

The project has given progression to other creative opportunities such as running other creative like walk and draw which was facilitated drawing group this group looked at the Georgian architecture of Bath focusing on different drawing techniques and perspective.

Fresh Art@ also enabled some of the participants to set up a peer facilitated group within the community called creative perspectives, this group is supported by creativity works at Bath Artist studios.

Some participants have also moved into further education, volunteering and paid work due to being part of Fresh Art@.

As well as the participants both of the volunteers have facilitated creative groups within the community and one is working as a Fresh Art@ Worker (creative engagement worker) co-managed by Creativity works and AWP.

Funding and Resources

Fresh Art @ 2015-16

Creativity Works

Staff time and management
2446

Artists fees
1400

Materials
400

Exhibition Venue Hire
170

Framing
427

Curation support
400

Volunteers
300

AWP
in kind
Project support

Image Credits

Title: Heart of the Holburne
Date: 10/03/2015 - 16/05/15
copyright/credit: Steve Hedley Fresh Art@ participant

Title: Salk 3
Date: 10/03/2015 - 16/05/15
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Title: Creativity Works 1 - Fresh Art@ participants welcomed by Mayor of Bath in celebration
Date: 10/03/2015 - 16/05/15
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