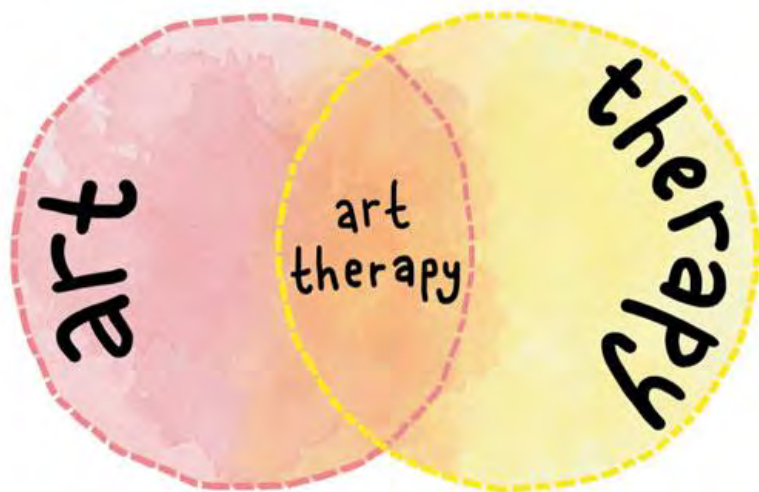


Trauma Informed Practice & Art Therapy

Understanding student behaviours
from a trauma informed perspective





Bronwyn Napiorkowski

- Masters of Art Therapy, Latrobe University Melbourne (completed 2019).
- Clinical Placement at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (Eating Disorder Unit 2018).
- Headspace-observation (anxiety, depression, self harm, suicidal ideation, gender identity and sexual orientation questioning, fear of the judgement of others, disconnection).
- Thesis-Art Therapy for teens presenting with Self Harm behaviours (2019).
- Currently work in private practice (NDIS, VOCAT, DCJ)

What is Art Therapy?



What is Art Therapy?

- A form of psychotherapy involving the encouragement of self-expression & exploration via creative modalities
- Trauma informed approach
- Person centred framework
- The therapist genuinely hold the belief that the answers lay within you (the client/or individuals)
- Hierarchy (side by side, curiosity)
- Trust and safety is key
- Create a space for the individual to be authentic. Opportunity to create and come to their own understanding of their 'inner world' (agency and choice). Inner world becomes outer world.
- Strengths based approach
- Multi modal (creative arts, dramatic arts, movement, breathing, mindfulness, somatic, song, dance)
- Not reliant on verbal exchange





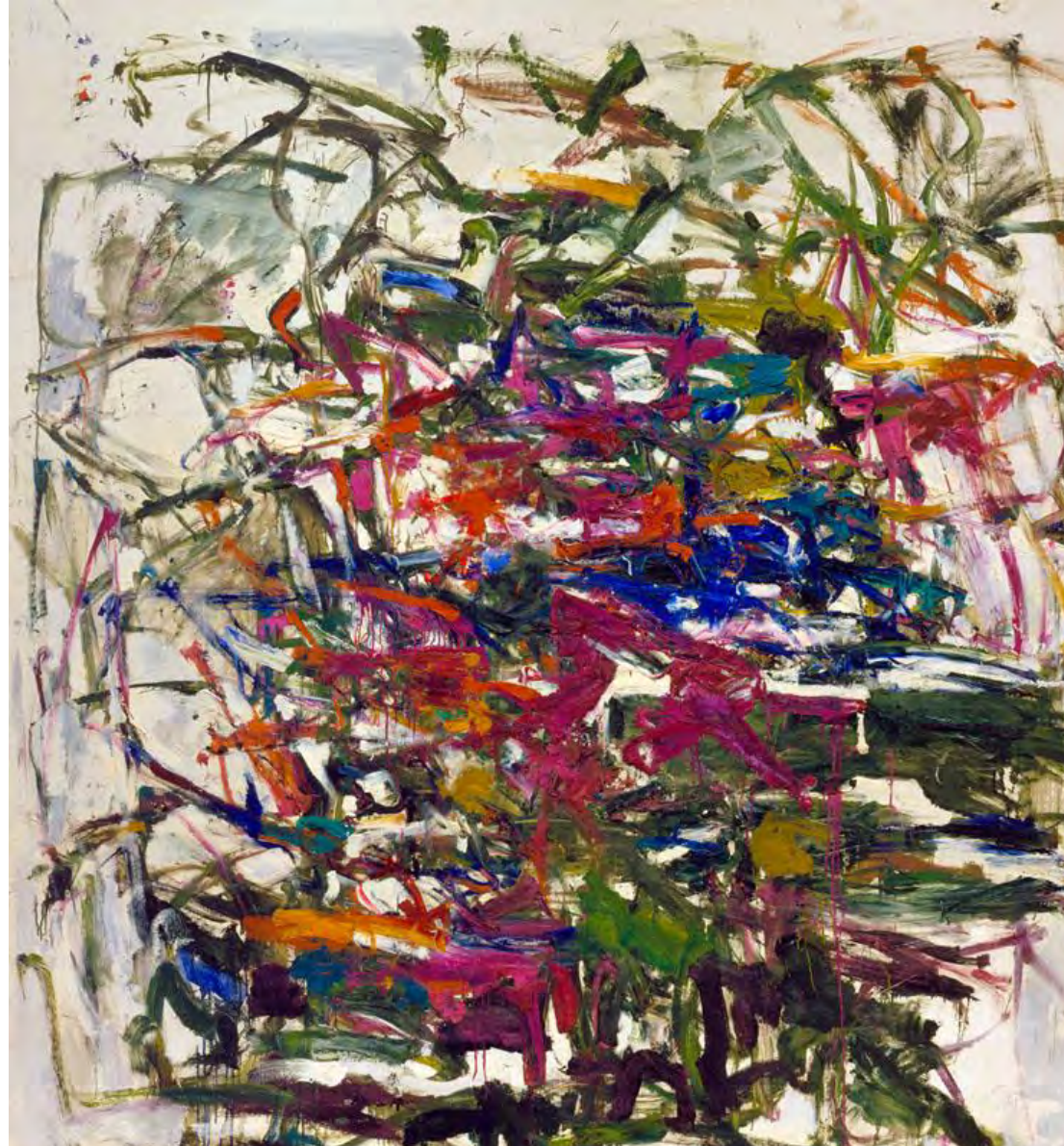
Curious-
*interested in learning about people or things
around you*


Curiosity-
an eager wish to know or learn about something

*The best students are the ones who are curious
about everything.*

*How do we foster a sense of curiosity
with students?*

*Model curiosity in your teaching (including
being curious about difficult behaviours).*





*“Often the hands will solve a
mystery
that the intellect has
struggled with in vain”*

Creative Connections

- Period 2 & 3
- Art Therapy program
- -connection to self
- -connection to nature
- -connection to each other
- -pre and post evaluations
- -Dass21
- -build self esteem
- -build group trust and cohesion



Creative Connections

Bellingham High School

Term 3, 2022

18th July-23rd September

Creative Connections is a ten week Art Therapy program designed by qualified and registered practicing Art Therapist Bronwyn Napierkowski. The aim of this program is to increase student engagement, promote self-esteem and strengthen connections with self, nature and community. This program will be pre and post evaluated utilising DASS 21 and the attached program intake and evaluation form.

Week 1- Connection to each other (July 21st 2022)

Introduction, meet and greet, establishing group rules/boundaries, exploring connections with others in the group.

Week 2-Connection to Country (July 28th 2022)

Yarning circle exploring the journeys we have each individually taken on this land

Week 3-Connection to nature (August 4th 2022)

Nature mandala, walk in nature to collect objects as a group, create mandala collaboratively

Week 4-Connection to community (August 11th 2022)

Where do I fit in this community? Exploring personal voice, responsibilities, sense of belonging "My Voice My Truth!"

Week 5-Connection to artists around the world (August 18th 2022)

Artist can change the world. Introduction to a series of artists and their work. Explore images and themes. Empower students with a sense that they too can express their worries, angst, frustrations through art. Exploring installation, public art and how it can impact viewers at large.

Week 6-Group work begins (August 25th 2022)

Week 7-Group work continues (September 1st 2022)

Week 8- Group work continues (September 7th 2022)

Week 9-Group work continues (September 14th 2022)

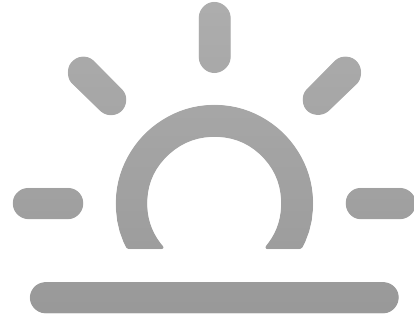
Week 10-Final week of term- Celebration lunch and mini art exhibition of works displayed, yarning circle, post evaluation forms completed.

[NOTE; There is potential for an extension of this program into the community as an interactive Art exhibition discussions around a street installation in town can be pursued as the program unfolds].

DASS-21 results

- From the 18 students who completed the DASS21-
- 10 self reported experiencing above the normal range for either depression, anxiety or stress.
- 8 self reported experiencing severe anxiety
- 4 self reported extremely severe stress
- 2 self reported extremely severe anxiety
- 2 self reported severe depression
- 2 self reported extremely severe depression
- These results are not meant to clinically diagnose a condition. This does however indicate a high level of anxiety amongst the group with over 50% self reporting symptoms as experiencing either severe or extremely severe levels of anxiety. Four students reported extremely severe levels of stress. Four students reported severe to extremely severe levels of depression.

-Trauma Informed Practice



What is Trauma?

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing (SAMHSA 2014, p. 7).





The world feels unsafe



A traumatic event or series of events exceeds a person's capacity to cope with it, leaving people feeling vulnerable and challenging an individual's belief that the world is safe (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network n.d.).



-domestic violence, chaotic home life, dysfunctional attachment to carers, emotional or physical abuse, life threatening event, bushfires, lockdowns, sexual abuse....

Survival mode

- *Normal and necessary responses for survival*
- *However in individuals who have experienced trauma these responses are heightened or triggered more easily.*
- *Hyper-vigilance*



Flipping your lid-the scientific explanation

Ongoing traumatic stress on the brain in childhood may create difficulties with learning and memory, sense of self, focus and concentration, physiological responses, self-regulation and coping, and the ability to form positive relationships (DeCandia, Guarino & Clervil 2014; Harris 2017).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>



Behaviours

Some possible indicators of trauma include:

- increased tension and irritability
- anxiety
- low self-esteem
- aggressive or violent behaviour
- inability to feel or control emotions
- tired in class due to sleep disturbances
- problematic or harmful sexual behaviour
- general aches and pains with no clear cause
- over or under reaction to noises, lights and sudden movements
- difficulty forming positive relationships with peers.



JUST CALM DOWN!!

Engage the parasympathetic nervous system

- Breathing
- Grounding
- Connecting with nature
- Getting back into our bodies (sensory engagement)
- Exercise
- Visualisation
- Meditation



-Build safety and connection

-Create a space for learning in an outdoor setting

-Be aware of different learning styles (trauma informed and neurodiverse lens)

-Build self esteem (strengths based)

-Emotional literacy (build self awareness of mental health)



“poop to rainbow unicorn” check in



Self symbols



Safety in familiar rhythm



“Own the zone” & group huddle



Bottom up approach

COMING BACK
INTO THE BODY

BREATHING

MOVEMENT/
GROUNDING

NAME
THE BEHAVIOUR

HAVE OPTIONS
-AGENCY
-CHOICE

TRY AGAIN

What is in your tool kit?

- establishing safety
- strengths based approach (empowerment! provide choice)
- name the behaviour
- what do they need? (food, water, a walk)
- co-regulation (breathe deeply for them, and then with them)
- referral pathway (is there a quiet space/sensory space in the school?
Counsellor?)



Art making (10 minutes)

You are invited to create a piece of art. Utilising the art materials on hand, create a response piece reflecting on the information presented today so far.

- no artistic ability required
- not a masterpiece!
- It does not need to *“look like”* anything realistic
- encourage you to do this in silence
- INVITE CURIOSITY and playfulness*
- Reflect on the making process
- Share reflections in a circle



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