

Art for health's sake

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John Smith

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The 2016/17 New Zealand Health Survey found that one in six adult New Zealanders had been diagnosed with a common mental disorder at some time in their lives. These issues included depression, bipolar disorders, and anxiety disorders.

Established platforms for immediate support include round-the-clock phone and text message counselling run by public health and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), with the Mental Health Organisation listing approximately two dozen counselling services across a broad spectrum.

These contact services range from general, youth, and senior services to specific services for the rainbow and migrant communities, people living with addictions, and people working in the music industry.

There is also a fast, tailored service for people in distress who phone the standard 111 emergency number for police or ambulance services.

People can talk to their family, friends, their GP, or their regular counsellor to find support and advice on coping with mental health issues – or simply to have an opportunity to talk about them.

Strategies are important for coping with mental illness and in the smartphone era these include a number of apps and digital interfaces which help people to give themselves self-treatment with mood trackers, cognitive behaviour therapy programmes, daily tasks, and quizzes. Mental health experts also recommend a healthy diet,

good sleep, and regular exercise – particularly for people dealing with stress or anxiety.

It is now believed that adding a creative approach to the therapeutic mix can benefit New Zealanders' mental health and wellbeing.

It is understood that creating visual art, such as paintings, drawings, writing, and sculpture, can have significant impacts on people experiencing stress or difficult emotional issues.

The recovery process can also be sped up by engaging in visual art, with the brain cells being stimulated via new connections between brain cells. This process is called

NEURO PLASTICITY

↳ **Creating complex** ↲

ART

is the key to building these exciting new connections

between parts of the

BRAIN

ACTIVATING

THE BRAIN'S NEUROLOGICAL PATHWAYS

with new or **ENHANCED**

CREATIVE

CHALLENGES

including **better**

behavioural management

and the processing of

FEELINGS

INGS

↳ **greater stress relief,**

and improved feelings of

↑ SELF ESTEEM

↳ **in turn** ↲

Getting BUSY with the BRUSHES

and easels isn't the

SILVER BULLET

for people dealing with the

BLACK DOG

or any other

mental health

issue, but gives them a

GREATER CHANCE OF GETTING

BETTER

and seeing the **WORLD**

and their place in it in a sense that's way

MORE POSITIVE

and **natural for them.**

The brain's wheels begin to

TURN

It's not

YOUR

EVERY

DAY

therapy, but it can be enjoyed by everyone

CREATING

for mental health's sake is easy to get

INTO

because all it takes is a blank canvas

and your brain to make amazing

ART

START CREATING



warehouse stationery

