Trendsetting Therapeutic Arts Services for Foster Youth – A Journey into Lyrical Expression:

Prefatory Comments: Supporting youth in moving toward permanent, productive futures; it has been recognized that too many youth involved in the child welfare systems transition to independence and adulthood without command of the life skills, adequate support and preparation for challenges faced by young adults.

Detailed Workshop Proposal:

This plenary session/workshop focuses on cutting-edge programs and strategies to assure that youth have what they need to achieve educational & employment success, efficiently express themselves and develop self-advocacy skills.

In the first half of this seminar, participants will learn about the therapeutic value of expressive Arts and how we use these Art programs to reach teens in an effort to build resiliency and reduce trauma amongst teens in foster youth. Participants will learn about our efficacious programs, the malleable nature of these expressive Arts programs and how we collaborate across organizational lines to improve the life of the youth we serve.

During the second half of the workshop; A Journey into Lyrical Expression - participants will engage with our instructors to experience first-hand how therapeutic and engaging these programs can be with their foster clients. This workshop is guaranteed to provide a shot of adrenaline to any weary participant and be a focal talking point for those involved.

Therapeutic Value of Expressive Arts

Art is an important and universal facet of human expression and is as old as human civilization. Expressive arts include activities such as dancing, drawing, drama, creative writing, painting, writing poetry, making music, sculpting, and photography. Professions such as art, music, and movement therapies require graduate-level training and special professional certifications in the United States. The therapeutic use of expressive arts by non-credentialed professionals is different in that it simply focuses on the inherent therapeutic value of children participating in creative endeavors. Both approaches encourage creative expression, but the context, facilitation, and purposes are different.
The opportunity to grow and develop through the Arts has never been more apparent. Our creative, expressive arts programs, in particular, have been used to motivate youth towards self-awareness through self-expression. This has been shown to reduce stress and accelerate psychological and physical healing.

The creative process has been documented to cause specific areas of the brain to release endorphins and other neurotransmitters that affect brain cells and the cells of the immune system, relieving pain and triggering the immune system to function more efficiently. In conjunction with these physiologic changes, the Arts can regularly change people’s attitudes, emotional states, and perception of pain.

**Conference Program Description:**

This plenary session/workshop focuses on cutting-edge programs and strategies to assure that youth have what they need to achieve educational & employment success, efficiently express themselves and develop self-advocacy skills. The session provides an opportunity to hear and learn about effective program designs, collaborative strategies within and across organizations/institutions, and approaches specifically designed to engage and create opportunities for youth confidence, competency, and development. This workshop includes an in-depth look into our award-winning Lyrical Expression program – where participants will engage in a trendy and motivating session. This workshop is sure to get your creative juices flowing and blood pumping.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate understanding of creative Arts as a therapy theory and its approaches.
2. Learn how to reach youth in a community-wide effort to build resiliency and reduce trauma amongst teens in foster youth.
3. Participants will learn how to use a modular approach towards effective programming for youth.