



## The Artist Within: Awakening Creative Expression

### Integrative Wellness Course



#### **OVERVIEW:**

**Learn to engage in creative play to awaken and ignite your inner artist, contributing to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.**

The Artist Within explores the modalities of visual arts, music, movement and expressive writing as creative tools for the Five Bauman Wellness Practices: Joyful Movement, Mindfulness, Healing Relationships and Service. Studies show that spending just 30 minutes or more each day on arts activities relieves stress, decreases feelings of loneliness, lowers depression and anxiety, encourages creative thinking and increases greater life satisfaction. Because the arts are uniquely capable of enhancing positive emotions, we build agency and resilience in the discovery of something we can do to feel better.

#### **JUSTIFICATION:**

In communities large and small, the arts are used daily to reduce the experience of pain, help individuals express needs and emotions, and create a welcoming and uplifting environment – a path to joy for those who may feel disheartened. Such moments are made possible by a diverse group of professions providing an ever-expanding array of initiatives that engage the arts, humanities, and design in the service of health and well-being.

The Artist Within, a course as part of Bauman's Integrative Wellness program, introduces these inspiring areas of practice and lays a foundation to connect, unify, and elevate the full arena of the arts, health, and well-being.

It is well known that engaging in creative expression is vital to human health and well-being, to bridging the life experiences that divide people and society, and to helping people understand the human condition (Clift & Camic, 2016; Hanna, Rollins, & Lewis, 2017; Lambert, 2016; State of the Field Committee, 2009).

Throughout the United States, the arts are being used to enhance personal healing, promote public health, and support community well-being, including relieving stress, decreasing feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety, encouraging creative thinking and increasing greater life satisfaction. The marriage of the arts and wellness practices is a natural example of how creativity connects, in this case, with the science of recovery, resilience and longevity. The array of settings from medical and natural health schools and wellness centers, to extended living facilities, companies, and public schools. (2017, Janet Chu, Ph.D.)

- **Visual Arts** are powerful in helping us to express our feelings, facilitate verbal communication and cathartic release and reveal unconscious materials and symbols that can't be fully expressed through words. Through this art modality we are able to exercise our mental muscles for nourishment, leading to a process of repair and healing.
- **Creative Movement** helps to relieve stress and anxiety. And those given theater training exhibit word and listening recall, problem solving, self-esteem, and psychological well-being.
- **Music** is nutrition for the soul. It helps to decrease anxiety and restore emotional balance. There is also evidence of the effectiveness of auditory stimulation to abolish pain. Through music we find the strength to process whatever is in our hearts and minds, leading to rejuvenation and restoration.
- **Expressive Writing** can improve control over pain, depressed mood, and pain severity. It aids to organize our thoughts, release our feelings, and regulate our emotions, helping us to gain a sense of control of whatever we might be weighing in the moment. Additionally, studies have shown that individuals who have written about their own traumatic experiences exhibit statistically significant improvements in various measures of physical health, reductions in visits to physicians and better immune system functioning.

### Learning Objectives

1. Learn nonverbal means of communication through visual, auditory, and movement pathways that are still available to us when stress, trauma, language, ability, or culture interfere with speech
2. Engage the brain so much that it quite literally crowds out stress and enables the upper brain functions, necessary for learning, to come back online
3. Enhance positive emotions and not just reducing negative ones
4. Cultivate and grow character and leadership development skills
5. Build social connection
6. Share creative experiences to offer an organic way to be truly seen, heard, and connected

## Program Competencies

1. Identify areas of strength and limitations in the various art practices.
2. Develop a daily discipline to build your confidence and wellbeing.
3. Find your voice, best learning style.
4. Form meaningful, sustainable relationships with colleagues and people of interest.

## Course Facilitators

[Christina Wright, M.Phil, CPCC](#) - [Wright Arts](#), [christina.wrightarts@gmail.com](mailto:christina.wrightarts@gmail.com)

Facilitators-in-Training

## Course Format

The course includes four sessions over a four-week period and will be delivered via Zoom or in-person. Each session runs for 90 minutes.

- Practices Check-In
- Activities for Creative Expression
- Reflections and Sharing
- Weekly Commitment and Affirmation

## Curriculum

### Lesson One – Overview of Social Emotional Arts + Creative Expression for Joyful Movement

90 mins

- Land Acknowledgment and Agreements in Action
- Social Emotional Arts Overview
- Joyful Practice Overview
- Music for Joyful Movement
- Creative Movement
- Appreciation and Blessing

### Lesson Two – Creative Expression for Mindfulness

90 mins

- Land Acknowledgment and Agreements in Action
- Sharing of practices in the last week
- Mindfulness Practice Overview
- Visual Arts for Mindfulness
- Music for Mindfulness
- Creative Movement for Mindfulness
- Expressive Writing for Mindfulness
- Appreciation and Blessing

## Lesson Three – Creative Expression for Healing Relationships

90 mins

- Land Acknowledgment and Agreements in Action
- Sharing of practices in the last week
- Healing Relationships Practice Overview
- Visual Arts for Healing Relationships
- Music for Healing Relationships
- Creative Movement for Healing Relationships
- Expressive Writing for Healing Relationships
- Appreciation and Blessing

## Lesson Four – Creative Expression for Service

90 mins

- Land Acknowledgment and Agreements in Action
- Sharing of practices in the last week
- Service Practice Overview
- Visual Arts for Service
- Music for Service
- Creative Movement for Service
- Expressive Writing for Service
- Appreciation and Blessing

### Participation Requirements

1. Attend at least 80% of the sessions
2. Make weekly commitments to practice creative expression for each wellness practice
3. Share your learning process with the group
4. Provide constructive feedback on the course to your facilitators

### Assignments

- Weekly Assignment: Choose at least one art modality to engage in each wellness practice; journal reflections

### Assessment

- Wellness Practice Inventory
- SEL Creative Arts Skills Assessment

### Outcome

1. Group learning, sharing, bonding
2. Stress relief
3. Decreased feelings of loneliness
4. Lower levels of depression and anxiety
5. Increased creative thinking

6. Greater life satisfaction
7. A toolbox of art modalities for personal and professional use