

“Reach for the HeART”: A Partnership Program between Psychogeriatric Day Hospital and Art in Hospital

Author: Loh H Y¹, Lee S², Kong W S¹, Choi S W¹, Cheng G²

Institution: Ward H2, Department of Psychiatry, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital¹ Art in Hospital²

Introduction:

‘Visual art are valuable expressive outlet for those who cannot respond to verbal therapy’ (Diane Waller, 1993). We noted that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps elderly to reduce stress and a continuous art training can develop high motivation and improve cognition. In 2009, ‘Reach for the HeART’ was collaborated with Art in Hospital including a series of art workshop and exhibition. Families and carers were invited to join the workshops and communication opportunity is developed between the elderly and families throughout the process of painting.

Purpose of the Project:

Promote activity as an interacting tool among the elderly and their carers.

Objectives:

1. To enhance physical, mental and emotional well-being of the elderly.
2. To promote hand motor coordination for the elderly people.

Material & Methods:

Materials are acrylic color, canvas board, brushes, etc. Workshops are held bi-monthly by a professional artist and an experienced facilitator. Every artwork was completed under the instruction of tutor step wisely. Clients’ selection criteria are as follow:

Criteria	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4
Diagnosis	Depression	Dementia	Dementia	Depression
MMSE Score	18 – 20	17 – 10	>10	18 – 20
Gender	Mixed			
Numbers of Clients	10	10	10	10

Numbers of Staff	5	7	5	5
Numbers of Relatives	---	---	10	---
Duration (Hours)	2			
Assessment Tool	Feedback forms			

Results:

Due to the effectiveness, workshops will continue in 2010. It enhances communications among families and elderly emotional well-being, developing interpersonal skill and overall to improve their quality of life. Feedback forms from elderly and their family members indicated enjoyment and keen for another. Clients' mental state, mood, speech, attention span, motor coordination and social functioning are graded accordingly as stated.

Conclusions:

Presently, 80 elderly and 38 relatives are recruited since 2009 and it is accelerating. Power of visual art is significant, some elderly with serious wandering problem were able to focus on painting over an hour, and some who did not talk much had becoming more expressive than before. Hopefully, it will provide a non-verbal channel of communication between the elderly and families.