



# Creative Minds student group at ucla



## BACKGROUND

Through process-oriented arts, we can work via metaphor by concentrating on the process of expression and the self that emerges through that process. Reflecting on unconscious themes revealed and sharing it with others can foster self-awareness, insight and empathy. This connection can allow changing perceptions of self and others and cultivate individual and collective social connection and empowerment.

**Our mission is to deliver social - emotional creative arts groups to transform lives at UCLA and in the community, creatively.**

A growing body of well-done research shows that the arts:

- \*Can impact the mind-body health; provide positive self-identities (such as "artists", "creators", "musicians", etc, rather than "mentally ill")
- \*Support members of community mental health agencies who have not yet been diagnosed, and therefore may not otherwise have access to therapy
- \*Serve as a powerful vehicle for bringing individuals together from diverse social, racial and economic backgrounds; increased civic engagement, tolerance and altruism, regardless of age, race, or education (LeRoux, 2011).
- \*Is associated with academic performance, enrollment in and graduation from high school and college, civic and community service, news consumption, and engagement in local politics (Catterall, 2009 and also see Catterall, 2012).

## CMP EVALUATION

The CMP pilot program evaluation included a concurrent self-report pilot study to evaluate the goals and experience of SUOS and DP members participating in the CMP. The creative arts group outcomes were assessed by qualitative (free response questions and different well-being dimensions) in two different self-report surveys administered to member-participants: 1) post-test daily creative arts group surveys and 2) quarterly survey reflections. Sixty-eight (duplicated) participants completed the surveys offered during the research phase of the project.

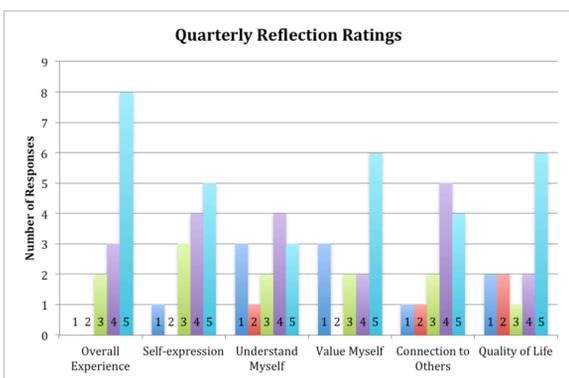


Figure 1: Thirteen participants participated in the quarterly reflection surveys. The most positive results included high ratings (ratings of 5) of overall experience in the group (61%), valuing oneself more deeply (46%), and that one's life is better because of the group (46%).

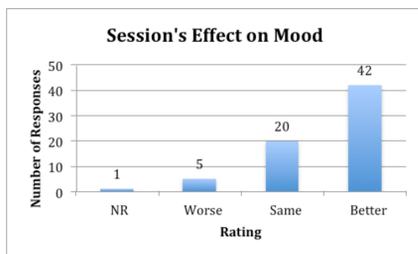


Figure 3: Of participants that responded to the question, the majority (63%) felt they had a better mood at the end of the session; 30% said they felt the same, 14% gave the session a 3/5, meaning "okay", 7% participant reported that they felt their mood decreased after the session.

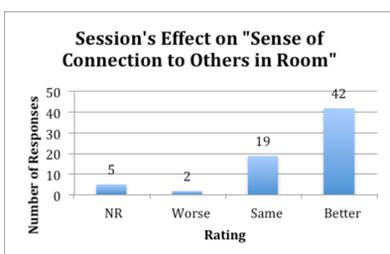
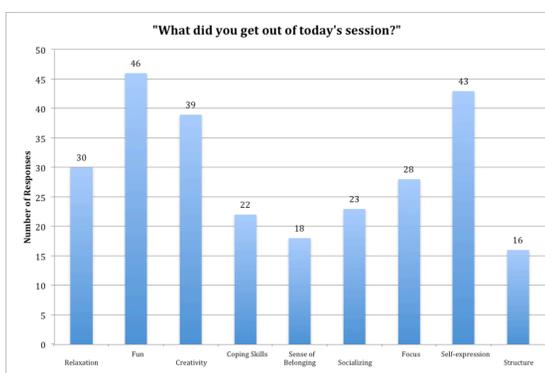


Figure 4 (ABOVE): Of participants that responded to the question, the majority (60%) felt they had a better mood at the end of the session; 30% said they felt the same, 14% gave the session a 3/5, meaning "okay", 9% participant reported that they felt their stress got worse after the session.

Figure 2 (LEFT): The highest aspects that member-participants got out of the groups included "fun" (46), "self-expression" (43), and "creativity" (39).



### KEY REFERENCES

- Catterall, J (2009). *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: A 12-Year National Study of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts*. Los Angeles, London: I-Group Books. 22
- LeRoux, K., & Bernadska, A. (2011). *Impact of the Arts on Individual Contributions to US Civil Society*.

## METHODS

### Strategies

- \* Experiential education in the use of the arts as a process of self-discovery and the deepening of oneself and others.
- \* Design, implementation, and evaluation of our programs for best practices and quality assurance.
- \* Networking with UCLA peers, health care professionals, creative arts therapists/interns, educators, community workers, and visual/performing artists.
- \* Partnerships with community-based healing arts organizations, like-minded UCLA student groups, and UCLA Academic departments.

### Philosophy

- \* Sessions bring self-reflection and discussion for promoting emotional awareness, empathy, and development of community.
- \* What is said in the group stays in the group, as long as everyone respects each other and themselves. Under any circumstances, if a participant mentions harming his/herself or others, the facilitator must refer the participant to a pre-approved mental health professional qualified to address these issues.
- \* There is no audience. Everyone is part of the experience of creative expression - and they define their own personal level of engagement.
- \* Spontaneity is key: be flexible, open, and in the moment.

## events

The Creative Minds student group partners with UCLArts and Healing and Students for Integrative Medicine (SIM) to deliver on-campus creative arts events open to UCLA students and the public.

### This year's events:

- \* Introduction to Yoga and Movement Workshop with Kern Hilary
- \* Manifesting the Me: the power of poetry and imagery for healing Facilitation Training (Parts 1 and 2)
- \* Giving Voice to our Inner Lives: expressive poetry workshop
- \* Rhythm and Voices Drum circle
- \* Music and Lyrics for the Soul
- \* Found Voices: Spoken Word Event



## service

The Creative Minds Project (CMP) brings art therapy, drama therapy, dance/movement therapy, expressive poetry, music therapy and drumming to adults and transitional aged youth at community mental health and homeless agencies in Santa Monica and Venice. This sustainable program is served by volunteers who are creative arts trainees or therapists with experience integrating the arts, graduate students in the creative arts therapies, and UCLA undergraduates.



"The Good Will Out" -RL SUOS Member

"I need to get things out of my head and down on paper. If someone looks at my poetry I want them to feel what I'm feeling. Whether I'm angry, I'm sad, I'm happy, I'm joyous, or I'm a little off the wall. I want them to feel that as well!" -JC, Step Up on Second member



## DISCUSSION

Notably, the member-participant survey reports were similar with the findings of Lipe et al (2010), in which creativity and fun were in the top choices that participants chose to describe what they got out of the group. The finding that "creativity" was a popular response seems to reinforce the conclusions of Chambala (2008) which suggest that participating in arts programs can allow participants to identify as "artist" (or "creative") instead of "mentally ill" or "homeless". Another arts group evaluation in a Canadian Clubhouse setting by Baines (2003 and 2010) found that relaxation, fun, socializing and a sense of belonging were among the top five choices of the study participants - with the exception of "fun", these choices were not among our top findings. The differences in the results may be indicative of difference in intervention strategies and or differences in member values. During the project design, it was clear that the gold-standard randomized, controlled trials would not be appropriate or feasible in this setting. While findings of the pilot still provided useful information, this great limitation should be kept in mind.