

theatre nemo

promoting good mental health and wellbeing through the performing arts

Project Evaluation: Animation “Debby” (6 months)

Location & Duration

Theatre Nemo studio/office space

6 month project, twice per week, 2 hours each

Project outline

This project centered on the theme of depression and is based on the participants’ personal experiences. It includes script and dialog writing, model making, set design, sound recording and filming of the animation.

The final outcome (DVD) demonstrates the impact and effects of depression on a person and tries to help understand how people feel in such a situation. It also acts as a healing process for the participants and enables them the possibility to share their experience with other people in a creative and artistic way.

Project outcomes

- Increase confidence
- Increase self-esteem
- Team-work/building
- Skills development

Project indicators

All of the group drew upon personal experiences to create the script and were quite forthcoming about their past and present experiences of depression. As a result the script came together quite quickly and in quantity. All members contributed equally and they worked together extremely well with measured discussions about changes in plot and the characters emotional journey. Being a very personal and sensitive area it was very encouraging to see such a committed response by all group members. Some of the group in particular warmed to this part of the process and they devoted a lot of their own time out-with the workshops to writing up the script and researching locations and props for the next stage of the project, namely the set design and construction.

The group had very limited experience of model building, with the exception of one, so when it came time to build the set and the props for the animation there was a little hesitancy. With a step-by-step approach to building things such as furniture and dressings, the group quickly picked up how to construct the necessary objects and their confidence grew with each piece they made to the point where they could quite happily be left to build items without further instruction. Skills that the group already had were also called upon and one group member in particular was able to use her dress making skills to excellent effect in creating the wardrobe for the main character. Another group member showed fantastic flair and aptitude for model making and proved to be the backbone of the model making sessions. Both aforementioned group members spent many hours outside of the workshops working on clothing and models respectively without any prompting and showed phenomenal dedication and ability that inspired the whole group.

Alongside the filming, the group has also been recording the dialogue and sound for the film. We have had the assistance of a sound technician who has integrated into the group amazingly well and he has created an inviting atmosphere in which to allow the group to record their pieces. The group enjoyed immensely recording dialogue and background noises and one member in particular has shown great devotion to writing the main characters thoughts and spoken pieces, alongside a couple of the other members who have all written pieces in their own time, again without prompting, and further stamped their signature on the film.

Conclusion

After six months the animation was not fully complete, however the footage that the group shot was edited and presented as a final piece with a view to using it as a pilot for a longer animation project. The general consensus within the group was that the work was of such a high standard and that all participants were so proud of the work that it would be a terrible shame to leave the work incomplete and so current negotiations are underway to see the filming through to completion.

As a whole the members have created an incredibly warm and welcome environment and every session has been greatly enjoyed by the participants and by the workshop leaders. There is an incredibly strong sense of personal attachment to the work by the group and there is a huge amount of personal investment from all involved with a wonderful pulling together of individual skills, personalities and experiences.