

# Art for health's sake

Decades of work to understand and manage New Zealand's "quiet crisis" has delivered a range of advances in clinical and medical treatment, and ongoing support for people living with mental health issues.

John Smith

Decades of work to understand and manage New Zealand's "quiet crisis" have delivered a range of advances in clinical and medical treatment, and ongoing support for people living with mental health issues.

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