

## Our Project Story

Creative Therapies  
Groupwork



**Tell us about the funded project – what did you set out to achieve? Who participated? How successful was the project? Will your project continue?**

Our aim was to provide easier access to our specialist support services for people dealing with complex issues around addictions, poor mental health and homelessness as we recognise the crossover between these issues and sexual trauma.

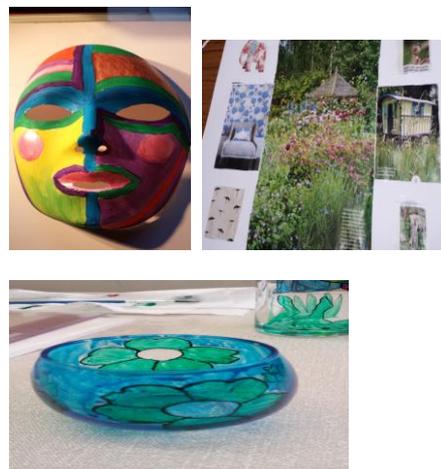
Not everyone who has had poor mental health will necessarily have had sexual trauma but they are often at increased risk of sexual exploitation by the chaotic nature of their lifestyles. We also recognise how difficult it is for people to come forward and disclose so we have used the Creative Therapies sessions to make that transition easier. It has also allowed frontline staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of the effects and impact of sexual trauma and of the support we can provide.

We created a programme of events using art, craft and writing therapies and, initially, decided on a women only group and a men only group. Very quickly, at the behest of the participants, the two groups merged very successfully. Participants felt comfortable in each other's company and many commented of their experiences of "feeling normal for a while" and the importance of not being judged.

We had an average of 9-10 people for each session, sometimes as many as 12-13 which made for lively discussion and a good level of positive energy in the room. Participants came from different agencies – Salvation Army Men's Shed, Women's Aid, Addictions agencies and some self-referred through friends/associates from Mental Health agencies who had taken part and then told them about the group. The project has continued in several other parts of Argyll and will be returning to Oban in the coming months. Local workers did keep the initial group going for some time after the Dedicated Groupworker sessions ended.

"I love coming here even though I don't normally mix with people much"

"This helps me see things in a more positive light"



**What were the health benefits?**

Many participants reported feeling more optimistic about the future and feeling less isolated.

Some formed new social networks which took them away from networks which were more closely tied to addictions etc.

**Where there any unexpected outcomes?**

Some participants re-engaged with other support agencies because they felt more able to address issues from their pasts.

### Contact details for your project:

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