

**Ryan White Part A Planning Council of the Philadelphia EMA**

**Positive Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**January 9, 2017**

**12:00-2:00p.m.**

Office of HIV Planning, 340 N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 320, Philadelphia, PA 19107

**Present:** PH (11), PA (2), NJ (1)

**Guests:** Michella Rattigan, Yasmine Awais, Ellen Schelly-Hill, Flossie Ierardi

**Staff:** Antonio Boone, Jennifer Hayes

**Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Introductions:** K. Carter called the meeting to order at 12:05p.m. He read the mission statement.<sup>1</sup> A moment of silence followed. Those present then introduced themselves and participated in an icebreaker activity.

**Approval of Agenda:** K. Carter presented the agenda for approval. **Motion:** D.G. moved, M.W. seconded to approve the agenda. **Motion passed:** All in favor.

**Approval of Minutes (December 12, 2016):** K. Carter presented the minutes for approval. **Motion:** D.G. moved, M.W. seconded to approve the minutes. **Motion passed:** All in favor.

**Report of Chair:**

• **Participation Acknowledgments**

K. Carter recognized participants who were attending their first Positive Committee meeting.

K. Carter reminded the group to be respectful of others, even if they had disagreements.

**Report of Staff:** A. Boone noted that the Positive Committee would be putting together a newsletter. He asked anyone who was interested in working on the newsletter to sign the RSVP list. He stated that he'd send out a scheduling email to determine a good time for everyone who wanted to participate. A. Boone noted that an HIV services survey was being distributed in Philadelphia, the PA suburbs, and NJ. He stated that the survey could be found online at research.net/r/hivtalkback.

**Special Presentation:**

• **Creative Arts Therapies at Parkway Health & Wellness – Drexel University**

M. Rattigan introduced herself and 3 other members of the Creative Arts Therapies program at Drexel University. She said she'd describe the program to participants. She noted that the Parkway Health and Wellness program was located nearby in Center City.

M. Rattigan stated that art therapy, physical therapy, and nutrition were offered at the Parkway Health and Wellness location (1601 Cherry St). K. Carter asked if art therapy groups were available. M. Rattigan replied that there were not currently any groups, but there sometimes were. R.B. asked

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<sup>1</sup> Mission statement: The Positive Committee supports and enhances the role of people living with HIV/AIDS to empower their participation in the decision-making process of the Ryan White Part A Planning Council and the HIV Prevention Planning Group.

how he could participate in the program. M. Rattigan stated that anyone who was interested should call the center. She said she'd brought handouts and placed them on the side table. She noted that the program did not take insurance, but offered an affordable sliding scale for their services.

M. Rattigan noted that the creative art program was dedicated to "provid[ing] treatment utilizing the healing power of the arts within the safety of a therapeutic relationship," with respect for diversity. She said the art therapists in the program provided therapy, outreach, education, and advocacy. She noted that creative arts therapists used arts-based and creative methods for helping people feel better and healthier. She said art therapy could help with communication and expression along with physical, emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. She asked participants if they'd ever had feelings they couldn't express through words. M.W. pointed out that art was a long-standing way people could express themselves and could be part of spiritual practice.

M. Rattigan said that art therapy was a non-verbal form of communication and expression for all kinds of people. She said it was a creative way to work on problems and day to day issues. She noted that art therapy was not just about what was wrong in peoples' lives. She said it was also a way to discover strength and resilience.

M. Rattigan noted that many people at the meeting may already make art. She stated that art making could be part of community building, relaxation, and stress reduction. She noted that personal art-making was not necessarily art therapy and did not require a therapist. She stated that art therapy used creative expression for problem solving, symptom relief, relationship building, and promoting well-being. She pointed out a slide containing a picture a client had drawn to describe her life. She asked for interpretations of the picture. Group members gave ideas for what the client might have meant.

M. Rattigan stated that some people thought they could not do art therapy because they were not skilled in art. She said that most adults had not developed very advanced art skills. However, she noted that there were digital forms of art and photography, and art could also be made using many materials.

M. Rattigan described music therapy. She noted that music provided a non-verbal means of self-expression and allowed control over the environment. She said it may assist in pain management, quality of life, spirituality, and self-esteem. R.B. said that writing music helped keep the mind sharp. R.W. added that listening to music could be calming. K. Carter stated that the music he was listening to often expressed his mood. He said that sometimes he did not listen to music when he was depressed. He noted that others might be able to understand his feelings based on what he was listening to.

M. Rattigan stated that humans tended to be interested in music throughout their entire lives. She noted that music was often a social pursuit. She stated that children were innately responsive to music. She added that musical skills developed naturally.

M. Rattigan introduced dance movement therapy. She stated that dance therapy used movement to improve emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of a person. She noted that all the art therapy forms overlapped in that they promoted creativity for helping people have better lives. She noted that dance movement therapy was effective for individuals with all different kinds of impairments and from all cultures and ages. R.B. noted that he'd participated in stretching exercises

in the past. M. Rattigan replied that participants may be familiar with many different forms of therapeutic movement already. K. Carter said that there was no wrong way to express oneself creatively. M. Rattigan stated that all different forms of expression were valid and high levels of skill were not necessary. R.W. stated that there were other forms of movement aside from dance. He added that movement could help to release pressure. M. Rattigan stated that dance movement therapy could help people become more aware of the ways they held their body, walked, and sat. She said this might relieve tension and pain. R.W. pointed out that gestures and movements could make speech more compelling. K. Carter stated that movement was a form of non-verbal communication.

M.C. said he liked to make and look at art. He noted that art was a form of expression that was for everyone, regardless of their backgrounds. He said he appreciated all forms of art. M. Rattigan pointed out that art was a community experience as well as a personal experience. R.B. stated that creative writing was another form of expression. M. Rattigan said creative writing therapy was not offered at Parkway Health and Wellness. However, she explained that creative writing was part of the art therapy movement. R.B. added that creative writing could be a collaborative project.

R.W. stated that even animals appreciated music. M.W. stated that the arts stimulated the brain.

M. Rattigan said that Y. Awais had done work in New York with PLWHA and would talk about her work. Y. Awais said she was a psychotherapist and art therapist who worked in New York City and Philadelphia. She stated that she considered art therapy a way to hear stories and learn more about peoples' experiences. She said it was a form of traveling shared by a client and a therapist.

Y. Awais said she'd worked on art therapy with PLWHA as part of Housing Works in the late 1990s. M.W. explained that Housing Works was an advocacy organization in New York that helped clients get the services they needed. M.W. added that he was a member of ACT UP Philadelphia. Y. Awais noted that Housing Works started as a part of ACT UP in New York. She noted that the program helped people meet their basic needs, which had to be met in order to stay healthy. However, she added that people wanted to express themselves even when they did not have housing or all their needs met.

Y. Awais said she had worked with people of all ages who were infected or affected by HIV, including people who were displaced from their homes due to their HIV status. She stated that she'd recently been working on a documentary series with Philadelphia FIGHT and the Positive Women's Network. She said she'd share more information about the project with the group. She noted that there had been a decline in funding and awareness around HIV since the 90s, and projects like this helped maintain public awareness.

Y. Awais asked the group to share previous experiences with art therapies or their ideas of what art therapy was. K. Carter noted that some rehabilitation programs and institutions encouraged creative projects. Y. Awais said art therapy was sometimes defined by who facilitated the process. She noted that some art projects may be relaxing, but they didn't necessarily help people think about things in a different way.

Y. Awais distributed notecards containing solid colors. She asked participants to pick a color that reminded them of someone who gave them support and one color that reminded them of a place that was safe or comfortable. She asked participants to share about their colors. K. Carter asked if the

exercise was a form of art therapy. Y. Awais said that the exercise was not necessarily included in a therapy session, but it may be used as part of an art therapy group, especially as a warm-up exercise.

M. Rattigan stated that F. Ierardi would direct a music exercise. She said there were 4 main methods used in music therapy: improvisation (making it up as you go along and feeding off each other), songwriting, recreating (performing a cover of a song), and receptive experiences (listening). She explained that the group would participate in a music-assisted relaxation exercise. She stated that participants could also use the exercise on their own, outside the group. She said that she'd chosen relaxing music that everyone might like and explained how to participate in the exercise. She led a guided meditation exercise.

F. Ierardi asked participants if they'd like to share their experience with the exercise. K. Carter said that it helped him release some tension. M. Rattigan asked how long the song had been. F. Ierardi said it had been 4 minutes and 30 seconds long. M. Rattigan encouraged participants to put aside some time each day to do the exercise. H.B. asked what kind of instrument was played in the song. F. Ierardi said it was likely an electronic version of an African instrument called a kora. D.G. stated that he owned many instruments and liked to have friends over to make music. F. Ierardi said that music making and listening could both be part of music therapy. M.W. stated that he used music to bond with friends and family. M. Rattigan reiterated that music was a social experience that could bring people together. R.W. noted that the human heartbeat, walking, and other physical/biological processes were rhythmic. F. Ierardi noted that babies in the womb had rhythmic experiences with their parents' heartbeats.

E. Schelly-Hill said she'd be leading a self-care movement word ritual. She stated that she sometimes helped clients make their own self-care movement word rituals in therapy. However, she noted that she'd lead the group through one her own exercises today. She stated that the wording of the exercise was adapted from the BuildABridge Children's Foundation ([buildabridge.org](http://buildabridge.org)). She said she'd pass around many colors of paper with words on them. She noted that the group would do the exercise first while she read the words, and then they'd do the exercise while reading the words themselves. She added that everyone could do the exercise themselves, and it only took a short amount of time. She invited the group to stretch out and make any noises they'd like to accompany their stretches. K. Carter explained that some spiritual practices used movement. Another participant said that prayer could involve movement.

M. Rattigan offered to answer any questions about art therapy and the program at Parkway Health and Wellness. K. Carter asked if the program had done any work with the LGBT Elder Initiative (LGBTEI). He said he thought the program would be appropriate for the LGBTEI. M.W. asked if the information was available in Spanish. M. Rattigan stated that it was not. She noted that the group didn't have any Spanish speaking clinicians. K. Carter suggested looking into interpretation.

**Old Business:** A. Boone noted that a representative of Penn's Program on Sexuality, Technology, & Action Research (PSTAR) would be attending the April meeting of the RWPC. He said the presentation would be about a program that uses technology to link YMSM to services in Detroit and Atlanta. He reported that a similar program would be piloted here in Philadelphia.

**New Business:** None.

**Announcements:** M. Coleman stated that a memorial service for well-known community member and activist Christopher Collins would be sponsored by COLOURS and held tomorrow at 3pm.

**Adjournment:** Motion: D.G. moved, R.W. seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:52pm. **Motion passed:** all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jennifer Hayes, Staff

Handouts distributed at the meeting:

- Meeting Agenda
- December 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes
- OHP Calendar