

PAF – Puppeteer's weekend
Puppetry, Therapy and Healthcare Opportunities
Saturday 8th April 2006

1. Hearts&Minds

Introduction

- Magdalena Schamberger, Artistic Director of Hearts&Minds.
- Hearts&Minds is an arts-in-health organisation established in 1997, based in Edinburgh.
- We have experience of using the performing arts – including puppetry - in a less traditional setting, such as a health care environment and will hopefully provide inspiration for some puppeteers to consider the possibility of using their skills in such a setting.

Hearts&Minds Mission

- Our aim is to promote the quality of life for people in hospital and hospice care through the performing arts. We achieve this aim through the delivery of 2 arts-in-health programmes, namely the **Clowndoctors** programme for children in hospital and hospice care and the **Elderflowers** programme for elderly people with dementia. One of our most recent developments is **Tricky Business**, performing arts activities for young people with mental health problems, combining elements of both programmes. We are working with the Scottish Executive's 'National Programme' on this.
- Our programmes are delivered 40 weeks a year, on an ongoing basis, weekly or biweekly visits– depending on the size of health care units.
- We aim to contribute to the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of participants.

H&M Principles

The following principles underpin our programmes:

- We use the performing arts as a starting point for communication, stimulation and an outlet for creativity;
- All our practitioners are professional performers who undergo comprehensive arts-in-health training before working in a health care environment;
- Arts activities include clowning, improvisation, **puppetry**, dancing, storytelling, music, movement;

- We work in close partnership with health care staff, who refer individual participants to the programmes;
- Practitioners follow a referral system, planning each session and recording the outcomes afterwards;
- Evaluation systems include feedback from participants and health care staff.

2. The Clowndoctors Programme

Launched in 1999 and currently delivered in 8 health care units across Scotland.

3. The Elderflowers programme

- Research, development and training in 2001
- All participating ladies and gentlemen are suffering from a form of dementia.
- Assessment and continuing care
- 4 health care units
- Elderflowers family unit

4. Hearts&Minds Practitioners

International team. Currently 10 arts-in-health practitioners, one of which is a puppeteer and visual artist as well as performer (Ian Cameron)

- Red Nose – smallest mask in the world
- No make up;
- Delivering activities in character
- Character specific costumes names;
- Working in duos, mostly male/female partnerships
- Yellow doctors coat for Clowndoctors
- Old fashioned formal dress for Elderflowers

5. Benefits of our programmes

- Participation
- Empowerment
- Access to the arts
- Distraction and stimulation
- Demystifying medical procedures
- Development of social, physical and communication skills
- Communication through the arts

6. Background:

Hearts&Minds started out as a theatre company looking for new opportunities. I was working as a freelance performer and theatre director. Following a three month period of working with local actors for UNESCO in Senegal, I wanted to take the performing arts out of a more traditional setting and reach people who otherwise would due to their physical health - or lack thereof - not have access to the arts, in particular high quality arts activities. This led us to introduce the Clowndoctors programme to Scotland.

- Our strength was and is that we are using professional performers with a background in clowning and physical theatre, who undergo comprehensive **training** to work in a health care environment. This **preparation is key**. In the training we cover alongside artistic issues and onsite observations themes such as
 - Hand washing and hygiene;
 - Isolation protocols,
 - Medical terms,
 - Staffing structures;
 - Initial training included everything from fire procedures to CPR.

There are **challenges** of working as an artist as part of an institution. It demands

- Professional skills,
- True interest in working with children/elderly people with dementia;
- True dedication;
- Ability to work in partnership with health care staff.
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7. Practical side of working in a health care environment

Description of a day in the life of a Clowndoctor:

Example and case studies of the work Hearts&Minds do

Context of interactions

We are always looking beyond the participants' illness; for the healthy part of the person, their personalities, interests, humour, creativity;

- Process orientated rather than goal orientated
- Looking to create a different environment
- Health care environments: hospitals, hospices, residential homes

- Isolation cubicles
- Bay wards
- Nightingale wards
- Individual rooms
- Play rooms
- Hall ways
- Individual and group visits with individual attention
- One off or long term
- Age range: 6 months to 18 years

Puppetry and object manipulation – similarities to Clowning:

Non-verbal communication

Special needs

Shy children

Creative children

Multi cultural – overcome language barriers

No language necessary

Clowning and puppetry: double act

Case study: 4 year old, newly diagnosed with cancer; puppets to break the ice

Learn about procedures – unthreatening

The presentation was concluded by showing a short film of images giving an insight into the work we do.

Thank you.

For more information please check:

www.heartsminds.org.uk

www.clowndoctors.org.uk