



TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic • 100 Old Billerica Rd., Bedford, MA 01730



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THE ARTS IN HEALTHCARE

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Have you ever felt the healing power of being in the presence of a beautiful painting? When you hear a piece of music you love, do you take in a breath and feel at once peaceful and energized? Does experiencing a performance of exceptional dancers get your toes tapping and uplift your spirit? The beneficial effects of the arts are being incorporated into health care in creative and unusual ways to enhance our own innate abilities to heal.

A growing number of hospitals and medical centers are being planned with attention to how the physical environment effects our well-being. Many have art in hallways, patient rooms, and waiting rooms. Art displayed on the walls of hospitals humanizes the environment and helps reduce stress in patients and staff alike. Incorporating elements from the natural world such as gardens, courtyards and nature photography can have restorative effects and positive outcomes. One research study compared the recovery time of surgical patients that had a view of trees outside their window to those that had a view of a brick wall. The tree-view patients had shorter hospital stays, received less pain medications and had fewer post operative complications than the patients with a view of a brick wall. (Ulrich, R. : *View Through A Window May Influence Recovery From Surgery*, Science, v224: p420-423, 1984).

Music heard in health care settings can create an atmosphere of rest and rejuvenation for those recuperating, as well as for staff. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released a report based on 600 studies showing that design in hospitals, including sound and light can have a dramatic effect on how fast and how well patients recover. (Ulrich, R.: *The Role of the Physical Environment in the Hospital of the 21st Century: A Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity*, Report to The Center for Health Design, 2004). Exemplar Good Samaritan Medical Center in Lafayette, CO, incorporated music into hospital design in an effort to create a more holistic healing environment. The arts speak to our humanity in subtle and powerful ways.

Storytelling, puppetry and drama performed in the lobby of a children's hospital can be presented interactively so patients are involved in the story, offering a cathartic or humorous way to cope with a disease. The power of laughter is at the heart of groups like the "Charlie's Chaplains Hospital Clown Creative Arts Ministry." Laughter Therapy can reduce stress, increase oxygen levels, decrease pain, ease anxiety, improve mood and add joy to life.

Patients who participate in the creation of art can be empowered to face their disease and transform limiting emotions through their artistic expression. Some Expressive Therapies include music, art, dance, writing, and drama to name a few.



One such modality is Sand Tray Therapy in which the participant is encouraged to create a "world" in a tray of sand using miniature figurines, toys, shells and various objects. The result can be a microcosm of our inner world reflected in metaphor and symbolism. It becomes a safe outlet to explore our fears, express our hopes or simply shift our focus from our troubles. Even at times when our health is compromised, we can still summon our creativity from within and be changed by the experience.

The National Endowment for the Arts highlights some of the research being done on the arts in healthcare. "Patients with life-threatening illnesses such as cancer may engage in art activities in order to mourn, grieve, and celebrate life. The arts also empower patients to endure painful treatment and post-treatment conditions, and to find healing and meaning in their experience. Artists can be part of an interdisciplinary team in which art has been incorporated into cancer patient care as well as the cancer unit setting". (Bailey SS: *The arts in spiritual care*. Semin Oncol Nurs 13(4): 242-247, 1997.)

In her book, *Art and Healing: Using Expressive Art to Heal Your Body, Mind, and Spirit*, Barbara Ganim writes, "Healing with art is a journey that will take you into the depths of your soul. There you will encounter parts of yourself that you never knew existed. As you create the artwork that exposes these parts of yourself so that you may know and understand them and the mysteries they hold, you will be healed. But the healing experience does not end with the creator. Sharing our

healing journeys and the artwork that documents this inner voyage can affect and heal the viewer as well."

BEDFORD DRUG PICK-UP

The Bedford Police will pick-up unused and expired medicines at the Clinic on Friday, February 8. Please drop off your medicines between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm on February 8. Unfortunately, we cannot accept them on other days or at other times.

HEALTH EDUCATION TALK

On Wednesday, February 13, Eric Steinberg, NP will give a health education talk on "Alzheimer's Disease Research: Diagnosis and Treatment."

Eric Steinberg is associated with the Boston University Alzheimer's Research Center and has been conducting research on various aspects of Alzheimer's Disease including on-going studies that have been conducted at Carleton-Willard Village.

CLINIC NEWS

As a reminder, the Clinic offers a variety of services including Acupuncture, Massage and a Chiropractor. If you would like more information or to make an appointment, please call the Clinic.