

# Arts and Health in Wyoming

Information from the **Wyoming Arts Alliance**

## Benefits to Health

Studies indicate that exposure to the arts:

- reduces pain, lowering prescription pain relief
- improves physical, emotional and psychological health
- reduces anxiety, depression, emotional distress
- boosts the immune system
- shortens hospital stays

Some specifics:

- Music therapy reduces anxiety, calms the brain's neural activity, and restores emotional balance, showing positive contributions to control pain and boost the immune system
- Visual Arts therapy help people express experiences that are too difficult to put into words, demonstrates statistically significant decreases in symptoms of physical and emotional distress during treatment, decreases negative emotions, reduces depression, and increases positive communications between patient and caregivers
- Dance and Theater or Movement-based therapy increases motor activity, improves range of motion and ambulation, relieves stress and anxiety, improves cognitive and psychological well-being (word and listening recall, problem solving, and self esteem)
- Expressive Writing therapy (writing about traumatic experiences) improves anger expression, depression, pain control and severity, fatigue, and psychological well-being

Arts-in-Medicine program participation correlated with improved SF-36 (short form 36 item patient-reported survey of patient health) social functioning, bodily pain, and physical role functioning scores, as well as a trend toward greater albumin levels, but also higher phosphate and lower calcium levels.

Source: *American Journal of Public Health*



## Arts Therapy Benefits Patients With Dementia and Alzheimers Disease

Studies indicate that Dementia / Alzheimers patient exposure to the arts:

- Boosts self-esteem
- Increases focus and attention span
- Provides an outlet for emotions
- Recalls memories
- Activates neurons, improving brain function
- Facilitates communication

Studies show that art therapy can enhance communication, brain function and social interaction for dementia patients. In fact, visual art can trigger dormant memories and emotions, inspiring conversations among these patients who normally struggle to express themselves. What's more, when dementia patients create the art themselves, that activity stimulates the whole brain. Instead of just responding to images, patients must plan, remember, create patterns and use motor skills.

Source: *NeuroPsychiatric Hospitals: A Place for Mom*