

# Touch a Flower, Talk to Me

AN INTERACTIVE TEXTILE ARTS PROJECT TO SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF SERVICES FROM ROOKWOOD HOSPITAL TO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL LLANDOUGH.



## Primary Outcomes

Improved the environment of the day room, Rookwood Hospital.

Captured staff memories of working at Rookwood Hospital.

## Other outcomes

Patients engaged in creative interventions to assist with their recovery.

Provided an opportunity for artist development via engagement with service users and to explore future projects.

Funded by the Arts programme within Cardiff & Vale Health Charity, TOUCH A FLOWER, TALK TO ME was designed and led by artist Marion Cheung. It involved 54 participants including patients of Specialist Neuro Rehabilitation Unit (ward 7) Rookwood Hospital, staff, members of Sunrise Elderly Living crafts group and 28 Year 6 pupils from Peter Lea Primary School.

Marion led 8 one-hour workshops in the day room and 4 two-hour sessions in school followed by 4 weeks in July and August to construct the wallhanging and interactive display. A celebratory exhibition took place in September (9 – 30th, 2019) at Plaza Exhibition space, University Hospital Llandough.

The project was commissioned to capture the essence of Rookwood Hospital via memories to support the transition of services from Rookwood to University Hospital Llandough and improve the environment of the day room and new unit that takes positive reflections from the past.

During the workshops in hospital, patients and staff decorated laser-cut flowers and painted items for the exhibition doing as much as they could with as much choice as possible. Staff invited patients to take part – supporting them with the activities alongside the artist.

**“We loved it. The patients loved it... (x) was proud of her work. It was**

**really lovely seeing everyone get involved. (x) was in her room and gets fed up quickly, it really cheered her up” – Healthcare support worker**

To connect memories of Rookwood Hospital to University Llandough Hospital – Marion carried out informal interviews with participants’ consent, discovering what makes Rookwood a special place to work. Visitors could touch the flowers and listen to stories of many varied career journeys as well as poetry and birdsong from the hospital grounds. Pupils described their involvement and their thoughts on the arts in hospital environments.

**“What a beautiful exhibition of joy, colour, memories and history... it expresses so much of the joy and warmth that so many people feel towards Rookwood and the recordings transport you there. Looking at the flowers doesn’t make you think you’re in a hospital and the fact that you can actually touch and interact ...it was an important process for many with beautiful, memorable outcomes”**  
– Visitor, Plaza, 20/09/19

Marion engaged pupils in a discussion about the benefits of the arts within clinical environments and the positive effects it has on patients’ recovery. As a result, pupils reflected on family members who had been in hospital and were enthusiastic to get involved – engaging in problem

-solving activities.

A mixed methods approach was taken to evaluate the project and included staff, artist and teacher’s observations, questionnaires, interviews, photography and a project journal. Ms. Jones, Year 6 Teacher said, **“The children all engaged with the different activities, even those who could sometimes struggle and focus within the normal classroom setting. The project had an impact on confidence and resilience- particularly the sewing which many found tricky”.**

An estimated 1000+ visitors saw the exhibition and it attracted many positive comments, particularly from carers of patients with dementia,

**“I took several patients down to the display, to my surprise even those who I imagined wouldn’t necessarily find it engaging, did. It was an incredible display of textures, sounds and colours and I was inspired by it”**  
Activities co-ordinator

Marion has enjoyed involving as many participants as possible through the project and looks forward to future collaborations within hospitals and community settings.