

Report : TBIS project, Murrison Hospital. ABMUHB.  
Lead artists: Sian Hughes & Sarah Jane Richards.  
Clinical Nurse Specialist: Carole Saunders.



**Introducing the intentions and process which underpinned the shape of the project:** In 2016 the facility for the Traumatic Brain Injury Service at Murrison Hospital was refurbished. £2000 was provided from the Capital budget to provide artwork for the unit. The TBIS team took this as an opportunity to engage patients very actively in the process and contributed a further £2000 to extend the reach of the project. Their intention was to offer rehabilitative care in a non-clinical environment, empowering patients via practical workshops and creative practice. In collaboration with the Capital Arts Manager, the team developed a brief in which patients were central. Through a rigorous recruitment process two artists were appointed, experienced Arts in Health practitioners, skilled in responding imaginatively to the environment with its users.

**Planning the workshop content and aims behind them :** TBIS staff worked closely with the appointed artists to plan a programme of practical workshops to explore themes, images and ideas for site specific artwork using a range of materials and processes. The schedule was devised to include a weekly morning or afternoon session for three groups over a period of 6 weeks. Delivery was alternated between TBIS staff and the artists. This model was developed so that staff could prepare and reassure patients prior to the artist led workshops.

**What took place in the workshops:** Patients explored their environment and used it directly to create small artworks during the workshop programme. With TBIS staff, patients discussed themes and produced their own dough to familiarize themselves with impressing objects, in preparation for future work with porcelain clay. Patients also engaged in cyanotype printing, book making and experimented with colour and light. In observing the sessions, it was clear that patients and staff were very engaged and comments gathered support this. They also became small communities, and whilst going about their activities, patients shared their concerns, their hopes and their responses to taking part in the project.

**Responses from patients and staff involved and this creative model of care :** A selection of comments collected from patients during the project include:

I can't believe we're so artistic – it's fantastic

I've learned to use the timer on my phone!

It's been brilliant.

You don't know what strength you have or how strong you are until you have no choice.

You get knocked down but you get back up again - Andy

The harder I fall the stronger I rise – Sara

It's only when you've experienced the darkness that you truly appreciate the light.

Don't know what I'd do without this workshop.

I've thoroughly enjoyed it – really locked into the creative thing - Ceri

They've saved my life.

Don't keep trying to be who you were or you'll never become the person you were meant to be.

I'm just different and that's OK now, not to be able to do those things – life's taken me on a different journey than planned – but that's OK - Ann

My memory doesn't stretch as far as the weekend – there was a time I'd burst into tears - now I just say it.

## Outputs and outcomes :

- The project resulted in a trans-illuminated artwork in the activity room and 'echos' in the reception area and corridor which everyone is delighted with and feels represents their unit well.
- During workshops, the TBIS nurse specialist was able to discreetly monitor each patient, offering care when needed.
- The TBIS nurse specialist also commented that patients were not deterred from attending check-ups in this non – clinical environment, in fact they were motivated to come in.
- The project has led to the continuation of weekly craft sessions.

**In conclusion :** The TBIS team's aspirations and intentions were innovative and imaginative. They invested enormously in planning and delivering a project in tandem with other specialists to get the very best outcomes and outputs. The project sits well with the ethos of rehabilitative care provided in the unit and demonstrates how Arts in Health and tangible projects can suggest new and effective models for care delivery. Patients genuinely valued the project, skills learned, their voices heard, care received, shaping their environment and moving a little closer to recovery.

Heather Parnell, Capital Arts Manager. February 2018.

