

Framing the Canvas

Arts and Photography as Mediums for Wellness

The Bermuda Experience

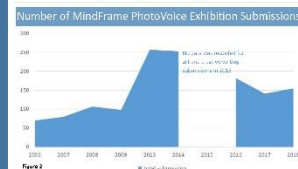
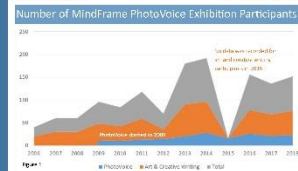
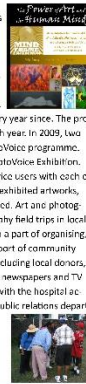
Debra Roof, OT MSc, and Filipe Costa, OT MSc
debra.roof@bhb.bm or filipe.costa@bhb.bm

BACKGROUND

Co-facilitated by therapists and service users, the MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition is an annual show of art, photography and creative writing by people who use mental health, intellectual disability and substance misuse services at the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute (MWI), services that come under Bermuda Hospitals Board. Art and photography therapies run throughout the year, and the exhibit showcases art and photography, alongside commentaries from the service users. The PhotoVoice programme is heavily influenced by Wang and Burris's (1997) Photovoice methodology.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Bathie (2012) discusses the historical use of art mediums in occupational therapy. Art therapy has a long history at MWI. The first known exhibition artwork by service users was in 2005 in the MWI lobby, with the name 'MindFrame' coming from the services users themselves. The exhibition was so successful, the following year it moved into a community gallery in the capital city, Hamilton, at the Bermuda Society of Arts where it has run every year since. The programmes and exhibitions have grown in scope each year. In 2009, two occupational therapists established the first PhotoVoice programme. The show was then re-named the MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition. PhotoVoice included commentaries from the service users with each of their photos. This practice soon extended to the exhibited artworks, and creative writing submissions were also included. Art and photography sessions are offered at MWI with photography field trips in local settings. Service users also have increasingly been a part of organising, setting up and promoting the exhibition. The support of community stakeholders has proved pivotal over the years, including local donors, photographers, designers, printer/framers, radio, newspapers and TV stations. In addition, partnerships were fostered with the hospital accounts department for managing funds and the public relations department where posters, brochure, intranet bulletins, social media and coordination with newspaper/radio/TV. Proceeds from art sales go back to the service user. MWI and the gallery for administrative/venue costs.



Staff (5) and service users (10) were asked to evaluate the benefits and challenges of the MindFrame PhotoVoice exhibition. The following themes came from their feedback.

Benefits		
Positive impact on staff and service users	Key at seeing work on display	Earning money/revenue
Recognition as artists (presentation for some after the show)	Promotes focus, relaxation, expression and reduces symptomatology	Improved wellbeing, self-esteem
Sharing of ideas and coming together	Socialisation, being around people (attending opening night)	Inclusive in public area (reduces stigma of MWI service users)
Commitments on art work	Gallery is an accessible location for Bermuda residents and tourists	Exhibition is now a well attended and recognised annual community event
Staff and service users see it come together in the gallery	Social events are work in frames	We like seeing narratives/stories
Going to different places for photography	Allows exploration of the lived experience	Service user led, eg participants involved in all processes
Learns skills in different areas, reveals hidden skills	Service user's speech at launch of exhibition, and involvement in media coverage	Opens up opportunity to explore other art, craft, expressive mediums



Challenges		
Insufficient Materials	No art therapist (2016-18)	Takes too long to receive funds
Motivations often extrinsic in nature	Errors in frames	Service user support
Writing narratives	Broken cameras (need functional cameras)	Time intensive for Occupational Therapists, on top of clinical work
Miscommunication leading to coordination challenges	Inconsistent record keeping	Coordination for project/implementation of plan



IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

MindFrame PhotoVoice's ethos supports occupational therapy client-centred practice (Byrant et al, 2014). The impact of this project in Bermuda is at many levels, for example, it increases the profile and awareness of mental health issues within the community, general hospital and political arena. It promotes positive user experiences through creative mediums and fosters recovery and social inclusion concepts. This challenges stigma whilst emanating hope as a 'catalyst for change' within participants. It is considered a tool that supports Psychosocial Rehabilitation principles and has progressed to promote users decision making, participation in promoting the exhibition e.g. TV, radio and newspaper interviews and adverts, wider-community places, peer-lead and ownership of the project.



PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

MindFrame PhotoVoice proves a valuable medium for service users at MWI and evaluation provides justification for sustaining the project in Bermuda. Support was received at many levels and it is now a project with a allocated funding and is led by an art therapist. MindFrame PhotoVoice fosters community partnerships and a public platform for service users' participation. This links to evidence-based interventions, which adds to the scope of practices by sharing this 'grass roots' project internationally e.g. Royal College of Occupational Therapists, Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists, and write up for journal. MindFrame PhotoVoice is considered a project that could easily be applied or implemented in other settings with or without many resources.



Framing the Canvas

Arts and Photography as Mediums for Wellness

The Bermuda Experience

Debra Roof, OT MSc, and Filipe Costa, OT MSc
debra.roof@bhb.bm or filipe.costa@bhb.bm

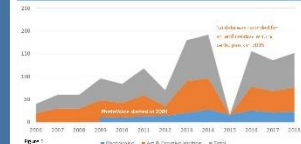
BACKGROUND

Co-facilitated by therapists and service users, the MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition is an annual show of art, photography and creative writing by people who use mental health, intellectual disability and substance misuse services at the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute (MWI), services that come under Bermuda Hospitals Board. Art and photography therapies run throughout the year, and the exhibit showcases art and photography, alongside commentaries from the service users. The PhotoVoice programme is heavily influenced by Wang and Burris's (1997) PhotoVoice methodology.

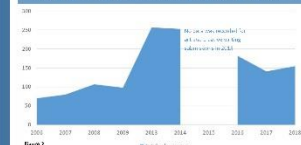
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Bathje (2012) discusses the historical use of art mediums in occupational therapy. Art therapy has a long history at MWI. The first known exhibition artwork by service users was in 2005 in the MWI lobby, with the name 'MindFrame' coming from the services users themselves. The exhibition was so successful, the following year it moved into a community gallery in the capital city, Hamilton, at the Bermuda Society of Arts where it has run every year since. The programmes and exhibition have grown in scope each year. In 2009, two occupational therapists established the first PhotoVoice programme. The show was then re-named the MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition. PhotoVoice included commentaries from the service users with each of their photos. This practice soon extended to the exhibited artworks, and creative writing submissions were also included. Art and photography sessions are offered at MWI with photography field trips in local settings. Service users also have increasingly been a part of organising, setting up and promoting the exhibition. The support of community stakeholders has proved pivotal over the years, including local donors, photographers, designers, printer, framers, radio, newspapers and TV stations. In addition, partnerships were fostered with the hospital accounts department for managing funds and the public relations department where posters, brochures, intranet bulletins, social media and coordination with newspaper/radio/TV. Proceeds from art sales go back to the service user. MWI and the gallery for administrative/venue costs.

Number of MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition Participants



Number of MindFrame PhotoVoice Exhibition Submissions



Staff (5) and service users (10) were asked to evaluate the benefits and challenges of the MindFrame PhotoVoice exhibition. The following themes came from their feedback.

Benefits

Positive impact on staff and service users	Joy at seeing work on display	Earning money/income
Recognition as artists (presentation for names after the show)	Promotes focus, relaxation, expression and reduces symptoms	Improved wellbeing, self-esteem
Sharing of ideas and coming together	Socialisation, being around people (attending opening night)	Inclusive in public area (includes signs of non-service users)
Compliments on art work	Gallery is an accessible location for Bermuda residents and tourists	Exhibition is now a well-attended annual community event
Staff and service users still come together in the gallery	Service users see work in frames	We like seeing narratives/stories
Going to different places for photography	Allows exploration of the lived experience	Service users feel, eg. participants involved in all processes
Learns skills in different mediums, reveals hidden skills	Service user's speech at launch of exhibition, and involvement in media coverage	Opens up opportunity to explore other art, craft, expressive mediums

By joining in the work they can see a connection
I can be anybody, not just a stereotypical service user
The public can see what we do
I share people that I can function and express myself

Challenges

Insufficient Materials	No art therapist (2016-18)	Takes too long to receive funds
Motivations often extrinsic in nature	Errors in frames	Service user support
Writing narratives	Broken cameras (need functional cameras)	Time intensive for Occupational Therapists, on top of clinical work
Miscommunication leading to coordination challenges	Inconsistent record keeping	Coordination for project/implementation of plan



IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

MindFrame PhotoVoice's ethos supports occupational therapy client-centred practice (Byrant et al. 2014). The impact of this project in Bermuda is at many levels, for example, it increases the profile and awareness of mental health issues within the community, general hospital and political arena. It promotes positive user experiences through creative mediums and fosters recovery and social inclusion concepts. This challenges stigma whilst embracing hope as a 'catalyst for change' within participants. It is considered a tool that supports Psychosocial Rehabilitation principles and has progressed to promote users decision making, participation in promoting the exhibition e.g. TV, radio and newspaper interviews and adverts, wider-community places, peer-lead and ownership of the project.

Cost of the Exhibition (2018)



PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

MindFrame PhotoVoice proves a valuable medium for service users at MWI and evaluation provides justification for sustaining the project in Bermuda. Support was received at many levels and it is now a project with allocated funding and is led by an art therapist. MindFrame PhotoVoice fosters community partnerships, and a public platform for 'service users' participation. This links to evidence-based interventions, which adds to the scope of practices by sharing this 'grass roots' project internationally e.g. Royal College of Occupational Therapists, Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists, and write up for journal. MindFrame PhotoVoice is considered a project that could easily be applied or implemented in other settings with or without many resources.



A Service User Perspective: Alana Dill

(2016 promotion)

https://youtu.be/4rR36k9aG_w

(Below photo from 2017 national television interview)

