



CHANGING MINDS

To educate, inform, inspire and empower people in order to affect positive change in attitudes and treatment for psychiatric illness.

When We Focus on Mental Illness, We Forget The Person

Power of Strength by Yvetta Collins

When I became the lead editor of this newsletter, I chose "The Power of Strength" as the title of my comment section. Strength is defined in the Webster Dictionary as 'the quality, state or property of being strong, power; the power to resist force, stress or wear'. Strength can propel us from where we are to where we would like to be or where we can be. There are numerous stressors and external pressures which cause one to dig deep within themselves to discover the power to go forward.

When my daughter was little and I watched her mental illness seemingly take over, I noticed there was one area in her life that seemed to improve. She was gifted in drawing. It was as if the mental illness drained the life out of who she was while increasing her artistic ability. This was her gift, that special area in her life where the mental illness could not invade. The one space in time where wholeness and expres-

sion abound. It was in this place where she found peace from that which was complex and confusion transcending into a kaleidoscope of color, texture and design.

For this issue, we take the focus off of mental illness and we encourage you to place the attention on the special gift that lies within the child. Many children riddled with hearing voices, darkness and sadness have a beauty within that, if tapped into, could bring that person into the peace and life they so desire.

Many children need this gift to be discovered and nurtured. Help the child to discover their gift so they can propel from where they are to where they would like to be. Let's focus on their dream, their gift buried under the folds of mental illness.

What we focus on the longest becomes the strongest.

Summer - Volume 6



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The Voice of Art by Gina Roell

Have you ever had a thought, but just couldn't put words to how it made you feel? Maybe you try to explain, but the words come out all wrong. This is a frustrating occurrence that happens frequently to many people. An Art Therapist's job is to help people connect and communicate through various art media. Through art, people have a new kind of voice. Some choose to use this voice, others ignore it, but it is there. For those that are able to use this new voice, those emotions that are usually buried deep within are able to be released in the form of a sculpture or a painting, large brush strokes or tightly controlled pencil lines. Sometimes all that a person needs is the opportunity and permission to create what they feel. They may not have words to describe it at first, but by creating a piece of art, they are communicating a part of themselves.

On any given day, upon observing an art therapy group, an outsider may think, "Oh what a cute craft project," then think to themselves and perhaps wonder out loud, "How is THAT Art Therapy"? As with much of mental health, there is more to Art Therapy than what can be simply seen on the surface. An art therapist is responsible for planning various art interventions to meet the needs of the clients served. In some cases, the planning of these interventions includes examining the treatment goals of the clients and developing specific interventions to



meet those goals. Everything from the project itself, to the media that is used, is carefully planned out.

In other cases, a studio approach is preferred where the therapist provides a safe space for the client to create as they wish.

I rejoice when a particular child is able to focus for an entire

hour, I celebrate another child's efforts to follow directions and complete an entire art project independently. These things may seem minor, but often, these little things help to facilitate some progress in treatment. When a person is given another modality in which to communicate, the possibilities as to what they can express are endless.

Gina Roell is an art therapist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Division of Psychiatry Residential Treatment Program

Incorporating Passion into Treatment

by Julie Daisey

Strengths Based Programming: the term's been around for years, but how do you do it?

It's easy to see the problems. Joey fights with kids and teachers. He has an anger issue, he *needs* anger management classes. Kathy keeps running away from home, she *needs* a locked placement. It takes a little more time and effort to see the strengths. Your first step is to figure them out.

Does your child love to draw, cook, write, paint, dance, take things apart, listen to music, dig in the dirt, or ride his bike til all hours of the night? Does your daughter constantly doodle all over her homework? Do your kids create great big messes for you to clean up? What positives can be found here?

Sometimes it's obvious, a child who is always singing might benefit from voice lessons, or the child who likes to cook might enjoy a cooking class. What if all you can get out of a child is that they want to fly airplanes and make money?

Never in a million years, you think to yourself, but smile and nod anyway. This is a kid who's been kicked out of school, refuses therapy, and seems to be constantly running away from home. How could he ever be a pilot? So you build on what you have... a kid who wants to make money. There's not too many jobs out there for kids these days, but they are always hiring for bus boys. It's a decent fit, there's no money to handle, no orders to get right, no customers to directly attend to, just cleaning up tables.

So we hook him up with a job coach for some interview honing skills and take him to apply. He makes it through the interview, and they call the next day. Can he start tomorrow? You jump at the chance. WHY? Because as it turns out, this little diner is at the airport. They don't get much business but they need someone a few days a week. You say to this kid, I know it's not a great job but let's see how you feel with your first check.

After the first week, you take the kid out to celebrate! He made it on time pretty much every day. He didn't get into any arguments. You haven't gotten any negative reports- OKAY! But it's still his first week and he doesn't see any money for seven more days, three of which he has to work, including a Friday night! Some extra effort makes the shift kind of fun Friday, as you and some people he knows have dinner there, and he gets to show off his skills.

You keep your fingers crossed and then payday comes. He's LOVING the money. It's gone in a day, but with some reassurance, he's ok with it, there'll be another check next week, AND school is out in 10 days so he can pick up another shift!

Turns out he picks up a lunch shift on Wednesday afternoons. There are a few regulars who eat at this diner, and as it turns out, one of them is a retired pilot. This guy knows everybody, and he befriends this young man, noticing how often he's just staring at the planes. Soon, the retired pilot offers this young man a tour of the mechanic's shed, where he's got a lot of friends who still work there. Before you know it, he's learning all about planes and how they work, and has found a few more role models. He's stopping by each day after work, except for payday, he still loves that money.

So now, to further nurture this success, you try to pull in this newly found natural support. You talk with the retired pilot about this kid's dream to be a pilot, and you work out a plan for him to take the kid up in a ride. It works out great, because being retired, he only flies his private plane anymore, and it's small enough that they can both ride in front, nothing closer to flying the plane yourself. This seems to be the turning point, he is hooked, and more motivated than ever to become a pilot. And maybe, just maybe with some well-placed supports and near perfect timing, he might be able to get into a flight program. Let the work begin! The next time you find yourself focusing just on the needs of a child, take a minute to figure out what's already working well. You just might find a way to eliminate the need while building an asset.

Carrie Fisher by Carin Ives



Carrie Fisher, born October 21, 1956, is the child of two Hollywood stars (Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher) and started out with a lot going for her - and something against her, too: bipolar disorder.

In 1975, at age 19, she had her first movie role, in *Shampoo* with Warren Beatty. In 1977, she starred in *Star Wars*, her most memorable role as Princess Leia. By this time she was alcohol and drug dependent. Carrie had been in therapy since she was 15, and in her early twenty's was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She refused to believe it, but her massive intake of drugs, both illegal and legal, were "keeping the monster in the box".

By 1985, Carrie suffered a drug overdose which resulted her entering into rehab. From this experience, came her first best-seller, *Postcards from the Edge* which was made into a movie in 1990. Carrie wrote both the screenplay and the film. That year Ms. Fisher published her second novel, *Surrender in Pink* about her relationship and brief marriage to Paul Simon.

Carrie's celebrity and unique openness about having bipolar disorder have made her an advocate and role model for many enduring the same journey. She wants to help others and is willing to talk to people who come up to her on the street. She has even developed an information and blog site- www.CarrieFisher.com. Fisher is quoted as saying-"The best part of it is I am able to get a lot of people coming up to me that are having a lot of problems, that don't know what to do, that don't have a good doctor, people who are suicidal, and I'm able to in some way help.

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Amplified by Laurie Stober

Crazy isn't being broken, or swallowing a dark secret. It's you or me, amplified. –Winona Ryder, in *Girl Interrupted*

I am a therapist who works with many mentally ill adolescents girls. It has been my experience that some of the most creative and passionate work are produced by girls who are diagnosed with severe mental health issues.

I am also the mother of a 17-year-old son who is fascinated by the movie, "Girl Interrupted." I am certain that a great deal of his fascination has to do with the main character portrayed by Angeli Jolle and I also believe that some of his fascination has to do with the raw and beautiful honesty portrayed by the patients in the psychiatric setting.

It has been my experience as a therapist on the residential unit that mentally ill individuals produce passionate art, narratives and even behaviors that represent their internal chaos. I am often blessed to witness the chaos that eventually gives birth to a dancing star.

I have the pleasure of facilitating groups and witnessing clients supporting and saying the most vulnerable and beautiful words to their struggling and heartbroken peers. Much of this vulnerability comes from their lack of ego and their ability to speak the honest voice of the id. At times I have witnessed clients support each other in ways that seem impossible given the amount of abuse and neglect many of them have endured. I believe that many of our clients experience pain from the outside in and are able to truly feel and absorb emotions that are only available to tormented souls.

In my office I display artwork that is often the creative result of sleepless nights and manic episodes. The colors are



brilliant, the descriptions intense. The humility of the artist is always a breath of fresh air. I believe this novel expression of humility is a trait that often accompanies a mental health diagnosis. My clients are humbled because they exist in a world where they are often unrecognized. Their creativity is diminished due to their inability to conform to the norms of society.

I carry a book bag that was designed by a client who can merge colors and fabrics in such a breathtaking way. The intrinsic blends of soft and hard colors woven with thick and delicate fabric that represent a particular synchronicity and whisper of beauty only they can express in art. I think individuals diagnosed with severe mental illness present with the backside of a beautiful tapestry.

The front of the tapestry resides in their complicated, beautiful mind; they see it and given devotion and compassion they will present it to us.

Connect The Dots

Connection to Resources

Melodic Connections - Adapted Music Lessons for special learning needs

4527 Reading Rd. Cincinnati OH 45202 - (888)858-3048

Dramakinetics of Cincinnati - Engaging individuals of all abilities through movement, music and drama; empowering all individuals to reach their full potential.

4222 Hamilton Avenue - Cincinnati, OH 45223
(513) 389-1721

Art Beyond Boundaries - Arts programs for children of all abilities to introduce them to art and further explore their artistic talents. 1410 Main St. , Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone: (513)421-8726

Christian Dance Academy – Special Needs Dance Classes
1020 Arbor Tech Drive, Suite F,
Hebron, Kentucky 41048 - (859)912-4002

Women Writing for a Change - Connecting people to the power of their voices and the truth of their stories through the art of writing and creation of community.

6906 Plainfield Rd - Cincinnati, OH 45236

Phone: (513)272-1171 Email: info@womenwriting.org

Visionaries &Voices - The mission of Visionaries and Voices is to provide artistic and cultural opportunities for artists with disabilities, and to build an inclusive environment where all artists feel valued.

Northside Studio & Gallery

3841 Spring Grove Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45223

Office (513) 426-4572, Studio (513) 861-4333

Fax (513) 861-3191

Tri County Studio & Corner Gallery

225 Northland Blvd. Cincinnati, OH 45246

Studio (513) 771-2999 Fax (513) 771-1802

Eating disorders can be difficult to treat and as many as 5 % of adolescent male and females suffer from them, making the disorder the third most common chronic illness in adolescents. That's why Cincinnati Children's Division of Psychiatry opened a 16 bed inpatient unit at the Lindner Center of HOPE in Mason, Ohio ages 11 to 17 on July 6, 2011.

Pediatric Mental Health Symposium 2011
September 20, 2011 Great Wolf Lodge
2501 Great Wolf Lodge Mason, Oh

Registration Deadline September 1, 2011
To register call Tina Neltner at 636-0888

Parent Education Series will begin in October, 2011

People With Mental Illness Enrich Our Lives

Virginia Woolf

The British Novelist who wrote *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando* experienced the mood swings of bipolar disorder characterized by feverish periods of writing and weeks immersed in gloom. Her story is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr.

Ludwig van Beethoven

The brilliant composer experienced bipolar disorder, as documented in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb.

Vincent Van Gogh

The celebrated artist's bipolar disorder is discussed in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb and *Dear Theo, The Autobiography of Van Gogh*.

Isaac Newton

The scientist's mental illness is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr and the *Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb.

Ernest Hemmingway

The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist's suicidal depression is examined in the *True Gen: An Intimate Portrait of Ernest Hemmingway by Those Who Know Him* by Dennis Brian.

Sylvia Plath

The poet and novelist ended her lifelong struggle with clinical depression by taking her own life, as reported in *A Closer Look at Ariel: A Memory of Sylvia Plath* by Nancy Hunter-Steiner.

Michelangelo

The mental illness off of one of the world's greatest artistic geniuses is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation*, by Anthony Storr.

Patty Duke

The Academy Award-winning actress told of her bipolar disorder in her autobiography and made-for-TV movie *Call me Anna* and *A Brilliant Madness: Living with Manic-Depressive Illness*, co-authored by Gloria Hochman.

Charles Dickens

One of the greatest authors in the English language suffered from clinical depression, as documented in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb, and *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* by Edgar Johnson.



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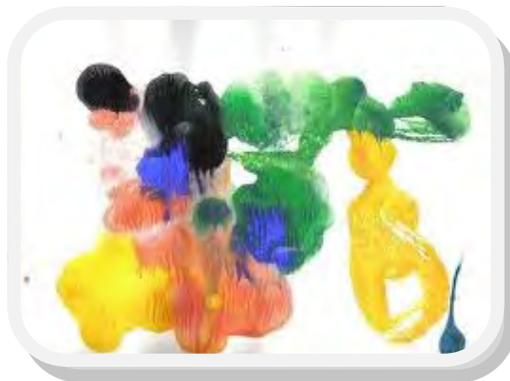
Carrie Fisher—continued

If I'm seen as sort of a poster recovery person for bipolar, then, OK." In an article from *BP Hope magazine* Fisher is quoted as saying -"Prior to having a child, I really did feel, it's my business if I wanted to stop my medications," Fisher says. "I no longer feel that's so."

In addition to maintaining and monitoring her pharmaceutical routine and continuing therapy sessions, Carrie says working out regularly not only helps offset the weight gain experienced by many people on similar medications, but provides therapy of another kind. She does sit-ups and walks on the treadmill and gives her a sense of control. Fisher states she has learned to do things she doesn't want to do.

In 2008, Carrie wrote a one-actor play-*Wishful Drinking*. -a memoir. Fisher is the performer on stage and is tells her life story with side-splitting humor. She began touring in late 2008 and the final performance was January 2010. The critics gave her a wonderful review! While on stage, Fisher stated how she is both a pez dispenser (Princess Leia) and is now in the abnormal psychology text book -who says you can't have it all!

Thank you Carrie Fisher for your honesty and showing others with bipolar disorder that is possible to triumph over adversity!



Amplified - continued

People often ask me how I do this work. Most often I love engaging in the "amplified" life. When I tire or become tainted, the "dark secret" always reveals itself in appropriate time. I am thankful for the creative minds that often struggle with the expectations of our small world. What would happen if for one day we were all able to experience the interruption of our normalcy and experience both the pain and creativity of mental illness.

Laurie Stober is a Clinical Counselor at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Division of Psychiatry Residential Treatment Center

"We need your stories" Parents, families and practitioners all benefit from sharing knowledge of and emotional insight to the myriad and complex facets of mental health. Please consider sharing your story with us.

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