

ART OF CAREGIVING SESSION NOTES

SERIES I

Session 1: Nov. 17, 2016 (morning) **Visual Journaling (Gateways)** **Instructor: Kerry Yaklin**

- 8 attended; 3 could not make it
- Instructor provided information about, and examples of, Art Journaling, and demonstrated basic techniques with Gouache and Colored Pencils.
- The project was to (1) create a door, “a gateway to a place of self-nurturing,” (2) create a “sacred space . . . a space that encourages and invites you to feel full, satisfied, happy, and content,” and (3) to contemplate the types of actions one can take to “honor their needs.”
- Instructor provided a handout with templates/examples of doors & keys that can be easily drawn.
- Along with demonstrating basic techniques & providing the templates, the instructor encouraged the participants to explore on their own.
- Prior to the session, the instructor assumed the participants would each have had some art experience, but this was not the case, so she adjusted her plans to include more specific instruction.
- Time ran out before the lesson was completed.

Session 1: Nov. 17, 2016 (evening) **Visual Journaling (An Introduction)** **Instructor: Noa Kritzer**

- 9 attended; 2 could not make it
- Instructor provided information about, and examples of, Art Journaling, and demonstrated basic techniques with colored pencils, while focusing on “trying to decrease intimidation.”
- Participants engaged in some discussion about “new beginnings,” and created the 1st page of their journal.
- In the very beginning of the session, one participant used a lot of time introducing herself and telling her story. The instructor plans to get started right away for the next session; she suggested the sessions be longer, especially in the beginning for introductions.

Session 2: Dec. 1, 2016 (morning) **Ceramics (Raku Glaze)** **Instructor: Tracey Priska**

- 10 attended; 1 no show
- Participants glazed pre-thrown, bisque-fired vessels, and fired them outside as a group
- **From instructor:**

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- What worked well: Fabulous designs on Raku vessels! The outcome of the project really excited the participants even though they did not know what to expect when glazing.
- What could have worked better: We got started late, and time was a bit of a factor during the firing. We finished about 30 minutes late, and some participants had to leave.

Session 2: Dec. 1, 2016 (evening)

Ceramics (Coil Vase)

Instructor: Meri Maka

- 7 attended; 3 no show
- Due to weather conditions, most participants did not arrive until 10:00. Art-making started at 10:20am-11:30am.
- Participants created holiday vases, built with coils.
- Low fire glaze was used; pieces to be picked up at next session.
- **From instructor:** “Very enjoyable project, hands-on and therapeutic. [The participants were] very proud of their work.”

Session 3: Dec. 15, 2016 (morning)

Painting (Watercolor)

Instructor: Tracey Priska

- 7 attended; 3 could not make it; 1 no show
- Started late due to inclement weather.
- Watercolor painting using contact paper for masking.
- A couple of participants (brother & sister), made ornaments using the take-home kit from the previous week to give as gifts to the other participants.
- One participant travels 175 miles from Saugatuck; he attends an afternoon caregiver support group at Beaumont.
- One participant has attended Meet Me @the BBAC with her husband.
- **From instructor:** “Successful project - easy technique for all art levels. Larry [made a] highly detailed turtle, and stayed 1/2 hour after everyone left”

Session 3: Dec. 15, 2016 (evening)

Painting (Watercolor)

Instructor: Meri Maka

- 8 attended; 2 no show
- Participants created a winter scene with pine trees
- **From instructor:** “[Participants] really enjoyed painting; [it was a] calming experience. One participant said the repetitive motion allowed them to meditate”

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SERIES II

Session 1: Jan. 12, 2017 (morning)
Visual Journaling (Personal Mandala)
Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 7 attended; 4 could not make it
- Session began with meditation & breathing exercises.
- Instructor walked participants through the process of creating a circle step by step; first they drew a square, then used a ruler to cut it into four pieces, then drew curved lines connecting the pieces until they had a circle on the page—this was the most challenging part of the session.
- Participants were provided with examples of simple, interesting shapes that could be used to fill in their mandala.
- Participants found the exercise to be enjoyable and relaxing.

Session 1: Jan. 12, 2017 (evening)
Visual Journaling (Gratitude and Happiness)
Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 10 attended; 2 no show
- Session began with Ted Talk video: The Happy Secret to Better Work, by psychologist Shawn Achor who argues that happiness inspires productivity:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLJsdqxnZbo&v=1=en>
- Instructor provided examples of gratitude pages from her own journal and demonstrated basic techniques with Gouache (wet on wet, wet on dry, resist with wax and tape).
- Instructor found that the video was effective in motivating participants.

Session 2: Jan. 26, 2017 (morning)
Visual Journaling (Found Poetry)
Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 6 attended; 2 could not make it; 1 no show
 - Session began with a brief presentation from a representative from Same Address (Garry Cole), who discussed “8 Tips for Managing the Challenges of Caregiving.”
 - Project consisted of gluing a page from a book into the journal, creating a poem using selected words on the page, then covering the rest of the page with color, designs, and/or collaging.
 - Instructor provided examples of found poetry journal pages, but they were all fairly complex; more simple examples would be helpful
 - Participants found the project to be very enjoyable
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Session 2: Jan. 26, 2017 (evening)

Visual Journaling (Function + Beauty)

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 9 attended; 5 could not make it
 - Session began with a brief presentation from a representative from Same Address (Garry Cole), who discussed “8 Tips for Managing the Challenges of Caregiving.”
 - Instructor walked participants through the process of assessing different areas of their lives, and encouraged them to look at where they invest the most time, and where they may need to invest more time (personal fitness, career, etc.).
 - Introduced more functional ways to use the visual journal; focused on the concept of making things beautiful and functional, creating visual representation of ideas, and making & using habit trackers.
 - **From Instructor:** Speaker was succinct and interesting.
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Session 3: Feb. 9, 2017 (morning)

Jewelry & Metals (Bracelets)

Instructor: Nancy Clark

- 8 attended; 2 could not make it
 - One participant, without prior notification, brought the person he takes care of (his girlfriend); this caused some minor discomfort of the group (it was a bit awkward) – ArtAccess Coordinator followed up with an email.
 - Used assorted glass and plastic beads to make bracelets.
 - Sanded and polished small, flat bronze and copper pieces, and created surface designs by stamping and texturing; added pieces to bracelets.
 - Received an email with this message from a participant during the session: “Like the class with Nancy today”
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Session 3: Feb. 9, 2017 (evening)

Jewelry & Metals (Bracelets)

Instructor: Janice Deagan

- 9 attended; 3 could not make it; 2 no show
 - A new participant arrived for her first session; she sat down & began making friends without hesitation.
 - Used assorted glass and plastic beads to make bracelets.
 - Sanded and polished small, flat bronze and copper pieces, and created surface designs by stamping and texturing; added pieces to bracelets.
 - One participant commented that banging the metal was a great stress relief.
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Session 4: Feb. 23, 2017 (morning)

Painting (palette knife; acrylic; flowers)

Instructor: Diane Smith

- 7 attended; two called/emailed to cancel; one “no-show”

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- One participant informed us that another participant was “having a hard time coping with her husband’s decline.”
- One participant was very pleased with the bracelet she had made during the previous session; it had been too big, so she took a few pieces off & used them to make earrings. She makes jewelry as a hobby.
- One participant does not enjoy the journaling, and she plans to attend only the 3rd & 4th session or next series.
- One participant commented on how enjoys that this time seems to provide the “ability to totally relax.” He also discussed how the culture difference between CG & CP can be a challenge.
- Same participant expressed that, while every project had been wonderful, the instructors had gone over their instruction time at each session. This left them less time to actually work on their project.
- Participants begin with paper before moving to the canvas. A couple drew first, but most used the knife exclusively.
- They asked many questions about palette knife technique & color mixing, and they were very into the texturing.
- **From instructor:**
 - It was freeing to not have to draw (not intimidated at all) & the projects became very impressionistic. No drawing was a plus.
 - If there were more than 12 participants, a helper would be useful.

Session 4: Feb. 23, 2017 (evening)

Painting (palette knife; acrylic; landscapes)

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 8 attended; two called/emailed to cancel; five “no-show”
 - Two participants (husband & wife) shared pictures of them using the take-home kit (clay pinch pots), and doing other art projects, with the aunt they care for.
 - Two participants were wearing the bracelets they made during the previous session; they shared that they were very pleased with the results.
 - During the time before moving into the studio, the participants sat in groups chatting with each other about topics ranging from caregiving to art-making and other leisure activities.
 - During the studio time, participants were very focused on their work. They were working quietly with music playing in the background.
 - After the session, a few of the participants agreed that doing the palette knife work was “freeing” – there was a basic consensus of enjoyment and relaxation.
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SERIES III

Session 1: March 2, 2017 (morning)

Visual Journaling (Self-help Robot)

Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 9 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel; two “no show”; one called to switch from evening to morning
- Three new participants; as usual, the newcomers were quickly welcomed by the veterans of the program.
- During the time before moving into the studio, the participants sat in groups chatting with each other about topics ranging from the weather & the drive here to family, caregiving, children & grandchildren to traveling & home repair.
- Instructor walked them through the process of making a Self-help Robot in 4 steps:
 - Make a mess on the page, “marks & spills & slop & chaos”
 - Make a list of “several things that aren’t working for you right now” & simplify them down to a single word
 - Create a robot on cardstock (instructor provided examples of different robot “body parts” to use)
 - Make two boxes next to the robot. Label one “OUT” and the other “IN”. The out box will contain the words in your list from step 2, and the inbox will contain the opposite words. (For example, if one of the words in your outbox is exhausted, you can use well-rested or energetic for the inbox)
- One participant commented, “I really enjoy that this is for artists and “non-artists.””
- Another participant said, “Kerry is very talented at making people feel safe to play; she is energetic and nonjudgmental.”
- **From instructor:**
 - This was an enjoyable and successful project.
 - One participant, who is usually very quiet & reserved, was very lively and dancing during the session.
 - One new participant expressed that she had been scared to come b/c she feels she has no imagination/is not artistic; she was pleased and very glad that she came.
 - The participants really loosened up during this session; being instructed to “create a mess on the page” allowed them to get silly.
 - One participant was moved to tears when she thanked the instructor.

Session 1: March 2, 2017 (evening)

Visual Journaling (Zentagle)

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 12 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel; one “no show”; one called to switch from evening to morning
- Five new participants; as usual, the newcomers were quickly welcomed by the veterans of the program.

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- One of the new participants brings her mother to Meet Me; a couple of the new participants knew a couple of the returning participants from other local places.
- During the time before moving into the studio, the participants sat in groups chatting with each other about topics ranging from caregiving to work to art.
- Instructor discussed, and showed examples of, Zentangle; discussed using art as meditation, and how patterns can be visual representations of feelings.
- Participants created basic silhouettes, and filled them with Zentangle.
- During their studio time, the group was very focused and working quietly.
- A few participants described the project as being very relaxing.
- One participant remarked, “I love coming to this program, especially right after I visit my mother.”

Session 2: March 16, 2017 (morning)

Visual Journaling (Mason Jar)

Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 9 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel (both were new); three “no show” (two were new); one of the new participants who could not attend has not been able to find a caregiver for her husband during this time.
- One new participant attended, and was warmly welcomed by others.
- During the time before moving into the studio, the participants sat in groups chatting with each other about topics such as travel, bike riding, exercising, medications, and caregiving.
- Session began with meditation & breathing exercises; instructor asked participants to listen to the message that their heart is speaking—the Mason jar is meant to be the “safe & special place on the page to hold the insight that speaks out from your heart’s center.”
- Instructor provided a printout of cupped hands for each person to collage onto their page; next they followed the steps to draw a jar for the hands to hold. They used paint and salt to create the night sky inside the jar. The instructor shared a quote for them to paste onto the page, and asked them to fill the jar with positive affirmations & adjectives about themselves.
- After the session, one participant said, “Kerry is such a great instructor!”
- New participant said she “really enjoyed it” and plans to continue attending.
- Instructor expressed that this was one of the most impactful sessions she has facilitated; she also felt that the mix of collaging and creating was very positive and empowering.

Session 2: March 16, 2017 (evening)

Visual Journaling

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 12 attended; two participants were “maybe”, neither showed up; two “no show”
- One new participant
- During the time before moving into the studio, participants were sharing their visual journals with each other, and discussing art and caregiving
- One participant said, “This program is such great respite.”

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Session 3: March 30, 2017 (morning)

Ceramics (Neriagi bowls; Black and White Porcelain)

Instructor: Tracey Priska

- 8 attended; four participants called/emailed to cancel (two due to care recipients' hospitalization, one due to lack of caregiver, and the other was a personal reason); two "no show"
 - Prior to their time in the studio, the participants were eagerly sharing the work in their journals with each other and the AofC staff. There was so much socializing going on that we could hardly get them into the studio.
 - Instructor encouraged participants to explore pattern and design.
 - "I just can't express how much this program helps; I am just so appreciative"
 - **From instructor:**
 - Everyone really enjoyed getting their hands messy.
 - There were some participants who really wanted precise designs; it took a little comforting to get them to accept the looseness of the patterning.
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Session 3: March 30, 2017 (evening)

Ceramics (Neriagi bowls; Black and White Porcelain)

Instructor: Tracey Priska

- 10 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel (one due to care recipient's condition, two due to personal commitment); three "no show"
 - **From instructor:**
 - This group saw the results of the first group and really ran with the project.
 - A little too much water made some designs murky, and we had to go back in and clean them up.
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Session 4: April 13, 2017 (morning)

Book-making (Japanese Stab Binding)

Instructor: Lyz Luidens

- 8 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel (one due to personal commitment; one is on vacation); six "no show" (one has been having trouble finding a caregiver & the other's care recipient is in the hospital).
- One newcomer attended & was warmly welcomed by the other participants.
- Prior to their time in the studio, participants' discussions included car accidents, spring flowers & planting, self-defense, emergency preparedness, and caregiving.
- One participant stopped to thank us for offering the program; she is very pleased with her experience.
- One participant explained that she and another participant have a running joke about "who is the least talented," and added that "neither of [them] really care though, it's all - in good fun."
- The project consisted of Japanese Stab Binding to create an accordion book, and letter press & collage tissue paper for decorating the covers.

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- After the session, one participant talked about how wonderful this program has been for her, “when I have a bad day, I really look forward to this.”
- **From instructor:**
 - The project was a bit technical, especially using the awl and creating the binding, but the group caught on quickly and seemed to have fun figuring it out.
 - Those who figured it out first, helped the others in the group.
 - Participants were very amenable to waiting for their turn with the awl & with the letter presses.
 - Bigger, stronger awls were needed for this project.

Session 4: April 13, 2017 (evening)

Book-making (Japanese Stab Binding)

Instructor: Lyz Luidens

- 12 attended; one participant called/emailed to cancel; three “no show.”
- Prior to their time in the studio, participants’ discussions included travel, photography, caregiving challenges, former careers, and sharing caregiver resources.
- One participant said, “I am just so happy to be here; I had a really rough day & I need this.”
- The project consisted of Japanese Stab Binding to create an accordion book, and letter press & collage tissue paper for decorating the covers.
- Bigger, stronger awls were needed for this project.
- One participant explained how, during the first couple sessions, she had a difficult time tuning out her caregiving responsibilities; now, she is able to come to the sessions, and even though she keeps her phone nearby in case of an emergency, she is able to enjoy the couple of hours set aside for herself.

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SERIES IV

Session 1: April 27, 2017 (morning)
Visual Journaling (Gratitude)
Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 9 attended; one new participant; one on vacation; one “no show” (emailed later to explain that she gotten lost on the way, due to construction).
- One participant brought the projects she made with the take home kit to show (clay beads; accordion book).
- New participant welcomed warmly by the others; conversations before going into the studio ranged from caregiving to the current gallery exhibition (student show in the Commons).
- Project consisted of a crayon resist, watercolor wash, and collaged sun & rays.
- First, participants wrote a definition of gratitude, or a quote about gratitude, or what gratitude means to them. Inside the sun, they wrote things they are grateful for in a spiral.
- Participants told the instructor that they enjoyed the process, and that it was not intimidating
- Time was a challenge during this session; choosing the pieces for their collages took more time than anticipated
- After the session:
 - “This was fun and relaxing!”
 - “I never would’ve done this on my own, but I really liked it”
 - “So amazing how different each person’s is, but they were all successful!”
 - (New participant), “Thank you! This is wonderful!”

Session 1: April 27, 2017 (evening)
Visual Journaling (Lettering)
Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 6 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel; two “no show”
 - Before going into the studio, participants were sharing caregiving resources (phone numbers, websites, info), and discussing caregiving challenges and vacations.
 - “This is the only thing that makes sense; thank goodness for you guys!”
 - “Thank you for spoiling us”
 - Instructor demonstrated various lettering techniques, and showed examples.
 - Participants experimented with brush pens and chisels pens, and practiced “faux calligraphy”
 - Instructor discussed the expressive qualities of lines, and they examined various signatures.
 - Project for following session was introduced: “something you’re looking forward to”
 - **From instructor:** This session was very intimate, because we all sat close together for the demonstrations, but it was also loose and fun.
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Session 2: May 11, 2017 (morning)

Visual Journaling (Choices: Moods and Coping with Emotions)

Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 7 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel; one “no show.”
- One participant brought art from home to share with the others.
- Conversations before going into the studio ranged from caregiving to gardening to art-making.
- Project consisted of using color, line, and pattern to depict a set of chosen emotions; participants used pen, pencils, and pencil rubbings to create an “emotional wardrobe,” beginning with the prompt/quote: “my moods are like clothes, I can change them to suit my needs.”
- Instructor noted an abundance of positive nonverbal/body language indicating participants’ understanding and interest in the project.
- Design-wise, the project was a bit intimidating for some.
- This project, unlike most, went more quickly than anticipated; participants were told they could either “expand their wardrobe” or work on their own once they had finished.
- After the session:
 - “I really liked this!”
 - “This was a very practical lesson”

Session 2: May 11, 2017 (evening)

Visual Journaling (Looking Forward)

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 9 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel; five “no show.”
- Before going into the studio, participants were sharing their journal work with each other, and sharing caregiving resources (phone numbers, websites, info), and discussing caregiving challenges and vacations.
- New participant welcomed warmly by the others.
- In the studio, participants focused on something they were looking forward to doing or seeing.
- Instructor showed examples from her journals, showed collage techniques, stamping, and stenciling.
- They discussed symbolism, and how to visually represent abstract concepts.
- Before starting the full two-page spread project in their journal, the instructor discussed composition & balance, and showed them how to do thumbnail sketches.

Session 3: May 25, 2017 (morning)

Wet Felting

Instructor: Tracey Priska

- 7 attended; three participants called/emailed to cancel; two “no show.”

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- Session began with a speaker: Elizabeth (Beth) Spencer (Lecturer, University of Michigan School of Social work), whose focus is on caregiving and dementia; discussion surrounding “self-compassion.”
- The project consisted of wet felting over stones to create felted pouches.
- **From instructor:**
 - The participants got up and danced and let loose as they rubbed the rocks.
 - They said it was really meditative and relaxing.
 - There were several ideas shared to transform pouches into purses, sachet holders, eyeglass cases, etc.
- **Participant comments:**
 - “We are learning to be kind to ourselves.”
 - “Now I am stress free.”
 - “This program is like insulation from getting overwhelmed; having something positive in the background helps keep crises at bay.”

Session 3: May 25, 2017 (evening)

Wet Felting

Instructor: Tracey Priska

- 8 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel; five “no show”
- The project consisted of wet felting over stones to create felted pouches.
- **From instructor:**
 - They loved the project and really were amazed at how durable the pieces were after just a few mins of rubbing.
 - One participant wanted to do more needle felting than wet felting, and wanted a lot more instruction; that took away from other participants doing the wet felting.

Session 4: June 8, 2017 (morning)

Painting (Acrylic - "the Happy Honu View")

Instructor: Kerry Yaklin

- 8 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel; five “no show.”
- Discussions before going into the studio ranged from the felting project to scheduling to accidents, art-making, interior decorating, and gardening.
- Participants used acrylic paint on a canvas 9x12" board in the creation of an underwater (scuba-divers) view of a sea turtle (Honu - in Hawaiian) swimming in a reef.
- Honu was chosen for this project because Hawaiian culture views the sea turtle as a symbol integral to their way of life; they represent good luck, endurance, and longevity, and they are symbols of peace and strength.
- Participants followed the instructor through guided steps:
 - Making the "tunnel view" from below the reef using tints and shades of blue and white on their canvas,
 - Using brushes and sponges to create at least four variations of sea life/vegetation around the border in a black silhouette, and

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- Using basic shapes to build their Honu(s) in black paint. Number of turtles was up to the individuals wishes.
 - **From instructor:**
 - Interpretive project allowed for little to no pressure, along with guided step-by-step instruction and two example canvases completed to show scope of project.
 - Simple shapes and emphasis on "irregularity" as a more accurate representation of "nature" allowed participants to feel confident in their mark making.
 - Everyone was able to complete the project, felt success in doing it, and seemed to admire their sweet turtle and its reminder of goodness.
 - One participant said, "It's fail proof!"
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Session 4: June 8, 2017 (evening)

Painting (Watercolor – Flowers)

Instructor: Noa Kritzer

- 8 attended; two participants called/emailed to cancel; five “no show.”
 - Session began with two speakers:
 - Elaine Reed, BFA w/a concentration on Memory Loss, from University of Michigan Geriatrics; artist in residence at University Hospital, and
 - Anne Mondro, MFA, from University of Michigan School of Art and Design.
 - Their topic was: “How to Facilitate an Art Project with Your Loved One.”
 - Instructor discussed the color wheel and demonstrated some basic color mixing and watercolor techniques.
 - Participants used artificial flowers to use as models for their paintings.
 - Presenters went over the time allotted, so the participants did not have as much time as they would have liked to work on their project.
-