

# **Creative Arts Interventions for Improved Epilepsy Patient Quality of Life:**

**Progress Report of a trial during the  
pandemic**

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# Creative Arts II Study Team



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## Creative Arts Pilot Study

- Study of arts interventions with **Epilepsy** and **Headache** patients
- Participants completed **1 intervention** during their inpatient admission
- Examined **quality of life questionnaires** before and after
- Compared **seizure frequency, EEG recordings, medication use**, etc

Main finding: This type of study is **feasible!**

## Current Study - Creative Arts II Study

- Randomized study of one of three longitudinal arts interventions with **Epilepsy** patients
- Participants complete **1 intervention** during their inpatient admission, plus **4 follow-ups remotely\***
- Outcomes to be examined:
  - **quality of life questionnaires** before and after first intervention, **and at end of participation**
  - Comparisons of **seizure frequency, EEG recordings, medication use**, etc
  - **Coding artwork** for themes

\*Interventions initially in-person for visit 1 and remotely for visits 2-5, but all done remotely due to pandemic social distancing restrictions.

## **Primary Objective**

To assess the effect of the creative arts intervention on QOL in patients with epilepsy as measured by a distress scale and epilepsy-specific quality of life measurements.

## **Secondary Objectives**

1. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on epilepsy patients' EEG recorded during the intervention.
2. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on the affective state of epilepsy patients using validated screening tools for anxiety and depression.
3. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on seizure frequency in epilepsy.
4. To identify themes generated by participant responses to a common creative writing and visual art prompt using qualitative analysis methodology.

## Creative Writing

### Activity 1 – Personal Metaphors

Choose a personal metaphor from each of the following categories: plant, animal, water, soil, weather, building, part of building or room, stone, heat, musical instrument, kind of artwork, container, tool, toy, etc. Choose three or four metaphors that feel most like themselves and write in the voice of each object with as much detail as possible.

### Activity 2 – Mini autobiography

Write to a set of prompts such as: What comes easy to you? What is hard? If you had a store, what would you sell? If a movie was made about your life, what are three scenes that would be essential?

### Activity 3 – A Favorite Place

Creative writer will lead patient through a guided fantasy about a real or imagined place that the patient associates with a deep sense of well-being. Prompts will include all five senses. Patient will then free write about the details, followed by creating a poem or prose description about the special place.

### Activity 4 – Freewriting, Looping and Journaling

Patient will write nonstop for three minutes on whatever comes to mind, then select words or phrases they find most interesting and, using those as a prompt, again write for three minutes nonstop. This will be repeated several times until patient has a good flow in writing about

## Subject 10 Artwork – Activity 1

I am a miro painting scattered all over  
no one knows exactly how I am put together and the reasons why  
they think it is one thing and it is actually another

I am the weeping willow. The weeping willow people look at and admire.  
I bloom for a certain time, but I fall apart as the seasons change.  
The short time in the weeping willow's blooming is due to short-time  
happiness,  
however I know that it is only a temporary happiness.  
The weeping willow loses their shape. People don't look at them  
as beautiful anymore. They dismiss the weeping willow  
and the weeping willow is just another weed to them.  
The weeping willow considers him or herself as just another tree.  
And many times the weeping willow will just dry up and get hit  
by lightning and die.

I am a gazelle. I am the animal you will never catch.  
I will run away from my feelings and from any animals that will try to hurt  
me.  
I am the fastest animal. I will find cover from any predators that are  
around me.  
I am an animal that is always aware of my surroundings and ready to run.  
I am the animal that is never comfortable in myself. I am guarded,  
knowing that I am always watched and ready to be attacked.

I am the hammer, the hammer that will beat up thyself  
until I can't take it anymore and then beat up everyone else around me  
until they start beating me up. This hammer was created by something  
that is more powerful than me. And something that I created and I can  
take that power away but I am afraid to let the hammer go  
because I feel unworthy and believe I am deserving of the hammer.  
Without the hammer beating me, I don't know how to live.

I am the glass house. I am very transparent. People see right through me  
I try very hard to put on the façade to make people think I am strong,  
a person who can do good things and show strength and be that woman  
of grace, with the house with the white picket fence, married,  
with 4.5 children. I have failed and have none of that.  
And just like the glass house people see right through that and only laugh

I am a façade and a joke.  
I am a glass house on stilts. I am higher up and protected.  
I can see you and you can see me. However, being a glass house  
I can see you coming. You will never hurt me. Again, you will never hurt me.  
I am a glass house on stilts on a cliff overlooking the ocean.  
I can escape because I am higher than you.  
On the cliff I am higher than you and no one can get me.  
Where did this come from? I am terrified of heights.  
I am closer to God.  
The ocean is restoring to me

## Subject 6 Artwork – Activity 1





## Visual Art

### Activity 1 – Personal Metaphors

Choose a personal metaphor from each of the following categories: plant, animal, water, soil, weather, building, part of building or room, stone, heat, musical instrument, kind of artwork, container, tool, or toy. Create a work of art that combines visual expressions of selected personal metaphors.

### Activity 2 – Mini autobiography

Fill in images in a cartoon-style booklet that uses prompts such as: What comes easy to you? What is hard? If you had a store, what would you sell? If a movie was made about your life, what are 3 scenes that would be essential?

### Activity 3 – A Favorite Place

Visual artist will lead patient through a guided fantasy about a real or imagined place that the patient associates with a deep sense of well-being. Prompts will include all five senses. Patient will sketch some of the details, then create a drawing or painting or structure of the special place.

### Activity 4- Scribble drawing, doodling and sketching, sculpting

Draw loops and/or doodle for three minutes, then select images or patterns they find interesting to develop into a drawing. Offer patient a sketchbook and encourage drawing or other art-making outside of sessions if interested.

### Activity 5 – Patient-Directed Expression

Patient will choose a theme and art approach based on interest and experiences. If patient has difficulty expressing themselves with words, VA will suggest creating images that represent their experiences.

## Subject 5 Artwork – Activity 4 and 2

4/9  
Scream

(P)

Healthy to me looks great. If I was healthy I would be able to do all the things I want to do. Finish school, be a nurse, have a job, drive. Healthy would be to lose weight, exercise more and eat right.

Problems, who doesn't have them, we all do. I have a lot of problems. Things that healthy people take for granted seem like luxuries to me. Be it a good night sleep, going for a drive, having a job, or an exciting experience. Money is a huge problem for me. Both my mom and I are overworked so we are always short for the month. I can't do it. I was going to say next. The 15th of the month is stupid. I was on a train, what for heck happened, I was doing so well. Now I'm drawing a blank again, HELP!!

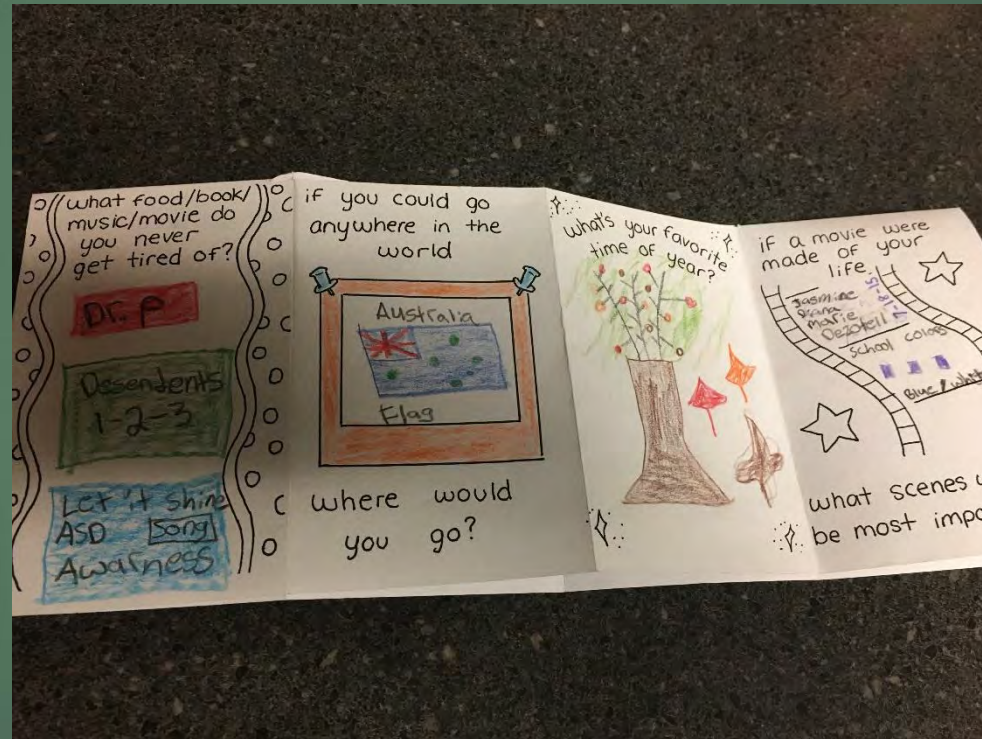
I see a man trapped in a woman's body, looking in the mirror is uncomfortable, I try to avoid it when possible.

Helping others comes easy to me. I am a great listener and very empathetic, I am good at reading people and knowing who is genuine and who is fake.

Looking at myself and honestly taking an inventory is hard for me. So is telling the difference between what is reality and what is just my mind playing tricks on me.

If I had a store, I would sell...

## Subject 6 Artwork – Activity 2b



## Subject 44 – “A Favorite Place” exercise 3

Natures sweet gift bubbles away as we patiently  
await its first liquid golden sip  
In the sugarhouse we are all gathered around loosely  
telling tales of the past  
The old wooden floor which has barren so many  
different feet creaks and moans  
The sun begins to set so that the moon can begin to  
make its voyage upwards  
Merry laughter fills the air and darkness finally falls  
Lights come on as vehicles roar to life and this day  
has come to its end

Subject 1 – exercise 4 “Infinite line”



## Study progress and Pandemic impact

1. Research completely halted for 3 months
2. EMU admissions held, then partially curtailed since March 2020.
3. Eligible patients: 113 far lower than anticipated
4. Missed opportunities for enrollments due to workplace changes

**Enrolled: 47**

**Completed (so far): 19**

**Declined participation: 34**

Enrollment Ends 2/1/21



Subject 9 "A Favorite Place"

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Funding: National Endowment for the Arts,  
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