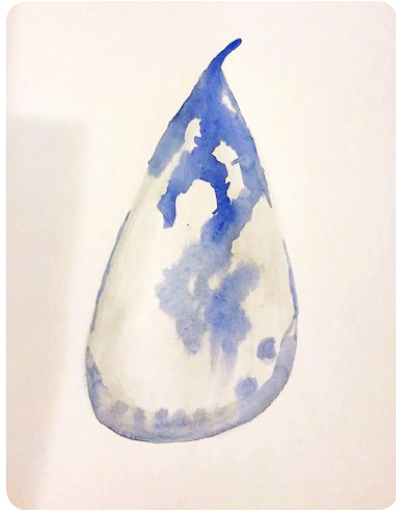


Finding connection through art...

Creating art can be just what one needs to refocus in moments of anger. Following is a story from one of our facilitators at a substance use outpatient treatment program, where two women found peace and connection during an A Window Between Worlds' art workshop.



We began our art group late one day because a fight broke out between two participants just before we started. I was really worried we would have to ask one or both of the women to leave our treatment program, and for one of them, leaving the program would have meant she could lose her housing.

After a mediated conversation, both participants calmed down enough that they decided they wanted to participate in the art group that day. The painting process seemed to soothe them a great deal and one of them even shared that making art helped her re-center herself: "I really enjoyed this time because I was able to forget everything that happened and just breathe for a little while and lose myself in painting."



She apologized to the woman she'd been fighting with, and both participants made insightful and kind comments about each other's art. I think art-making together was the best possible thing that could have happened to bring them both out of fight-or-flight* mode and come back to their best selves. The process appeared to serve as a reconciliation — they walked out of the room together, talking.



"...I was able to forget everything that happened and just breathe..."

This is one of those moments I feel really privileged to witness while doing this work!

* Research has shown that when a person feels threatened — as these two women did before the workshop — the response is either fighting (what happened here), running away (flight) or being unable to do anything (known as freeze).



Based on annual evaluations submitted by facilitators in 2018:
93% agree that the art workshops helped make a positive difference in participants' relationships and interactions with others