Renewal Webinar Series
Animating Healthcare Communities
with Theater and Drama Therapy

assembled and presented by Lynn Kable
Amherst Glebe Artist Response (AGAR)
with assistance from the participating theatre and drama therapy artists and groups

*Presented by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare*

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Theatre Programs and Directors in this Presentation

- Akeela, Inc. Anchorage Alaska “Off the Rocks” Drama Therapist Tami Lubitsh
- Aomori Social Promotion Corporation, Aomori, Japan
- Hospital Audiences, Inc. (HAI) New York City, Michael Jon Spencer, Director
- Kate Hawkes, Wellness with Kate, working in Oregon and currently in Queensland Australia
- Living Art, Missoula Montana, Theatre Artist (trained as drama therapist) Youpa Stein
Programs Discussed

- Milwaukee Public Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Barbara Leigh, Director
- Tamar Rogoff Performance Projects, New York City
- Roots & Branches, Intergenerational Theatre, a program of FEGS, Arthur Strimling Artistic Director, New York City
- Stagebridge, Oakland, CA, the nation’s first senior theatre.
Context of Discussion of Work

• Work of these theatres and artists will be discussed in the context of the many ways theatre is used in the arts in healthcare.

• Successful theatres and programs have been developed in a number of contexts, from the artistic to the expressive, the instructional, and the therapeutic. Several programs here are discussed in more than one context.
Theatre Performance Whose Topic is a Stage of Life, an Illness or a Condition

• A skilled theatre artist, actor, writer, director, can create a work of art that allows audiences to emotionally understand the situation of a patient or family members.

• A well-known example of such work is the recent Pulitzer Prize winning play *WIT*, about a woman’s journey living with cancer and its treatments.
Stagebridge, Healthy Aging
Oakland California

- Stagebridge celebrating 30th season as the nation's oldest senior theatre company.
- Presents positive images of older adults through theatre arts classes, workshops, healthy aging programs and public performance.
- American Society on Aging 2009 MetLife Mind Alert Award
STAGEBRIDGE, Oakland, CA

- Stagebridge was founded in 1978 by Dr. Stuart Kandell.
  The company’s mission has always been to provide opportunities for older adults to use theatre as a way to bridge the generations.

The company consists of 100 actors, storytellers, students, and volunteers whose average age is 70.
Stagebridge, Oakland CA

- Stagebridge Programs include theatrical performances, classes in performance skills, performances for elders in many settings, storytelling in schools and a sensitivity program for nursing students.
- Funding sources include government, foundations, corporations and even United Way.
“Grandparents and grandchildren -- it’s so important -- “we’ve lost the ability to connect” says Arthur Strimling Artistic Director of “Roots & Branches” Theatre, now a program of FEGS in New York.

Mr. Strimling first developed his techniques when he supervised young at-risk members of the New York volunteer corps collecting stories of Holocaust Survivors at Isabella Geriatric Center. He wove their joint experiences into theatre.
Strimling/Roots & Branches

- He was asked to continue his work by a Jewish agency serving seniors, JASA, and later the theater became a program of FEGS, who provide administrative, office and other in-kind services.
- The student component was expanded to including Strimling’s theatre students at NYU and later young actors as well.
“Roots & Branches” New York City, Arthur Strimling Artistic Director

Roots&Branches gave me a new raison d’etre, a chance to combine old and new skills, old and new interests. It’s revitalized me. I feel like the Phoenix, rising from the ashes of my retirement.

-Yvette Pollack
Ensemble member

Photo and text-courtesy of FEGS Roots & Branches
Theatre Performance for Change of Attitude or Political Actions

- A work of art may be created by a theatre or film artist about an illness or condition in order to change public awareness and political actions of audience members.

- The play *The Normal Heart*, by Larry Kramer, a polemic about living with HIV, produced by The Public Theatre in New York in 1985, and the Academy Award winning film, *Philadelphia*, starring Tom Hanks, who played a lawyer diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, were both widely credited with changing public attitudes towards HIV/AIDS.
Tamar Rogoff *Daughter of a Pacifist Soldier*

- Director/Choreographer Tamar Rogoff’s work *Daughter of a Pacifist Soldier*, about the lives and PTSD of combat Veterans was first performed at LaMaMa Experimental Theatre Company off Broadway in New York.
- It was developed by professional actors and dancers and members of the Manhattan VA PTSD unit in 2003.
TAMAR ROGOFF
Daughter of a Pacifist Soldier

- Rogoff is a professional theatre and dance artist who often creates works featuring professional and non-professional performers in the same piece.
- Method brings her in contact with various communities outside the theatre world, often in healthcare settings.
- Rogoff says “I take my own autobiographical material and universalize it.”
Daughter of a Pacifist Soldier

- *Daughter of a Pacifist Soldier*, words and stories of Manhattan VA participants and movement by dancers were interspersed with actress Onni Johnson reading and speaking about the letters and journals, playing Rogoff herself.
- Vets from World War II, Korea, Viet Nam shared stories and gave testimony to how combat had affected their lives.
- Company members buddied with a veteran over the period of a year and performed to the soundtrack of the veteran’s voice.
Opening Night of "Daughter" Performers and Vets in Curtain Call
Tamar Rogoff Performance Projects

• Evaluation: Rogoff does not formally evaluate her work, as she produces it as performance, theatre and dance. Evaluation of her work is generally done by Critics in the *New York Times* and *Village Voice*.

• Funding: Rogoff receives funding from arts sources, especially foundations.
Theatre for Self Expression

• A Theatre Workshop Artist can encourage patients or consumers to express their own feelings or to act out the feelings of others through storytelling, role play or the creation of a work of art to be shared in the workshop group.

• Such an artist may also create a public performance piece featuring the works of workshop participants.
Kate Hawkes, Wellness with Kate

- Australian-born Writer and Director Kate Hawkes developed many of her Performing Wellness™ methods, using writing and performance, while living and working in Oregon.

- Photos: Hawkes (holding papers) with VA Counselor, with cast of Soldier’s Heart. Oregon.
Kate Hawkes / Wellness with Kate

• Kate Hawkes is currently in remote rural area of central Queensland, Australia, putting together a writing/performance program, derived from her *Performing Wellness™* model.

• Project includes writing workshops and 1-1 creative mentoring for individuals, to explore and share experience and challenges, living in exceptionally remote, harsh environment.

• Collection of stories will be made available to wider community through live performance, in book form and on relevant websites.
• in Oregon, Kate after her extensive work with Well Arts Institute, which she co-founded, she has taken the PW model into other areas, including a version with sexual abuse victims at a college where she taught.

• On the Coast, she also coordinated and produced a 6 coastal town tour of a selection of stories written by veterans during two Performing Wellness programs she had facilitated in previous years. (continued)
Kate Hawkes / Wellness with Kate

• Stories were offered to raise awareness of PTSD and support returning veterans.
• Kate describes them as proving the power of writing and performance to bring healing as well as educational content to communities.
Kate Hawkes - Philosophy

• Kate views theatre as creative individuals in a collaborative endeavor. “We step outside of ourselves to bring the heart of ourselves to others”

• Regarding PTSD, Hawkes believes that writing the story “is a transmutation from a ‘sick’ person or victim there to be helped to an artist offering a gift to the world.”

• Theatre allows story transformation in a manner that gives power to the teller. Sharing writing with another artist to perform it becomes, as Kate says “mine/not mine” and shared with an audience so it is no longer secret.
Kate Hawkes

- Evaluation: Kate has writers and performers evaluate their own growth through the project through a pre and post series of questions with both 1-5 scale responses and the written word.
- Funding: Kate receives funding from foundations, corporations, government and individuals for her work. She is a believer in partnerships and collaborations with a variety of communities to bring work to fruition.
Youpa Stein
Living Art, Missoula, Montana

• Living Art has a program called “Cancer, Courage and Creativity.”
• 8-week, closed group integrating role play, mask-making, writing, art and movement.
• Youpa Stein trained and worked as a drama therapist, but explains that her performance work with Living Art as “personal growth through creative expression” and stresses that workshops “are intended as support, not as a replacement for therapy.”
Living Art
Cancer Courage and Creativity - Garden Mask
Living Art / Youpa Stein
Cancer, Courage and Creativity

• Methods: Workshops allow people to explore several different art forms, often weaving together in the mask work.

• Philosophy: “Different people have different windows into the work. Theatre in particular brings to the work different perspective through playing different roles,” says Youpa Stein.

• Youpa speaks of a patient who learned to express in a physical way what she could see as spiritual, physical and emotional impact. “Taking interior experience from an external expression perspective,” says Youpa.
Drama Therapy

- A Drama Therapist can use theatre techniques with patients to explore feelings and history.
- The work is done in a therapeutic framework, with identified goals, time frame, compensation, and evaluation between therapist and patient.
- Drama Therapists have a certification process requiring specific studies and internships in addition to practical theatre experience.
Off the Rocks
Drama Therapy and Theatre Program of Akeela, Anchorage, AL

- *Off the Rocks* is a program using theatre and drama therapy as tools in the recovery process and to increase community awareness of substance abuse issues through play production.
- The program is directed by Registered Drama Therapist Tami Lubitsh.
- It is a component of Akeela, an Anchorage program providing comprehensive substance abuse and alcohol abuse prevention and treatment services in Alaska.
Off the Rocks, Anchorage

Four stage project:

1. Drama Therapy sessions- Lubitsh and participants in Recovery, stories of participants are told and acted out.

2. Alaska Playwright Schatzie Schaefer collaborates to use stories as the basis for a script for a play, titled *Sweet*

3. *Off the Rocks* participants form a production team for Sweet. Some are actresses, others work backstage or on producing play.

4. Sweet will run for six performances in Anchorage in February, 2009
Off the Rocks

- Evaluation: participants stay in program and remain clean and sober
- Funding: VSA Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Trust, local merchants. In-kind from Akeela and Out North.

Rehearsal: “Sweet”
Instructional Theatre

• An arts organization may work by itself or partner with a health organization to create a series of theatre pieces to educate youngsters, families or adults about health issues.

• Such theatre is also used to make professional or family caregivers more effective in what they do.
Milwaukee Public Theatre / Barbara Leigh, Director

• *MPT* runs a variety of theatre programs educating youth and families on issues including abuse, AIDS, and violence

• *MPT’s innovative Capaz* (Capable), began in 2006 with grants from Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Children/Youth with Special Health Care Needs Center.

• A bilingual troupe of actors, directed by Chilean actress/director Carolina Soza, presents short interactive plays about health care access, inviting audiences to change negative outcomes in the plays.
Milwaukee Public Theatre

• **Capaz** takes scenarios where a Latino family with a child with special needs faced barriers to care due to issues of accessibility, comprehensiveness, continuity, family centeredness, coordination, compassion and/or cultural effectiveness while interacting with health care providers.

• Soza and the actors transform the scenarios into short interactive plays and present them to the families and care providers, inviting their participation to change some of the negative outcomes.
Milwaukee Public Theatre

- Capaz: The result has been a nearly 100% increase in awareness of the issues faced by these families, with a corresponding sense of empowerment.

- *Tasawari*, is MPT’s new program which focuses on the creation of interactive theatre works for African American families whose children have special needs.
Hospital Audiences, Inc. (HAI) 
New York

- HAI uses a combination of health information and a chance to use it in role plays where workshop participants give much needed advice to trained actors, playing people with very bad habits! The project was started with funding from the NYC Health Department designed by psychiatrist Richard G Dudley, Jr.
Hospital Audiences, Inc (HAI)

- A series of plays have been developed for use in schools. HAI’s Prevention Education Program uses theater arts to confront health and social challenges. One, titled “Respect” was created and directed by TONY Award winning director George Faison.

- Conducted in schools, detention centers, community centers and other youth venues, these performances and workshops physically, intellectually and emotionally engage audiences, challenging individuals to assess and solve difficult issues independently.
Stagebridge, Oakland, CA

“See Me!” with Nursing Students

• **See Me! Healthy Aging Program** trains medical professionals to see older adults as people.

• Stagebridge senior actors, singers, storytellers and improvisation students perform in workshops as part of medical training curriculum in the classroom. Workshops include performance, role play and questions and answers with seniors.

• **See Me!** Works at several Bay Area colleges and universities including their flagship partnership with Samuel Merritt College – School of Nursing in Oakland.
The Aomori Social Promotion Corporation operates in a fishing village in Northern Japan. It provides services to elders in nursing facilities and in the community.

Their geriatric program had 3-year funding from an insurance company to conduct a caring for caregivers program.

They formed a “project team,” which made it a priority to inform the community about senile dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease and about caregiving.
Caregiver Information Theatre
Aomori Social Promotion Corporation, Japan

• Caregivers wrote, produced & performed a play on caregiving for patients with senile dementia titled “I Love You!” 1350 people saw the show.

• Each performance was followed by a speaker and then by small group discussions on needs of caregivers.

• Photo: Administrator Mr. Nakamura holds theatre poster for “I love you” Photo by Lynn Kable
Comedy, Humor

• Clowning, comedy, musical comedy performing can all be used to help patients or caregivers “de-stress”
Duke University Medical Center - Caring for Caregivers, early 1990’s

• Duke had a program called “Broadway comes to Duke” that provided a professional theatre set up for pre-Broadway productions in Durham, NC.

• The then-named Cultural Services department used the theatre to mount a professionally directed musical with orchestra starring staff members from most departments of the hospital -- from lab technicians to housekeeping, nurses, MD’s and administrators.
Duke - High End Caring for Caregivers Theatre
CAHRE Program at Shands Hospital, University of Florida

- At Shands Hospital, Society for the Arts in Healthcare early leader and caring for caregivers pioneer John Graham Pole, MD, medical professor who worked in pediatric cancer patients, established programs using theatre games, humor workshops and clowning to teach medical students and nurses to take care of themselves using theatre games.
CAHRE PROGRAMS

Laughter Workshop for nurses, clown noses for intensive care nurses
Concerns and Advice
Performances in Healthcare Settings: Keep it Simple

- Ideally, performances of theatre require a place to put on costumes, a place for settings to be stored and set up on stage, lights on the actors faces, mirrors for putting on make-up, places for valuables to be stored.
- Often healthcare facilities have NONE OF THE ABOVE.
Performance Space advice in Healthcare Facilities for Performance Groups

• Inspect performance spaces in healthcare facilities before promising to use them. Stage spaces can be tiny, ceilings too low for sets, non-working piano keys, lights, microphones.
• Discuss availability of performance space and performance equipment. Secure availability for rehearsal and set up time as well as performance.
• Check on above again right before you plan to come -- large items have tendencies to appear on stage, equipment to break.
Advice to Performance Groups - Words to the Wise

- If doing a lot of performing in healthcare facilities or senior centers, buy equipment, take everything with you and make sure you can carry it in and out with you.
- Carry sound system with CD accompaniment or an electric piano and broken piano keys and microphones will not be a problem.
- Wear costumes and you won’t have to change in the public bathrooms. Carry mirrors.
Presenting Professional Theatre in Healthcare Setting

• Make sure the company or performer has seen and approved your space and equipment.

• Try to make available some private locked space for changing clothes, putting on make-up and storing valuables.

• Test working condition of required equipment in time to have it fixed.

• Clear and clean performance area before performers arrive (spinach on dining room floor, tables piled on stage are no-no’s)
Legal Issues for Theatre Artists: Patient Privacy

• The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule (see HHS.gov) has many requirements as to what information about patients can be shared and with whom.

• Artists working with in-patients or out-patients need to make sure that their work is in compliance with these statutes.
Legal and Moral Use of Images, Voice and Words in Public Performance

- Theatre Artists need to make sure that patients and all others have released and given written consent for use of any images or written words that are to be performed publicly.
- Artist needs to assure themselves that they have a legal right to creations of others that they are using in their work.
- The most important idea is to have patients and others take pride of ownership of their creative work, and to avoid any sense of invasion of privacy or exploitation.
Workshops: Suitable Space, Equipment, Preparations and People

• Before deciding on a theatre modality, check out the space availability and the abilities and disabilities of potential participants.

• Larger rooms are required for theatre games, clowning and physical theatre than for storytelling workshops.
Workshop Participants - If you are thinking about Using Techniques You’ve Seen Today

- Writing workshops require something to write on and people who can write.
- People who can’t write (for educational or physical reasons) may be able to audio record stories or be videotaped.
- Young children are usually more comfortable with improvisation, role play & storytelling than with learned lines and the written word.
- Theatre workshops can get noisy so plan space accordingly.
Preparation: Ideas, Alternatives, Equipment and Materials

- When beginning a workshop with people whose strengths and preferences are unclear, it is best to plan primary activities, but also to have alternative ideas and materials ready.
- Check out all equipment before starting, preferably in time to get it fixed if it is needed!
- Make sure engaging/appropriate materials are available to all participants for both preferred and alternative activities.
- Never assume anything. Surprises abound. (people who haven’t spoken in years - do!)
Some Rules for Institutional Arts Programs

• Check schedules: Do arts programs when staff and volunteers are available, not when there is Bingo or a competing activity with food.

• Since staff are gatekeepers for patients in institutional settings, it is very important that artists have good working relationships with staff.
Artist/Institution Health Concerns

• Find out and tell artists what tests and immunizations they must have before starting programs and who will pay.
• An artist with cold or flu should never go to an institution serving frail elderly, immune compromised or very ill patients.
• An immune compromised artist needs to know if she/he will be exposed to diseases such as TB. Staff should notify all artists, and not assume who is HIV+ or on chemotherapy.
• Artists need to know what materials might be harmful (allergens, medicine interactions) for specific patients. Check OSHA, ask staff.
Follow up Questions

Please feel free to contact us.
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- Kate Hawkes www.wellnesswithkate.org
- Hospital Audiences, Inc. 212-575-7676 www.hospitalaudiences.org Michael Spencer Director.
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