



Healing the Mind, Body & Spirit Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”. Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter November 2024

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“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” - Desmond Tutu

“Don't tell someone to get over it-help them get through it.” - Unknown

1] [‘It’s the first time I’ve woven in 27 years’: Peruvian women revive arts lost to trauma of forced sterilisations](#) By Nadege Justiniani in Huayllacocha @ The Guardian

Article excerpt: After the death of former president Alberto Fujimori this month, survivors still seeking justice are finding healing and hope in Indigenous weaving abandoned as a result of his policy.

Ricardina Huaman Folopa carefully pinches and counts wool threads with her fingers: 87 – the exact number of pairs of threads needed to weave a *chumpi*, a belt traditionally made by women in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Here, in the Indigenous community of Huayllacocha, south of Machu Picchu, she is part of a quiet revolution taking place.

Folopa and eight other survivors of forced sterilisation are weaving again for the first time in decades, as part of a workshop led by artist and anthropologist Alejandra Ballón Gutiérrez. They are using the millennia-old backstrap loom they abandoned after their operations. “Can you believe it? It’s the first time I have woven in 27 years,” says Folopa. “It hurts my tummy, but that is not what worries me. What if I’ve forgotten everything?” she adds in Quechua, shifting to find a more comfortable position on the ground.

Using the loom, which is attached to the weaver’s waist, causes regular jolts to the abdomen as the *ja’ulla*, a wooden rod, is forcefully pulled towards them. After being forcibly sterilised, many women found it too painful. “I used to weave with my mother, who would bring me wool to make coats in the winter. But after the operation, the pain was unbearable,” says Eutropia Quilla Huaman, one of the other women at the workshop. “Our tradition is disappearing. It’s not just that the women stop weaving, they also forget the techniques, and that’s the worst.”

In 1997, neither Folopa nor Huaman knew what an anaesthetic or a tubal ligation was. Between 1996 and 2001, medical teams travelled across Peru, targeting the country’s most vulnerable and poorest communities. The official purpose of the coercive birth control policy led by former president Alberto Fujimori was to fight poverty; it was originally funded by USAid and the UN. Rapid denunciations by community leaders didn’t stop the government from pursuing the policy, using quantified targets, according to Amnesty International.

Master weavers from the region of Pisac, a village in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, helped the women create a *chumpi* in three parts, representing three crucial moments in their lives: before, during and after the surgery. “The idea behind the project was not only to enable them to learn again and to transmit the technique to younger generations, but also to help them create a visual testimony of what happened to them. The colours and the words they choose for each part of the textile are symbolic,”

says Ballón Gutiérrez.

For master weaver Jovana Lopes Paco, weaving is more than a tradition; it is at the heart of her identity. “It’s not something you learn from books, it’s a gift that someone has decided to pass on to you. In my case, it was my mother,” she says.

“Don't tell someone to get over it-help them get through it.” - Unknown

“The role of the artist is to transmit to humanity the deepest experience of reality. Art is remembrance. It is love.” - Kathleen Mundy

2] [Psych Ward Greeting Cards](#) - We make it easy to show patients in the psychiatric unit you care.

Psych Ward Greeting Cards makes it easy for empathic and compassionate people to let patients in the psychiatric unit know that people, even strangers, care about them and support them. It is a [ForLikeMinds](#) program created and managed by [Katherine Ponte](#) to deliver greeting cards, chocolate, and small gifts from strangers to patients at participating hospitals.

Sharing a card can have a wonderful impact on a patient at their lows - offering help, encouragement, and hope. They need our support at this critical and vulnerable time.

More than 80% of former psychiatric unit patients surveyed said receiving a "get well soon" card would have helped their recovery. A little [evidence](#) to share.

Each month, we lovingly deliver donated cards with inspiring messages, chocolate, and small gifts to patients at leading hospitals in the New York City area. These deliveries are made through in-person visits and shipments. We partner with Gracie Square Hospital, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York-Presbyterian Payne Whitney Clinic, New York-Presbyterian Westchester Behavioral Health Center, and NYC Health + Hospital/Bellevue.

We often meet and speak to patients, sharing our lived experience and hope that recovery from mental illness is possible. We are thrilled to have the support of so many wonderful card donors, financial contributors, and giving partners. It is an honor and a privilege to support these inspiring patients and work with the staff members at our partner hospitals and non-profits.

“Memories remind us that nothing lasts forever. Time is precious and should not be wasted. Enjoy life and remember; don't count the days, make the days count.” - Unknown

“Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful.” - Just For Today

3] [‘I can do the same job as a man’: Ukraine’s first frontline female commander on war, grief – and her hope for the future](#) By Emine Saner @ The Guardian

Article excerpt: Yulia Mykytenko leads a platoon of men in a reconnaissance and attack unit – and has already lost her husband, father and many friends in the devastating war. In her memoir, she writes that she was always destined for combat.

he sound of birdsong is so loud outside Yulia Mykytenko's current home, an abandoned house somewhere in the Donbas region of [Ukraine](#), that I can hear it through my laptop. We're speaking on Zoom, Mykytenko visible briefly – young, wearing black, her dark bobbed hair with blue-dyed streaks in it – before she turns the camera off because her signal isn't great. She has some outside space and, she says with a laugh, a local sheep sometimes comes to visit her dog. Mykytenko, a lieutenant in the Ukrainian army, also feeds the street cats, pets abandoned by residents who fled, and has her own cat. In her new memoir, *How Good It Is I Have No Fear of Dying* (the name comes from the first line of a poem by the Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus), she writes that each of the houses her 15-strong platoon live in has a cat, to catch the mice and rats that chew everything, including the cables to the generators and satellite communications. Their numbers boom in the area, she writes, as they “feed on the bodies of hapless soldiers”.

Mykytenko, 29, spent two years here between 2016 and 2018, when Russia invaded the region, then again after [the full-scale invasion in 2022](#). One of the first female frontline commanders, she leads a reconnaissance and attack unit. Her pilots use drones to track the Russian army and to locate the dead bodies of fallen colleagues and support their retrieval. Just this morning, some of her men – she lives with five of her platoon – told her there had been some heavy shelling at 5am, but she slept through it. “I got used to it,” she says. This current house is “quite comfortable” – it has running water (at the previous one, they had to fetch water from a well), but it is cold and takes an hour to heat.

She is “tired, very tired”, she says. A year ago, she felt more motivated: “I was ready to be at war for at least maybe three years more, but now, sometimes I really want to go home [to Kyiv]. But I know that nobody will replace me, and I know that my experience can preserve my people, my fellows [her name for her comrades], which is why I'm ready to work for them.” Is it a struggle to keep her morale up? “I wouldn't say that it's a struggle, but yes, it takes some resources.” On bad days, Mykytenko will ask her sergeants to take over, and she'll spend the day watching Harry Potter movies.

The coming year, she thinks, “will be most critical. I think maybe we will see some results, and maybe peace agreements, because our side is completely exhausted, and the enemy is also completely exhausted.” There have been concerns for what it could mean for Ukraine if Donald Trump wins the US election, including decreased military spending and pressure on the country to negotiate an unfavourable settlement with Russia. She doesn't spend much time thinking about global politics, she says, “but I believe in US democracy, and the only thing I can do is support the American people and their choice. I just hope that the western world may see that this is not only a war between Ukraine and Russia, it's a war of democratic values. For now, it's a critical moment for the democratic world, whether they push away dictators, or they continue with intolerance.”

Mykytenko is resigned to war fatigue from the west; that Ukraine only gets attention “if something extremely bad happens, like the bombarding of a children's hospital in Kyiv”, as happened in July this year. “I can understand. Our citizens are exhausted and try to live not seeing war. I can see that with donations, it's a very small amount now, compared [with what] it was one or two years ago.” (Like other platoons, Mykytenko's raises money online to pay for expenses, such as new drones and fixing vehicles.) “So it's not so surprising that the west is also tired.” In her book, written with the journalist Lara Marlowe, she states she doesn't expect to see peace in Ukraine in her lifetime. “I think that my generation won't,” she says now. She just hopes that future generations will.

[How Good It Is I have No Fear of Dying](#) By Lara Marlowe

The inspirational biography of Lieutenant Yulia Mykytenko, a commander serving on the frontline of the Ukraine War.

“He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.” - Friedrich Nietzsche

“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” - Martin Luther

4] [The Holiday Season Is Upon Us Are You Ready? This Can Be A Stressful Time For Many - How Will You Balance Your Energy And Emotions](#) By Lisa Zarcone

Article excerpt: Definition - Ignoring feelings of sadness, loneliness or depression in an effort to maintain “Holiday Cheer”.

Facing the loss of a loved one (passed or removed), with whom you have shared the holidays. Having unrealistic expectations of family and friends. Having an expectation that you “should” feel good!

YES, it is that time again. As the emotional fall season may have sparked the “seasonal blues”, now its holiday time.

Many people do struggle with the changing of the seasons. When fall is upon us and the leaves are bright and exhilarating, we celebrate the contagious energy of that cool breeze and hot apple pie, but as the leaves begin to fall and the landscape becomes barren and dark, so does our mood.

This transition can be very hard for people, especially those who suffer from anxiety, ptsd and depression. As the sun goes down earlier in the day, bringing in the darkness with its cold winds of change, you may want to hibernate so you do not have to feel the wrath of sadness, loneliness or depression.

“Yes, hide, seek shelter from the internal storm of life”...

Stumbling along this path of autumn, there is a peak of brightness as we give thanks in the month of giving “November”, but then we are thrust directly into the holiday season with so many emotions, feelings and unrealistic expectations.

How can we survive the madness?

The first thing to remember is that we are not always going to feel joyous, and to put that expectation onto yourself is truly unrealistic. The holiday season sparks up those old wounds of the past. Instead of sugar plum fairies dancing in your head, its more like little green monsters of deceit picking away at your sanity.

Now let’s add in work, family stress, paying bills as we are trying to keep up with the holiday spending as the energy that surrounds you is on an all time high. YOU are not the only one feeling this “anxiety”. Look around you it is everywhere you go! Are you seeing holiday joy? Not always!

As you move forward try to think about the many people who are struggling as you see the stress and glazed over look on their faces, trudging their way through each day, trying to survive.

The best thing that you can do for others is offer patience and kindness, even when it feels hard.

As for yourself --- Self Care

Self-care is so important, especially during this time of year.

Start off by allowing yourself to feel. If you are triggered by a memory, instead of hiding or pushing it away, be bold and brave and look at it. Pick it apart and see why it is affecting you. Then take the bigger step and make peace with it.

“The human mind always makes progress, but it is a progress in spirals.” - Madame de Stael

“I am larger, better than I thought, I did not know I held so much goodness.” - Walt Whitman

5] [How musicians are opening up about their mental health](#) By Harriet Robinson & Lili Sheppard @BBC News

Article excerpt: 'Bipolar pop' helps fans with mental health.

In the past, speaking about your own mental health and addiction problems in public was seen as taboo.

But now, in an industry where these issues are often rife, musicians, including Billie Eilish, Demi Lovato and Lewis Capaldi, are digging deep and sharing their most personal experiences, helping many fans "feel seen".

Following their lead, an increasing number of artists are speaking up to get the message out that it is OK to talk.

Ileo, who makes what she calls "bipolar pop", said the reaction from her fans had been "crazy" since she starting singing about her mental health experiences.

The singer from Cheltenham, who is bipolar, said: "People reach out and say 'this song helps me so much'."

Swindon-born singer-songwriter Athena Aperta, 26, also hopes her "honest lyrics" will give listeners hope.

She has been sober for two years but said her struggles with mental health, alcohol and drugs all intensified after becoming involved in the London music scene, where substance abuse was "very common".

She said finding a job back near her hometown in 2022 was actually "a blessing in disguise", helping her to overcome her addiction.

"There are drugs still, there's people drinking alcohol," she said, but added she is now able to "regulate herself more" if she is around that environment.

Athena recently received funding from the Youth Music: Next Generation award to release two singles, including Facing the Sun, which "is about living with anxiety, depression, CPTSD [Complex post-traumatic stress disorder] and being a recovering people-pleaser".

"There's a lack of hope in the world at the moment. I just really want to give that to people," she said.

A [2023 census by Help Musicians](#) found almost a third of musicians had experienced negative mental wellbeing.

The head of Help Musicians' dedicated mental health sister charity, Music Minds Matter, Grace Meadows, said: "Not knowing that support is available or who to turn to for support can lead to behaviours, such as substance abuse, that compound rather than alleviate mental health issues."

She explained the "normalisation of drugs and alcohol across the industry" can further exacerbate this.

"It is the privilege of wisdom to listen." - O.W. Holmes

"If no one knows us as we really are, we run the risk of making ourselves victims of our own self-hatred. If we can be loved by somebody who sees us as we are, we will then be able to accept ourselves. Others rarely think we're as bad as we think we are." - Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics

6] [Sasha's Story — Voice For The Kids](#) - Documentary

Article excerpt: *"Through embracing my fear and confronting what scared me the most, I rediscovered my beauty and learned to harness my power." - Sasha Joseph Neulinger*

Sasha Joseph Neulinger is a husband, father, hockey player, backcountry adventurer, motivational speaker, and an Emmy Nominated filmmaker - he also happens to be a survivor of multi-generational child sexual abuse:

"I believe that a person doesn't have to know how they are going to climb their 'mountain,' they just need to know that they are committed to climbing it. With one foot in front of the other, and with each step taken, more of the path is revealed. Each step is something to build on. There is nothing easy about facing severe trauma, but the reclamation of one's life in the face of adversity makes reaching the summit of that personal mountain that much more meaningful and empowering.

The view of the world from within the thick timber is very different than the view from the top of that mountain. Through the steps we take, we earn that shift in perspective: to see the scale of our lives independent of the trauma we experienced. I can recognize and accept that the mountain I climbed, while massive on its own, is just one piece of an expansive world. I can recognize that the trauma I experienced is just one piece of an expansive, multifaceted life.

I did not choose my trauma, nor have I chosen to be defined by it. But I did choose how I responded to it: how it would contribute to the shaping of who I am today. Through embracing my fear and confronting what scared me the most, I rediscovered my beauty and learned to harness my power. I built a loving and respectful relationship with myself and reclaimed ownership of my life... and it feels absolutely amazing!”

After a decade of battling to reclaim his voice in court as a child in Pennsylvania, Sasha moved to Montana in 2008 to study film production at Montana State University. For the first time in more than fourteen years, he could experience life without abuse being the primary focus of his existence. Outside of classes he fly fished blue-ribbon trout streams, hiked countless peaks, and began to explore what brought him joy in life. He started to see that despite his tumultuous childhood, he still had an entire lifetime waiting to be lived.

But there was still more work to be done.

In many facets of his life, Sasha was thriving. He was a straight-A student, physically fit, and enjoying his social life. Despite his best efforts to truly move forward, there were still lingering symptoms from his childhood trauma that continued to tug at him, and there was still a voice within Sasha that worked to pull him from the present moment, into a place of self-doubt, fear, and insecurity. He realized that this tug-of-war that was happening inside of him was an indication of lingering, unhealed wounds and unanswered questions from his childhood. He knew that in order to truly move forward with his life, he'd have to revisit his past, search for the source of his cognitive disconnect, and confront his demons head on.

<http://www.voiceforthekids.com/filmmaking> - Sasha Joseph Neulinger's autobiographical documentary, *REWIND*, was nominated for the 2020 Best First Documentary Feature by the Critics Choice Awards, and received 3 Emmy Nominations, including Outstanding Social Issue Documentary, Outstanding Direction, and Outstanding Editing. We utilize the same Emmy Award Winning crew that filmed *REWIND* when working with Child Advocacy Centers, law enforcement agencies, and non-profits.

“You have extraordinary power within you to overcome life's difficult challenges.” - Lailah Giftly Akita

“Love yourself enough to set boundaries. Your time and energy are precious. You get to choose how you use it. You teach people how to treat you by deciding what you will and won't accept.” - Anna Taylor

7] [A Brief But Spectacular take on multigenerational housing](#) – YouTube

Older adults will soon outnumber children on a global scale. Bridge Meadows is an innovative multigenerational housing community in Oregon that fosters healing and connection for foster youth, their families and elders. Three generations of Bridge Meadows residents give their Brief But Spectacular takes on how living in this vibrant community has transformed their lives for the better.

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from

the relationship.” - Brene Brown

“I can’t make past wrongs disappear, but I can take actions that will help me to let them go. When I make amends, I do what I can to correct the situation. Then I can put the past in its rightful place and leave it there.” - Courage to Change

8] [Metabolism and diet are linked to root of bipolar depression, say researchers](#) By Robin McKie @The Guardian

Article excerpt: Illness could be treated as a physical, rather than mood, disorder, according to scientists in Edinburgh

Iain Campbell, a researcher based at Edinburgh University, has a special perspective on [bipolar depression](#). He lives with the condition and has lost family members who have taken their own lives because of their depression. It remains an intractable, devastating health problem, he says.

More than a million people in the UK have bipolar depression, of whom a third are likely to attempt suicide. Yet its roots remain unknown – despite significant efforts to understand them.

However, a major new approach to the illness has recently been adopted by psychiatrists to uncover its causes and highlight possible treatments. Rather than viewing bipolar depression as a mood disorder, it should be seen as a metabolic disturbance that can be tackled through diets and other interventions that can change bodily processes.

“We should be thinking of bipolar depression, not as a primary emotional problem, but as a malfunctioning of energy regulation in the body,” said Campbell, who has played a key role in setting up [Edinburgh University’s Hub for Metabolic Psychiatry](#), which opened last week. “It is a very different way of thinking about mental illness.”

Backed by Baszucki Group, a US non-profit, and UK Research and Innovation, the national funding agency, the hub will investigate bipolar depression’s links to metabolic disorders, such as diabetes and obesity, and will also investigate how it is affected by disruptions to circadian rhythms.

“Systems involving energy, metabolism and light are all interlinked in our bodies and one outcome to their disruption is bipolar depression, we believe,” said Professor Danny Smith, head of the new hub.

Bipolar depression was originally known as manic depression, a label that catches its progression, Smith added. “At times, people have no energy. At others, they simply have too much. They are manic. They don’t need sleep. They are really active and do things that are out of character. Psychiatrists will say to them: how are you feeling? In fact, they should be asking: what are you doing?”

One approach is developing metabolic treatments that could curtail their bouts of mania and lethargic depression, said Campbell. “Ketogenic diets, in which a person eats no carbohydrates but lots of fats, are quite common. [They are used to cut weight](#) but also to treat epilepsy in some cases. However, it is now becoming clear they can help alleviate bipolar depression.”

A recent study at Edinburgh University involved 27 individuals with bipolar depression who were put

on a keto diet for eight weeks.

“A third of them did very well. Their mood was more stable, they were less impulsive, and their depression lifted,” said Smith. “[Finding] out why some responded and others did not will be one of the first undertakings for researchers at the new hub.”

“Let me remember that the reason for making amends is to free my own mind of uneasiness.” - The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage

“Sometimes we try so hard that we fail to see that the light we are seeking is within us.” - As We Understand

9] [From Depression to Dementia, Inflammation Is Medicine’s New Frontier](#) By Edward Bullmore @Pocket News

Article excerpt: The barrier between mind and body appears to be crumbling. Clinical practice and public perception need to catch up.

Unlikely as it may seem, #inflammation has become a hashtag. It seems to be everywhere suddenly, up to all sorts of tricks. Rather than simply being on our side, fighting infections and healing wounds, it turns out to have a dark side as well: the role it plays in causing us harm.

It’s now clear that inflammation is part of the problem in many, if not all, diseases of the body. And targeting immune or inflammatory causes of disease has led to a series of breakthroughs, from new treatments for rheumatoid arthritis and other auto-immune diseases in the 1990s, through to the advent of immunotherapy for some cancers in the 2010s. Even more pervasively, low-grade inflammation, detectable only by blood tests, is increasingly considered to be part of the reason why common life experiences such as poverty, stress, obesity or ageing are bad for public health.

The brain is rapidly emerging as one of the new frontiers for inflammation. Doctors like myself, who went to medical school in the 20th century, were taught to think that there was an impermeable barrier between the brain and the immune system. In the 21st century, however, it has become clear that they are deeply interconnected and talk to each other all the time. Medical minds are now opening up to the idea that inflammation could be as widely and deeply implicated in brain and mind disorders as it is in bodily disorders.

Advances in treatment of multiple sclerosis have shown the way. Many of the new medicines for MS were designed and proven to protect patients from brain damage caused by their own immune systems. The reasonably well-informed hope – and I emphasise those words at this stage – is that targeting brain inflammation could lead to breakthroughs in prevention and treatment of depression, dementia and psychosis on a par with the proven impact of immunological medicines for arthritis, cancer and MS. Indeed, a drug originally licensed for multiple sclerosis is already being tried as a possible [immune treatment](#) for schizophrenia.

Is that hope realistic for depression? It is beyond reasonable doubt that inflammation and depression are correlated with each other – or [comorbid](#), to use some unlovable but important medical jargon. The key scientific questions are about causation, not correlation. Does inflammation cause depression? And,

if so, how? One experiment that scientists have designed to tackle these questions is to do two functional MRI brain scans, one before and one after an inflammatory response has been [deliberately provoked](#) by the injection of typhoid vaccine. If there's a difference in the two scans, that shows that bodily inflammation can cause changes in the way the brain works; if not, that would be a problem for the theory that inflammation can cause depression.

A recent meta-analysis reviewed data from 14 independent versions of this [experiment](#). On average, the data showed a robust effect of inflammation on brain activity. These results confirmed that bodily inflammation can cause changes in how the brain works. Encouragingly, they also localised the effect of inflammation to particular parts of the brain that were already known to be involved in depression and many other psychiatric disorders.

“Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot.” - Nigerian Proverb

“It's not what other people believe you can do, it's what you believe.” - Gail Devers

10] [Childhood Trauma and Somatic and Mental Illness in Adulthood Study](#) @ National Library of Medicine

Abstract - Background: Childhood trauma is associated with somatic and mental illness in adulthood. The strength of the association varies as a function of age, sex, and type of trauma. Pertinent studies to date have mainly focused on individual diseases. In this study, we investigate the association between childhood trauma and a multiplicity of somatic and mental illnesses in adulthood.

Results: Persons with childhood trauma were more likely to bear a diagnosis of all of the studied conditions: cancer (odds ratio [OR] = 1.10; 95% confidence interval: [1.05; 1.15]), myocardial infarction (OR = 1.13 [1.03; 1.24]), diabetes (OR = 1.16, [1.10; 1.23]), stroke (OR = 1.35 [1.23; 1.48]), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (OR = 1.45 [1.38; 1.52]), depression (OR = 2.36 [2.29; 2.43]), and anxiety disorders (OR = 2.08 [2.00; 2.17]). All of these associations were stronger in younger persons, regardless of the nature of childhood trauma. Differences between the sexes were observed only for some of these associations.

Conclusion: Childhood trauma was associated with a higher probability of developing mental as well as somatic illness in adulthood. As childhood trauma is an element of individual history that the victim has little to no control over, and because the illnesses that can arise in adulthood in association with it are a heavy burden on the affected persons and on society, there is a need for research on these associations and for the development of preventive measures.

“Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.” - Frank Outlaw

“You can't have a better tomorrow if you're always thinking about yesterday.” - C. Roth

11]] [S.I.L.V.E.R. - Healthy Aging with a Psychiatric Disability](#)

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging Among Adults with Serious Mental Illnesses:

Supporting Individuals to Live As Vibrant Elders in Recovery (RRTC – S.I.L.V.E.R.)

Introducing an exciting new resource at [Boston University-Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation](#)

The S.I.L.V.E.R. Portal is your destination for the latest information on healthy aging for individuals with a psychiatric disability. This new web resource features webinars, blog-posts, articles, trainings, podcasts, and other products intended to serve stakeholders in the well-being of older adults with lived experience. Come take a look - we're off to a great start!

If you like what you see, don't forget to [sign up](#) for future S.I.L.V.E.R. Updates!

“If you are going through hell, keep going.” - Winston Churchill

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

12] [Blooming Creativity](#)

[Journals for Life](#). - Welcome to Blooming Creativity, where your journey to wellness and growth is encouraged. Our books are more than just blank pages, they are companions designed to support your health and well-being. At Blooming Creativity your story starts now!

Welcome to where design meets inspiration and care. I'm Anita Lee. I'm thrilled to share my journey, the vision, and the mission behind my work.

My story is one of resilience and transformation. From the heartbreaking loss of my mother during early childhood and then navigating my way through the foster care system for several years to self-medicating with liquor in hopes of relief, I was on the ride of my life! Little did I know that relief would come not through drinking, but through not drinking and getting to know myself. Journaling helped me ask plenty of questions, and time led me to answers through the very same journaling. Ultimately, years after moving to California, I found my way to sobriety. I became profoundly aware and longed to help others. I discovered the power of self-reflection with compelling honesty and set out to share it with anyone who would listen.

I envision a world where every individual has the opportunity to discover and unleash their voice, thus realizing their full potential. I will be a leading catalyst for personal transformation, empowering people to overcome challenges, discover their strengths and weaknesses, and continue to create a life filled with purpose, resilience, and wellness. I am dedicated to supporting creative expression and healthy recovery in all individuals.

My compassionate mission is to nurture creativity and expression, often through journaling, as a pathway to recovery and overall wellness. I encourage others to embark on a journey of self-discovery through various forms of expression, thus enabling them to envision a new and powerful narrative. I inspire positive change, foster resilience, and support individuals through seeking and achieving well-being.

“Writing is the painting of the voice.” - Voltaire

“Believe you can and you're halfway there.” - Theodore Roosevelt

13] [Winter depression is real and there are many ways to fight back](#) By Carla K. Johnson @ AP News

Article Excerpt:As [winter approaches and daylight hours grow shorter](#), people prone to seasonal depression can feel it in their bodies and brains.

“It’s a feeling of panic, fear, anxiety and dread all in one,” said Germaine Pataki, 63, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

She’s among the millions of people estimated to have seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. Her coping strategies include yoga, walking and an antidepressant medication. She’s also part of a Facebook group for people with SAD.

“I try to focus on helping others through it,” Pataki said. “This gives me purpose.”

People with SAD typically have episodes of depression that begin in the fall and ease in the spring or summer. A milder form, subsyndromal SAD, is recognized by medical experts, and there’s also a summer variety of seasonal depression, though less is known about it.

In 1984, a team led by Dr. Norman Rosenthal, then a researcher at the National Institutes of Health, first described SAD and coined the term. “I believe that because it is easy to remember, the acronym has stuck,” he said.

What causes seasonal affective disorder? - Scientists are learning how specialized cells in our eyes turn the blue wavelength part of the light spectrum into neural signals affecting mood and alertness.

Sunlight is loaded with the blue light, so when the cells absorb it, our brains’ alertness centers are activated and we feel more wakeful and possibly even happier.

Researcher Kathryn Roecklein at the University of Pittsburgh tested people with and without SAD to see how their eyes reacted to blue light. As a group, people with SAD were less sensitive to blue light than others, especially during winter months. That suggests a cause for wintertime depression.

“In the winter, when the light levels drop, that combined with a lower sensitivity, might be too low for healthy functioning, leading to depression,” Roecklein said.

Miriam Cherry, 50, of Larchmont, New York, said she spent the summer planning how she would deal with her winter depression. “It’s like clockwork,” Cherry said. “The sunlight is low. The day ends at 4:45, and suddenly my mood is horrible.”

Does light therapy help? - Many people with SAD respond to light therapy, said Dr. Paul Desan of Yale University’s Winter Depression Research Clinic.

“The first thing to try is light,” Desan said. “When we get patients on exposure to bright light for a half an hour or so every morning, the majority of patients get dramatically better. We don’t even need

medications.”

The therapy involves devices that emit light about 20 times brighter than regular indoor light. Research supports using a light that’s about 10,000 lux, a measure of brightness. You need to use it for 30 minutes every morning, according to the research. Desan said this can help not only people with SAD but also those with less-severe winter blahs.

Special lights run from \$70 to \$400. Some products marketed for SAD are too dim to do much good, Desan said.

Yale has tested products and offers [a list of recommendations](#), and the nonprofit Center for Environmental Therapeutics has [a consumer guide](#) to selecting a light.

If your doctor diagnosed you with SAD, check with your insurance company to see if the cost of a light might be covered, Desan suggested.

“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.” - As We Understood

“It is the privilege of wisdom to listen.” - O.W. Holmes

14] [Dr. Ericha Scott - Addressing Trauma & Dissociation through Poetry @ The Creative Psychotherapist](#) - Podcast on Spotify

Dr. Scott is a healer who walks the fine line between mysticism and evidenced-based psychotherapy. She is a licensed psychotherapist (LPCC917) with additional certifications as a registered and board-certified art therapist (ATR-BC), registered expressive arts therapist (REAT), internationally certified advanced alcohol and drug counselor (ICAADC), and as a certified interfaith spiritual director. In addition, she is an Amazon number one best selling author in six countries, artist, photographer, and poet.

For 40 years, she has worked with those who struggle with substance and behavioral use disorders, survivors of trauma, complex trauma, torture, dissociation, victims of sex trafficking, and ritual crime. She is an Honorary Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, the oldest trauma organization in the world, and she was given the Alumni Recognition Award by Sierra Tucson for her work as a trauma and addiction therapist. For ISSTD she was nominated for her research on the topic of profound self-mutilation by those with dissociative identity disorders, and her advocacy for disempowered populations. This research, which included life-sized silhouette drawings and poetry, was published in a peer review journal by UCLA in 1999. Her commitment to health, wellness, and "art as medicine" includes art-based experiential teaching for the medical doctors in Andrew Weil’s University of Arizona Center for Complementary Medicine (8 years), professional clinicians, the public, and her own personal health journey.

Her investment in social change via the arts across the world includes travel, presentations, collaboration, and cultural exchange in 4 continents. Her worldwide creative and spiritual workshops bring hope and healing to diverse populations. Several of her peer-reviewed academic publications and lectures have been translated into Prussian, Arabic, Spanish, and Czechoslovakian. Last year, Dr. Scott

was the keynote speaker in Cairo for the first international scientific art therapy conference in Egypt.

"I give the credit for my success to the power of art to heal and transform even the most challenging problems."

"Learn to listen and listen to learn." - unknown

"It's okay to let go of those who couldn't love you. Those who didn't know how to. Those who failed to even try. It's okay to outgrow them, because that means you filled the empty space in you with self-love instead. You're outgrowing them because you're growing into you. And that's more than okay – that's something to celebrate." - Angelica Moon

Thank you & Take care, Michael

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A diagnosis is not a destiny

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"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi