



## What is Creative Expression?

Creative

*adjective* cre·a·tive \krē-'ā-tiv, 'krē-, \

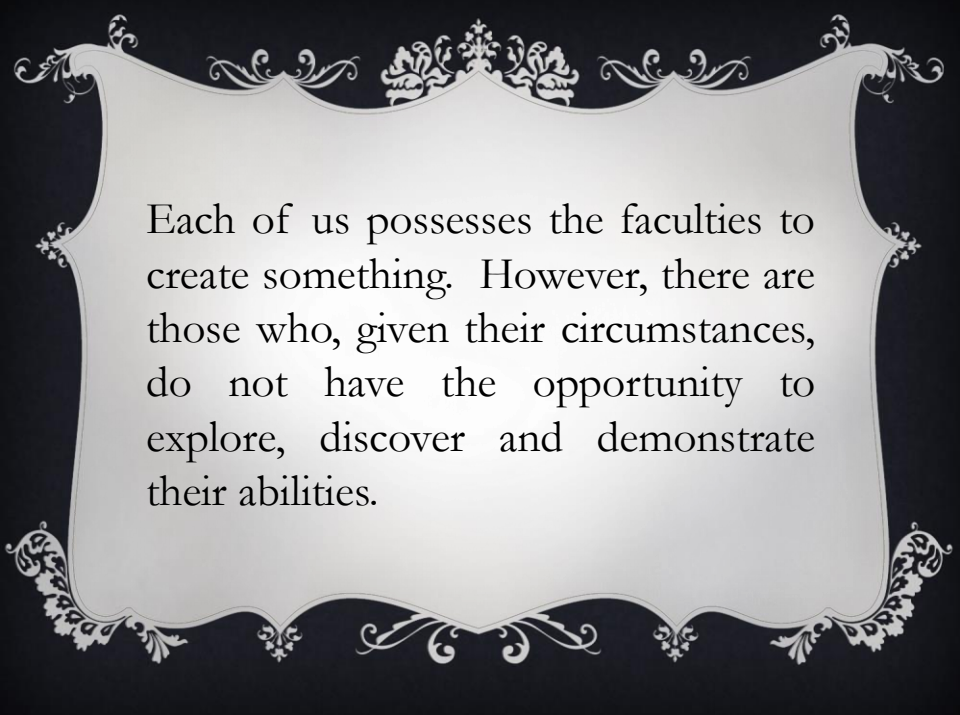
using the ability to make new things  
or think of new ideas: involving the  
process by which new ideas, stories,  
etc., are created.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary



## What is Creative Expression?

A space to freely declare or show our ability to make something, that is allowing us to prosper in mind, body and spirit.



Each of us possesses the faculties to create something. However, there are those who, given their circumstances, do not have the opportunity to explore, discover and demonstrate their abilities.

## Methods of Creative Expression

Drama  
Dance  
Music  
Creative writing  
Visual arts

## Applications of Creative Expressions

Adapted from: [www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org](http://www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org)

### *Music Engagement*

Whether it's passive listening or the active creating, engaging in music has demonstrated effectiveness in decreasing anxiety and tension, calming neural activity in the brain, and reducing heart and respiratory rates.

## Applications of Creative Expressions

Adapted from: [www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org](http://www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org)

### *Visual Arts*

An activity producing a work that can be viewed such as painting, sculpture, collage, photography or anything else—expressed visually. Visual expression is correlated with self-esteem and positive self-identity. It also brings a sense of achievement to the individual, reduces stress, increases positive emotions, and decreases markers of emotional distress. People with emotional difficulties desire to continue in the healing process.

## Applications of Creative Expressions

Adapted from: [www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org](http://www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org)

### *Movement*

This includes formal, informal and free form dances can contribute to a positive body image as well as increased self-awareness, problem solving abilities, self-esteem, and cognitive and psychological well-being.



## Applications of Creative Expressions

Adapted from: [www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org](http://www.JoyfulHeartFoundation.org)

### *Expressive Writing*

Journaling, storytelling, free writing, poetry, or personal memoir, can alleviate sleep disturbance, depressed mood, pain severity, avenue for emotional catharsis, reduce physiological stress resulting from inhibition, improve cognitive processing, and facilitate in the extinction of negative emotional responses to traumatic memories. It can also positively affect anger expression, feelings of social support and other general quality of life measures.

#### Other References:

Baikie & Wilhelm (2005). Emotional and physical benefits of expressive writing. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 11, 338-346.  
De Moor, Sterner, Warneke, Gilani, Hall, Amato et al. (2002). A pilot study of the effects of expressive writing on psychological and behavioral adjustment in patients enrolled in phase II trial of vaccine therapy for metastatic renal cell carcinoma. *Health Psychology*, 21 (6), 615-619.

## FACILITATING A CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS GROUP

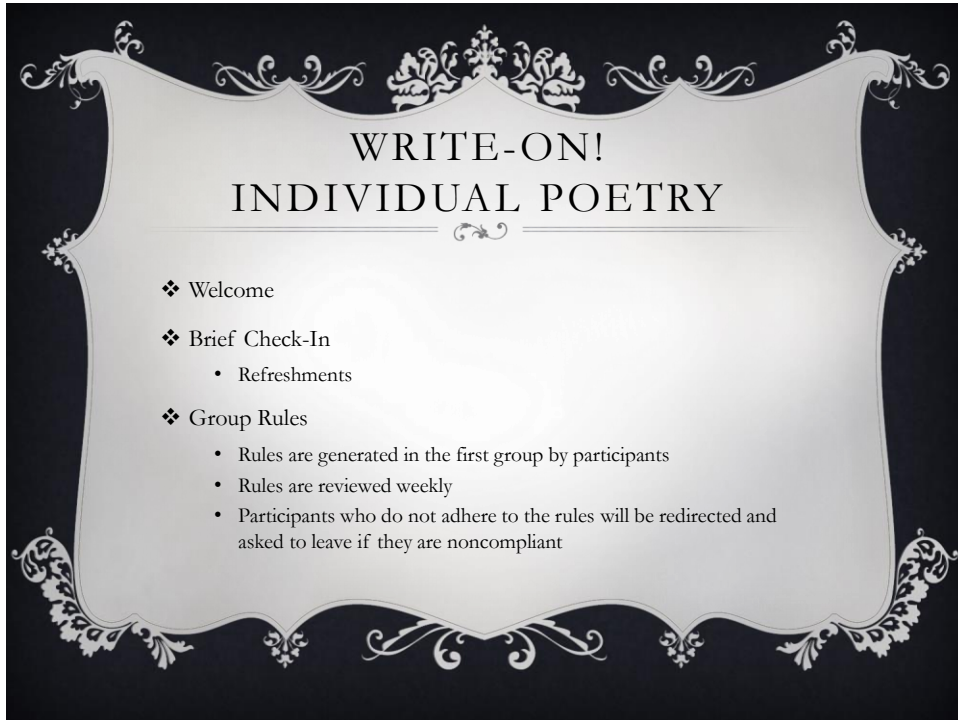
WRITE-ON!

## FACILITATING A CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS GROUP

- ❖ Facilitators guide the creative expression experience
  - Group is open
  - Group is not designed to process feelings
  - Group is client centered and driven
  - Participants are invited to help with set/clean up
- ❖ Creative expression does not have to rhyme; it's free expressions of group members perceptions of the topic
- ❖ Group members are welcome to elaborate on their creative expression
- ❖ If participants arrive late, they quietly enter and join the group activity
- ❖ No negative criticism

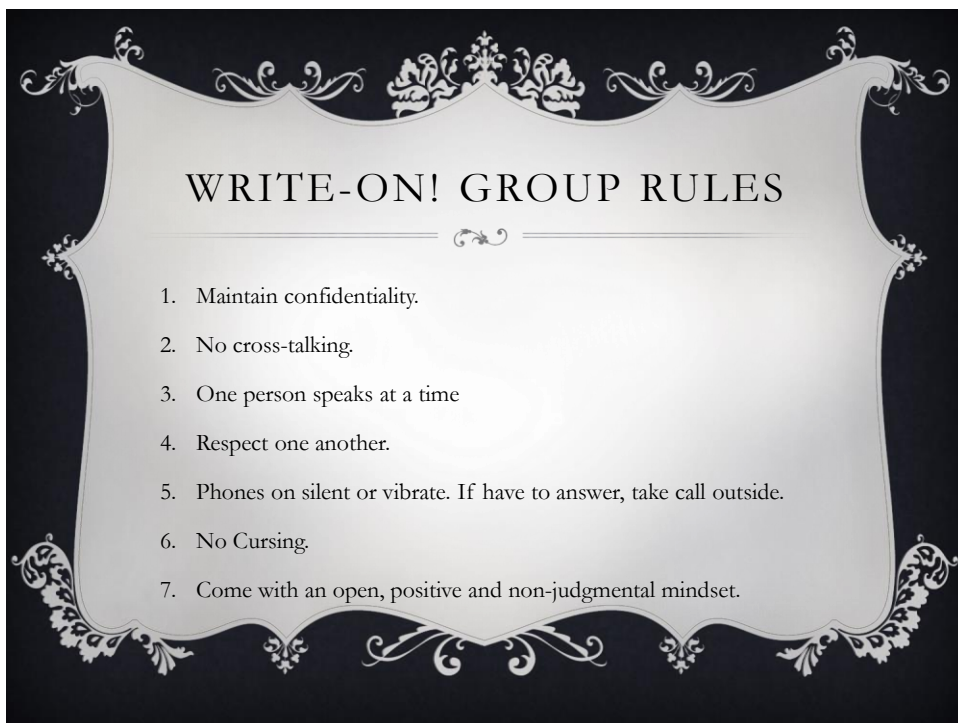
## FACILITATING A CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS GROUP

- ❖ Required Materials
  - White Board
  - Markers
  - Notebook for each participant
  - Pens and pencils
  - White paper to make name tags
    - Participants think of an adjective that describes themselves and begins with the first letter of their first name
    - The name tag is displayed every week
    - New participants make a name tag at the beginning of each group; elicit help from all participants needed to suggest adjectives



## WRITE-ON! INDIVIDUAL POETRY

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Brief Check-In
  - Refreshments
- ❖ Group Rules
  - Rules are generated in the first group by participants
  - Rules are reviewed weekly
  - Participants who do not adhere to the rules will be redirected and asked to leave if they are noncompliant



## WRITE-ON! GROUP RULES

1. Maintain confidentiality.
2. No cross-talking.
3. One person speaks at a time
4. Respect one another.
5. Phones on silent or vibrate. If have to answer, take call outside.
6. No Cursing.
7. Come with an open, positive and non-judgmental mindset.





## WRITE-ON! INDIVIDUAL POETRY

### ❖ Brainstorming

- Participants facilitate this section
- Participants suggest words or phrases that are written on the board for two to five minutes
- Voting
  - Raise hand high to vote
  - Participants can vote more than once
  - The word or phrase with the most votes wins
  - If there is a tie, participants can decide to write on both words or phrases or use one for the group poem



## WRITE-ON! INDIVIDUAL POETRY

### ❖ Writing

- Allow 10-15 min for Creative Expression
  - The time may vary depending on number of participants
- Facilitator decides when to begin feedback based on number of participants who have finished writing
- Facilitator notifies participants to begin wrapping up by giving warnings when two minutes are left
- If needed, participants can continue writing while feedback is given (not recommended)



## WRITE-ON! INDIVIDUAL POETRY

❖ Feedback:

- Group participants are invited to read their creative expression
- Clap after each creative expression
- Constructive feedback is provided by all who desire to share
- Encourage participation even if participants have no desire to share



## FACILITATING A CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS GROUP

### *WRITE-ON! GROUP POETRY*

## WRITE-ON! GROUP POETRY

### ❖ Choose a topic

- Either use the word or phrase that has the second most votes, or use the other word or phrase from the tie
- All participants write two to three sentences on the topic
- Facilitator compiles and reads group creative expression
- If there is a computer in the room, type creative expression and read as one collective expression
- If no computer is available, decide the order of the individual writings and have participants number their writings. Collect and read as one collective expression. Type and present at next session for inclusion in journal.

## WRITE-ON! GROUP POETRY

### ❖ Pass the Paper

- Facilitator writes a word or phrase on top of a piece of paper
  - The number to be determined by number of participants in the group
  - Each participant receives a piece of paper with a word or phrase
  - Participants have one minute to write about the topic on the paper
  - Pass the paper clockwise until the participants receive their original piece of paper
  - Each participant reads the creative expression

### ❖ Feedback

### ❖ Dismissal

- Everybody clean up!

## WRITE-ON! JOURNAL

- ❖ Each year a collaboration of participant's writings are compiled into a journal and sold at our Annual "May is Mental Health Month" Celebration
- ❖ All proceeds from the Journal sales are equally divided and returned to the participants who contributed creative expressions
- ❖ Feel free to purchase a few to take to your agency

## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

- ❖ Questions/Comments
- ❖ HAVE FUN and WRITE-ON!
- ❖ Enjoy the creative expression process at your agency
- ❖ Thank you for coming!!! ☺☺☺
- ❖ Contact information:

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Downtown Mental Health Center

640 South Maple Avenue, LA, CA 90013 Phone: 213.996.7300

Thandiwe D. Gregory, LCSW : [Thgregory@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:Thgregory@dmh.lacounty.gov)

Rizaldy R. Ferrer Ph.D.: [RFerrer@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:RFerrer@dmh.lacounty.gov)