Creative Integration
Alan Watters, University of Otago

Art therapy techniques can be used as a different way of engaging the student in the counselling space. Students will often enter sessions with the expectation of sitting and conversing with a counsellor. Using art adds a different quality to the discussion and changes the focus within the therapeutic relationship. It provides opportunities for the student to express themselves through a different modality.

The workshop will be based on Lusebrink's 'Expressive Therapies Continuum' (2010). This is a theoretical system, organising three different levels of expressive functions using art materials. The continuum initially focuses on the individual's kinaesthetic/sensory level. This is based in movement and sensation. This is followed by the perceptual/affect level, which finds organisation in a formal visual element as well as dealing with frustration. Lastly, there is the cognitive/symbolic level, which connects to executive functioning giving rise to connection and storytelling.

The workshop aims to give participants an experience of the creative process. It would be organised in such a way that it would give the participants an opportunity of working through the three different levels. The activity will be broken down into four parts. Firstly, the facilitator will provide participants with an explanation of theory and introduce art materials. The second part will centre on motion and mark-making. The third part will explore the process of perceiving images. Lastly, the participants will be encouraged to title or give a story to the image. The idea of the process is to capture and embody movement, perception and symbolism.

References

Learning outcomes
- Participants will have an opportunity to experience the process of the three levels of the expressive therapies' continuum
- Participants will be provided with some theoretical insights underpinning the continuum that may be useful in the counselling setting
- Equip participants with practical materials needed for this type of approach.

Presenter
Alan Watters, University of Otago

Alan has been a Registered Nurse in Mental Health for over 20yrs, working in both the UK and NZ in a variety of community and inpatient settings in Mental Health. He currently works as a Wellbeing Counsellor for Student Health Services at Otago University. Most recently, his work has focused on skill building and coping strategies that enable independent recovery and resilience in everyday living.

He has a specialist interest in arts therapies, and is registered as an Art Therapist with ANZATA (Australia & New Zealand Arts Therapy Association).