

Benefits of Narrative Therapies Workshop- 16th March, 2018 Chermside Community Health Centre

*A health economics analysis compared the **cost-effectiveness of an arts-based approach** in the treatment of mild to moderate depression with pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions. Based on the literature indicating broadly similar levels of clinical effectiveness, **it is suggested that the arts-based approach is likely to be cheaper whilst yielding similar health improvements in participants (Craemer 2009).***

Please click on the link to read more about Australia's [National Arts and Health Framework](#).

Documented benefits of the [ARTS](#) in the promotion and prevention of chronic diseases include:

- **Improved mental health** – addressing anxiety and depression, developing coping strategies
- **Increased physical and mental activity** – reducing risk of heart disease; maintaining brain health – vital with increased longevity in the population
- **More social connection** – alleviating social isolation which is associated with morbidity and mortality and a range of lifestyles risk factors. (Craemer 2009)

Take home messages :

- In Wales (UK), **Storytelling is now imbedded into the Health System.**
- Researchers found that **79%** of their research participants aged over 65 years of age ate better and were found to be healthier. **77%** engaged in more physical activity after engaging in an art activity experiment.
- **Narrative therapies such as poetry, storytelling and creative writing** force us to **externalise** our thoughts, **remind** us from past experiences that we probably already have, inside of us, what it takes to overcome our problems and they allow us to develop the tools to **re-author** our story or the story in our head and change it to be closer to the truth than the false and toxic thoughts that plague many of us.
- Our 'toxic' or 'false thoughts' need an escape route and narrative therapies can show them the **EXIT**.
- **Reading stories activates the neurons in our brain that tricks our body into thinking it's doing something that it isn't.** This is why reading a novel, a magazine or a newspaper article can make us cry, feel happy or angry or sad.
- **Storytelling improves the relationship between carers and mental health patients.**
- In a study researching the effects of storytelling in the mental health system, nurses were observed to respond to their patients' needs more creatively and with a calmer and softer approach.
- Story writing is now included in the Mental Health Nursing curriculum for the mental health benefits to the student as well as its ability to develop empathy in individuals.
- A great benefit of **digital story-telling** is its accessibility, that is, 'at your finger-tips'.