Explore the healing and restorative power of the arts through the lens of the Bible

WYCLIFFE SINGAPORE

A Look at Arts in Trauma Healing



Trauma Healing & Why the Arts?

Trauma Healing

In our Bible translation, Literacy and Ethnoarts work, we often meet individuals, families and communities carrying deep psychological and emotional wounds. Because trauma overwhelms the mind, people often struggle to put their feelings into words. Many people suffer from trauma, making trauma healing a growing worldwide priority and a vital part of caring for the whole person.

Why the Arts?

Words can be hard to find, but local arts offers a bridge. Artistic activities help quiet the mind, lower inhibitions and gently unlock feelings that are too painful or taboo to speak about. The creation process also reduces stress, brings relaxation and naturally opens the door to healing.

Did You Know?

The more marginalised a group of people are, the more vulnerable they are to trauma. Minority language groups are among the most vulnerable.



Arts in Trauma Healing & the Power of Laments

Arts in Trauma Healing

Trauma isolates people from one another and from God, creating a major barrier to engaging with Scripture and experiencing true peace. The arts help bridge the emotional and analytical parts of the brain. Because pain can be communicated through artistic expression, it gives people a safe space to reflect, self-regulate and break out of isolation.

The Power of Laments

To use the arts effectively, we look closely at local cultures to find meaningful, relevant expressions. This contextualisation matters deeply. For example, laments in their local style give people a voice for grief and loss—whether through song, dance, visual art, or even food.

Real-Life Impact

In South Asia, a woman wrote a song* to give voice to the grief of girls sold into prostitution—a painful reality in her community.

Oh sisters, listen to my song
This is my story
As I think of my pain
I feel I am in hell
Looking at my troubles
Promising luxurious life
He took me to Bombay
He sold me there for prostitution...
I pass my days crying day and night
Please spread my story among our people...
Do not trust anyone

This song brought deep emotional healing to the girls, resonated across the community, and has even been credited with reducing local rates of prostitution. It shows how contextualised art helps people make meaning of their deepest feelings and experiences.

*Source: wycliffe.sg/post/stories-from-the-field-arts-in-trauma-healing

Scripture-informed Trauma Healing



"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
— Psalm 34:18

God longs to draw near to those who have lost hope. In life, we all experience suffering and pain that can turn into deep shame and grief. While healthy grieving helps pain fade over time, unexpressed grief often turns into trauma—lingering inside us as "heart wounds" that require special care.
That is where the Trauma Healing Process comes in. We walk alongside individuals and communities to help them experience God's comfort and restoration.

Our Goals & Where We Work
The ultimate goal of trauma healing is to help survivors build up psychological regulation, find relational safety and experience a true sense of community through creating and sharing arts together.

Regions of Work: Asia, the Pacific/Oceania, Africa, the Americas, Australia and the Middle East & Europe.

To serve communities effectively and celebrate God-given cultural identity, we approach Ethnoarts through several defining principles:

Heart Language, Heart Arts
Just as God speaks to a person's heart through their native language, he also speaks through their native art forms.

Community-Led Process
Outside practitioners act as learners rather than experts. They ask open questions to spark the community's own creativity.

Broad Scope of Mediums
It goes beyond music to include verbal arts (poetry, storytelling), performing arts (dance, drama), visual arts, textiles and even food culture.

Note: Adapted with insights from Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International.

Arts in Trauma Healing Process (ATHP)

The ATHP Approach

Our foundational training equips you to blend contextualised expressive arts—like music, dance and visual art—with biblical truths and basic mental health principles. There is also an emphasis on facilitation skills and co-journeying with the people.

Together, we look at seven core lessons: Suffering, Heart Wounds, Listening, Grief, Laments, Taking our Pain to the Cross and Forgiveness.

The 4-Cycle Training Journey



Cycle 1: An interactive introduction combining Scripture, mental health and the fundamentals of expressive arts. No prior experience is needed!

Cycles 2 & 3: Deeper practice, theoretical foundations and hands-on experience leading healing groups with mentorship.

Cycle 4: Advanced training focused on mentoring, training others and multiplying this ministry.

Are You Ready to Join?

Because we journey closely with the broken-hearted, we ask that you are in a stable, healthy place emotionally and spiritually before stepping into a facilitating role.

If you are currently working through unresolved trauma yourself, we lovingly encourage you to seek counselling or join a healing group first. When you are ready, this training will equip you to bring God's restoration to communities in need.

Global Impact: Deaf Communities

Geri, a translation consultant with the global sign language team, shares: "The Deaf in one region have been working on using the arts for trauma healing, and it's been very effective. We're hoping something similar could be done in other places too."

Across cultures and languages, this ministry offers communities a powerful way to experience God as healer and comforter.

– Learn more: wycliffe.sg/post/contextualisation-culture-in-the-light-of-scripture

What You Will Learn & Where It Takes You

Learning Outcomes
After completing the training, you will be able to:
Understand the scope and impact of trauma and apply that knowledge personally or in ministry.

Design culturally appropriate approaches and materials for basic trauma care.
Facilitate healing groups using local arts to empower communities.

Beyond Healing Groups
The skills you gain go far beyond formal trauma groups—they can transform everyday relationships and leadership.

For example, one youth leader shared how learning about heart wounds and listening changed his approach completely. By simply making space for his teenagers to share their struggles and adding a creative art activity, he opened the door to deep, meaningful conversations.

Whether you are leading a ministry, a team or a community, these tools could help you bring restoration in your life context.

Imagine your path as an Arts in Trauma Healing practitioner...



The Discovery Journey
Starts with a personal awareness of your own brokenness and a deep desire to help others process pain.

Heart Over Credentials
Formal education and hard skills matter less than your natural disposition and heart for this ministry.

An Appreciation for the Arts
You don't need to be an artist yourself, but you recognise how arts helps people regulate emotions and express deep feelings.

Seeing Value in the Work
You truly see the life-changing impact of bringing trauma healing to communities.

A Safe Space Maker
You love creating room for people to explore their own creativity and find a path to personal restoration.

When the rubber hits the road, what does life in the field actually look like?

"From this co-journeying experience, I appreciate the opportunities to tell my story. It is a relief to get to share with others in a safe way. I come away from this experience feeling more confident in who I am in relationship to God." – Deaf Community Member

"I have found helpful tools to apply to my own healing journey through this training. And now, as I walk alongside others, I am finding a beautiful gift in co-journeying with them in their own healing experience." – ATHP Facilitator

"I appreciate that God is close to the brokenhearted and that we can explore tools, his Word and our heart-needs in our walk with Him to move closer to places of healing in our own lives." – Co-journeying Participant



Want to serve with us?

Offer your talents to God and discover the joy of serving Him in new ways! We're looking for:

Arts Workers
Arts Specialists
Arts Consultants





What You Need to Get Started

- **Training & Experience:** Ideally, candidates should have prior training, hands-on experience and, minimally, a certificate in ATHP Cycle 1.
- **Character & Growth:** Possess—or be ready to grow in—empathy, authenticity and deep self-awareness.

If a confirmed candidate lacks the required qualifications, that's ok! With a basic undergraduate degree, you will undergo training before deploying to the field and receive ongoing mentoring. Depending on your experience, this may include on-the-job training or a field internship if a suitable role is available.

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