



What is Healthy Living Through Art?

By Jason Petruccelli

“The objective is simple; mindfulness in the process of art will promote relaxation, which in turn promotes good health. It is wonderfully simple – and wonderfully effective”

- Jay Petruccelli

In Tibetan Buddhist culture, a mandala is an important sacred image that expresses a person’s journey towards unity of the self. Mandala Art believe that art is a spiritual practice where one can express his or her own uniqueness; experiencing satisfaction, self-worth and an understanding of personal value by creating.

Healthy Living Through Art is a concept first designed by Jay Petruccelli – artist, owner and creative director of Mandala Art – in early 2000; inspired by the difficulties his close friends and family members experienced while dealing with terminal and mental illness.

The core principle of *Healthy Living Through Art* is simple; participating in creative, artistic activities offers tremendous health benefits to people suffering from all types of illness, including depression and anxiety.

Primarily based in the medium of mosaic, Mandala Art holds *Healthy Living Through Art* participatory sessions for those in the community suffering from these illnesses; providing them with a chance to relax and heal through their contribution to creative projects.

It is well documented that art is a powerful channel to express emotion; art therapy uses visual art to help patients understand troublesome experiences and devise ways of coping. Art can help clarify a person’s experience with their illness, allowing them to express feelings of loss, isolation, alienation and depression.

Healthy Living Through Art encourages people with an illness of any kind to free themselves from stress and allow their mind to take time away from being sick. It’s a chance to be creative and give oneself permission to separate this creative moment from one of stress and worry.

Rather than attempting to block out or repress any suffering, *Healthy Living Through Art* encourages participants to live in the creative moment and experience life by embracing their own artistic creativity.

Healthy Living Through Art treats mental illness in the same manner as other forms of illness – as separate to the sufferer, rather than as the characteristic that defines them. By separating the illness from the person, space is created to gain valuable perspective and recover self-esteem.

Since its inception, *Healthy Living Through Art* has been striving since to improve and nurture community health, creative expression, family connections and community awareness of all types of illness affecting Australians. Mandala Art aims to promote the benefits of integrating artistic creativity into people’s lives; art provides a sense of self-worth, of self-esteem and fulfillment.