

Expressive Arts Therapy Interventions for relieving emotional and physical suffering in cancer patients

Chair:

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Peter Mai, MD MA has been establishing a psycho-oncology service at his psychiatric practice in Zurich after resigning from his position as leading consultant at psychiatric services near the capital Berne, Switzerland. After having specialized in psychotherapy, psychosomatics and psycho-oncology, he became fascinated by the healing resources of the creative process and arts and studied expressive arts at Tamalpa Institute, N. California (Anna and Daria Halprin) and art therapy at the Institute of Art and Therapy, IKT Munich (G. Schottenloher), Germany, using creative therapies as an integral part of his clinical work and has been teaching psychotherapeutic arts interventions internationally.

Description of workshop

This half day workshop will be divided into three parts:

- 1) an overview of the most useful application of art therapy interventions for patients with cancer
- 2) some clinical case presentations will show the effects of the creative process on a physical, emotional and spiritual level: attendees will be introduced to the topics of “autonomy control”, “intermodal transfer” and the “decentering process” of art therapy interventions
- 3) during the experiential part of the workshop, the attendees will be introduced to different arts modalities in order to recognize the therapeutic impact of specific art interventions and how to implement them. If time allows we will reflect about an international Arts Exhibition presenting stories and art products of cancer patients to highlight the benefits of the creative process as a therapeutic tool.

Learning objectives:

1. How to facilitate some useful art interventions as a specific indication during acute stages of illness, as a supporting tool during the rehabilitation process and how to foster meaning during the final stage of illness.
2. How specific art therapy interventions could meet the special needs of cancer patients in this context by reducing anxiety and emotional stress, enabling perception and facilitating expression of emotions, promoting inner strength and sense of purpose, to strengthen and support autonomy and establishing new life perspectives.
3. By participating in the self-experiential module, attendees will reconnect to their own innate creative potential on a physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual level and understand the therapeutic potential of the transforming abilities of creative therapies and how to apply them to their patients.
4. Participants will as well learn how to use and facilitate some specific expressive art therapy tools for their own self-care and psychohygienic use whilst working with patients and experience an innovative stress management tool.