



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Bethlem Royal Hospital

Welcome

Bethlem Royal Hospital has a long history of providing the highest quality care for people recovering from mental health issues.

The hospital offers the perfect therapeutic environment for promoting recovery, set in 270 acres of green space, with woodland and meadows that are designated as a site of importance for nature conservation.

Facilities include a swimming pool, art gallery, walled garden, nature walks and an extensive occupational therapy programme. Our programme offers a wide choice of creative activities, which gives people the opportunity to rekindle old skills, learn from new experiences and build their confidence on their path to recovery.

To attend any of the activities, see your occupational therapist who will advise you and refer you to the programme. They will also update you on any current additions or changes to the schedule.

Peter O'Hare

Head of Occupational Therapy

Bethlem Royal Hospital

CONTENTS

Art	4
Bethlem Gallery	6
Computer skills	8
Dramatherapy	10
Drama workshop	12
Drumming	14
Freeform aikido	16
Gardening	18
Pottery	20
Retreat (meditation for beginners)	22
Sewing and textiles	24
Therapeutic cookery	26
Woodwork	28

ART

Our art sessions provide a relaxed, safe space for people to express themselves creatively. Led by professional artists, you have the chance to learn a range of techniques including painting, drawing, printing, batik and fabric painting, mixed media and other art and crafts. Choose to develop your own work or contribute to a group project.



What do you need?

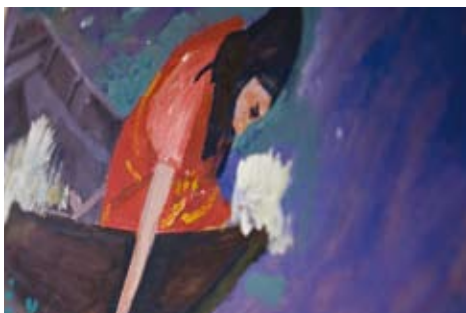
No previous art experience is necessary and all levels of ability are welcome.

What are the benefits?

Creative activity has been shown to increase self-esteem, provide a sense of purpose and give structure to a day. It can enhance social skills, help people engage in social relationships and improve quality of life.¹

When does the group meet?

The art group meets three times a week for two hours.



Art really has grounded me,
and was a huge turning point
in my fight against anorexia.

BETHLEM GALLERY

The Bethlem Gallery is a professional exhibition space in the grounds of the hospital. We showcase the inspirational talents of artists who have had contact with our services, and support them in promoting and developing their artwork through our links with arts and health organisations. The gallery has a full programme of events and exhibitions throughout the year, all of which are open to the public.



What do you need?

Everyone is welcome and entrance is free. If you would like to exhibit your work, you can find out more at www.bethlemgallery.com

What are the benefits?


Engaging with the arts gives people a voice, encourages self-expression, improves communication and strengthens relationships. Using the arts within the health sector has been found to humanise care, encourage patient choice and promote a whole-person approach that leads to a greater sense of health and well-being.²



I think one of the strengths of the gallery is that there is ongoing arts support available, not just for exhibitions. I think the gallery gives patients sanctuary and respite from the ward. It improves self-worth and helps symptoms by providing focus.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Develop new skills like word processing, how to use spreadsheets, or CV writing. You can also use these sessions to keep in touch with the world outside the hospital through social networking, email and internet research. Computer skills is suitable for all ability levels, and WiFi connection is available if you have your own laptop.



It is a relaxed group with staff on hand to help.

What do you need?

All ages are welcome and no previous computer knowledge is necessary. You need a referral from your ward's occupational therapist.

What are the benefits?

There are many benefits to participating in computer sessions. Research has shown that, "internet access to community specific and general health information can lead to increased empowerment and appreciation of information technology". The sessions can also increase confidence and skills useful for education and employment, help you keep in touch with friends and family, and develop interests.³

When does the group meet?

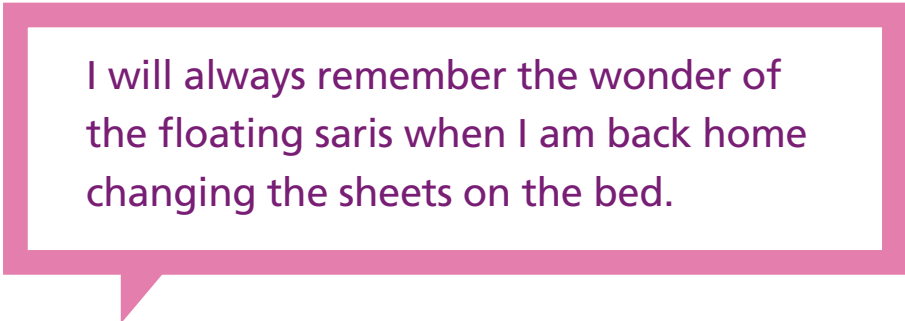
The computer sessions occur six times a week for two hours.



Having computer access is crucial to maintain contact with your world outside the hospital, whether you want to stay in touch with friends or look at your favourite sites.

DRAMATHERAPY

Dramatherapy is facilitated by the resident dramatherapist and students from The Central School of Speech and Drama, who are undertaking MA studies in sesame drama and movement therapy.



I will always remember the wonder of the floating saris when I am back home changing the sheets on the bed.

What do you need?

An ability to work in a group setting. A willingness to engage with the art form; music, movement, drama and story-work.

What are the benefits?

You are able to explore unconscious material, problems and solutions through the metaphor of the art form, where there is also an emphasis on non-verbal communication.

It has been recognised that a special type of dramatherapy, known as a sesame session, can be very beneficial. "People move or dance to the sound of music, a circle is formed and a story is told; people take on parts, and enact the story."⁴

When does the group meet?

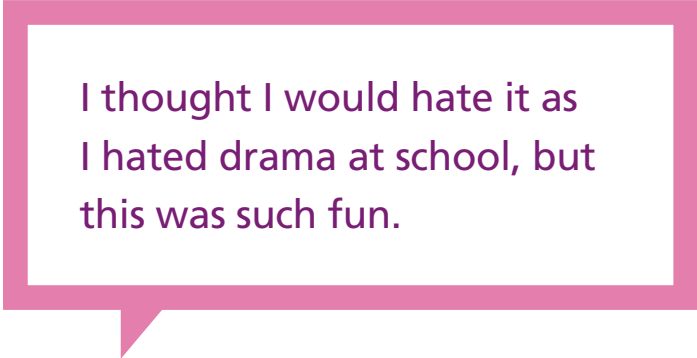
The dramatherapy session is held once a week for an hour.



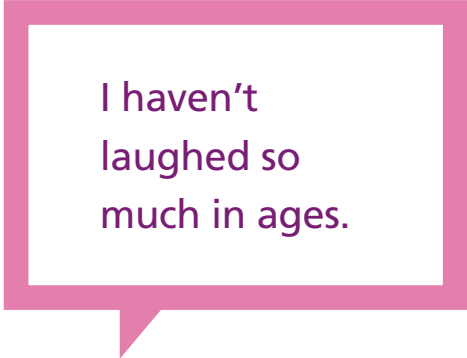
I never imagined that working with poetry relating to the seasons would resonate so much with how I feel.

DRAMA WORKSHOP

Our drama workshop is a mixture of theatre games, movement, improvisation and occasional script work. The emphasis is on having fun and building confidence.



I thought I would hate it as I hated drama at school, but this was such fun.



I haven't laughed so much in ages.

What do you need?

A willingness to join in and play.

What are the benefits?

Drama can build confidence and encourages teamwork. It's great fun too.

"Whatever the patient's age and troubles may be, the child self is ever present in all of us, below the surface, a powerful emotional aspect that needs to be brought into play if a patient is to come back into the flow of life."⁵

When does the group meet?


The drama workshop is held once a week for one hour.




I didn't mind looking silly as everyone joined in, including the facilitator.

DRUMMING

In our sessions, we drum together as a group. It's about listening, exploring and experimenting as we play a variety of instruments. When we listen deeply, we connect more creatively with ourselves and others.



I feel so much calmer than when I arrived.



I've drummed out all my frustration.

What do you need?

Musical experience isn't necessary; just a willingness to listen and experiment.

What are the benefits?

There are many benefits of drumming, including emotional release and relieving anxiety, physical toning, personal empowerment, self-awareness, self-expression, communication and social interaction.

"An hour-long drumming session revealed a reversal of the hormonal stress response."⁶

When does the group meet?

The drumming group meets once a week for one hour.

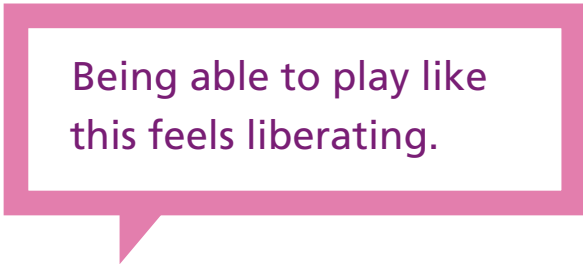


I'm not
anxious now.

This is about synchronicity and
we were all together!

FREEFORM AIKIDO

Freeform aikido is a meditative art that uses movement, breath work, sensation and voice. It is an improvisational practice that draws from traditional aikido gestalt therapy and zen. It stretches and focuses the body and mind, while promoting the state of being alive in the present moment.



Being able to play like this feels liberating.

What do you need?

A willingness to move. It is also helpful to wear clothes you can move freely in.

What are the benefits?

Freeform aikido can help you become more connected to yourself, to others and the world around you. It can release tension, promote calmness, and improve balance, flexibility and creativity. "Research has shown that aikido training for adolescents with behavioural problems led to larger increases in self-esteem than traditional treatment."⁷

When does the group meet?

The freeform aikido group meets once a week for one hour.



I feel
calm and
energised!

While I'm practising, I
stop ruminating. I can take
this with me outside.

GARDENING

Our organic kitchen garden gives us the chance to work outside on different seasonal projects. You can learn how to sow, plant, care for and harvest a wide range of fruit, vegetables, herbs and other plants using organic methods. We have a vegetable garden, greenhouse, wildlife garden, herb garden, wall-trained fruit, lavender walk and fruit trees.



What do you need?

It is useful to have your own boots and outdoor jacket, but we can provide appropriate footwear and rainwear, if necessary.

What are the benefits?

The therapeutic benefits of horticulture are well-documented, and gardening has long been used as a healing medium for a range of mental health problems.

“Horticultural work, apart from providing its own intrinsic benefits, enables skills to be learnt which can be used to obtain employment. All of these effects help self-esteem and well-being.”⁸

When does the group meet?

The group times can vary with the seasons, but generally the gardening group meets weekly for two hours.



I would just like to say how much I appreciated the facilities in the occupational therapy department at the Bethlem Royal Hospital. For me, the most important was the organic gardening. I learnt a lot, which I will be able to put into practice now I am home. It was also really good to be outside in the fresh air.

POTTERY

Make your own pottery or sculptural pieces in our light, roomy workshop. Trained ceramicists and occupational therapists are on hand to teach beginners the pottery techniques they need. Then it's down to you to make your own creations, or to follow examples from a range of work on display, or in ceramics books and magazines.

I fell in love with pottery and attended the group at every opportunity.



What do you need?

No previous experience is necessary; just a willingness to take part.

What are the benefits?

A recent study found there were a number of benefits of pottery, which included identifying new life roles and finding meaning in life, the promotion of physical and psychological well-being, and enhanced opportunities for social interaction. The organic properties of clay also add to a sense of creative 'adventure'.⁹

When does the group meet?

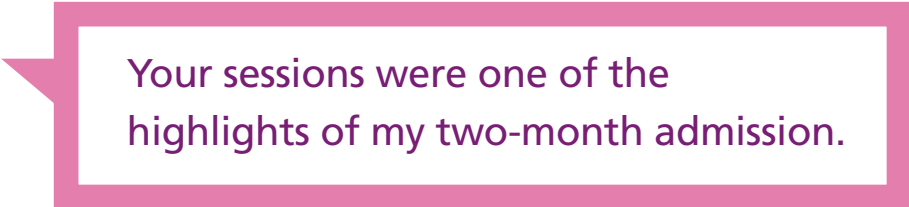
The pottery group meets three times a week for two hours.



It is a safe and calm space in which to work, and also chat to patients from other wards.

RETREAT (MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS)

Retreat is a simple guided group session that helps you rediscover a deep peacefulness and inner wisdom. The meditation practices have a 2,500 year history and come from the Buddhist traditions of the far east. The group has been running for more than 15 years and is led by a member of the chaplaincy team.



Your sessions were one of the highlights of my two-month admission.

What do you need?

You need prior approval from your ward. However, no particular experience or background is necessary; just a willingness to see what participation can do for you. Just come as you are, no matter how you feel. Sessions are open to everyone.

What are the benefits?

In recent times, meditation has influenced the Western treatment of a wide range of conditions. Its practice is perfectly safe and has always been held to be "...good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end". Meditation can help to build confidence and bring about inner change and personal growth.¹⁰

When does the group meet?

Retreat (Meditation for Beginners) is held once a week for one hour.



It has been truly wonderful and I am most grateful.
Coming to retreat has been a real pleasure.

SEWING AND TEXTILES

Our sewing and textiles group works with traditional and contemporary techniques. Discover new skills or revisit forgotten ones. Projects include embroidery, dressmaking, felting, weaving, sewing, card-making, embellishing, tie-dying, making stuffed toys and rag dolls, quilting and knitting. Our studio is well-equipped with sewing and embellishing machines, looms, knitting needles, materials, yarns, buttons and wool.



I find the session therapeutic.
There is no stress in here.

What do you need?

No previous experience is necessary. The group is open to anyone who has an interest in sewing and making items from fabric and materials.

What are the benefits?

Research suggests that participating in sewing and textiles has a number of positive therapeutic effects on well-being. These include “managing pain and unstructured time as well as facilitating self-esteem and reciprocal social roles”. The group is also a great way to communicate and exchange ideas.¹¹

When does the group meet?

The sewing and textiles group meets twice a week for two hours.



Years ago I used to do all kinds of creative things like knitting and sewing. Coming to sewing and textiles makes it okay to do it again.

THERAPEUTIC COOKERY

We offer cooking and baking sessions in our spacious, well-equipped therapeutic kitchen. Prepare food of your own choice, learn about healthy eating and cooking for pleasure, or develop independent living skills. The group sometimes shops locally for food and often uses produce grown in the hospital's own organic garden.

I never thought
I could do
something like this.



What do you need?

No previous experience is necessary.

What are the benefits?

“For many people, involvement in food preparation such as cooking or baking, can bring joy and pleasure. Baking is suitable for people with all levels of skills; it can be simple or complex and everyone can contribute. Its versatility makes it an apt occupation for inclusion in therapy programmes.”¹²

When does the group meet?

Cookery groups happen at different times depending on each ward's timetable. Check with your occupational therapist for details.



I've kept all the recipes
I've learnt here for
baking when I go home.

WOODWORK

Our well-equipped workshop offers a safe and supportive atmosphere to work on projects that could include toys, boxes, creative and decorative crafts, and small items of furniture. Projects run for a single session or longer. Bethlem woodworkers is an additional group for people who are ready for real working experiences, like constructing and installing wood products and making one-off commissions.

I was able to achieve two moderately difficult projects.

Sessions are well planned – woodwork was my favourite occupational therapy.

What do you need?

No previous experience is necessary, but you must have a referral from your ward. Beginners are welcome.

What are the benefits?

Research has found that woodwork can improve coordination, increase your confidence and generate a sense of self through achievement. It is also a useful practical skill.¹³

When does the group meet?

There are two open woodwork groups, plus the woodworkers' session. Each occurs weekly for two hours.



Attending woodwork helped in my therapy, and also helped me to challenge my problems.

- 1 Olivier, J., Huxley, P., Bridges, K., et al. (1996). *Quality of life and mental health services*. London: Routledge.
- 2 D. Beales, Personal communication, 2010.
- 3 Masi, C.M., Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Cassey, M.Z, Kinney, L., & Piotrowski, H. (2003). Internet Access and Empowerment. *Journal General Internal Medicine*. 18(7), 525-530.
- 4 Pearson, J. (1996). *Discovering the Self through Drama and Movement: The Sesame Approach*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- 5 Pearson, J. *Play, Slade and Human Development*. Sesame Institute. Retrieved April 23, 2010, from <http://www.sesame-institute.org/slade.htm>
- 6 Bittman, B., Berk, L.S., Felten, D.L., Westengard, J., Simonton, O.C., Pappas, J., & Ninehouser, M. (2001). *Alternative Therapies*. 7(1), 38-47.
- 7 Madenlian, R.B. (1979). *An Experimental Study of the Effect of Aikido Training on the Self-Concept of Adolescents with Behavioural Problems*. Dissertation Abstracts International. 40A, 760-761.
- 8 Sempik, J., Aldridge J., & Becker, S. (2003). *Social and Therapeutic Horticulture: Evidence and Messages from Research*. Loughborough University: Thrive and CCFR.
- 9 Timmons, A., & MacDonald, E. (2008). *Alchemy and Magic: the Experience of Using Clay for People with Chronic Illness and Disability*. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 71(3), 86-94.
- 10 McGee, M. (2008). Literature review in psychiatry: A peer-reviewed journal providing evidence-based information to practicing clinicians. *Meditation and Psychiatry*. 5(1), 28-41.
- 11 Reynolds, F. (1997). Coping with chronic illness and disability through creative needlecraft. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 60(8), 352-356.
- 12 Haley, L., & McKay, E. A. (2004). Baking gives you confidence: Users Views of Engaging in the Occupation of Baking. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 67, 125-128.
- 13 Mee, J., Sumsion, T., & Craik, C. (2004). Mental health clients confirm the value of occupation in building competence and self-identity. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 67(5), 225-233.



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources

www.fsc.org Cert no. SA-COC-001654-CQ
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

Printed on Soporset by Crucial Colour
Photography: David Hares Design: Piers Rutterford

Published: May 2010



Occupational Therapy
Bethlem Royal Hospital
Monks Orchard Road
Beckenham BR3 3BX

www.national.slam.nhs.uk