



AWBW

art transforming trauma

A WINDOW BETWEEN WORLDS

"It was easier for me to put paint to paper than say the words out loud."

CHILD SURVIVOR AND WINDOWS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

WHO WE ARE

A Window Between Worlds is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit based in the artistic community of Venice, California.

We train and support staff at a variety of human service organizations to facilitate our proven healing arts curriculum with individuals and communities who've experienced trauma. Our program offers art as a powerful resource for replacing violence and shame with safety and hope. Since 1991, over 300,000 children and adults have participated in the Windows Program healing arts workshops.

WHO WE REACH

Our network of partners includes domestic violence service centers, sexual assault agencies, homeless shelters, veteran's programs, schools and universities, foster youth services, substance abuse treatment centers, prisons, community programs, and more.



2019 PROGRAM IMPACT

- 14,130 art workshops
- 39,180 individuals participating 96,653 times
- 520 workshop facilitators
- 240 partner organizations

Facilitators reported:

- 99%: the Windows Program helps participants feel more hopeful
- 98%: it helps with building resilience
- 96%: it helps to build and improve peer-to-peer relationships



Adult participants reported:

- 93%: the healing arts workshops help me feel more positive about myself and my future
- 95%: art allows me to more easily express myself



- 90%: art helps me gain new insight into my life

TRAUMA AND ART

- Seven out of ten people will be impacted by trauma in their lifetime¹
- Up to 43% experience trauma by the age of 18²
- Creating art³:
 - leads to stronger resilience
 - increases self-reflection and self-awareness
 - reduces distress
 - alters behavior and thinking patterns
 - has positive physical effects

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your support is invaluable to making our program available to thousands across the country.

- Make a donation at awbw.org
- Volunteer
- Join our monthly giving program
- Sponsor an event
- Hold an art supply drive

1,2: istss.org/public-resources

3: *How art changes your brain.* doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0101035

AWBW/ About Us



OUR MISSION

A Window Between Worlds is dedicated to empowering individuals and communities impacted by violence and trauma through a transformative healing arts program.

OUR VISION

A Window Between Worlds views art as a catalyst to release trauma, build resilience and ignite social change. When individuals create art in a safe community they can be heard and respected — replacing violence and shame with safety and hope.



A Window Between Worlds (AWBW) collaborates with human service agencies across the country, training and supporting the staff at these partner organizations in facilitating our healing arts curriculum. AWWB's program allows these partnering organizations to expand their offerings to best serve those coping with the consequences of a variety of violent and traumatic experiences.

Our Philosophy

Since the beginning, the AWWB philosophy has been grounded in the idea that the art workshops are a "Window of Time" — a safe, non-judgmental space where participants can authentically express themselves in new ways.

By creating art in hands-on AWWB workshops, participants are provided this safe environment to tell their stories, build resilience, identify and name emotions, self-regulate, gain a stronger sense of self-worth and much more.

Facilitator Trainings

Established employees of human service agencies may apply to become Windows Facilitators. Training sessions include the AWWB philosophy, trauma-informed care approaches and experiential art workshops.

Ongoing Support and Curriculum

AWWB Program Department personnel are consistently in direct contact with active Windows Facilitators, along with sending monthly email updates. Through awbw.org facilitators can access and search over 500 workshops in our ever-evolving curriculum.



Our History

1991 — Artist and art teacher Cathy Salser tours the country, facilitating art workshops at domestic violence shelters

— Ongoing art workshops held at a local shelter and A Window Between Worlds is born

1993 — Held first "Women's Windows Program" group Leadership (Facilitator) Training

1996 — "Children's Windows Program" piloted in response to Los Angeles Domestic Violence Counsel request

1998 — Partnerships expand to outside of California

2001 — Teen-specific training materials created

2003 — Partners with first sexual assault agency

2004 — AWWB workshops first held in a prison

2005 — Curriculum available to Facilitators online

2008 — Family-specific training resources created

— First school-based partnership begins

2013 — Embodied art (movement) based workshops added to curriculum

2014 — New mission unveiled, reflecting facilitators' work with additional communities

— "Women's Windows" name changed to "Adult Windows Program" for gender inclusivity

2016 — Held first "Art Transforming Trauma" Conference

TODAY — More than 300,000 children and adults have participated in AWWB art workshops

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS WHO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE, INCLUDING:



AWBW/ Windows Program Impact

Our Windows Program facilitators complete workshop logs, as well as fill out an annual evaluation, providing quantitative data about workshop participants and the impact of our healing arts program.

In 2019 AWWB...

supported
520 facilitators at **240**
partnering organizations

These art workshop facilitators...

worked with
14,211 children & teens
and
24,969 adults
who participated in
workshops
96,653 times

75% of our partners
would not have a healing
arts program without our
support

83% of participants
are from a low income background

Types of trauma Windows Program participants have experienced:

97% **Domestic Violence**
81% **Sexual Assault**
77% **Homelessness**
67% **Marginilization/Oppression**
61% **Immigration**
60% **Foster Care System**
45% **Human Trafficking**
42% **Gang Violence**
19% **Other**
12% **War Zone**

Facilitators reported that the Windows Program helps...

- 99%: workshop participants feel more hopeful
- 98%: with building resilience
- 75%: participants learn to practice self-care
- 90%: participants identify, process, and express feelings
- 76%: improve communication between adults and children
- 96%: to build and improve peer-to-peer relationships

Adult participants are given the option to complete evaluations at the end of each workshop.

Adult participants reported that the healing art workshops...

- 95%: allow me to more easily express myself
- 93%: help me feel more positive about myself and my future
- 90%: help me gain new insight into my life
- 93%: help me find the courage to make healthy decisions for the future
- 90%: help me open up about things I haven't shared before



AWBW/ Windows Program Voices

This art has **helped me more** than 6 months of consistent therapy.

Participant, Center for a Non Violent Community

I know how much positive impact this program will have in our community, especially among the women whose human rights and human dignity have been violated. I am excited with all its **healing potential**, and can't wait to start implementing the workshops.

Windows Training Attendee, Esperanza Community Housing

I can feel myself **getting happy!**
My anger is going into the clay.

Child Participant, SafeHouse Denver, Inc.

We are excited to share [at a conference] about how Windows has **changed the face of our program** and the lives of our clients for the better, and to hold space for a conversation about the right of all peoples to express themselves creatively.

Facilitator, YWCA of Greater Lafayette

As a survivor of sexual abuse, I like the fact that we don't always have to talk about it. I've been locked up since I was 15. I never had a chance to be a kid, these workshops help me to **let go of negativity**.

Participant, Just Detention International

I have observed [participants] increasing support for one another and **finding peace** for their own story.

Facilitator, Patton State Hospital

I feel **safe and supported** in art group more than anywhere else.

*Child Participant,
Community Violence Intervention Center*

I liked doing this activity because I feel that I have never been **able to voice** what my body wants, it has always been used by others.

Participant, East Los Angeles Women's Center

This really **helped me deal** with the death of my son. I didn't realize I was going through all of this.

Participant, California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc.



After coming to this group, I **don't feel lonely** anymore.

*Child Participant,
SCOE/Art from the Heart*

I am excited to share what I have learned not only with my clients but also my colleagues and community. The exercises helped me

get in touch with my creative and expressive side. I thought I had lost that part of me forever.

Windows Training Attendee, St. Johns Well Child

These workshops help me to **open up** to the fact that being abused was not my fault.

Participant, Wichita Family Crisis Center

The biggest difference with having art programs are that the clients will have **a form of release** without pressure unlike traditional support groups which are based on 'sharing and participation'.

Facilitator, La Casa, Inc.

I loved the class. I could **be myself again**. Thank you so much for letting me know that jail can't change who I really am.

Participant, Tri-Valley Haven - PREA

I'm still hurting and in pain. But this **gives me hope**. I don't feel stuck.

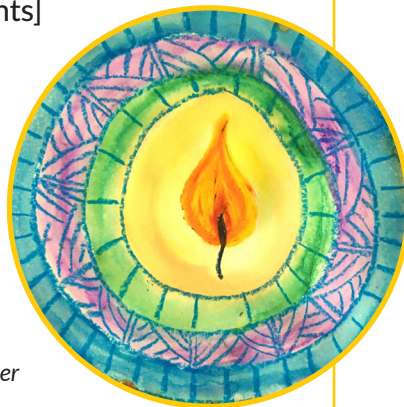
Participant, Su Casa

The healer carries wounds that are still healing. Thank you for helping me surface those in a **safe space** and working through them!

Windows Training Attendee, Interface Children & Family Services

I realize how strong I am for being able to get through this.

Child Participant, Child Protection Center, Inc.



AWBW/ Popular Workshops

Our healing arts workshops provide a “Window of Time” for participants — a safe, non-judgmental environment where they can authentically express themselves in new ways. We have an ever-evolving curriculum, with hundreds of workshops developed in collaboration with our partnering program facilitators. Here are some of our most popular workshops:



Touchstones

No matter where you go, you can take Touchstones with you as a reminder of your hopes, dreams, intentions, or anything else you want to hold near. How will you use Touchstones in your life?



Heart Stories

Take a moment to listen to your heart. If it could speak, what story would it tell?



The Monster in Me

Sometimes our big feelings can make us look, feel, and sound like a monster. What are your monsters and what might they need?



Claiming Who I Am

Let go of negative messages you've received and claim who you really are. How will you express your unique identity?



Red Flag Banners

Learning from past experiences of domestic violence, what are some of the warning signs that we can use as future red flags to help keep us safe?



Take a Break, Self Regulate!

Breaks can be healthy for your body and mind. What will your next break be? Roll the dice to see.



Personal Needs Flower

Many of us are good at taking care of others and sometimes we forget about ourselves. What are some of your needs that can be taken care of?



Inside/Outside

Let's take a moment to explore the person everyone sees on the outside and the person you know on the inside. What are some differences and similarities you notice?



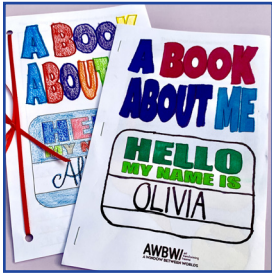
Creating a Safe Place

Thinking about what safety means to you, what one place can you go to, real or imaginary, that makes you feel this way?



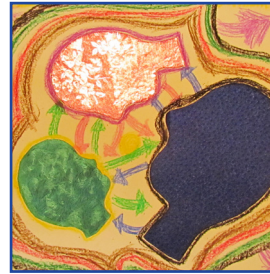
River Stories

Honoring your resilience throughout your past and present, what does your river of life look like?



A Book About Me

As the main character of your book, you get the chance to write your own story. How will you tell the story of you?



Examining Relationships Collage

Relationships can be challenging and wonderful for many reasons. What do your relationships look like



Inner Self Portraits

We can learn a lot about our strength by looking inside of ourselves. What lies inside of you?



Story Trees

With sturdy roots and continuous growth, trees can tell the story of our lives. How will your tree represent you?



The Lotus Flower

Just like the Lotus Flower
pushes its way through the
mud, we too can make our way
through dark, murky places.
How are you like the Lotus?



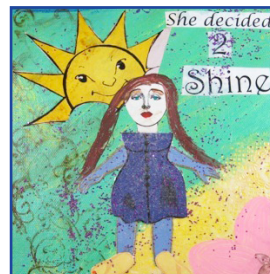
Expressing Feelings with Watercolor

Explore the wonder of watercolors as you let your feelings flow onto the paper. What colors will you choose?



Putting Myself Back Together

There are so many different feelings that we can hold throughout our bodies. As you take a closer look, what do you learn about yourself?



Permission Canvas

If you could give yourself permission to do something you've always wanted to do, what would it be?



Building Resilience

Let your flower remind you of your resilience. In what ways do you blossom and grow?



Positive Piggies

Positivity has the power to uplift and inspire. What affirmations can you share for yourself and others?

Silence to Spoken

Ten-year-old Everly had been identified in her elementary school as a child who was in need of extra support, but little of her situation and trauma was known by school administrators. Soon after, she started AWBW art workshops facilitated by Rachel Cross as part of the Art from the Heart program.



*"I still have
anger in me
but learning to
draw it out has
helped me a lot.
Art pushes me
to keep going
because I get
to express my
emotions."*

*– Everly, 10-year old
survivor and art
workshop participant*

Everly wore her hurting heart on her sleeve. The look in her eyes read broken, sad and lonely. I knew right away that this sweet little girl had been through something major. At first, Everly did not talk, and I didn't push her to speak. I knew that in her own time, when she was ready, she would share her thoughts and feelings with the group. Four weeks went by in silence but on the fifth week the Monster In Me workshop sparked something in her.

In this workshop Everly was asked to look within and to identify her hurt or anger and to give it a face, a monster if you will. Everly wanted to focus on her pain. In AWBW there is no wrong way to do art so Everly was free to express herself in the way that she needed so that healing could begin.

As she created, she was silent as usual, but by the end of the workshop, we all got to hear what her voice had to say. She described her drawing as, "This is me, I'm crying, this is all of my pain; and my eyes are like hearts but they are broken because of my mom. This reminds me of my mom."

After that workshop, Everly asked if she could stay and speak with me privately. During this time, Everly expressed to me the deep pain she felt from the trauma she endured that led up

to the separation of her from her mother and siblings. I could see the pain roll down her face in the form of tears, I could hear in her voice a desperation to get better, to find some relief.

After she had finished sharing, I made a suggestion to her. I asked her, if she would like, she could do the Write a Letter to a Parent workshop. In this workshop the participant writes a letter to a parent and they get to express anything they may need to. I suggested that she write a letter to her mother. Upon Everly's return with the letter, she allowed me to read it and discuss it with her. When we were done, Everly shredded the letter! As soon as she put that letter into the shredder she began to smile. The first smile I had ever seen on her face!

Today Everly is thriving in areas that were previously darkened by her trauma. Both her teacher and other school administrators have commented on her positive changes since attending the group.



Creativity and Confidence

A Window Between Worlds' first partnership in 1991 was with Sojourn, a domestic violence program that is now a part of The People Concern in Santa Monica. We received an email from a woman who attended AWBW workshops at Sojourn explaining the impact creating art has had on her life.



Private Paradise: "This is my hopes and dreams of a **SAFE** and peaceful future; unlimited possibilities. This is my 'invitation' to true freedom after my liberation."

*"I rediscovered
my humor, my
wit and my
voice..."*

I'm pretty sure you're the wonderful people who supply the healing arts workshops for the survivors of domestic violence at Sojourn. I simply had to reach out personally to say how grateful I am that you've done this.

I would NEVER have considered doing something so 'indulgent' as an art group before but it's become a revelation for me during my recovery process. I was extremely cynical about it and impatient at first, but after 3-4 sessions, I kid you not, I rediscovered my humor, my wit and my voice again. Even more shocking was the old familiar feeling of confidence seeping back into my frozen terrified brain.

However, the most wonderful thing your course gave me was the explosion of creativity and confidence in parenting my autistic son. Now our apartment is virtually



wallpapered with all kinds of art projects we do together. I also use it as a 'solution' to problems he encounters during play and difficult transitions — to sit down and design and 'tape together' a mini-house for his soft toys would NEVER have happened a year ago!

Please do NOT ever stop this extremely important work. My son and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You have helped 'save' us and made our lives so much more colorful and bright.

Based on participant evaluations submitted by adults in 2019:

93% report that the workshop helped them to feel more positive about themselves and their futures