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ART THERAPY IN ADDICTIONS RECOVERY:

A GRAFTING PLACE FOR WOMEN'S HEALING

by

Nancy Jean Olthuis

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of St. Stephen's College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children and grandchildren:

Ian & Laura, John Matthew, Kendra, and Kara; Zane & Danielle and Aurora.

May you fly with God-given wings.

It is the Spirit Who gives life [He is the Life-giver]

John 6:63 (Amp)

ABSTRACT

Using a phenomenological approach, my thesis question is: What is the lived experience of the women who participate in an addictions recovery group that uses art therapy featuring metaphors related to the vine. Infusing a metaphor about the various attributes of the vine, including narrative and visual art therapy images, had the intention of supporting creative elements in the women's recovery journey relevant to 12-step programs. My interventions were based on art therapy, applied research, and theological study. I drew deeply from the natural world and Christian-based traditions, weaving art, photography, movement, and writing with ritual and spiritual practice. The vine becomes the intertwining metaphor for this study's research. I employed phenomenological methodology as the research approach in order to search for themes and the essence of the lived experience(s) of these women, particularly examining whether or not the vine metaphor is relevant and could facilitate the participants' therapeutic experience. Organic inquiry, which is based on the growth of a plant, inspired aspects of the method. Participants were from a Christian-based residential recovery centre for women. The data was collected from individually recorded interviews and from the mundane data that members contributed through art, non-verbal communication, and verbal comments during the group sessions. The themes support the capacity of artmaking, art reflection, and group dynamics as an efficient, effective addictions treatment modality. I constructed and included a manual called VINES (Visioning Images in Nature Empowering Soul-healing).

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My Lord and my God who is always before, beside, behind, and beneath me.

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Introduction

Art therapy is the language of the heart and soul.
When heart and soul fall silent, we forget our beingness…
the art therapy process encounters imagery that becomes numinous for us,
telling of spiritual truth both in us and beyond us.
(Sagar, 2001, p. 249)

Overview

I present the reader with a map to this study, beginning with my path that led to this thesis. The introduction establishes the use of art therapy, spirituality, metaphor, and ritual in relation to addictions and recovery and my chosen methodology of phenomenology and introduces the thesis question. I develop the metaphor of the vine as having healing potential for addictions and recovery in the art therapy milieu. I convey my spiritual grounding as well as describe the intimate relationship between art therapy and spirituality. Chapter one presents a critique of the literature of art therapy, group art therapy, addictions and recovery, and spirituality as it relates to art therapy and recovery. I present a literature critique that interweaves and examines relevant areas of art therapy, group therapy, addiction and recovery research, phenomenological methodology research, and theology. Chapter two gives the reader a sense of the roots of phenomenology and its context as a research approach for art therapy. A succinct section in chapter two is devoted to the relationship of organic inquiry to phenomenology as a research approach and contextualizes the vine metaphor within organic inquiry.

Having established this framework, I describe my research methods in chapter

three including a background of the Christian recovery centre, the basic structure and pre-selected areas to explore within the VINES groups art therapy sessions, ethical issues including confidentiality, how the data was stored, interview questions, and reliability and validity of the research. The results are presented in chapter four under three sub-sections: section one gives the reader a sense of how the VINES group art therapy sessions transpired through the art and the individual participants' processing of their art in the group (GAP). Several participants were not present to be interviewed so this is the degree to which I could present their experience. Each VINES group session in section one closes with my therapeutic reflections to establish a sense of my subjectivity as researcher. Section two presents the first order themes distilled from the three participants that I interviewed and their art. The higher order (more global) themes are presented in section three.

Chapter five's discussion establishes continuity with the topics covered in chapter one's literature critique in addition to topics that emerged in the results. The discussion highlights aspects of the thematic results supported by relevant literature. Following the discussion, chapter six summarizes and concludes with a contribution to future research. The VINES manual (chapter seven) distills my methods for possible ways to replicate this research study. A reference list and appendices follow. I have included in the appendices: a brief personal statement which includes response art and poetry (A); the dynamic flow of art of four participants (B); and, finally, the ethics and consent forms used in the research (C).

In the Beginning

This journey began with my own exploration of the synchronicity of images and archetypes appearing in nature, which were to me, in their revealing, profound sources of healing and Divine manifestation. I have since observed an intimate relationship between spirituality, nature, and art therapy. My 2007 art exhibit of photography and poetry entitled *Borderlands: Finding God at Eye Level,* invited viewers to find their own transcendent meaning in a spectrum of natural images. Inspired by Celtic spirituality, I wanted to convey a glimmer of the manifest presence of God, as perceived or felt, in creation. Aptly named by the Celts as "the thin space, " it is barely perceivable, but penetrable if one chooses to look closely.

In 2010 I began my art therapy practicum working with women in addictions recovery and sensed that my thesis question would be around the healing power of nature in art therapy practice. While in Starbucks, with the purpose of honing in on my proposal, my eye immediately was drawn to an empty table with a solitary, white envelope bearing a "VINES" logo. To me, it was almost as if it was a personal invitation. Just like my calling to art therapy, the topic found me. I felt the soul of the work lifting its voice and clarifying my vision. Creativity ignited, an acronym came to mind triggered by the logo on the envelope: Visioning Images in Nature Empowering Soul-healing (VINES). Layers of possibilities began unfolding.

Vine images were already rooting in my subconscious and began appearing in 2003, in a tapestry my sister gave to me for my new home. The tapestry became the gathering tablecloth used in the research sessions and is now the background image for

the manual cover. Then, vines appeared in the first painting I had made in many years. The image that came to me for this painting was a Tuscan fresco of the vine and the branches. The metaphor of vine and the branches of the Gospel of John (Chapter 15) resonated within me. It became a spiritual source of inspiration for the group themes, as the art therapy sessions of this research took place in a Christian recovery centre.

As art therapist and researcher, and following the contextual foundation of art therapist Shirley Riley (2004), I wondered if the vine indeed had "symbolic and universal significance…a secure metaphoric base from which the transition from mythic to personal interpretation was available…adding the illustrative quality of art forms created by the clients [which] allowed an opportunity for further projections to be made" (p. 199). I envisioned group themes of self-vine, pruning, nurture, grafting/connection, and fruit which could possibly parallel and creatively enhance elements of 12-step recovery programs. Through the vine metaphor, group participants could possibly project upon the care and growth of plant and might relate these metaphors to themselves. Other vine-related topics might resonate with aspects of their life process.

The dual nature of the vine, in Jungian terms, could function as a metaphor for the light and shadow aspects of the self and encompass the ambiguity of the recovery journey. A grapevine structure has capacity to produce much fruit. The misuse or abuse of wine derived from the fruit potentially can contribute to alcohol addiction experiences for many. For some, the spiral down to the Hades of addiction may also lead them to finding ways to healing and recovery (Schierse Leonard, 1989).

Addictions and Recovery Presented Through the Metaphor of the Vine (Nature's Model)

Pruning grapes is easier when you understand the growth and fruiting characteristics of the grapevine. Grapevines produce fruit clusters on the previous season's growth (two-year and older wood is not fruitful). Before pruning, an average grapevine may have 200 to 300 buds which are capable of producing fruit. If the vine is left unpruned, the number of grape clusters would be excessive. The vine would be unable to ripen the large crop or sustain adequate vegetative growth. The purpose of pruning is to obtain maximum yields of high quality grapes and to allow adequate vegetative growth for the following season…The most desirable time to prune grapevines is in late winter or early spring. Grapevines pruned at this time of year will bleed heavily. However, the bleeding will not harm the vines.

(Jauron, 2010)

Addiction itself can be described as a phenomenon that chokes out a sensory connection to the natural world, plunging the addict into a dark world of bondage, where the substance becomes the reason for living (Schierse Leonard, 1989). Addiction can be represented as a grafting into diseased vines that ultimately rots away the plant, or in the case of people living with addictions, the body/mind/spirit. Healthier possibilities are cut off and instead, a more restrictive life context disconnects those living with addictions from their own healing by taking control of their minds, bodies, and spirits, robbing them of their potential for more healthy being-ness (May, 1988; Olthuis, 2002).

The deceptively beautiful moonflower is a choking vine bearing a marked

resemblance to the morning glory. The moonflower is the morning glory's shadow counterpart, only appearing at end of day. Unrestricted, the moonflower subsumes whatever lies in its path. The vine image serves as a potential metaphor for the work in addiction recovery groups.

Of all the aspects of vineyard care, pruning is the most crucial (May, 2008; Patrick, 2008). Even in healthy vines, the vine wood can grow in an uncontainable manner, often to lengths of 10-15 feet, stealing nourishment that goes into fruit-bearing. Without pruning, the dense leaves will prevent sunlight from ripening the fruit clusters. Unpruned, branches are weak and prevent the vine from bearing fruit.

On a metaphorical level, denial of the addiction is a resistance to pruning. Eventually the addicted person is metaphorically buried within the tangled mess of a fruitless vine. Proper pruning trims vines branches to lengths of mere inches, and out of these healthy branches spring the clusters of grapes. Via the metaphor of grafting and connection, "intervining" gives a natural quality to growth in relationships. Fruit can be a metaphor for many aspects of personal growth accomplishments which can lead to enhanced self-esteem. Seeds for future growth are contained in the fruit. Even experiences of loss through addiction can become compost to nourish the fruit-bearing vines.

Vines are characterized by clinging and climbing, both vertically and horizontally (Thomas, 1999). Healthy clinging can be related to building new healthy relationships within community. The image of a vertical climbing vine, reaching for sunlight could connect to the concept of searching for a spiritual Higher Power. Tendril vines can be tenacious in their clinging, having the strength to break apart mortar and bricks (Thomas,

1999). This tenacity is like the ability to survive in the face of an addiction, a former unhealthy behaviour. Stubbornly clinging and growing like vines can bring new growth and hope as struggles are reframed and acknowledgment is given to a healing process through recovery. This process may have the potential to promote healthy empowerment.

The Metaphor of the Vine Applied to Art Therapy Groups

The vine metaphor parallels elements of the group process: of formation (planting), finding its feet (taking root), finding cohesion and establishing trust (grafting and growth), processing negative emotions (pruning), and fruit (insight for personal growth). Like a vine, group process requires flexibility and is not a static application of art invitations (Riley, 2001). As a living organism, the group becomes "varied, integrative and sustainable over time and therefore stronger and more pliant" (p. 217). The group becomes the vineyard into which individual vines are planted.

The therapist can possibly find meaning in the vine metaphor. Within group dynamics, the therapist ensures that the individual vines are not clinging in dependence. As husbander, the therapist encourages participants to cultivate personal meaning from the art. Fruit bearing cannot be forced. Picking the fruit prematurely as in the red stage of the blackberry or grape, can leave a bitter taste. For art therapists, forcing the process can thwart the fruit of individual's self-discovery and inhibit his or her ability to become their own tutor (Schnetz, 2005).

Contextualization of Organic Inquiry and Phenomenological Art Therapy

Organic inquiry is a relatively young research methodology particularly suited to psycho-spiritual topics (Braud, 2004; Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). Based on a plant's growth, this research process incorporates multiple ways of knowing including the

sacred/spiritual. The process of organic inquiry parallels that of phenomenological art therapy, which seeks to describe the experiences that the individual has with the art and the artmaking process (Betensky, 1995; Schnetz, 2005; McNeilly, 2006). Art therapists engage the image and the individual from a point of view of curiosity and attempt to bracket their personal interpretations (Betensky, 1995; Moon, 2002; Schaverien, 1992).

Rather than being contained in initial directives, art therapy's very process resists efforts to control it. The research process can resist similar directive efforts. In organic inquiry, the themes and narratives organically emerge from reflections (Clements, 2004, Curry & Wells, 2006). In art therapy, images have a life of their own and will emerge from the artmaking for meaning making. Organic inquiry actively recognizes Spirit, and like art therapy, can also open eyes to the sacred in the mundane (Braud, 2004; Clements, Ettling, Jennet, & Shields, 2002; Curry & Wells, 2006; Romanyshyn, 2007). A portion of organic inquiry happens in liminal space, just as in art therapy, as one moves from the ordinary everyday into the creative imagination. Using the metaphor of the vine, organic inquiry is flexible and adaptable with possibilities for new growth. Multiple ways of knowing interweave vine-like, creating rich foliage. Organic inquiry encompasses the interconnected web of life—body, mind, spirit, and environment.

These introductory reflections about the value of nature and vines as metaphors provide a grounding for my thesis. My hope is that these explorations of the lived experiences of women in addictions recovery as they interface in art therapy with the metaphor of the vine move beyond the boundaries of my personal experience. I invite you to embark on this journey with open curiosity, seeded by these women's stories of recovery. Chapter one opens with a critique of literature relevant to this study.

Chapter One

Literature Critique

This literature critique addresses areas of research that are relevant to this art therapy and addictions recovery thesis and gives a background for the work that has been foundational to my development as art therapist:

- art therapy as healing modality;
- art therapy and spirituality;
- nature as healing link;
- group art therapy;
- addictions and recovery;
- art therapy interventions and techniques for addictions recovery in group work; and
- ritual in art therapy.

A brief overview of art therapy's historical development and significant researchers/clinicians in the field is presented to give the reader a sense of context for the literature critique. There are many other researchers/practitioners who are making their own marks in the field of art therapy. Only because this is a critique and not a literature review, I have not included their work.

Research in art therapy can best be described as in a pre-adolescent stage of development (J. Hammond-Meiers, personal communication, October, 2010). Art therapy in its infancy grew up in the late 1940's and early 1950's in the United States, Canada, and Britain alongside recreational and occupational therapies in the clinical setting of

psychiatric hospitals. As the discipline followed closely in the wake of the relatively young science of psychology, pioneers saw its potential application in a wider scope of populations and began to develop their own methodologies. Many of these founders were also practicing artists, and, for some, art therapy was a natural progression of their creative work. It became necessary to establish and articulate a theoretical orientation to establish respect for the discipline (Malchiodi, 2002).

Within art therapy, an open studio model evolved. The open studio focused on the creative process of making art as a healing path and is noted in the theoretical approach of Pat Allen (1995), Ellen Levine (2003), Shaun McNiff (1988), and Catherine Moon (2002). At the other end of the continuum, the art image holds primary therapeutic focus and can be valuable in clinical assessment (Hammer, 1997; Hinz, 2009; Oster & Gould, 1988; Schaverien, 1992). Generally, art therapists will place varying degrees of emphasis on the process of artmaking or on the image itself.

Branches of art therapy took root in the United States with the pioneering work of Edith Kramer (1958) and Margaret Naumberg (1966). Pat Allen (1995, 2005), Mala Betensky (1995), Nancy Chickerneo (1993, 2008), Mimi Farrelly-Hansen (2001), Lisa Hinz (2009), Ellen Horovitz-Darby (1994), Cathy Malchiodi (1999, 2002, 2007), Shaun McNiff (1988, 1990, 1992, 2004, 2009), Catherine Moon (1989, 2001, 2002), Shirley Riley (2001, 2004), and Judith Rubin (2005), sources cited in this study, could be considered as leaders in the field today. Pat Allen tells of her own coming into art therapy after a serendipitous encounter with Margaret Naumberg, breaking free from the strictures of her fine arts study. After attending a lecture and meeting Naumberg personally, Allen reflects on her first experience of painting her dream images:

> Paintings are supposed to speak for themselves, yet most of what I see around me in art school is mute and distant. We speak in words like 'form,' 'gesture,' and 'surface,' but no meaning, no content. The form of my paintings is weak; this is not 'art' in any sense, but the meaning evoked by these images connects me once again, in a different way, to the river that surges below my observable daily life, the place of soul. I throw my lot in with Naumberg and art therapy at that moment. (1995, p. 55)

Natalie Rogers (1993) integrated the expressive arts into the person-centred (humanistic) work of her father, Carl Rogers. After being introduced in 1973 to humanistic art therapy, Natalie reflects on her notes journalled at that time: "I want to be less self-conscious of my unconscious. I want to be able to work more directly from my unconscious to paper or art media. I want to integrate my life force, which is surging, with the one-ness with the universe that I feel. I want to explore the left side of me…" (p. 35). She wanted to explore her feminine side and her right brain which holds the emotions. This is significant as the autobiographical history, with all the accompanying affect, is in the right brain (Schore, 2001).

The Canadian art therapy tradition has evolved in a different vein from its American counterpart. Four grand-mothers and fathers include Martin Fischer (1973), husband and wife team Selwyn and Irene Dewdney in Ontario, and Marie Revai in Quebec (Fischer, 1973; Lamy, 2007). Fischer came to Ontario, Canada during the Second World War and had been under the tutelage of Carl Jung. Marie Revai immigrated to Quebec from Hungary in 1951. An accomplished artist, she began working with psychotic patients in occupational therapy and was known for her great compassion for

the suffering (Lamy, 2007). Marie similarly envisioned that a new type of therapy was evolving. Together with the American pioneer Elinor Ullman, they founded the American Association of Art Therapists. Second-generation Canadian art therapists cited in this study include Helene Burt (2012), Monica Carpendale (2002. 2009), Nadia Ferrara (2004), Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers (2005, 2012), Christine Lummis (2004), and Martina Schnetz (2005).

British art therapy was strongly planted in the psychoanalytic tradition. Many in the Jungian school were Jewish and had settled in Britain, fleeing the European continent to escape the Nazi war regime. Winnicott's (1965) object relations and attachment theory evolved in this milieu. The theoretical approach of Gerry McNeilly (2006) and Joy Schaverien (1992) reflect these roots. Val Huet and Sally Skaife (1998), Marian Liebmann (1986), Diane Waller and Jacky Mahony (1999), and Neil Springham (1999) are British art therapists cited in this study.

If one reads the personal journeys of these art therapists, more often than not, art therapy is a field that finds the individual rather than the individual seeking it out. Contrary to the medical model, the art therapist does not presume to be the healer or healthy fixer of one who is ill, but enters into the unknown pain and inner world of another with a common humanity and compassion. "The two [therapist and client] are co-constructing the client's health" (Burt, 2012, p.10). Catherine Moon's personal experience captures this essence of the art therapy relationship. Moon told herself after being upended on her tipping chair, falling backwards in a therapy session:

> Get off your high horse and get yourself grounded! Know what it is like to have your world turned upside. Your becoming a good therapist is not about putting

> yourself apart from the people you work with; it is about coming to know intimately their pain, their humiliation, and their ability to rise above it…I can see the poetry in falling backwards in a chair and getting up in the midst of a community of people who snickered, not to make fun of me but to welcome me into the fold. (2002, p. 31)

Art Therapy as Healing Modality

> *We need forms and images. Without them we have no way of relating to the Divine. Symbol and image create a universal spiritual language. It's the language the soul understands.*
>
> (Kidd, 1990, p. 137)
>
> *Everything in the world of soul has a deep desire and longing for visible form; this is exactly where the power of the imagination lives.*
>
> (O'Donohue, 2004, p.51)

Art therapy is essentially a non-verbal way of accessing subconscious material (Hinz, 2009; Malchiodi, 2007; Moon, 2002; Riley, 2001; Schaverien, 1992). Language is unable to communicate feelings and experiences from the pre-verbal phase of human development, thus art is able to access the pre-verbal wounds when words cannot be found (Fischer, 1973; Hinz, 2009; Levy, 1995; Rubin, 2005; Schaverien, 1992). Repressed memories of traumatic experiences exist at a pre-verbal level and are often inaccessible through language (Burt, 2012; Herman, 1992; Levine, 2010). Art therapy's gentle approach allows buried trauma and repressed memories to externalize and diffuse in the art at a pace suitable to the individual (Crenshaw, 2006; Lummis, 2004; Simington, 2007). Moon (2002) and McNiff (1988, 1990) describe the art product as an artifact. It

becomes a concrete record of a client's journey and can be revisited at a later time for a further harvesting of meaning. Complex feelings can be explored in the simplest art product.

Rogers (1993) in *The Creative Connection* underscores several key concepts incorporated in art therapy. Both positive and negative emotions can be processed through the art. Rather than something to be feared and buried, negative emotions can be reconstructed as a force toward self-understanding which breaks down inners barriers and can lead to positive change. When feelings are "violent or wrathful, we can transform them into powerful art rather than venting them on the world" (p. 5). Both the art and the artmaking processes become the conduits for healing by externalizing these issues and deep emotions in a fairly non-threatening manner compared to some treatments or even in a non-threatening manner for many clients. The art and artmaking may help pace the client's disclosure in order to promote later integration and may help in reconnecting dissociated aspects of the self (Allen, 1995; Burt, 2012; Hammond-Meiers, 2012; Hinz, 2009; Levine, 2003; Levy, 1995; Lummis, 2004; Moon, 2001; Rappaport, 2009; Rogers, 1993; Schaverien, 1992; Waller & Mahony, 1999; Wilson, 2003).

Chaotic parenting can result in a child's lack of attachment and impede the maturation of emotional development found in the right side of the brain (Schore, 2001, 2002; Siegel, 1999). Current neuroscience research suggests that brain development continues into adulthood. The art therapy process facilitates mind/body healing of the left and right hemispheres of the brain by integrating logical, relational processing and sensory, emotional experiences:

Completing the art therapy task involves the integration of higher cortical

> thinking such as planning, attention and mindful problem solving with social-emotional investment. The skills of an attuned art therapist helps express, recruit and hold the relational self in mind while allowing for the expression of needed emotions and motivations. The realization of emotions in the artwork becomes a natural accompaniment to completing higher cortical tasks. Emotions, such as frustration and joy, which emerge in the artwork, are experienced whilst learning to trust another person. (Hass-Cohen & Carr, 2008, p. 39)

Pioneering theorist Susanne Langer is not deeply explored in the art therapy context, but her foundational writings give a philosophic framework for the effectiveness of art as healing language. As a mode of expression, the art image can convey feeling in the realm of the symbolic that the spoken word is not able to communicate (Juillard & Van Den Heuvel, 1999). Langer's *Philosophy in a New* Key, first published in 1941, articulated a multi-sensory approach to reconnecting with feelings via art which "formulates our conceptions of feeling and our conceptions of visual, tactual, and audible reality together. It gives us *forms of imagination* and *forms of feeling*, inseparably; that is to say, it clarifies and organizes intuition itself" (Langer as cited in Ferrara, 2004, p.111).

Artmaking rekindles the imagination, thereby effecting transformation through the creative process (Allen, 1995; Cameron, 1992, 1996; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; Horovitz-Darby, 1994; McNiff, 1992; Moon, 2002). Creativity has an inherent power to heal as the channel to the soul (Allen, 1995; Cameron 1992, 1996; Jung 1956, 1959; Hillman, 1972, 1996; Knill, Barba, & Fuchs, 2004; Lummis, 2004; McNiff, 1992; Schierse Leonard, 1989). The process of making art transcends the logical mind and is the doorway to the subconscious. Carl Jung identified the creative process as an

"unconscious activation of an archetypal image and…by giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life" (Jung, 1978).

The language of creativity is the language of the senses (Chickerneo, 2008; O'Donohue, 2004). Children are fluent in the language of creativity and, in their naturally innocent state, are connected to their senses. Developmentally, creativity is often extinguished at a very young age, most often as children transition out of elementary to high school where high value is placed on logical thinking and reasoning (Cameron, 1992, 1996; Levine, 2003; Moon, 2002; Rogers, 1993). Art classes are relegated to electives and art quality determined by external criteria.

Negative critique at critical developmental stages can often traumatize individuals, causing them to doubt their own creative ability and avoid future artful engagement. The rational mind holds the voice of the inner critic, of the adult self, which can be a harsh voice recapitulating these voices that echo into the present (Allen, 1995). The critic's voice resists knowing because as Pat Allen wisely identifies, "knowing is dangerous because it leads to change…to live is to change. The critic says 'don't know, you might find out something awful about yourself, don't go into that river of life, you might drown'" (p. 48). Adults can long to reconnect to the spontaneity and wonder of their childhoods (Cameron, 1992, 1996; Chickerneo, 2008). By reconnecting and reclaiming the child self, sensory memories that are energizing and life giving can be activated (Hinz, 2009; Schaverien, 1992). The healing value of art therapy is that artistic talent is not required to enter into the process even though the person's inner critic will say otherwise.

The language of healing also speaks in metaphor, symbol, and beauty (O'Donohue, 2004; Simington, 2007). Metaphor is a symbolic means of human communication, giving a richness to reality and an art-full approach to living (Hillman, 1972). Metaphor as symbolic representation is a core concept in art therapy as clients will uncover their own metaphors through the creative process. Riley and Malchiodi (2004) advocate tuning in to each client's metaphoric language which "provides the therapist with a dictionary that mirrors their unique way of perceiving the world and understanding events" (p. 49).

Art Therapy and Spirituality

An intimate relationship exists between spirituality and art. Spirituality is ontological, that is, it is part of humanity's make-up and the ability to create is part of being formed in the image and likeness of God, reflecting divine creativity (May, 1988; Olthuis, 2002). Creative expression in all its forms also has the potential to open up spiritual pathways (Allen, 2005). Dissanayake (1988) and Gablik (1991) have explored the foundational principles of making art: Dissanayake codifies art as a human behaviour. From its very beginnings, art was linked to ritual and religious activity, using the language of symbol and metaphor to express the inexpressible. Humankind's biological make-up includes a need to "make special" (1988, p. 92).

If artmaking is a fundamental, spiritual expression of humanity's desire to connect with the Divine, to give form to the Formless, art itself can be seen as a container for the sacred. Art therapy can be infused with sacred character and can be regarded as a sacred activity. This view of art therapy is found in the tradition of Allen (2005), Chickerneo (2008), Farrelly-Hansen (2001), Horovitz-Darby (1994), McNiff (1992), and Moon

(2001). “The ancient space provided by the ritual of art disciplines has served for generations to grant imagination body and soul. It spontaneously registers as *sacred* space, as it has traditionally” (Knill, Barba, & Fuchs, 2004, p. 107).

McNiff (1992) ascribes a sacred character to the images themselves, calling them “angels of the wound” (p. 26). They have a specific message to communicate to the art therapy participant versus a universal message, and should not be controlled or interpreted because in McNiff’s opinion, they are an “expression of the soul’s process of ministering to itself” (p. 26). Often it is the rejected image that is the most profound, and through changing the image, one is able to change (p. 38). In his introduction to Knill, Barba, and Fuchs’ *Minstrels of Soul: Intermodal Expressive Therapy* (2004), McNiff again uses the sacred to describe the images that “move through us like angels and demons who know their way. They are the agents of imagination’s medicine, which treats disorders of the soul with soul” (p. 12). Schaverien (1992) adds another dimension by describing the art object as a talisman, infusing it with a “magical atmosphere…The picture may then come to be magically invested and so capable of ‘working wonders’ for good or ill. The clients who unconsciously empower a picture may find they have come to be in awe of their own creation” (p. 139).

In the context of art therapy, Moon (2001) and Schaverien (1992) describe sacred as a “making special” (2001, p. 30). The creative process makes the ordinary (also termed “profane”) special. Dissanayake (1988) gives further clarity: “One intends by making special to place the activity or artifact in a ‘realm’ different from the everyday…Both artist and perceiver often feel that in art they have an intimate connection with a world that is different from if not superior to ordinary experience” (p. 92).

A postmodern view of art therapy includes and recognizes spirituality as inherent within the artmaking process for many clients (Burt, 2012). Art therapist Mimi Farrelly-Hansen (2001) had an "intuitive understanding that art making, therapy, and Spirit were related, perhaps, inseparable" (p. 12). This intuition was the impetus leading to her authorship of *Spirituality and Art Therapy: Living the Connection*. Farrelly-Hansen has collected the stories of practicing art therapists/artists who are of diverse faith traditions. Spirituality is identified by these individuals as integral to their own healing process as well as that of their clients.

Spirituality is a sweeping term within the art therapy milieu as well as in the present cultural context. In an early 1990's survey of art therapists at the 20th annual Art Therapy Association of America (ATAA) conference, Catherine Moon commented on the range of personal interpretations of spirituality: " 'Spirituality' is a loaded word. It is loaded with ancient history and trendy New-Ageism...It is loaded with the good and bad of religion. It is loaded with hope and meaning and mistrust and cynicism" (Moon cited in Doyle, 1993, p. 21). Presently, some of this fear is abating as indicated by the developing dialogue between science and religion. Medical circles are now acknowledging spirituality as integral to healing (Levin, 2002; Levine, 2010).

Doyle (1999) has explored a similar softening of the boundaries between the sacred and profane as occurring in art therapy. She critiqued three theoretical orientations of prominent art therapists: archetypal, existential, and developmental. Jung has been named as one of the first to express a spirituality of art therapy as he regularly used art—significantly, mandalas—to probe and understand his own dreams (Farrelly-Hansen, 2002). Joseph Campbell and his disciple, James Hillman, continued in the lineage of

Jung's active imagination, deepening the exploration of myth and universal archetypes. One's own personal narrative can be re-storied by connecting a larger meta-narrative, thereby effecting healing (Hillman, 1972; Levine, 2010, McNiff, 2009). Existential questions as to the meaning of life often emerge in the art therapy milieu (Allen, 2005; McNiff, 2009). Horovitz-Darby (1994) recognized the parallel relationship between developmental theory and spiritual development and created a spiritual assessment tool to be used in the art therapy process.

Doyle (1999) has suggested that the shamanic tradition and the highly analytic within art therapy are now becoming less polarized. McNiff (2009) has compared the role of the art therapist with that of the shaman of global indigenous cultures:

> characterized by imagination, mythic patterns, and creative expression…Through ritual enactments and ceremonies, the shaman acting on behalf of the community, strives to bring back the souls of sick and troubled persons. These ways of viewing and treating illness and disturbance correspond completely to what we do in expressive arts therapy. (p. 39)

McNiff's view is somewhat in alignment with some types of art therapy models. However, this view historically was not one easily recognized or understood in the medical/scientific community (Doyle, 1999).

Guiccardi (2011) coalesced the essence of the shamanic experience as navigating between the seen and the unseen. Abram (1996) defined the role of shaman in a way that could also be attributed to the art therapist's ability to guide a client's creative experience: "the ability to slip out of the perceptual boundaries that demarcate his or her particular culture—boundaries reinforced by social customs, taboos, and most

importantly, the common speech or language…" (p. 9).

By reestablishing the flow to the creative source, which connects to the divine Source, lost parts of the self can be reclaimed and integrated (Allen, 2005; Cameron, 1992; Rogers, 1993). Throughout the literature, writers identify this source as the wellspring of life (Chickerneo, 2008; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001). In the Christian Scriptures, the locus of this source is the heart centre. When the heart centre dies, creativity dies also. "Guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 5:6 NKJV).

Nature as Healing Link

Nature provides an abundance of images for healing. A connection to the natural world is woven in the fabric of humanity and is a common thread woven through both eastern and western spiritual traditions (Chickerneo, 2008; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; O'Donohue, 2004). Images from nature connect to our human psyche subconsciously in myth and archetype and have universal potential for healing (Chickerneo, 2008; Farrelly-Hansen, 2002; Jung, 1956, 1959; McNiff, 1992; Schaverien, 1992; Schierse Leonard, 1989). Nature has sacramental character—and like the Eucharist within some Christian traditions, can be taken in by the individual who is so inclined to receive it for nurturing (Bassoff, 1992; Farrelly-Hansen, 2002; Horovitz-Darby, 1994; Moon, 2001). Nature can potentially bring us into a relationship with the Creator of the universe (Adam, 2000; Newell, 1999). As viewed in Celtic spirituality, God extends divine arms through nature, giving solace, comfort, and healing.

Often not distinctly acknowledged at a conscious level, our physical existence is grounded in the earth. Abram (1996) explored this sensual connection to the earth:

Caught up in a mass of abstractions, our attention hypnotized by a host of human-

> made technologies that only reflect us back to ourselves, it is all too easy for us to forget our carnal inherence in a more-than-human matrix of sensations and sensibilities. Our bodies have formed themselves in delicate reciprocity with the manifold textures, sounds, and shapes of an animate earth… (p. 22).

Abram considered the present-day culture as seeing nature as mechanistic and devoid of mystery.

Contemporary society bears the wounds of dysfunction as we have become further and further distanced from the natural world (Abram, 1996; Clinebell, 1996; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; Sabini, 2002; O'Donohue, 2004). In *The Earth Has a Soul: C. G. Jung on Nature, Technology and Modern Life*, a collection of Jung's memoirs edited by Meredith Sabini (2002), Jung sensed that humanity's relationship to the natural world required a balance. The natural world is not to be sought only as an escape, but neither should it be avoided by sole focus on the rational (pp. 200-201). His poignant observations presaged the current natural deficit in modern culture. Richard Louv (2005) has specifically identified an alarming disconnection from nature in children today as nature-deficit disorder. Farrelly-Hansen (2001) paints a vivid picture of the relationship of disconnection to the earth and the resulting crisis in the environment:

> We live in challenging times when extraordinary breakthroughs stand shoulder to shoulder with widespread homelessness and isolation, rampant violence and addictions to immediate gratification, intoxicants, narcotics, escapism. We are careless about waste, we bury our grief, we shun old age…the big picture can be overwhelming, which is perhaps why so many people deny the earth's pain. (p. 133)

As a light illuminating this darkness, scholar and pastoral psychotherapist Howard Clinebell (1996) portrayed a vision for an ecologically grounded theory of counseling and psychotherapy. He envisioned a tri-partite healing circle, developed from his own deep, long-standing relationship to nature. Clinebell noted the relationship between a disconnection from nature and spiritual disconnection. However, he also observed a reciprocity of healing: as one is nurtured by nature, a desire to care for the earth and an enhanced spiritual awareness propel the individual to engage with others in earth-caring activities (pp. 8-9). He describes "nurtured by nature" as: "flinging wide our inner windows of grateful awareness of these gifts of life and deepening our intimate interaction with the natural world in ways that are both healing and enlivening" (p. 8).

A relationship with the natural world has also been central to the shamanic experience and the shamanic interpretation of the role of art therapist (Abram, 1996; McNiff, 2009). Guiccardi (2011) identified a unifying factor of the shamanic journey across cultures as healing grounded in the earth. Creation has been explored by art therapists as a unique portal to healing: the innate beauty or even desolation of an image from nature can be the key to soul nurture (Anderson, 1995; Bassoff, 1992; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; MacFarland, 2008; O'Donohue, 2004). Nature, like art, can be a bridge between the sacred and profane and a portal to the liminal space. Pat Allen (2005) sees this bridging as being easily lost in a complicated world, because

> at one time humans achieved self-renewal simply in nature, that being embedded in the natural world was a means to retune us to our soul…the deep truth of natural law simply reentered our awareness on a deep, nonverbal level when we watched the sunset or the tide go out. (p. 106)

An art therapy approach that includes nature can contribute to a holistic treatment for women in addiction recovery. Interacting with the natural world has the potential to reawaken senses that have been dulled by substance abuse (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; Feen-Calligan, 1995; Levine, 2003). A reconnection to the body when there has been disassociation, can be facilitated by a re-grounding in the natural world (Clinebell, 1996; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; MacFarland, 2008). Betensky (1995) affirmed the relevance of using art materials from the natural world that can "bring forth emotional arousal and consciousness all at once. Being themselves bits of the world, these materials contribute to the client's getting back in touch with the world" (p. 22).

Nancy Barrett Chickerneo has advocated embracing the natural world as a source of personal healing. After a long career as art therapist in addictions recovery, Chickerneo's recent work, *Women Spirit Awakening in Nature* (2008), is down-to-earth and forms the structure for her development of SPA Sisters retreats (Spirit-Place-Authentic Self). Metaphors from nature are tapped to access the well of internal wisdom by restoring intuition through the senses: "Instead of the 'here's what I want to tell you' approach, the 'what do you see, taste, touch, smell, feel' approach gets past our carefully constructed, tough stone exterior and into our centre where things become clear and focused" (p. 41). Beginning with a clear question of intent and open expectancy, one can experience a metaphoric message from the natural world that is uniquely personal.

Mimi Farrelly-Hansen (2001) refers to psychologist Evelyn Bassoff's view that particular soul wounds of unmothered women may be soothed and filled by a relationship with nature. While recognizing the tangled web of addiction, Bassoff attributed a lack of parental nurture in early childhood relationships as fodder for women's addictions. In

Mothering Ourselves: Help and Healing for Adult Daughters, Bassoff (1992) describes how nature can complement loving human relationships as a source of nurture:

> By going into Nature, we experience a oneness with the universe, which relieves feelings of conflict and fragmentation. Outer experience changes inner experience: harmony inherent in the natural world instills a lovely feeling of internal unity. Just as a soothing mother quells her young child's distress by containing her fears and anxieties, Mother Nature can be a source of solace for the adult child in pain. (p. 122)

Groups and Groups in Art Therapy

When it begins, a community is like a seed which must grow to become a tree.

…Community is always in a state of growth.

The growth of a community depends on the growth of each of its members.

Communities need tensions if they are to grow and deepen. There are a thousand reasons for tension. And each of them brings the whole community, as well as each individual member, face to face with its own poverty, its inability to cope, its weariness, aggression and despair.

Jean Vanier (n.d.)

Groups are a minor miracle.

(Riley, 2001, p. xviii)

Art therapy groups share features in common with more traditional verbal therapy groups (Liebemann, 1986; Malchiodi, 2007; Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005; Skaife & Huet, 1998). Art therapist Cathy Malchiodi traces group art therapy's unique, curative elements to the pioneering work of Irving Yalom (1995): instilling hope, interaction, universality,

catharsis, and altruism (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 194-95). Riley (2001) sees art therapy groups as functioning on similar multiple levels and names conformity, trust, disclosure, and nurturing as core issues in group work. Vital to the group process is having "containment", that is, a place of balance and safety to process negative emotions (Malchiodi, 2007; Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005).

Coupled with a sense of security, building trust within the group and with the therapist fertilizes creative expression. As trust within the group and with the therapist grows, a range of comfortable to uncomfortable feelings can begin to externalize in the art object. From a psychotherapeutic approach, Hinz (2009) and Schaverien (1992) have described the art image as the transitional object. The art as transitional object separates the problem from the individual who then can talk about the art before relating insights to self. Thus engaged, problems become approachable instead of being insurmountable, manageable instead of out of control. The individual is not the problem.

Rogers (1993) also values this expression occurring within a group environment which facilitates an individual developing an "internal locus of evaluation" by growing in the ability to not be overly dependent on continual praise from others and being able to give oneself praise and credit when due (p. 14). This ability develops self-esteem. The group environment also enhances self-esteem by building self-confidence in working with formerly unfamiliar art materials (Malchiodi, 2002; Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005; Skaife & Huet, 1998). Creative growth is achieved in the group container by what Shaun McNiff describes as an "ecology of creation" where individuals will hopefully enjoy the fruits of their creative endeavours… and "view their own personal growth through the development of their own art alongside others" (Riley, 2001, p. xv).

Within the art therapy milieu, two types of art therapy groups are identified: art psychotherapy and open studio. The open studio approach allows participants to experience transformation by engaging in the artmaking process under the watchful care of the art therapist. Moon (2002) adds significantly that the open studio model changes the power differential in the client-therapist relationship. Within this model, therapists draw on their artist identities:

> [C]lient and therapist become artists together, working toward creative re-imaginings of problems and potentials…If we view our clients in terms of the poetry of their lives, then our conception of the therapeutic relationship is firmly established as a co-creative venture. It becomes impossible to view our clients as persons in need of 'fixing' according to our standards and values, just as we would not think to fix someone's poem, or painting, or dance according to our ideas about what is 'right.' (p. 116)

Knill, Barba, and Fuchs (2004) present a theoretical approach to expressive arts therapy, promoting the group as witness. When the images are presented to others in the group, "they become gifts that promote dialogue, exchange and communion" (p. 87). "The image dwells in the world independently from all of us and visits us in the presentation" (p. 89). It is through dialogue with the images that further meaning-making and transformation occurs.

Art psychotherapy groups explore deep emotions and painful personal issues for growth and healing through the art practiced therein. The intention is to explore subconscious material which is unearthed and brought forth in the art which would otherwise go unnoticed. Schaverien's (1992) premise is that the transference properties

operate in an analytical arts psychotherapy group in the same manner as in traditional analytic psychotherapy, but they are manifested through the art. Negative feelings in particular can be resolved and expelled through a "scapegoat" transference: "murderous, potentially harmful feelings may be expressed via an intermediary object, the picture. The picture is thus a scapegoat, a vehicle through which affect is embodied and channelled. It may become empowered and disposed of in a significant manner" (p. 38).

Within the art psychotherapy model, Schaverien (1992) also identifies the splitting between logical thought and mythical (creative) thought as a source of distress. This state is explored through the art as a client can so identify with the image as to be the image. The hope is that over time he/she will "transition from the fused state of mythical thinking to a differentiated state where language can be brought to bear. It is clear that any act of disposal in relation to an object with which its maker is so identified, will clearly be of considerable significance" (p. 41). Defused emotional attachment and diminished identification with the image can be seen as hallmarks of healing.

McNeilly (2006), in his research in group analytic art therapy, adds that in addition to transference with the art, transference exists between the therapist and the individual displayed within the matrix of the "group as a whole." Possibilities for personal growth and discovery can emerge with the additional layers of insight offered beyond the core dialogue between the individual and the image. Within the group environment, the individual can rehearse and develop positive relational skills that may be brought back into daily living.

McNeilly (2006) further notes that while the emphasis in art therapy may be on the positive aspects of the group dynamic, the group may also be a negative transferential

environment for some individuals. Group members can have a negative transference to the therapist as well as to others in the group. What has been termed as resistance by the client is more often a defense mechanism in action. Riley (2001) observes that defensive mechanisms relate to clients protecting themselves against re-experiencing core wounds often beginning in early childhood.

Analytic art psychotherapy and open studio groups can be viewed on a continuum in terms of practical application. The analytical art psychodynamics identified above can transpire in the studio as well. Group structure and function will be determined by the needs of the group and can coalesce around a common theme as in the area of addiction recovery. Moon (2002) notes the time factor can be a favourable determinant for the open studio approach and perhaps is more practical in terms of brief therapy where the therapist attunes to a client's particular "point of access" (p. 118). The open studio approach differs in that treatment plans are not devised around identifying problems.

Each group's dynamics has its own unique character. Riley (2001) describes the formation of an art therapy group identity:

> A group of people come together and gradually, their very disparate personalities and behaviours come together in some strange way that transforms the group into a personality, an entity in itself. Because of this witchery, there are no groups that are exactly alike and that is part of the fascination. When you add art expression to the mix, another mysterious amulet is a part of the process. Now a group has voice, behavior, and eyes! To see forms together and share a vision takes therapeutic intimacy to another level (p. xviii).

Though there are variations in how to conduct a group, some clinical observations

lead to a number of functional ideas for art therapy groups. Riley (2001) favours a balance between structured and unstructured directives. Verbal processing, which can happen through a poetic response on an art-based level, gives cognitive meaning and understanding to the image-making process (Allen, 2005; Knill, Barba & Fuchs, 2004; Moon, 2002). However, without unstructured directives, "unconscious meaning and metaphors often stay inaccessible to verbal insight" (Riley, 2001, p. 211). Thus an unstructured directive provides access to the material below the level of conscious awareness, allowing it to emerge when the psyche is ready. With respect to the therapeutic approach, directive, semi-directive, and non-directive have different layers of meaning within art therapy groups. McNeilly (2006) effectively argues that there is always direction within any art therapy group even in a non-directive, open studio concept. He voices a concern that theme-driven groups can derail the process of transference.

Addiction and Recovery

> *Addiction is a plague upon the soul's fields, a toxic attack on heart and spirit.*
>
> (Schierse Leonard, 1989, p. 331)

Generally, addiction is considered to be a physical, psychological, social, and spiritual affliction. Successful recovery models integrate these multiple ways of being (Clinebell, 1984; Margolis & Zweben, 2011; Maté, 2008; May, 1988). Some exploration of the complex brain physiology of addiction is critical to understand the immensity of addiction's physical effects. Research has demonstrated that actual chemical changes occur within neurotransmitter brain cells in response to an addictive substance (Maté; 2008; May, 1988; Siegel, 1999; van Wormer & Davis, 2003). Based in the cortex as the

seat of emotional response, brain chemistry is altered to such a degree that cravings may exist long after the physical addiction has passed.

Multiple diagnoses are common for clients with addictions. More often than not, chemical addiction can be concurrent with physical and emotional abuse, eating disorders, depression, and traumatic experiences, resulting in many issues that need to be addressed (Levy, 1995; Lummis, 2004; Waller & Mahony, 1999). Addiction is often a result of varying degrees of trauma to the self (Carey, 2006; Clinebell, 1984; Crenshaw, 2006; Olthuis, 2002; Schierse Leonard, 1989). These issues often manifest in a disassociation from the physical body and can result in self-harm through continued use of an addictive substance.

Peter Levine (2010) and his body awareness approach to trauma healing reveals many areas of convergence for addictions recovery. He has identified a correlation between the degree of physical disassociation from the body and the seeking of stimulation from external sources. Hammond-Meiers' (2012) research employs art therapy and dance/movement therapy with women who have experienced trauma. In this milieu, she emphasizes "having an understanding of felt sense and the experience of embodiment," noting that "the issue of allowing the body experience to come forward, especially in art and dance movement therapy, is especially important when working as a therapist with trauma" (pp. 257-258).

Noted psychiatrist and behavioural scientist Allan Schore (2001, 2002) is continuing research on how secure attachments critically affect an infant's right brain development and the ability to regulate an emotional (affect) response to environmental stressors. Schore explores these maladaptive patterns from an interdisciplinary

perspective. He returns to support Freudian developmental observations that: “the early development of the unconscious is equivalent to the genesis of a self-system that operates beneath conscious verbal levels for the rest of the life span” (2002, p. 191). Art therapy, with its capacity to operate in a non-verbal environment, can hold significant potential for accessing subconscious feelings in order to reprogram and regulate emotional responses.

Psychologist Evelyn Bassoff (1992), in her many years of practice, has observed that women in addiction generally have experienced chaotic parenting, traumatic early childhoods, and broken trust with significant relationships. In cases of abuse, a child will internalize a message of self-blame and shame that “there must be something wrong with me” rather than crumble his or her idealized view of the abuser as trusted caregiver (Levine, 2010). Present relationships in adulthood often fragment as a result. Re-connection through healthy attachment thus becomes vital for addictions recovery and ideally can be possible within the group environment.

Also a founding principle of 12-step programs, group process can facilitate recovery as the group can be a rich source of interpersonal exchange which leads to skill development and may lead to more effective connections with others (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1984; Lummis, 2004; McNeilly, 2006; Riley, 2001; Waller & Mahony, 1999). Clinebell (1984) notes that the group can be a micro model where the recovering addict can explore finding satisfaction in relationships rather than in addictive substances. New resources must be established and used to replace the old pattern of substance abuse. As underscored in Health Canada’s *Best Practices: Treatment and Rehabilitation for Women with Substance Use Problems* (2001), relational theory is crucial to women’s treatment programs.

Gender brings another layer of complexity in addition to women's needs in addictions treatment. Those who participate in a same-gender group have progressed further in recovery (Clinebell, 1984; Health Canada, 2001; Krestan, 2000; Lummis, 2004; May, 1988; Mate, 2009; Matheson, 2005; van Wormer & Davis, 2003). Women feel freer to discuss relational issues without taking on the role of care-giving nurturer and feel more comfortable in sharing common issues and emotions. They experience less judgment and power imbalance then in a mixed gender group dynamic as initially promoted by Alcoholics Anonymous (Clinebell, 1984; Health Canada, 2001; Lummis, 2004). Often in mixed gender groups, women will seek comfort in a new relationship as a distraction: "the temptation to get romantically involved during the earliest period of recovery can be overwhelming and elicit emotions for which one is ill prepared" (van Wormer & Davis, 2003, p. 480).

Women in addictions suffer social stigma and a double shame from broken and disconnected relationships with children (Health Canada, 2001; Lummis, 2004). As parents, they experience overwhelming guilt: from not being the "good enough" parent to having children placed in foster care. Women can find themselves in circumstances over which they have no control through cultural and societal influences; paradoxically, they use the substance to cover a lack of personal power (Clinebell, 1984; Krestan, 2000; Lummis, 2004). Krestan makes the distinction between separating "the powerlessness due to oppression from powerlessness due to addiction which may have arisen to ease the pain of the original powerlessness" (p. 35). The polarities in women's experiences of powerlessness within the largely male-dominated hierarchy of 12-step programs are noted in the work of Clinebell (1984), Krestan (2000), Lummis (2004),

and Matheson (2005).

Addiction can reflect an inability to experience negative emotions. Guilt and shame are hallmark emotions of addictions (Olthuis, 2002; Levine, 2010; Lummis, 2004; Maté; 2008; May, 1988; Wilson, 2003). Perfectionism and control are often shared in addictive personalities (May, 1988). Olthuis (2002) identifies a cycle of control and release in the addictions process. An innate fear of losing emotional control leads an individual to bury these emotions with substance abuse (Olthuis, 2002; May, 1988). When feelings are buried, the pressure builds, and release is sought by returning to the addictive substance. The resulting emotions of guilt and shame grow in proportion to the intensifying cycle. In a full-blown addictive cycle, the substance becomes more than a substitute for life–it is life.

Allowing oneself to experience with control the full range of emotions, including negative, is critical in addictions recovery (Lummis, 2004). Referring to research by H.C. Johnson (2004), van Wormer and Davis (2003) present a key statement which can be applied to the relevance of art therapy as providing a sense of play and creative achievement, thus regenerating positive emotions: “Almost all drugs of abuse are believed to induce two kinds of changes in brain structure and function. These are the loss of motivation—to achieve, engage in fun activities, and so forth—and the storing of emotional memories of the high” (p. 199).

Spirituality and Addictions Recovery

Dealing with the underlying spiritual issues in addiction is essential to long-term recovery (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1984; Coyhis, 2000; Maté, 2008; May, 1988; Olthuis, 2002; Sabini, 2002; Schierse Leonard, 1989). Even within science-

based research medicine, this spiritual void is being recognized as the core of addiction (Olthuis, 2002). The development of Alcoholics Anonymous by Bill W. in the early part of the 20th century was grounded in the historic Christian tradition. The 12-step program has since evolved to recognize a Higher Power as something innately understood by the individual, so that the program would attract all who sought healing. Those wounded in the past by religious structures are welcomed without experiencing a perceived judgment (Clinebell, 1984).

Gabor Maté (2008) and Gerald May (1988) have been transparent in describing their own non-substance-based addictions, saying that humanity is prone to addictive attachment. While May and Maté write from different spiritual perspectives, they might find agreement in that the search for something to fill an innate yearning or fulfill the desire to attach is ontologically hardwired into humanity (Maté, 2008; May, 1998; Olthuis, 2002). Maté names this yearning a "God-thirst" (p. 79). He believes that inner transformation is not necessarily attributed to God as a Higher Power:

> Spiritual awakening is no more and no less than a human being claiming his or her own full humanity. People who *find themselves* [quotes mine] have no need to turn to addiction, or to stay with it. Armed with compassion, we recognize that addiction was the answer—the best answer we could find at one time in our lives—to the problem of isolation from our true selves and from the rest of creation. (p. 396)

May's *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions* (1988) is a seminal text used in the educational recovery program at the Centre in which this study was conducted. May's Christian-based approach to addictions recovery gives

the Biblical basis for addiction's physical, emotional, and spiritual complexity. The soul hole can only be filled with an attachment to God:

> God's insistence is grounded in love rather than in selfishness. We have had God's breath in us since the beginning, and God knows that the fulfillment we long for will come from nothing other than God's very self. Nothing less than God will satisfy the yearning that God has planted within us. (p. 112)

May (1988) demonstrates that an addiction spiritually isolates an individual further and further from God. The addiction becomes an idolatrous replacement for the Divine. His spiritual framework finds identity and true humanity in the living God of the Christian tradition.

Pastoral counselor and psychologist Howard Clinebell in his comprehensive text *Understanding and Counselling Persons with Alcohol, Drug, and Behavioral Addictions* (1984) underscores the common denominator of spiritual healing in recovery as attributed to God independent of a religious affiliation: "No analysis of religious approaches to addictions can be complete if it leaves out the creative power of the divine Spirit…all healing, whatever its mode, depends on this power. This power is equally available to all religious and nonreligious approaches to addictions" (p. 180).

Levin (2001) has conducted extensive research within a wide variety of populations in the field of theosomatic medicine which studies the connection between physical healing and spirituality. Based on the broad spectrum of his research, he finds that mystical, numinous, or spiritual experiences can be a powerful source of psychological growth:

> because such experiences of mystical or numinous states, if deeply felt and held to

> be real and meaningful, can change how we feel about ourselves and our place in the world. Things once important may now seem transient or insignificant. (p. 161)

Levin's research can support spirituality as a key component of recovery models that address the whole person–body, mind, and spirit (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1984; Lummis, 2004; Maté, 2008; May, 1988). This holistic approach is a departure from the disease model which, in essence, diagnoses and treats substance addiction as a physical disease which must be managed by life-long abstinence (Margolis & Zweben, 2011).

Levin has found that those who embrace various religious writings and have a personal spirituality "may have increased resistance to disease, decreased risk of depression and emotional distress, and hastened recovery from illness. This is because faith leads to hope and hope has physiological consequences" (p. 143). Within the sphere of addiction, overwhelming hopelessness is often experienced in the face of insurmountable problems (Krestan, 2000; Waller & Mahony, 1999). Instilling hope can play a key role in addictions recovery to counteract the deleterious physical effects of substance abuse and manage stress levels and emotional anxiety (Levin, 2010).

In the Time Magazine article *The Optimism Bias*, Sharot demonstrates from a neurological brain science study, that the ability to envision a hopeful future, even if an illusion, has benefits in the present: "hope keeps our minds at ease, lowers stress and improves physical health" (2011, May 28). In an addiction recovery approach that focuses on an individual's strengths rather than weaknesses, van Wormer and Davis (2003) suggest that to ensure long-term recovery "the treatment modality used must offer

hope and a way out of the morass of the addiction cycle." Hope is critical "to developing a healthy outlook on life and a dramatically altered lifestyle" (p. 17).

Schierse Leonard (1989) compares journeys of addictions recovery to the chaos and redemption of the creative process. Her Jungian, archetypal perspective gives another window of insight into the ambiguity of recovery. Writing out of her own recovery from addiction, she says that like the creative process, recovery is not linear: "Both creativity and recovery require us to reach into the depths of our being over and over again, just as we move through the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth" (p. 341). Schierse Leonard's model holds much richness for recovery by envisioning a poetic response to addiction while not dismissing the enormity of the affliction.

Art Therapy and Addictions Recovery

Art therapy has been demonstrated to be effective in helping people move toward self-awareness to change addictive behaviours (Chickerneo, 1993; Levy, 1995; Lummis, 2004; Malchiodi, 1999, 2002; McNiff, 1992; Rappaport, 2009; Waller & Mahony, 1999; Wilson, 2003). As non-verbal modality, art therapy enervates the right brain which understands metaphor, symbol, paradox, and humour (Siegel, 1999). Because it is an individual expression, art therapy creates a safe environment for addicts who are "afraid of being judged by others and as a result they themselves often judge and criticize" (Groterath, 1999, p. 21).

Crenshaw (2006), Lummis (2004), and Schierse Leonard (1989) address the multifaceted nature of addiction through the creative process. Creativity becomes the bridge to healing body, psyche, and spirit that have been damaged by addiction (Lummis, 2004; Schierse Leonard, 1989). In the art therapy milieu, old patterns and behaviours can

be reframed by focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses (Lummis, 2004; Riley, 2004; Schierse Leonard, 1989; Waller & Mahony, 1999). Art therapy employing archetypes can reconstruct personal narrative through connecting to a narrative larger than oneself. Housed in the collective unconscious, archetypes manifest a "uniformity and regularity" that transcend individual experience (Hillman, 1972, pp. 41-42). Viewed through an archetypal lens, recovery can be viewed as subterranean journey of entering into the abyss of facing one's shadow in all its blackness. Employing a Jungian theoretical approach, Schierse Leonard (1989) opens an alternate window in looking at addiction recovery: "The shadow must be brought forth out of hiding" (p. 331).

Hillman, in his essays on archetypal psychology, describes creativity in terms that may hold a healing possibility for the recovering addict:

> Creativity becomes primal power itself, reflected in the abnormal, the extraordinary, the capacity for extremes of intensity. The libido becomes unchained, desublimated in liberation, reflecting the God, Liber; freedom expresses its verbal roots in Frey and Frigg—archetypal patterns behind the release of the inferior and raw man. In place of intellect and reason, creativity means the primitive, the naked, the ignorant, the black, the deprived and depraved. Raw power becomes creativity, and its reverse, too: raw dismemberment, torn and tearing to pieces in the creative drama of the shadow. (1972, p. 45)

Rubin (2005) importantly notes that the process of art therapy relocates the locus of control to the individual. Lummis (2004) identified this locus of control as a key focus in addictions recovery, as addicts have often lost any semblance of control over their lives.

In the artmaking, fearful, raw negative emotions that have been suppressed and denied in substance abuse can be brought out at the individual's own pace.

Eugene Gendlin (1981) developed his focusing technique by returning to the body's innate wisdom, to locate a "felt sense" of the issue at hand. Laury Rappaport (2009), in her groundbreaking *Focusing-Oriented Art Therapy*, links artmaking to Gendlin's focusing. In developing this practice of art therapy, Rappaport invites the individual to externalize the image emerging from the felt sense in the art. This method calls for a mindful presence, which is a form of mindfulness training. It can be especially appropriate for addictions treatment in that recovering addicts can have difficulty staying in the moment (Lummis, 2004). Their focus tends to dwell in past regret or anxiety about the future.

The physical act of artmaking can bring about re-grafting when individuals are out-of-touch with their bodies. Hammond-Meiers (2012) has combined art and dance/movement therapies working with adults, adolescents, and children. Employing thorough phenomenological research, she identifies one of the themes of adult participants expressed in their therapeutic experience as an increased "understanding [of] the felt sense and experience of embodiment" when using art therapy and dance/movement therapy (p. 257).

In working with the bodily experience of trauma recovery, Levine (2010) describes embodiment in the world as grounded in physicality: "[T]he way we know we're alive is rooted in our capacity *to feel*, to our depths, the physical reality of our aliveness embedded within our bodily sensations—through direct experience" (p. 287). Mindfully bringing the individual's focus back to the body can bring integration.

However in cases of trauma, for some clients, this can be an overwhelming and frightening experience. Sensitive and gentle pacing by the therapist is of utmost importance (Burt, 2012; Carey, 2006).

Disempowerment is often the result of the inner voice of intuition being silenced. Reflecting many women's addiction experiences, Silverstone (2003) describes this void: "[M]ost of us resist owning our own power, becoming self-directed. We've been used too long, to be told by others what to do, and more often, what not to do. This has led us to believe that we are incapable of knowing for ourselves" (p. 3). Lummis (2004) and Schierse Leonard (1989) have seen intuition being reawakened along with senses that have been dulled by substance abuse through the creative process. Artmaking can befriend the inner critic, potentially transforming it into a guiding, protective voice (Allen, 1995; Moon, 2002). When this occurs, personal power can be reclaimed.

Art Therapy Groups and Techniques in Addictions Recovery

Art therapy groups may satisfy a component of women's need for interpersonal development. This group experience can constructively encourage developing positive relationships as the addictions cycle can lead to disconnection from others (Krestan, 2000; Matheson, 2005; Riley, 2001). Through a given number of suggestions and out of the structure of the group, the therapist promotes activities where participants explore arising themes that may help them to achieve personal growth and awareness. Liebmann (1986), Malchiodi (2007), Moon (2002), and Riley (2001) have delineated art invitations to promote group cohesion and trust through shared artmaking such as group murals.

Self-portraits, body maps, and inside-outside boxes can be used to explore participants' sense of self. Family history and history of addiction can be rendered

visually through diagrammatic art (Hinz, 2009; Lummis, 2004; Schaverien, 1992). As defined by Schaverien, a diagrammatic image is a literal representation of a "preconceived mental image," which needs to be explained (p. 86). As denial and rationalization can be immense defense-roadblocks to recovery, Lummis (2004), in her work in an addiction day treatment program, incorporates an addiction timeline. It is one way of acknowledging the reality and history of the addiction. One can deny with words, but what emerges in the art product is more difficult to deny. Sensory awareness and guided visualization invitations have been used to reconnect to senses dulled by substance abuse (Hinz, 2009; Liebmann, 1986; Lummis, 2004; Malchiodi, 2007; Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2001).

Ritual in Art Therapy

Take comfort in ritual

Starbucks door sign

There is not an abundance of research on ritual in the artmaking process but there is concurrence on its import. Anthropologically, humankind has been engaged in healing rituals since the dawn of time (Achterberg, Dossey, & Kolkmeier, 1994; Clinebell, 1996; Ferrara, 2004; Malchiodi, 2007). Clinebell (1996) links ritual with humanity's make-up:

> We humans are a ritual-creating species. All cultures have living folk rituals that are group ways of acting out their meaning-creating history, beliefs and values, fears, hopes and dreams. These rituals are often earth-centred and form the central forces in these cultures' religious life. Some therapists and teachers are as surprised by the potential therapeutic power of relevant rituals as are their clients or students. (p. 216)

Achterberg, Dossey, and Kolkmeier (1994) in *Rituals of Healing: Using Imagery for Health and Wellness,* give reasons for ritual's seamless occurrence, which can be applied to what transpires in the art therapy milieu:

> Ritual ushers us into a welcome and comforting rhythm of thoughts and activities. It unclutters our minds by providing structure and boundaries during times of change. The order imposed by meaningful ritual allows us to reflect our values and convey messages to self and the community about who we are and what we are experiencing. Ritual helps us face together those things that are too painful, confusing, or awesome to face alone. Because rituals both come from and create dreams, they encourage the deeper wisdom coming from these visionary levels. (p. 19)

Ritual enriches the art therapy process, which has its own inherent rituals and, at times, can enhance the framework for creating and witnessing images (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; Ferrara, 2004; McNiff, 1992; Riley, 2001; Wasilewska, 1992). In this vein, Ferrara (2004) has described the "double ritualization of art therapy" as being the structure and material usage set forth by the therapist in creating the art therapy space as a "space with a purpose" and the client's role in attaching meaning to the structured space (p. 98).

Rituals and rites can be a source of comfort. Establishing rituals in the group can enhance stability and safety (Lummis, 2004). For lives in addiction recovery, rituals contributing to order, structure, and boundaries are significant as clients are emerging from the chaos of addiction (Lummis, 2004; Ferrara, 2004; Schaverien, 1992). Riley (2001) describes how even the simplest ritual and gestures from the therapist can be meaningful to these clients:

> a rather elaborate ritual of making large folders, inserting the artwork and placing it in the cupboard or drawer, can be reassuring and gives a ceremonial closure to each session…every gesture from the therapist becomes significant particularly…where chaos ruled and reliability was non-existent. (p. 196)

Affirming rituals can be unique to each group process and will emanate naturally (Riley, 2001). Viewed organically, ritual contributes to the protective hedge around the vineyard of group process. Rituals define the framework, affirm milestones, and celebrate progress. Rituals can be transplanted as new lifestyles are established.

Having traversed the relevant art therapy literature, a brief literature critique of phenomenology and phenomenological research will follow in chapter three. Phenomenology as an approach to art therapy will also be included. The chapter will conclude with an overview of organic inquiry as an intertwining methodology that relates to both the art therapy and the research itself.

Chapter Two

Phenomenological Research and Organic Inquiry Literature

Phenomenology

Phenomenology emerges as a philosophical discipline in the work of Husserl and his disciple Merleau-Ponty (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1967; Merleau-Ponty, 1968). At the root of phenomenology, philosophers "sought the most universal essence, those characteristics without which the object would not be what it is" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 101). Through a multi-experiential way of being in the world, phenomena are interpreted in terms of the unique meaning people attribute to experiences (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1967).

Historically, the participants' consciousness of their experiences has been the key factor. Some modern researchers are also embracing the sub-conscious and body consciousness as valid areas of exploration (Romanyshyn, 2007; Todres, 2007a, 2007b). Of particular importance for art therapy research, the process of art therapy operates in these realms as well. In essence, the sub-conscious can manifest in the art image and the act of creating (artmaking) is a sensory experience emanating physically from the body.

Phenomenology engages the participant as person in the world, the body as interface. The lived experience is grounded in this interface to the world as taken in through the senses of the human body. The body becomes more than an object and is integral to the research process (Finlay, 2006, 2008). As a research methodology, a phenomenological approach gathers data from multisensory dimensions as opposed to a singular logical approach, giving depth and richness to participant experiences

(Hesse-Biber & Levy, 2006; Husserl, 1967; Moustakas, 1994; Romanyshyn, 2007; Swinton & Mowatt, 2006).

Within phenomenology, high value is placed on a person's sense of her/his own experience—human being-ness—as each individual, while sharing some common experiences, is a unique entity. In psychological research, a phenomenological orientation looks at the mutual and complex relationship between the individual and the environment (Giorgi, 2009; Langdridge, 2006). Giorgi addresses the complexity of this relationship, noting that in incorporating a scientific research method, psychology has its own unique tensions for phenomenological explanation. Human experience is not static, but is continually in flux. The data will come from multiple individuals, each with her/his own life world. Thus, the original philosophical task of distilling essences cannot be generalized in the same manner:

> Universalizing in such a way transcends psychological interests. It represents a philosophical understanding of a psychological phenomenon but without the pertinent psychological dynamics or precise uncovering of the psychological nature of the phenomena. (p. 101)

To some extent, Giorgi (2009) resolves this tension by noting the difference between structures and constituents. Higher order themes function as structures to integrate the individual or constituent within the common experience or the larger experience of the whole. The constituent's lived experience (phenomena) within the whole will be "highly diversified" (p. 103). Because of this diversity, all the data cannot always be categorized under a single label. This challenge is also worthy of exploration in the research.

For hermeneutic and phenomenological research, the researcher is not assumed to be value-neutral and objective, in a subject/object relationship, but rather a co-participant in the research process (Curry & Wells, 2006; Finlay, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Romanyshyn, 2007; Swinton & Mowatt, 2006). Within a phenomenological approach, the interplay between the subjective experience of the researcher and participant is explored to gain a fuller understanding of the lived experience. A phenomenological orientation values bracketing, which means disclosing possible areas of personal bias, and letting the reader decide if the researcher has revealed the participants' experience or leaned too much into preset views (Finlay, 2008; Hesse-Biber & Levy, 2006; Husserl, 1967; Moustakas, 1994).

Highlighting a qualitative research way of being reliable, the researcher gives the themes to the participants to see if they are indeed reflecting the experiences of the participants or not (Curry & Wells, 2006; Glesne, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Romanyshyn, 2007). The researcher can also give the distilled themes to external readers as a way of validating the trustworthiness of the work. The idea is whether these themes resonate with their experiences. If it does, then this helps establish validity in the research process.

Finlay (2006, 2008), writing extensively on embodied research, has observed that until quite recently, the body has been relatively overlooked as a source of data in phenomenological research. Sharing from her own research experience, Finlay encourages researchers to pay attention to the bodily responses of both the participant and themselves. This dynamic energy can be mined as a significant source of data.

Abram (1996), in his definitive work, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, attributes an

almost numinous quality to the sensing body: “It was as if my body in its actions was suddenly being motivated by a wisdom older than my thinking mind, as though it was held and moved by a logos, deeper than words, spoken by the Other’s body…” (p. 21). Drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1968), Abram brings attention to the unseen within the world. The wealth hidden in the unseen realm, i.e. within the body, supports what is visible. This idea of the visible bringing forth the invisible is a fertile concept when applied to a phenomenological approach to art therapy. It also relates to the role of shaman as navigator between the seen and the unseen (Guiccardi, 2011).

Phenomenological research can require a differentiation of the work from the person of the researcher (Romanyshyn, 2007). In *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind* (2007), Romanyshyn sets aside the dictates of the logical, conscious mind, the ego, in pre-determining a course for the research. He describes this letting go as tuning in to the soul of the work—when “a researcher makes a place for the unconscious sense of the work to speak…” and “bring[s] the depths of the work to the surface” (p. 141). Romanyshyn calls this process of dialoguing with the researcher’s subconscious, complete with personal complexes, imaginal (Rowland, 2008). He offers a “map of the terrain” for entering into this “ritual space of play;” working through transference dialogues, engaging the “Others” in the work, giving form and being a witness, and, finally, critical regard with scholarly amplification (Romanyshyn, 2007, pp. 140-141).

This process is a natural fit for the art therapist/researcher as Romanyshyn’s languaging could describe art therapy itself. It, too, explores the unknown terrain of the psyche, igniting the imaginal through the art image and process. Romanyshyn’s work is based in depth psychology and is a profound departure for contemporary research.

In a review of *The Wounded Researcher*, Susan Roland (2008) relates its critical necessity for the 21st century: "[M]odernity has perfected research without soul" and a "perfect thinking that is withering for lack of soul" (p. 1).

A Phenomenological Approach to Art Therapy

Key concepts from the development of phenomenology have been applied to the process of art therapy. A phenomenological approach is particularly suited to art therapy in that the therapist, to the degree possible, brackets presuppositions and engages with the "thingness" of the image from a point of view of curiosity alongside the client (Betensky, 1995; Carpendale, 2008; Schnetz, 2005). The therapist does not project her/his own personal interpretations on the art as this may derail the client's flow of deriving personal meaning. From a phenomenological perspective, the art therapist also tunes in to multiple sources of data from the individual and group as a whole. Body language, materials chosen, group energy, and the surrounding environment all contribute to layers of experiential knowing.

Mala Betensky's *What Do You See? Phenomenology of Therapeutic Art Expression* (1995) has been a foundational text for the phenomenology of art therapy. Betensky has laid out the phenomenological intuiting sequence of visual display, distancing, and intentional looking to see (p. 14). From a point of view of curiosity, the how, the what, and the why, simple words in themselves, can elicit a plethora of possibilities and create havoc with the therapist's universal need to reduce tension through certainty. Judith Rubin comments on the significance of Betensky's work, that it provides "viable answers that are not simple recipes but rather models of how to think about one's work" (p. viii).

Carpendale (2002, 2009) has given further dimension to the phenomenological approach in the art therapy milieu. She identifies the intentional looking to see as giving deeper meaning and import to the object of attention. When the art is viewed phenomenologically, the client is guided to look more deeply from a distance, to see all that there is to see via the structural elements. The noticing of what is missing and recurring can lead to connecting and integrating for personal meaning.

Lummis (2004) uses a phenomenological approach similar to Betensky's (1995) intuiting sequence in her manual for working women in an addictions treatment program. The art image can initially be experienced on a primary level through the elements of shape, colour, and line; from a metaphoric, or symbolic view, and finally, the art can be related to oneself, resulting in personal growth through self-awareness. Hammond-Meiers (2005, 2012), in her investigations of women's group experiences in combined art and dance movement therapy, sees the natural fit in using phenomenology to undergird expressive arts therapy research and practice. In multi-modal ways of intuiting:

> Less will be lost in the translation if we are familiar with the various sensory modalities, employ them in the research, and know the various ways they are functional and communicative within multimodal expressive therapies, including combined art and dance/movement therapy. (2005, p. 22)

Organic Inquiry as Research Methodology

Organic inquiry as methodology grew out of transpersonal psychology and is rooted in phenomenology, heuristic, and narrative inquiry (Curry & Wells, 2006). It is a relatively new transpersonal research approach that is particularly suited to topics that are psycho-spiritual in nature (Braud, 2004; Clements, 2004). The research process

incorporates the researcher's multiple ways of knowing in recognizing body, spirit, and feeling, as well as mind (Braud, 2004). The sacred/spiritual is actively recognized by the researcher as another source of "knowing" in addition to the forms of thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting identified in Jungian psychology (Braud, 2004; Clements, Ettling, Jennet, & Shields, 2002; Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). Organic inquiry invites transformative change, not only in the researcher and participant, but also to readers of the research.

Organic inquiry draws heavily from phenomenological research methodology. It includes the use of thematic development and the subjectivity of the researcher and reflexivity with the participant (Curry & Wells, 2006). The process of organic inquiry is based on the natural metaphor of a plant's growth (Clements, et. al., 2002; Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). It is cumulative and begins with the experience and passion of the researcher as the seed planted. From the seeds, the roots push down into the liminal (chthonic) realm in researcher and participants. The chthonic realm is the place of soul, dreams, synchronicities, and creativity (Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006). The narrative stories (and within art therapy research, the art, and artmaking) can be considered as if they are the branches growing out of these explorations (Clements, 2004). Transformation is considered to be the stage of the developing fruit, possibly effecting change and a deeper connection to self, Spirit and service for the researcher, participants and those reading the study (Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006).

Critique of Organic Inquiry as Research Methodology

Braud (2004) comments that organic inquiry research may take different twists and turns. This unpredictability can be troublesome for those who need specific

guidelines and steps and want to be in control of the process. Organic inquiry in itself draws on other methodologies as mentioned above and is not a unique entity. Braud acknowledges that with its unpredictability, attempting to replicate a research process can be difficult.

Organic inquiry is in partnership with Spirit as active participant, although belief in God is not a pre-requisite (Curry & Wells, 2006). Curry and Wells suggest that recruiting in partnership with Spirit is uniquely defined by each individual researcher. This process requires spiritual discipline. Spending time in reflection/retreat can open the heart to who might be able to participate, the framework for interviewing, and the distillation of data.

Chapter Three

Methods

Introduction. Having presented the literature around the methodology used in this study, chapter three introduces the methods employed within the research groups. The background of the research site and composition of the group are presented along with ethical issues around confidentiality and handling of data. As this is a phenomenological study, my potential biases are bracketed along with how the data was triangulated for validity and reliability. I have also outlined the structural framework of the groups and the questions which guided the participant interviews.

Methods. Themes around the vine metaphor were employed as image directives for the art therapy research group. Art, movement, poetry, and photography became the multiple sources of media that the participants experienced. The participants' phenomenal experiences were gathered from the following multiple sources of data: interviews, observations during the group sessions, and videos reviewed by the therapist/researcher. I reflected on the data in order to distill the essence and themes. These multiple sources also parallel the multimodal approach of arts-based theory (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005; Hammond-Meiers, 2012; Levy, 1995; McNiff, 1992; Moon, 1992; Weiser, 1993). The multiple sources of media and data gathering triangulated the research, thus bringing a thick and layered description to the discussion of the data and resulting themes (Curry & Wells, 2006; Glesne, 2006).

Bracketing

I intended to reveal areas where I might have presuppositions that are potential areas of bias that I may or may not be aware of or not fully realize (e.g. subconscious learned feelings or ideas). I might also have conscious biases (e.g. religious preferences) that I attempted to curb for the purpose of being open to the participants. Potentially, conscious and subconscious biases could emerge within my Christian spiritual grounding. I endeavoured to reduce my own investment in the metaphor of the vine and my transformative, transcendental experiences with the natural world. My intention was to remain receptive to the participants' lived world, acknowledging that my background, age, and own lived experience may influence, hopefully to a small extent, how I responded to their experience (Finlay, 2006; Glesne, 2006).

Background to the Research Project

Research site background. The research project took place on site at a residential treatment centre for women in addictions recovery (referred to in the text as "the recovery centre" or "the Centre"). The residents are women who have expressed a desire to leave an addictive lifestyle and voluntarily entered a structured Christian-based recovery program. They were immersed in a holistic program that encompasses Biblical teaching, a Christian-based 12-step program, behaviour modification/anger management classes, household chores, physical fitness, and other outside activities. As an art therapy practicum student, I had previous contact with the residents as they had experienced art therapy within this milieu setting.

Assessment. The program director and counsellor use an interview process to assess readiness to enter the program. The applicant is required to detox before entering, seven days drug and alcohol free. The Centre is not able to accept individuals with diagnosed mental illness such as schizophrenia, borderline personality, and bipolar disorders. The Centre is not equipped to handle the specialized care that these individuals usually require. The program is described and presented as a long-term re-education process in that addiction is viewed as a physical, mental, spiritual and psychosocial problem. A one-year residency is recommended, as there is a better success rate of maintaining a clean and sober lifestyle with this length of stay. There are suites available to accommodate residents with children.

Program structure. The first phase of the program requires a two-month restriction that serves to cut ties to a former lifestyle. The residents are allowed one phone call per week and do not leave the Centre unless accompanied by a staff member. Behaviour is closely monitored and residents are kept busy. The program's strict structured nature is often a major challenge to those choosing to enter recovery.

The six-month time is a significant milestone. Many have experienced profound life changes at this juncture and often feel ready to leave the program even though staff may advise otherwise. Women who reach the one-year mark have the option to enter a transitional living space on site where they can hold jobs or continue their education. These women in transition are responsible for their own daily living decisions while still being able to draw on their community of support.

Group Composition

My working presence at the Centre as a practicum art therapy student probably influenced who decided to enter the VINES research group. Six of the eight women agreed to participate and signed consent forms witnessed by a staff member. The participants and their variants were as follows:

- P1 and P3 - early 30's, Aboriginal, attended all sessions and interview; previous art therapy experience;
- P2 – early 50's, Métis, attended Sessions 2-5 and interview, no previous art therapy experience;
- P4 – about 40, Caucasian, attended all sessions, not interviewed, no previous art therapy experience;
- P5 - mid-40's, Caucasian, attended Session 1, not interviewed, previous art therapy experience; and
- P6 - early 20's, Caucasian, attended Session 1, not interviewed, no previous art therapy experience.

Ethics and Consents

Documentation and informed consent. A description of the research project incorporating the vine metaphor in a five-session art therapy group at the Centre was presented in hard copy to the director for approval. The package also included samples of the consent forms. After receiving approval, a date and time were set, and I verbally presented the research project to the residents to enhance the comprehension of information contained in the description handout (See Appendix D). They were also

given opportunity to ask questions. Appendix D contains:

- Art Therapy Research Study Information Sheet;
- Consent Forms: Group and Individual, Thesis Presentation, Art Exhibit; and
- Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

Participant rights and confidentiality. Potential participants were informed in the verbal introduction, and through a written information description, that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any time. To reduce discomfort should participants decide to withdraw and for clarification that they had withdrawn, they could inform the Centre, which would then inform me. In that event, all their relevant data, texts, or recordings would be destroyed. All names of participants and identifying information were changed to protect confidentiality. I incorporated the data of those who left the Centre, as they did not specify that they wanted to leave the VINES group. Participants were informed that there should be no anticipated risk or harm to those who took part in this study. Resonance readers had access to data without any identifying information – only the themes, narratives, and the paper itself.

Care of data and art. The group process was digitally videoed by computer and individual interviews were digitally audio-recorded. Handwritten notes were taken of some of the stated experiences during the sessions. Interviews and video have been under the sole care of the researcher except for the time of transcription. Audio interviews and video remain with the researcher under lock and key for five years.

All video on computer is password protected. All digital pictures of the artwork are stored under computer password. The cameras, discs, or hard copies are secured in my home under lock and key and are only seen by myself. The Centre provided the art

materials room for storing the art which was kept locked. Only staff had the key to access this area.

After I completed the themes, the art was returned to the artists. If the artists no longer wanted their work, they or the Centre could dispose of it or have a "time-defined consent for display." The original consent information contained this information. Any further display outside of the designated thesis art exhibit required consent from the artists. I had hoped to curate the art exhibit. However, due to time constraints and changes at the Centre, it was not possible.

Basic Structure of VINES Group Sessions

Establishing ritual and the gathering table. The gathering table was the assembly point of the sessions. A copper bowl was the centrepiece used to hold each week's thematic elements. A vine tapestry and leaf-decorated sari completed the visual image as a connection to the beauty of nature (O'Donohue, 2004). The gathering table also functioned as a metaphor for security and consistency within the container of the art therapy group.

Opening the group sessions. After a brief check-in, each group session began with an opening prayer, scripture or poetic inspiration.

Grounding meditation. A meditation grounding body, mind and spirit prepared the group members to enter into the artmaking time.

Artmaking time. Forty-five minutes to one hour were designated for artmaking. At the end of this time, participants were invited to journal any thoughts and feelings that arose from the artmaking process, the materials, or the images.

Group processing. Before group processing, the physical space was cleared of

clutter for display and processing of the art. To establish safety within the group, I noted that sharing is always optional and can happen at a depth that is comfortable for the individual.

Closing. As closure, I read a meditation on the scriptural verse of the vine and the branches (John 15 NKVJ) or other related piece. Prayer was also included as part of a short ritual which varied according to the weekly theme. Clean up also formed part of the closing ritual for the art therapy groups.

Group Themes and Chosen Art Invitations

Five group sessions based on topics of the vine, pruning, grafting/connections, nurture, and fruit were facilitated. Each group session of one and one-half to two hours focused on one topic. Beginning with the vine, the middle sessions consisted of pruning and grafting/connection. Preparation for termination and closure encompassed the themes of nurture and fruit. Art invitations centered on these topics were presented, facilitated, and then explored for their possible healing potential (Achterberg, Dossey, & Kolkmeier, 1994; Clinebell, 1996; Farrelly-Hansen, 2001, McNiff, 1990; Schnetz, 2005). The five art invitations were as follows:

Art invitation 1. Participants were invited to select two images without thinking - one that attracted them and one that repelled them (Weiser, 1993). The images included photographs and symbolic representations of the vine printed out and downloaded from the Internet. Using those images as a starting point, they were then invited to create a piece of art imagining themselves as a vine. I offered a variety of media, noting that the photographs can also be extended and altered using other media. In other words, there can be further development of a theme with words, movement, or other art media.

Art invitation 2. Participants were invited to create an art piece depicting what pruning meant to them. I gave them the option of incorporating branches from the gathering table centerpiece into their art pieces. A variety of media was again offered, including three-dimensional materials such as yarn, fabric, and ribbons.

Art invitation 3. The participants were invited to work in pairs and create a three-dimensional art piece of mixed media on the theme of grafting. In addition to art media of their choice, frames were available for use. I used the expressive arts technique of intermodal transfer by inviting each dyad to interweave their poems line by line.

Art invitation 4. After a guided visualization grounding exercise, participants were invited to create a mandala depicting their experience of nurture; or how they would nurture themselves. I gave a brief explanation of the mandala as spiritual meditation. The participants could work with the art media of their choice. I again incorporated an intermodal transfer, inviting participants to nourish each other by writing a phrase on paper and placing it face down at each person's art. After each person returned to their own artwork, they were asked to create a poem from the offered phrases. I invited participants to share these poems with the group. These invitations to share were optional.

Art invitation 5. As preparation for closure, participants created a sacred stick. I brought a selection of branches of varying heights. I asked the participants to bring an object which to them, signified fruit. Participants could decorate with paint, add their own personal objects, found art, magazine photos, lines of verse or Scripture, and/or jewelry. This art invitation reflected a progression in the materials offered.

Data Gathering

I videoed the VINES group sessions in digital format on a MacBook Pro computer using I-Movie in order to review the content and reflect more about what participants stated or did. Following the group sessions, I photographed the artwork with a Canon EOS Rebel XT SLR digital camera. The .jpg files were downloaded to the computer listed above. With permission, I brought some of the original art to my home for further reflection. I recorded individual interviews on a Sony digital voice recorder.

Interviews. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews at the Centre with P1, P2, and P3 following the closure of the VINES group. The participants brought their art pieces to the interview for further recall. In the semi-structured interview, specific questions guided the interview, but I remained open to other questions in collaboration with the participants. This openness allowed me to have a dialogue with the participants, making them more likely to share their own experiences and feelings.

Salmons' descriptive metaphor of the gardener describes the semi-structured interview and resonates with the methodology of organic inquiry. As gardener, the researcher plants the seeds, realizing that "the question seeds the participant's thought process. With responsive encouragement the answer(s) will emerge. With it both the researcher and the participant's understanding will grow" (2010, p. 52).

Interview questions. The following questions guided the interview:

How did the participants experience the art therapy process?

What did they notice about the materials use and their experience with them?

With what art material did they find the most connection?

What did they notice about the images made?

What was their bodily experience while they were in the artmaking process?

What were their thoughts, feelings and felt sense while they were in the VINES groups?

Have their relationships changed as a result of this experience?

How did they experience the vine image in the art therapy process?

How did they experience the gathering table ritual connected to the vine?

What was their experience, if any, of God–did they experience spiritual growth?

Did they experience any recurring images that might have meaning for them?

What did the participants learn about themselves?

What did health, growth and grounding mean to them?

Has the participant's relationship with creation changed or not?

Did the participant notice or not notice similarities of the VINES themes

with 12-step programs?

Transcription. An independent transcriptionist transcribed three audio and three video files. The appropriate consent form was signed for confidentiality (Appendix D).

Reliability and Validity of Research

Distillation of data and themes. From the transcripts, I wrote significant themes for each participant on coloured sticky notes and attached them to sheets of paper. From the videos of the group sessions and being present with the art, I gleaned further layers of meaning from the participant experiences. First order themes were distilled from the mundane data. The process was thorough and iterative. Higher order themes were derived from the first order themes and the group's art and art therapy processing and clustered under categories (Curry & Wells, 2006).

Reflection and thematic considerations happened on a concrete level through elements of art, materials, and the art process; on a symbolic level through metaphor; and on a personal level as the participants reflected on their own experience (Betensky, 1995; Lummis, 2004). There was a going between sensory modalities as questionings and a process of opening to receiving new information. Practically speaking, this meant going from the words to the art to words to the researcher's reflection. This iterative process distilled the essence(s) of the phenomenal experience and where the essence of the experience resides.

The first order themes were given to the three participants interviewed to check about accurate representation of their experiences and I incorporated their feedback. This relates to the concept of validity. That is, am I saying what is actually happening or representing the experience accurately? First order and higher order themes without identifying participant information were given to two external readers: my art therapy supervisor and a professor at the University of Lethbridge with extensive research background in this area. The intention was again about validity—to see if the themes presented resonated with their experience in the areas of art therapy and addictions as authentic or accurately representing the experiences as they know those things to be.

The structure and methods have been presented to give the reader a sense of how I entered the research process and are offered in the VINES Manual for replication (See Appendix A). The results of my research methods are presented in chapter four. Section one portrays the group's art therapy experience over the course of the VINES group sessions. The themes derived from the mundane data are coalesced in charts in section two. Section three gives the higher order themes distilled from both sections one and two.

Chapter Four

Results

The following results chapter contains

- Section One - The VINES group's art and art therapy processing;
- Section Two - First order themes (Ts) derived the mundane data of individual participant experiences; and
- Section Three - Higher order themes (HOs) clustered under heading topics, common, and unique themes.

The higher order themes (HOs) are supported with examples from the numbered first order themes (Ts). Supporting references to the group's processing of the art in the higher order themes will be listed as GAP with the session number following (GAP1, GAP2, GAP3, GAP4, GAP5).

Results: Section One – The VINES Group's Art and Art Therapy Processing

The group's art therapy processing (GAP) is presented to give the reader a sense of the group art experience within the five VINES group sessions: the vine (GAP1), pruning (GAP2), grafting/connections (GAP3), nurture (GAP4), and fruit (GAP5). After completing the VINES groups, I did not have the opportunity to interview three of the participants (P4, P5, P6). I have presented the processing of their art as the limit to which I could explore the phenomena of their experience. Therapeutic observations follow each session, illustrating my subjectivity.

Figure 1. *Spazzy Spaces* - P4, Session 1 – mixed media and photographs on drawing paper, 24”x36”

Session 1 - The Vine (GAP1).

Session 1 - P4. VINES Group Session 1 was P4’s first experience with art therapy, and she remarked: “I didn’t know what I was doing.” P4 “mapped out” a journey in her vine art. P4 also used a map of Canada as a background that, to her, looked like a garden. She focused her images in triangular shapes around the Burns Lake area in British Columbia. She related that the major highways were like vines, but with all the side roads, it’s easy to “get confused travelling in your life.” These secondary roads may be interesting, but “you have to be careful that you don’t get lost.” P4 viewed low-lying vines as grounded and found them to be a “comfort zone.” This comfort zone was orange, which for her was a vibrant, happy colour. Her pumpkin vine photo was glued on soft, orange felt. P4 also used the word “spazzy spaces” to describe a particular section in her piece which she called the plateau—“spaces that don’t get along.”

Just like nature, the world is slowly destroying the vine.

So too will our vines be destroyed if we conform to the world.

P5, Poetic response (GAP1)

Figure 2. The World is Destroying the Vine - P5, Session 1 – mixed media and photographs on drawing paper, 24”x36”

Session 1 – P5. P5 liked the vine in her art the best; it was unsculptured, crinkly, and bunchy. Her three-dimensional mixed-media piece was laid out on the background of a hunting and fishing map, an interesting parallel to P4’s work. P5 related the map to humankind’s infiltration of nature and resulting devastation—“making nature over into what man wants it to be.” She also added a layer of spiritual meaning in that care must be taken not to conform to the world culture as it can destroy the spiritual man.

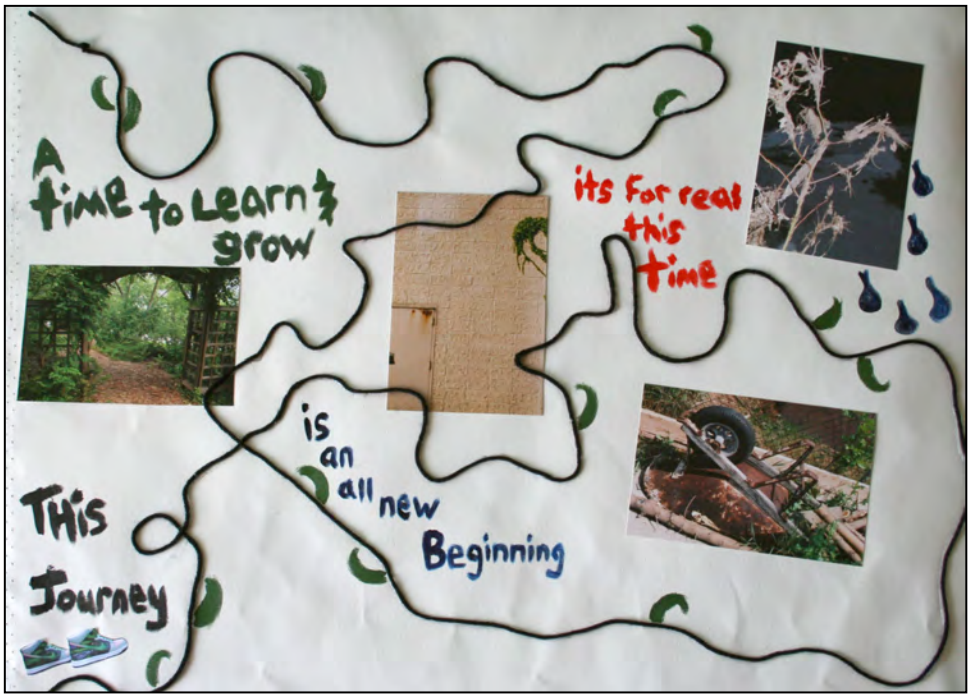

Figure 3. A Time to Learn and Grow - P6, Session I – mixed media, photographs; oil on canvas, 22”x28”

An all new beginning, It’s for real this time.

P6, Poetic response (GAP1)

Session 1 – P6. On a large sheet of canvas, P6 used oil paint to depict her journey with a singular circling line—her new “life vine.” She saw herself as starting to grow, having a new beginning, but noted “there’s always going to be crossroads.” The circles represent times when there’s nothing happening. She saw this as a time to heal and “turn into something beautiful.” P6’s favourite photo image of a retaining wall with a small portion of vine in the upper right hand corner is centrally placed. To her, it appeared as a heart, but only half of a heart. She had started to extend the vine off the photo with the oils, but changed her mind. In the end, she liked the half of a heart better and left it as it was. She saw a doorway there, but it was not opened. She painted her words along the

Figure 4. The Essence of Life - P1, Session 1 – pencil and oil pastel on drawing paper, 24”x36”

brown yarn which she carefully glued with the glue gun. P3 helped her spell the word “journey.” As her least-liked photo, P6 chose an overturned, rusty wheelbarrow with vines growing around it. To her, it was no longer useful: it was finished: “You just use it to carry your garbage.”

Been trapped behind the wall for ages. What is that?

It was the essence of life, it mesmerized me.

I reached out my shaking hand to the vine.

With surprise and gratitude, it reached out to me.

P1, Poetic response (GAP1)

Session 1 – P1. In describing her art, P1 spoke of all the walls she had built up in her life. The penciled figures remained ghost-like in the midst of the rainbow-coloured aura. A tendril leaf from the vine morphed into a hand, which P1 described as

"mesmerizing." It was God's hand reaching toward her, offering the strawberry. P1's favourite photo is of a strawberry surrounded by a wire mesh fence (See Appendix B, Figure 30). Looking at it, she said, "you wouldn't know there was a wall behind that strawberry." To P1, the wire mesh is detrimental, making it a "not-nice picture."

Figure 5. Just Between the Door and the Tree - P3, Session 1 – pastel and oil pastel on drawing paper, 24"x36"

Growing and growing, A jumbled mess.

P3, Poetic response (GAP1)

Session 1 – P3. P3 entitled her art "Just Between the Door and the Tree." From her preferred photo, P3 drew a morning glory in oil pastel. The flower is a bright spot in the midst of neutral colours, standing out in its singularity. With a brush, she added a soft

green pastel background. P3 gestured with her arms in a weaving-like motion that she likes to use a brush because “it’s easier to move around.” The vine is constricted by a tree which is “dark.” There is also a large doorway that takes up most of the area of the picture. The vine is crawling up the trellis with lots of tendrils.

P3 related that the little vine is struggling to survive the elements, struggling to make it against the tree which is taking up a lot of energy, “like the world taking up your time.” She viewed it as a struggle between life and death. The door is a door of appointment. She wasn’t sure what the horizontal black line across the top of her art meant. She might make it a part of the trellis. Her black and white photo was chosen as least favourite. Not knowing whether it was up or down, it intrigued her in “a creepy sort of way.”

Therapy unfolding as seen by the researcher. After the opening check-in and description of the theme for the week, I noticed a rapid engagement with the materials. There was no lag time, nor did the participants spend time pondering how they would go forward in their artmaking. The boardroom table seemed almost too small to accommodate the large sheets of paper used in the artmaking. P5 moved to a computer table. P4 found a spot on the floor with her back to the video and to the other participants, immersed in her own process. P1 and P3 were grounded physically, immersed in their own processes. P6 was cautious in venturing out. To establish connection with her as a new group member, I helped her choose a piece of canvas and oil paints. The Centre staff had told me that she’s very artistic.

P5 and P6 both wanted to use the one glue gun. P6 silently waited for P5 to finish. P5 is strong in seeing to her own needs. I found myself becoming slightly anxious for P6

as P5 was taking a long time and at first seemed oblivious to P6's need. I finally said that perhaps while P5 was arranging her vines and curly stuffing, P6 could use the glue gun. P6 moved closer to P5. She wanted to know if the glue gun would wreck the picture. I observed P5 taking on a mothering role with her. Another glue gun would have helped, but having to share and recognize another's need could provide a learning for members of the group. I saw something in how the group was "glue-ing" together.

P1 began working in charcoal pencil, seemingly undistracted by the glue gun drama to her immediate left. P3 had wanted to use the watercolour crayons that another Centre resident had in her possession but had not yet returned. I asked her if she was disappointed in not being able to use them, and she said that she was, as she would have liked the flow of the paint. P3 chose oil pastels to complete her work.

P5 showed me her art. I sensed her vulnerability in seeking my approval, a connection that has grown since I began doing art therapy at the Centre. She brought to my attention that she actually wrote something on a separate sheet of paper—a new step for her. In previous sessions, she was quite adamant about not writing and if she did, she wrote right on the artwork. I wanted to tell her that this work was a huge departure into the unknown for her, but never got the opportunity, as she left the Centre before the next session.

P4 was the last to finish her art, folding and refolding and re-laying out her work. She related that she felt like a "spaz" in not knowing what she was doing in her first art therapy session and was the last to process her art. P4 commented and asked questions about the artwork while the other group members were processing. As it was her first session, I explained the commenting process: that we don't project what we see into

another's art until invited to do so as our comment might detour someone's own emerging meaning. I explained that the group role is more as witness (Allen, 2005). The sharing time served as an illustration that we all see different things in the same image.

Session 2 - Pruning (GAP2).

Figure 6. My Grapevine, I Left It Home - P2, Session 2 – mixed media and magazine photographs on Bristol board, 23"x28"

My grapevine, I left it home. It needed to be transplanted into good soil

and not such a heavy clay pot. I didn't know how to prune a plant,

nor myself as my addiction got the best of me.

I was going to bring that grapevine indoors for the winter

and let it continue to grow in warmth of our house,

but it froze before I had any ambition to do so.

Half of it died just like me.

I left so much behind to better myself, to prune myself.

P2, Personal Reflection (GAP2)

Session 2 – P2. The pruning group was P2's first art therapy session at the Centre. Instead of speaking spontaneously, P2 read her reflection as she was unsure of what was going on. P2 spoke of her "secret" garden, which is so overgrown with Virginia creepers "you can't get into it." She wants to leave this garden as a legacy for her children and grandchildren but "I couldn't do it myself this summer. Like, I just couldn't do it, but I did keep the front of the house up." Just like keeping up the front of the house, she made a vow to watch the movie "The Secret Garden" with her granddaughter: "I have at least kept that vow."

The secret garden was central to her collage. Her first construction was a fragile little tree constructed with magazine photos and branches from the gathering table centrepiece. She featured her brother in her art. This is a significant relationship and her love for him is deep. P2 wiped tears from her eyes after her sharing time. She wanted to finish this collage on her own.

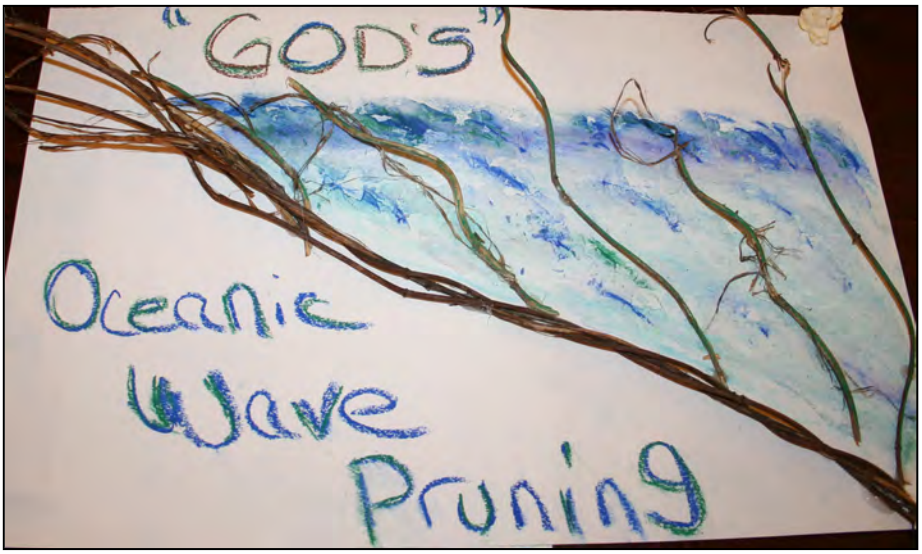

Figure 7. God's Oceanic Wave Pruning - P4, Session 2 – oil pastel and vine cutting on paper, 24"x28"

Reaching back up to Him for either help or saving.

I don't have the strength because this is overtaking me…too weak to survive,

but yet it's time for them to go and now their job is done.

Straight back to the heavens

and to help the other ones with more strength.

P4, Poetic response (GAP2)

Session 2 - P4. P4 portrayed pruning in her art as "oceanic wave pruning," depicting seaweed as a vine. But she doesn't like seaweed as "it gets too tangled up." These "prunes" (she chuckled describing them as prunes) are reaching back up to the surface. Water is God's natural pruning instrument, allowing creation to prune itself. She used the example of water pruning rock. P4 illustrated this cycle of life with a circular arm gesture which appeared as the rolling of waves. She also connected pruning to man's negative pruning of the seas, with oil spills ruining the oceans and coral reefs being

destroyed. She stated that “all those rules from government” ruined the lake shoreline around her parents’ cabin. It would have been better if “it was just left alone.” P4 said that man is trying to fix things he knows nothing about and making rules that won’t work. She thinks people should “prune the rules.” In her second art therapy session, P4 is “getting the gist of where we’re going” and stated that her brain was “more relaxed.”

Figure 8. Hope is but a Thread - P3, Session 2 – mixed media, paint, vine cuttings, and magazine photographs on paper, 24”x36”

Hope is but a thread, fenced in by ill-begotten dreams…

(sic) find the peace within, don’t just peer in.

Hope is but a thread even when it dies during the winter it is still alive, waiting for your spring renewal. Can see life through the fence, behind the fence sometimes it feels like you’re just holding on by a thread,

you feel like you're (sic) dead, but someone is hoping for you.

P3, Poetic response (GAP2)

Session 2 – P3. In the pruning session, P3's vine reappeared in front of strong, black lines. A sunrise depicted in an eye is a central image. P3 spoke of the eye photo image as an "eye-opening experience." It was an enigma: it could be either a sunrise or a sunset. She stated that the fence was "black, bad stuff." "You can be fenced in by your own stuff" and not actually go into the garden. P3 related to the rose photo image as "needing a lot of care and pruning." Without the care and pruning, there is a "jumbled mess." P3 saw herself as a climber, "going to something" in front of the fence.

Figure 9. Holy Golden Shears. P1, Session 2 – pencil, marker, and paint on paper, 24"x36"

I'm well cared for. Protected by my Father and His friends.

I'm being pruned an awful lot lately. At first it was uncomfortable and scary as those holy golden shears cut away at me. I wanted to run but instead I cried…and slowly as time went by I began to see and feel a lot more…umm...HEALTHY.

My trust in Him grew. My love began to grow.

Oh sure, it's still uncomfortable at times, and yes I still cry quite regularly.

But I know deep down that I can trust the hands that operate the pruning shears.

Lord, forgive me for my arrogance, my rebellion.

I'm starting to feel beautiful again.

P1, Personal reflection (GAP2)

Session 2 – P1. P1's art depicted God's golden pruning shears, showing the hand of God working in her life. She is the vine on whom God is still pruning away. The silver wire mesh in P1's Session 1 favourite photo art re-emerged around the baby tree. It protected her from her ex- husband who is "trying to tempt me with the bottle." Still "creeping" in the background, she addressed the "worm": "What did I ever see in that guy? Everything about him is toxic, only to move on to the next victim eventually." P1 chose look at the pruning shears "in a beautiful way," rather than as a negative experience. P1's roots are "going down into really good soil."

Therapy unfolding as seen by the researcher. The composition of the group changed with unplanned prunings in Session 2. P6 left the Centre, and P5 had an infection in her hands. P5 told me she was sad to miss the session, but would be unable to participate since her hands were bandaged. I gave her a hug and offered a twined vine from my bag to connect her to the work. In the group check-in, we honoured those who

left. I welcomed a new addition: P2 was new to the Centre having just come out of detox. She was fragile entering the group, saying she had difficulty concentrating.

I gave P4 and P2 a short orientation to the research group and the art therapy process. This appeared to be almost too much information for P2, as she was just emerging from the physical withdrawal phase. She stated that she was not creative. I reassured her that artistic ability is not a prerequisite for art therapy and that everyone has their own creativity. P2 asked to use a large sheet of paper. When she snapped a branch off the centrepiece, she looked at me as if she had done something wrong. She was very engrossed in her process and worked slowly.

P4 continued to comment when other group members processed their work. This week again I gently restated that we can see how subjective the work is, and that interpreting others' art can detour the individual's personal meaning. While the others were quietly doing their journaling, P4 told a humourous story of her waking up with chocolate on her face. I noticed my own irritation at what appeared to me a disturbance to the rest of the group's focus. I remembered Catherine Moon's (2002) many experiences with disturbing client incidences and how she reframed them as personal drama unfolding.

As I had the week before, I opened the artmaking to the medium of their choice, offering the centrepiece vines and branches as potential art material. Three of the four participants incorporated the offerings. I noticed a real exploration of the media, even by the participants who were new to the process. The participants seemed to be engrossed in the process and found that time passed quickly. It was difficult to bring the artmaking to a close. P3 continued to find metaphor upon metaphor in her work.

Session 3 - Grafting and connections (GAP3). The participants were invited to work in dyads, the group deciding who would work together. Following the artmaking, an intermodal transfer moved from the art to poetry, with each dyad weaving their individual poetic responses line by line.

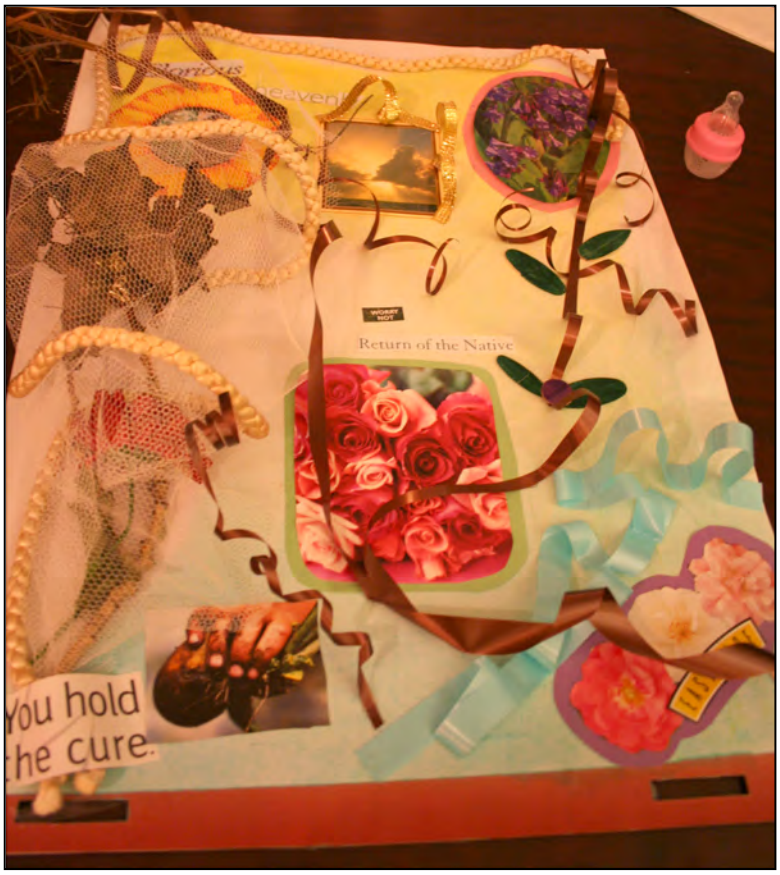

Figure 10. Transplant Your Heart - P1 and P3, Session 3 – mixed media, magazine photos on paper, 24”x36”

P3 *Graft on to the living vine. Transplant your heart*
P1 *The beautiful tendrils of the vine.*
P3 *The guardians protect you.*
P1 *Reaching up towards heavenly places.*
P3 *You hold the cure within yourself.*
P1 *Two women’s roots grow deep.*
P3 *A tiny rose breaks through with hope.*

P1 *The return of the natives.*
P3 *Return to the rich dark soil of your heart.*
P1 *Worry not. Fear no more.*
P3 *Grafting it to glory.*
P1 *Jesus holds the ultimate cure.*
P3 *The veil lifts from your eyes to heavenly places.*
P1 *Once we were lost, now we are found.*
P3 *Return to your native roots where you became a rose.*
P1 *Thanks to those deep healthy roots in the ground.*
P3 *Tend to your like with care. Water it to give it sun.*
P1 *What will we grow into now.*
P3 *A tie that binds us (laughter) is a cord that is not easily broken.*
P1 *Now that we are living our lives heaven bound*

P1 and P3, Woven poetic response (GAP3)

Session 3 - P1 & P3. P1 and P3's three-dimensional collage art reflected an interweaving with ribbons and vines. Collage photos of flowers dominated by the central image of roses is a focal point depicting their feminine beauty. For P1, this beauty was intimately connected to pride in her beauty as an Aboriginal woman. P3 chose the words "Return of the Native" for P1 and did not refer to herself in these terms. P3's lower left-hand corner of dried leaves covered by netting was an image of herself protected in this time of recovery at the Centre. "You hold the cure" stands out boldly as a taking of personal responsibility for healing.

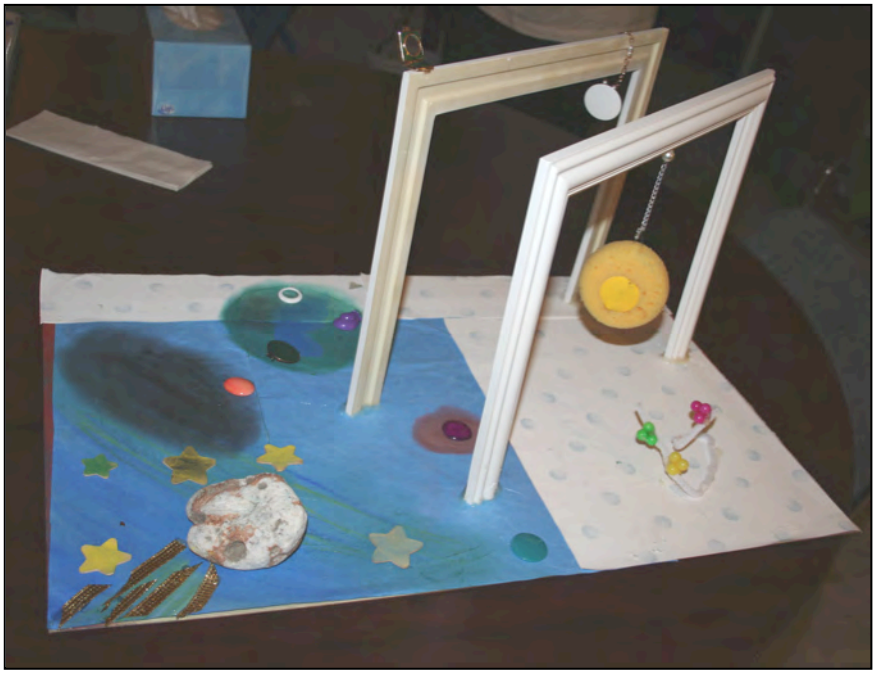

Figure 11. Ozone Effect - P2 and P4, Session 3 – pencil, oil pastel, construction paper, found objects, frame, and paint on paper, 18”x28”

P4 *Where we belong in the universe of God’s?*
P2 *December 21st or 23rd, 2012, what’s going to happen?*
P4 *From the mighty mountains to small DNA of the frogs.*
P2 *Man’s own destruction to our world*
P4 *From the stars above to the earth below. Ozone effect.*
Sounds below melting.
P2 *The melting of the white winter snow.*
P4 *The darkness of the moon.*
P2 *Life needs DNA and the speed of the comet*
which makes the day go blue.
This is my idea in calling to Abraham.
P4 *We will always know we are God’s children.*
P2 *What tribe am I from?*
P4 *To cross the gates into His secret room.*
P2 *Who am I?*
P4 *Done and done.*

P2 and P4, Woven poetic response (GAP3)

Session 3 - P4 & P2. P4 and P2's three-dimensional art piece symbolically related to the present state of the environment. It was simple and very clever in its use of found objects. P2 used an actual watch face setting to depict a hole in the ozone layer. A piece of lava rock portrayed a possible asteroid colliding with the earth. Beads and pipe cleaners formed a strand of DNA. This concern for the environment was also expressed by P5 in Session 1.

Therapy unfolding as seen by the researcher. Of the two dyads, one group chose to incorporate a natural piece from the gathering table. There was no hesitation in entering the artmaking process. With the invitation to work in pairs, P2 immediately "grafted" to P4, which left P1 and P3 together by default. P1 and P3 worked together with unimpeded flow, appearing to be in sync with very little verbal exchange. Both P1 and P3 are of Aboriginal heritage, and their artwork reflected pride in their beauty which I sensed had been a process for P1. The meditation grounding into ancestral memories possibly generated their response. P3's collaged magazine cut-out, "Return of the Native," caused giggles in the dyad.

P2 and P4 seemed to have some difficulty getting started. My observation was that P4 wanted to direct the process. However P2 did challenge P4's lead and not long after, they flowed into the artmaking. P2 and P4 chose to work on the floor, in a sense, going "underground." I was videoing the session via the camera built into my laptop and had difficulty capturing their process until I moved the computer.

I had offered several white frames for the artmaking. P4 wanted to cut one in half, and she left to get a saw from one of the other residents. P4 and P2 found it

challenging to glue the half frames into a vertical position, but with patience, they were able to achieve their desired result. As a closing ritual, all four women together used black yarn to bundle the branches from the grafting table. This bundle formed the gathering table centrepiece in the next week's session.

Session 4 – Nurture (GAP4).

Figure 12. Streak - P4, Session 4 – Mandala, marker on paper, 24"x36" (Note "shrinks" in upper right-hand corner.)

Balanced, unbalanced, contrast coming together in harmony;

hope so, we know so.

P4, Scramble poem (GAP4)

Session 4 - P4. P4 created her mandala by tracing circles with felt markers using black and salmon pink. She herself was not "a pink person," initially viewing pink as a weak colour. After reflection, she actually liked the salmon colour alongside the black, as the pink enhanced and intensified the black. P4 noted that the "strong and the weak help each other" —hence her title "Streak." She added that a weakness could be a strength.

P4's second circle joined embryonically to her first tracing, part of the circle being off the page. This one was "leaky" and she added that she didn't like things disheveled. P4 noted that the inner circle was stronger. She added the dots in the middle to "fancy it up." The juxtaposition of black and pink was particularly striking as these were two colours that initially didn't get along. "Don't get along" was a theme from the pruning Session 2 that carried over into P4's Session 3 mandala.

Figure 13. Fresh Dynamic Galaxy - P2, Session 4 – Mandala, paint on paper, 24"x36"

Fresh, dynamic galaxy in abstract nourishment sporadic and splendid

P2, Scramble poem (GAP4)

Session 4 - P2. P2 splattered orange and white paint within the boundaries of her mandala on a background of deep blue. She had always wanted to be like the artists who

splatter paints on canvas, noting that they get “big money” for it. The group all commented on this application of paint as remarkable in itself. P1 noted that she “could look at that forever.”

P2 literally left her fingerprint on her art. She recently learned that she is a “blue” person, and a pleaser, and found peace and calm in this colour. P2 shared that she was feeling anxiety in her solar plexus and that using paint allowed the anxious feelings to flow into her art. She found solace in being part of God’s family at the Centre and in making new friends. God’s word is the orange as “it sparks hunger.” P2 connected the visual image to the planet earth in the art of Session 3, saying “our planet may be dying but we will live in a new kingdom with You.”

Figure 14. Strong Hearty Grit - P3, Session 4 – Mandala, oil pastel and collage on paper, 22”x28”

Bold powerful, strong hearty grit, sustenance

P3, Scramble poem (GAP4)

Session 4 - P3. P3 created her mandala with a composite of mixed media including collage, oil, and soft pastels. Her theme centred around fertilizer as nourishment. She noted that fertilizer helps us grow—"the fertile soil of your soul." Her mandala was divided by a lightening bolt: one can be scared of God working or accept hope. She stated that "patience is waiting for the fruits, waiting for a season," commenting that "God will send tough times to make us grow." Her image illustrated the cycle from day to night, sunrise to sunset, a recurring image from her image in Session 2 (See Figure 8).

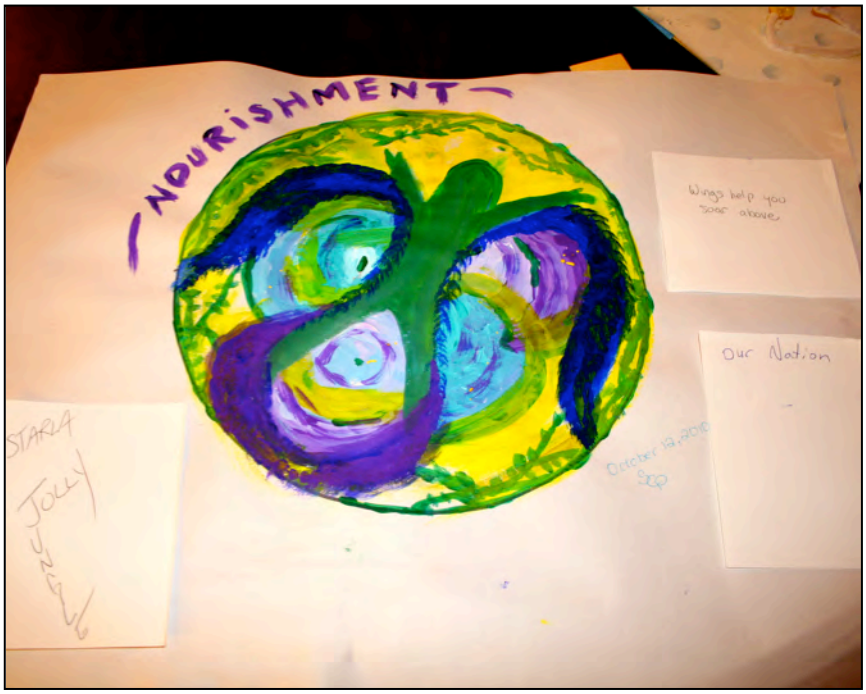

Figure 15. Truth Transforms Life. P1, Session 4 – Mandala, paint on paper, 22"x28"

Wings help you soar above our nation; jolly jungle.

P1, Scramble poem (GAP4)

Session 4 - P1. P1 was enervated by the Celtic guided meditation. Through the visualization, she experienced the sensation of coming up through water. P1 added wings to her image because "it felt like they should be there." Her first poetic response to her image came "bursting upward with force, bursting through the surface, nourishment running through every vein, atoms and molecules growing and multiplying. The dry and the parched transformed into healthy oases. Truth transforms life." Within her mandala, P1 saw the vine becoming a person. She connected this transformation to her Session I work in which she was reaching toward the vine from the outside. She herself is now the vine.

Therapy unfolding as seen by the researcher. In reflection, my sense is that I wanted to accomplish too much by opening the group with communion, which was, to me, a sacred ritual. Even though the participants were from various Christian backgrounds, including Roman Catholic, there was a lack of familiarity, almost surprise, at partaking in the ritual in this particularly outside-of-church setting. As I began to give communion, P4 asked if Jesus gave Himself communion. A discussion ensued and I added that I thought He might have. I had to let go of my pre-conceived idea of the group receiving communion in quiet reverence. P2 talked about the royal tasters who would test the wine so the king wouldn't be poisoned. I asked if someone would give me communion and P3 volunteered. The girls together (reminded by me) folded the gathering tablecloth, which was being establishing as a pre-artmaking ritual.

I note that what happens before and after group is as significant as what transpires in the group itself. As I had come early to prepare, P4 entered the art room and showed me a large aluminum pie plate she had retrieved from Thanksgiving dinner. She thought

we could add it to the supplies room. Synergistically, we were able to use it in the group artmaking, as it was the perfect size for tracing mandalas. P4 also brought “shrinks,” plastic snack packages reduced down by slow heating in the oven, to show the group. I noticed this desire to connect and contribute, and suggested that perhaps we could incorporate the shrinks into the art.

P4 also asked if I would like to borrow some of her worship CDs. I sensed it was her way of wanting to connect with me and trusting me enough to lend me her music. P4 told me that another “centrepiece” was waiting for me outside on the balcony table. One of the volunteers had brought in a collection of leaves, perhaps to connect with the work the vine group was doing. Was our group work “grafting,” inspiring others within the Centre to connect to the natural world? I had arrived early to centre myself in quiet prior to the session, but instead received these unexpected gifts of connection.

P4 often brought up tangential topics in the middle of the artmaking time. She liked working on the floor, generally with her back to the computer. She often left the room several times during a session. P4 brought a pot with a broken handle from the kitchen to fix while we were processing the art. I reminded myself to step back and watch this unfolding drama. Later, while P1 was processing her art, P4 interjected that she saw eyes and a nose in the image which, to her, looked like a snuffleophagus. This comment seemed to make light of P1’s meaning-making. I found myself again irritated as I felt it was insensitive to a fellow group member’s work. Maybe I needed to own my response and should have asked P1 how she felt about this comment. I experienced some concern when P1 brought her seven-month old baby daughter again to group. As it happened, the infant was content for the whole time, and P1 did not seem distracted. I held the baby

while the group did their poetic responses.

The participants were surprised by what emerged out of the “scramble poems.” Even though it was one of the longer sessions, they engaged in lively conversation while doing final clean up while I photographed the art. P4 started talking about being a football fan and demonstrated a circular “churn the butter” movement that she would do at Edmonton Eskimos games. I liked that movement and we had some fun doing it together. I offered the cheese bun left over from communion to the group. P3 “needed a snack” and accepted it. I put the bottle of grape juice from communion in the fridge so residents could use it, symbolic of the extension of our work into the community.

I was awestruck at the true artistic quality of the group’s poetic responses to each other’s artwork. I was nurtured by this session, even though I felt that my facilitation was a little choppy. The communion ritual, just as my plan to centre in quiet, transpired differently than I had imagined, which testifies to the unpredictability of the art therapy process. I noticed how P4 seemed to occupy a major spot in my reflections. I examined my own counter-transference issues in perhaps needing to control the process and creative space for the research.

Figure 16. Fruit of Wisdom - Sacred Stick, P1, Session 5 – mixed media and paint on branch, approximately 4.5 ft

Session 5 - Fruit (GAP5).

Session 5 - P1. P1 shared that she was deliberate in choosing the ugliest branch for transforming into her sacred stick. Like this branch, she had felt lonely and rejected for much of her growing-up years. She has now let go of that identity crisis "with God in me." P1 incorporated the green vine motif in her stick, which also reminded her of a snake, of which she is terrified. But she recalled how, in the story of Moses, God transformed the staff of Moses into a snake. She also connected to Psalm 23:4c: "Thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me." The base of her stick is triangular, which she compared to the Trinity as being foundational to fruit bearing. The five white feathers signified her

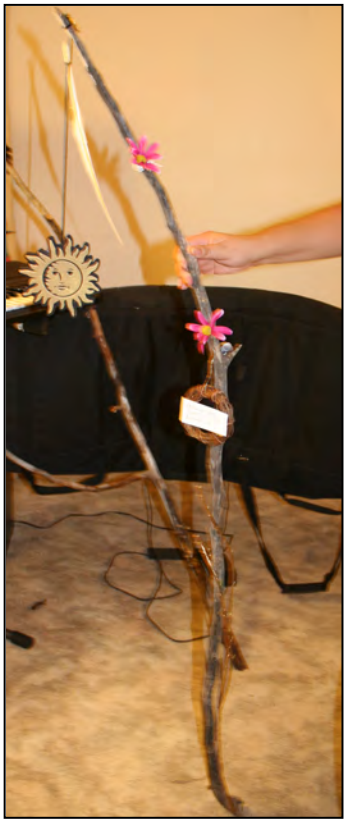

Figure 17. Soaring with God - Sacred Stick, P3, Session 5 – mixed media and paint on branch, approx. 5 ft

children as the fruit of her loins. She added small flowers for each child and wrote their initials in glitter on her stick.

P1 saw her inner wisdom as fruit. For her, fruit was passing on wisdom in giving her children a sense of pride in their native heritage that, for her, had been a source of shame. Now " I'm proud of whom I am – my brown skin and my brown eyes. God meant me to be brown." She felt "instant kinship" with other Native people in the city. Another aspect of wisdom is learning from your mistakes and she wants to teach her children how to sow good seeds into others' lives.

Session 5 - P3. P3 searched for key verses in Scripture to symbolize in her stick. She just “put things on” without thinking a lot about it. She incorporated a feather from those brought by P1, noting the theme of eagles’ wings and “being under God’s wing and soaring with God.” Golden themes predominate in the sun object. She didn’t know why she hadn’t noticed the motif in her work earlier. She related the city of God as being gold in the book of Revelations.

A flower symbolized her daughter and also the Biblical story of Aaron’s blooming staff. A tiny shell brought her back to her spiral motif in addition to being a pearl of great price. P3 described the polarities in her stick as “dead but useful, being strong and supportive.” She shared that “me and Christ are both better dead” (which elicited a round of giggles from the rest of the group). She explained that His death has brought life and “I have died to myself.”

Figure 18. Getting New Life - Sacred Stick, P2, Session 5 – mixed media and paint on branch, approximately 5 ft

Session 5 - P2. P2 chose her branch because it initially resembled the ugly poplar on her family homestead in Cold Lake, saying it was "cold and lonely." The poplar needed pruning so it wouldn't damage the house. Her sacred stick had a smaller branch at the bottom that held on by a fragile thread. She painted it silver to represent the iridescence of hoarfrost, "which makes anything beautiful." The stick is getting new life.

P2 had painted a rock gold with her granddaughter and for her, this was fruit: "We did it together." Her Métis heritage influenced the pink and black stripes on her "medicine stick," mirroring the pink writing on her black rock. She declared: "2010 is like a new beginning for me." P2 wrote John 3:16 and the Serenity Prayer on her stick.

Session 5 - P4. The bird was a recurring theme in P4's sacred stick. P4 transformed fridge magnets into bird eyes, giving her a "birds'-eye view." Having taken a surveyor's course, she was very precise in her work. P4 used small pieces of balsa wood cutouts for wings and kept her orange colour motif, a thread from Session 1 (GAP1).

Figure 19. Bird's-Eye View - Sacred Stick, P4, Session 5 – mixed media and paint on branch, approximately 5 ft

Some of the shapes looked like owl eyes, giving the appearance of "big brother" watching. She found all manner of intricate vantage points in her stick, seeing one area as being like a tiny theatre stage with curtains pulled back, like "a castle, a nest where the birds can play."

Therapy unfolding as seen by the researcher. In this closing session, I experienced particular joy and the experience of a sacred moment in setting the gathering table with a dozen red roses on the copper plate. As the participants entered the room, they were welcomed by the display of beauty. Conversation ignited as they commented on the roses' perfection. Even the Safeway florist had remarked to me over the phone that they were perfect, each one encased in its own watering sleeve. In the roses' perfect beauty, I saw a spiritual metaphor for how the women are seen through the eyes of Christ.

The red roses generated a conversation around the Red Queen of Alice in Wonderland: "painting the roses red with pursed lips." This conversational detour into the mundane again surprised me. Before we began artmaking, P2 asked if we were going to do the folding ritual of the cloth. She also asked if there would be music, which had become part of the ritual. The women appeared eager to enter into the making of the sacred sticks.

P3 and P1 worked in close proximity. P2 came prepared with her newsprint cover sheet and cleaning rags. P4 found her accustomed place on the floor with her back to me, saying later that it was intentional on her part. She appeared to prefer being the viewer from a distance—like the bird in her sacred stick—rather than the viewee.

After the session, P4 brought down the philodendron vines given several weeks ago in Session 1 to show me how well she tended them, again connecting with me as therapist. I was quite astounded when I found out P4 left the program a few days later, just before our scheduled interview. She literally "flew the coop," leaving no contact information. In hindsight, what I saw was only the tip of the iceberg.

I introduced the Celtic "anam cara," or soul friend, as a prelude to the closing

ritual of the rose (O'Donohue, 1997). The group was invited to form a circle by holding on to each other's sacred sticks. After a friendship blessing, each participant received two roses: one for themselves as a symbol of closure and one to give to someone else at the Centre to symbolize the extension of healing into community. In reflection, the ceremony of the rose could have been shortened. The rose itself says much, not requiring a lot of verbiage. Alternatively, perhaps another session viewing of all the art created, would have been meaningful in keeping with the inherent ritual of art therapy (Schnetz, 2005). I kept and dried two of the roses as a personal connection to the group. Finally, P2's collage, completed on her own time after Session 2, shows her growth over the course of the VINES sessions (See Figure 20). Note the density of the art compared to Figure 6 and her personal reflection:

> *Spring, new growth, deeper roots, stronger, longer, healthier vines. Inventory of one's purpose in life, pruning to be stronger. Information is yours, all you have to do is ask. Free, peace, a purpose in life to be able to forgive yourself, repent of my sins, walk with God.*
>
> *And then we need rain, seasons, harvesting, Thanksgiving.*
>
> (P2, Personal reflection)

These results present a sense of the participants' group art therapy experience in the VINES sessions along with their art. The first order themes follow in section two of the results.

Figure 20. Secret Garden - P2, Collage completed from Session 2, magazine images and elements from nature on Bristol board, 23" x 28"

Results: Section Two - First Order Themes

The first order themes were derived from the mundane data of the interviews as well as the art therapy processing. P1, P2, and P3 refer to the participants that were interviewed. Alongside unique experiences attributed to specific participants, some themes overlap with the phenomenal experiences of others (Px), and some are common to all of the members (Ps). Unique, overlapping, and common themes are demonstrated in the following separate charts.

Unique First Order Themes

T1 - P1 found safety in the group sessions	P1 initially preferred the safety of the group to individual sessions. She was at first intimidated at the thought of one-on-one sessions, being "kind of nervous about that" because she didn't know how personal it would become.
T2 - P1 felt cut off from her Native heritage growing up, but she reconnected to it and is proud of it.	P1 is now surprised at her own pride in who she is: "This is the first time in my life I can say that…I'm proud of all parts of me, especially my nationality."
T3 - The movement visualization employed in the mandalas produced a very different artifact for P1.	P1 commented that she almost "didn't recognize it" as her own, as she is usually pictorial and literal in her art. For P1 it was more abstract and something she had never done before.
T4 - It was important to P1 to reach out to new residents with love and acceptance.	P1 felt that if they do not finding acceptance in this new environment, they will go back to their old lifestyles where at least they were accepted. She based this observation on her own experience.
T5 - P1 felt bad when someone left the Centre.	P1 found that she established connections with new residents more quickly so they felt welcomed and not isolated. The loss "gets harder each time someone leaves as you get connected quicker."
T6 - P1 hopes to use her creativity to contribute to change.	P1 wants to use her creativity to do good which she sees as helping others and spurring them on to better lives. P1 enjoys photography and making movies and wants to explore making a movie about the homeless. P1 "enjoys watching people enjoy my art."
T7 - P1 wants to be able to dream.	P1's life has been about surviving from day to day. "I was a kid when I got pregnant. I never got to sit back and just dream."
T8 - P2 initially didn't see herself as creative.	Upon entering the group, P2 did not think she was artistic and saw others in her life as more gifted. By the end, she felt good about her art and is now excited for what she'll do next.

T9 - P2 expressed frustration working with another group member.	P2 also found that P4's frequent verbal interruptions in the group could be somewhat difficult. However, P2 seemed reluctant to vent any further frustration, saying that "I was there a year ago," and acknowledging that they did do a "wonderful piece together–we always butted heads a little but loved each other at the end of the day."
T10 - P2 did notice recurring images in her work.	P2 connected to these recurring images as "God-moments."
T11 - P3 really likes collage and is inspired by the image-gathering process.	For P3 "pictures convey something you can't draw right away because it would take too much time." P3 is able to connect to the images to her own impressions and attaches metaphor and analogy
T12 - The black poplar is a meaningful recurring image in P2's art.	The black poplar on P2's family farm needed pruning so it wouldn't destroy the roof. It appeared in her first collage and inspired her sacred stick.
T13 - P2 found black rocks to be a meaningful image.	When P2's family went to the beach, they used to collect black rocks.
T14 - Leaves had significant meaning for P2	P2 attached special meaning to leaves in how they changed through the seasons, incorporating both dried leaves and photo images of leaves into her collage.
T15 - Relapse is viewed by P2 as part of the recovery journey.	P2 sees the 60-day restriction as a good time to "focus on the Father and me and my recovery." She views it as getting a good jumpstart on being healthy. P2 does not view relapse as failure.
T16 - P3 tends to keep her thoughts inside until she is ready to share.	When asked about her experience of group art therapy, P3 related that she is not overly verbal in any of her group classes, saying that she is a more "meditative" type of person.
T17 - P3 is concerned with how she is perceived by others in the group.	P3 has some difficulty articulating her thoughts and does not want people to misinterpret what she says. When she says something, she wants it to have profound meaning so it "doesn't skew people's perception" of her as not being intellectual or deep. This "keeps me in a lot."
T18 - P3 identifies with the earth.	P3 perceives herself as earthy: "I think I'm actually a really grounded, down-to-earth person under all the chaos I've created for myself."
T19 - The vine has always held metaphorical significance for P3.	P3 has always had tendrils and vines in her art. Vine-like shapes have been even in her doodlings that she identified as something from the subconscious wanting to emerge.
T20 - P3 acknowledges her proclivity to over-intellectualize but now views herself as intellectual in a positive sense.	P3 related that an addict can talk oneself in or out of anything.
T21 - P3 needs to contain her personal power.	P3 almost sees herself as being "too powerful, " with the potential to be out of control. She feels harnessing this power through self-control can actually bring greater freedom.
T22 - P3 identified the theme of hibernation in her art.	This time at the Centre is a cocooning phase for P3, being "protected in a safe place and not being afraid

	to be vulnerable when exposed to deeper issues."
T23 - P3 sees herself as displaced/isolated in her cultural identity.	P3 did not fit in either Caucasian or Native culture. When among Caucasians, she feels the Native stereotype kick in, but still feels "as if I don't connect in a way." The same occurs around Natives. She also feels like a chameleon in that she can blend into either culture.

Overlapping First Order Themes

T24 - Px were uncertain about the vine directive.	At first, P1 thought that everyone would be asked to create the same piece. She was surprised at the variety of art pieces that came out of the same directive. While uncertain, P2 did have an idea that "it wasn't just go grab some tomatoes from Safeway that grow on a vine and glue them on paper."
T25 - For Px, making the vine was calming.	P3 finds herself on an emotional roller coaster as a result of all the changes and issues arising as she approaches six months in the program. The artmaking around the theme of the vine has helped calm her. P2 noticed she felt her anxiety lift after the artmaking.
T26 - Px were able to release control of the art therapy process.	P1 "never knew where it was going to end up until the end." P3 is not worried about the final creative product and can see how the process contributes to the whole. P3 enters into the art-making process in an exploratory manner and is able "to make sense out of what happens in the end."
T27 - Px saw their personal vine as starting to bear fruit.	P1 saw an aspect of fruit as being committed to renewing her mind and learning more about God. P1 had "really put in a commitment to growth" by entering more deeply into a relationship with the living God. P3 now knows "what kind of a vine I am—I can use my strengths for me."
T28 - Px want to teach their children important Christian values.	P1 described these values as "the way you act" and "the laws of sowing and reaping." P2
T29 - Px felt aspects of VINES groups related to the end goal of the 12-step program.	P1 found that it "related quite a bit because in the end, the goal of finishing the 12 steps is to be of help to others." P2 could see it helping others.
T30 - Px are more purposeful.	P1 wants to open people's eyes to the reality that God loves them. P1 spoke specifically of the homeless. P3 connected her personal purpose to her divine purpose, "spurring others on to do something greater or better with their lives."
T31 - Px liked the experience of different art materials.	P2 liked the softness of the pastels although she didn't "remember ever working with them." Splattering paint in her mandala was a unique experience for P2. Noting collage, for P3 "pictures convey something you can't draw right away because it would take too much time."
T32 - Px expressed concern about the	P2 gave these concerns form in her dyad art piece

destruction of the environment.	with P4. She spoke of global warming and the prediction that an asteroid is supposed to collide with the earth. P4 in spoke of ecological harm to lakes and oceans (GAP4)
T33 - Px related to the garden literally and as metaphor.	P2 called her garden the "secret garden." It is overgrown from not being tended. P3 related the garden to her own growth and change.
T34 - Px connected to birds.	P2 noted that only hummingbirds could reach the tall plants. She also said that hummingbirds fly south protected under the wings of geese. They go with the "greyhound," otherwise they would have "a heart attack" in navigating the long flight. P4 used the observing owl metaphor in her sacred stick art invitation.
T35 - Px connected to the colour blue.	P2 sees herself as a "blue" person – a peacemaker. P3 spoke of blue as being very calming. She also identifies blue with water and discovered that she "never knew I liked water so much. It's refreshing and calm and cool."
T36 - Px saw the sun as a meaningful image.	P2 placed in the sun in her collage as a source of life and existence. P3 saw the sun as symbolic for hope.
T37 - Px related to the changing of the seasons.	Fall reminds P2 of harvest. For her it is also a sad time, reminding her of her father's death. P3 found deeper meaning in the seasons of life, particularly from winter to spring.
T38 - Px are working on self-forgiveness.	P2 is still having some difficulty forgiving herself and letting go of some bad past memories. P1 is letting of past mistakes she made parenting her children and not being able to see them.
T39 - Px have a positive experience of God as father.	P2 speaks of God the Father as "the perfect dad. " She is "not scared to call Him Father like some people are." P3 wants to connect to something greater, which is God.
T40 - Px saw the 12-step program as essential to recovery.	P2 stated "you won't have a life without doing the 12-step." P3 was mid-way through the 12 steps in her recovery.
T41 - Px found the gathering table to be a visual starting point for artmaking.	P3 appreciated the table motifs which set the tone for the artmaking time. She found them helpful in "creating thoughts and feelings" which would stimulate the art-making process. P2 appreciated the design of the leaves in the tapestry and its colours that connected into her childhood memories, reminding her of "something my mom had years ago."
T42 - Px want to be true to their unique path and individuality.	P3 doesn't like following the crowd. "I want to achieve something greater in my own way on my own path. P1 wanted to express her individual creativity in the art and not be limited.
T43 - Px are more accepting of self.	P3 is more accepting of herself in acknowledging strengths and weaknesses and leaning on others for support. P1 was able to look at "what she used to be about," as something in the past. P1 felt like a different person from a year ago when she was

	broken, ashamed, and hopeless**.** She now is surprised at her own pride in who she is: "This is the first time in my life I can say that…I'm proud of all parts of me, especially my nationality."
T44 - Px connected the fence in the art to personal boundaries.	P3 noticed that the fence was in a lot of her art. It could signify keeping something in or out. But she sees this motif as getting smaller as she's establishing more personal boundaries in her life. P1 used a fence in her art to keep out the negative influence of her ex-husband.

Common First Order Themes

T45 - Art therapy has made huge difference by giving Ps an opportunity to be creative.	P1 saw the art therapy classes as an opportunity to "just let go of the world" and "let all that stuff come out." P1 viewed the sessions as special and did not look at them as "just another class like some of the others. P2 had never heard of art therapy and really enjoyed the artmaking. P3 is exploratory in her art.
T46 - The art therapy sessions clarified important personal issues.	P1 became aware of issues that she didn't know she was thinking about or that were troubling her. She was glad "it got dealt with …things I was struggling with spiritually that might never have gotten talked about." P2 has discovered that there's more than meets the eye in the art product: "There's a lot here and even more than what's here." P3 makes sense out of the end product.
T47 - The vine made Ps think of their old identity and now what is their new identity.	Working with the vine metaphor, P1 was able to look at "what she used to be about," as something in the past. The essence of P3's journey is trying to find her identity. In the past, P3 tried to find her identity and security in relationships. But finding her identity in Christ has made it much easier. P2 looked at herself in her previous recovery attempt and felt a newfound hunger to go deeper with God.
T48 - Ps are more aware of growth and change through the artmaking process.	P1 thinks about her own growth and change now that she has done the art. P2 found more personal meaning in the vine as the groups progressed. P3 looked to forge her own unique path and let it happen through the art.
T49 - Ps saw others growing as Christians because of their example.	Helping others to grow in faith symbolized fruit-bearing in P1's life. P2 wants to share her own testimony to help others in addiction. P3 wants to inspire others to achieve something greater, using her spiritual growth to help others in their faith journeys.
T50 - Ps credited God with their transformation.	P1 saw herself as a "bad case" when she came to the Centre. Because of her experience, she has faith that God can totally turn a life around. "The truth is sitting right here…He can save even the worst cases." P2 understands more spiritually in this time in her recovery. P3's Christian vine was sparse but

	under God's pruning, is more bushy and thriving.
T51 - Ps are less judgmental and more forgiving of others.	P1's birth father is a bottle picker and she has been able to reconnect with him. P2 was able to forgive her father prior to his death. She sees now that even though life was hard, he was "a good provider." She is trying not to focus on the past: "There's nothing I can do about that. I have to live for today." P3 noted her past failed relationships were her way of blocking emotional pain.
T52 - Ps sees God as active in the creative and therapy process.	P1 referred to an art therapy session that helped clarify things and "basically was an answer to prayer." P2 let "the Holy Spirit just help me for a moment and just be able to create this."
T53 - Ps appreciated the visual aspects of the gathering table.	P2 appreciated the design of the leaves in the tapestry and its colours. The greens and browns connected into childhood memories. P3 found the gathering table as a visual stimulus for creativity. Ps commented on the weekly gathering table themes in their VINES group check-in.
T54 - Ps related to other aspects of the gardening metaphor.	P2 noted that fertilizer is made from "crap" and that her journey to healing is fertilized by her "crappy" upbringing. P1 and P3 spoke of a "bad bug" attacking the vine, which they associated with her ex-husband. P3 related fertilizer and good soil as necessary for growth.
T55 - Ps want to develop their personal spiritual testimony.	P2 wants to share her healing journey with other addicts. P3 intentionally wants her words to matter, "spurring others on to do something greater or better with their lives." She wants to use her learning about God to help others in their faith journeys. P1 wants to open people's eyes to the reality that God loves them.
T56 - Ps found personal meaning in the sacred stick invitation.	P2 connected aspects of her Métis heritage to the final VINES group theme of "fruit." She described the sacred stick as a medicine stick and wisdom carrier. P1 and P3 incorporated their children and native symbolism in their sacred sticks.
T57 - Ps see the rose as a significant metaphor.	P3 spoke at length about the rose and its connection to the themes of pruning and grafting. She connected the rose to herself and also to Christ. She identified the rose as requiring much care. P2 made a connection to pruning in that "I never knew how to prune those rose things at home but I understand it all of a sudden." Through the rose, P1 spoke of now seeing herself as beautiful, unlike when she thought of herself as ugly in her youth.
T58 - Ps believe in establishing strong roots.	P3 wants to get to the root of her problems by renewing her mind and building from the ground up. P1 created an established root system in her art. P2′s final collage reflects the change from the fuzzy roots in her initial art piece.
T59 - Ps related positively to the pruning theme.	P3 is aware that future thriving will involve more pruning even though she might think her life is a

	huge improvement from where she was before. P2 connected pruning to breaking bad habits and forming new habits. P1 trusts God with her pruning.
T60 - Ps saw the positive spiritual aspects of grafting and connection.	P1 related to grafting as becoming "part of the vine and reaching out to another person who hasn't yet become part of the vine." P3 realizes that one is stronger when connected to something bigger. P3 is learning to take responsibility for her actions but still needs help, so "there was a lot of intertwining and connecting to something greater which would be God." P2 found connection as being part of a greater tribe of the children of God.

In summary, it is worthwhile to highlight unique first order themes emerging in the context of the art therapy group. One participant described her conflict with another group member. Another participant noted that she did not easily share her thoughts in the group and was concerned about how she would be perceived by other group members. This same participant felt culturally displaced and identified the theme of hibernation in her art. Another participant expressed feeling more safe in the group environment. She could now dream of a future and not just survive. A third participant noticed recurring themes in her artwork.

In addition to the unique themes, first order themes emerged that overlapped. Participants related a positive experience with group art therapy and growth in their creativity. They related aspects of the vine metaphor to their personal journeys in recovery or to themselves. They were able to acknowledge their prior state of addiction and connect to painful feelings as well as new, more positive ones.

Common first order themes included finding meaning in metaphors from nature that were generated from the vine metaphor. Pruning was acknowledged as a painful but necessary process for growth. Participants identified lives bearing fruit as extending

beyond themselves to other primary relationships, particularly children and grandchildren, and the community at large. Participants related aspects of their spiritual growth and relationship with God as crucial to their recovery. In conclusion, it is my hope that I remained open to the participant experiences in distilling the first order themes. The higher order themes follow in section three.

Results: Section Three - Higher Order Themes

Through the process of phenomenological reflection, by distilling the higher order themes, I hoped to bring the individual experiences of the first order themes into a sphere of the whole or possible global experiences in art therapy and addictions recovery. The higher order themes that follow (HOs) are clustered under general categories and are supported by the numbered first order themes (Ts) and the group's art therapy processing (Results: Section 1, GAP). The categories are:

- art therapy and the group; elements of art and artmaking;
- personal growth and empowerment; awareness of self and others;
- themes, metaphors, and images of nature;
- metaphors of nature as symbols for the Divine;
- core themes around the vine; and
- personal spirituality and experience of the Divine.

Common themes outside of these clusters are then listed. The section concludes with several unique themes. These unique themes bear witness to the fact that all of the data does not necessarily fit into these categories, thus testifying to the uniqueness of individual experience.

Art therapy and the group.

HO1 - Insecurity in group (T8, T17). Ps shared their relative insecurities in the group environment. P2 expressed an insecurity with her ability to create. P3 found it difficult at times to express herself verbally in the group.

HO2 - Attachment to therapist (GAP1, GAP4). Ps exhibited an attachment to me by bringing outside items to share. P2 brought elements from nature to the VINES group sessions–mountain ash berries and leaves. P2 stated in her interview: "I don't know what I'm going to do when you leave." P4 shared personal CDs, a pie plate that was used for tracing the mandalas, and the shrink art noted under "Grafting/Connections" (Section 1, GAP4). P5 (who left the Centre after the first VINES group) brought to my attention that she expressly had journalled on a separate sheet outside her art (GAP1). This was a change for her as she previously wrote on the art itself or wrote nothing at all.

Elements of art and artmaking.

HO3 - Art is seen as pleasurable and anticipated activity (T25, T45). Ps looked forward to the group sessions. P2 and P3 noted that making art around the vine was calming. The art therapy sessions were noted as different from regular classes.

HO4 - Enjoyment of creative materials (T11, T31). Ps noted their enjoyment of and engagement with the art materials. P2 and P3 stated in their interviews that making collage with photo images from magazines was their favourite method of working. P3 noted that the immediacy of finding the perfect image appealed to her. P2 and P3 expressed a particular enjoyment of pastels. P3 experimented with applications of paint, noting in her interview that she now likes looking at art materials when shopping.

HO5 - Identification/connection with colour (T35, GAP1, GAP4). P2 and P3

related to blue as a calming colour. P4 and P2 identified orange as a favourite colour. For P4, orange was a happy, comforting colour (GAP1, Figure 1). For P2, orange appeared as spatters in her mandala (GAP4, Figure 13). Two Ps mentioned green: P3 said she liked the greens associated with the vine, and P2 recalled green in memories of growing up. P3 was drawn to gold and golden objects in her sacred stick and connected the colour to Biblical references as well as to the sun (GAP 5, Figure 17).

Two participants used pink in their artwork. P4 noted that she was not a 'pink" person and labeled in pink the words "weak," but liked the tone when it was alongside the black (GAP 4, Figure 12). P2 used pink to decorate her black rock along with her granddaughter. She painted pink bands around her sacred stick that connected to her Métis background as medicine stick (GAP5, Figure 18).

HO6 - Relinquishment of control/surrender to the creative process in art therapy (T24, T26). Two Ps stated that they were open to wherever the art would lead. P3 stated that she was "able to make sense out of what happens in the end."

HO7 - Awareness of subconscious material (T19, T46, T48). Ps interviewed stated that the art helped them explore issues that were often below their conscious awareness. P1 stated that it was art therapy and "not just doing art." P2 saw that there was a lot of deeper meaning emerging, "even more than what's here."

HO8 - Specific vine art directive produced very different art from what was initially perceived (T24, T43). Ps interviewed noted that the vine art images were unique to each person. Their initial perception was that the images would be very similar.

Personal growth and empowerment.

HO9 - Individuality (T42, T43). Two Ps in interview noted the desire to be true to

one's own self and expression in the art.

HO10 - Self-confidence (T6, T8). P1 expressed more confidence in her desire to contribute as a change agent, and P2 felt better about her own creative abilities.

HO11 - Reframing of weaknesses (T43, T51, GAP4). P3 could now view her weaknesses as strengths. P4 in the art processing stated indirectly that pink, initially viewed as weak, was enhanced alongside black, connecting it to the strong helping the weak (GAP4, Figure 12).

HO12 - Boundaries (T44, GAP1, GAP2). Fences and trellises supported the vines in the art of P1 and P3 (GAP1, Figure 5; GAP2, Figure 9). Fencing protecting growing vines was also used by P1 as a boundary to keep out the negative influence of an ex-husband trying to lure her back into addiction. In her interview, P2 viewed the boundaries imposed by the Centre as a good thing. P1 illustrated a wall that kept her isolated and trapped as a negative connotation of boundary (GAP1, Figure 4). P3's fence, as her own "stuff," similarly held her back (GAP2, Figure 8). P3 spoke in her interview about her personal power as needing harnessing.

HO13 - Transforming bad habits (T27, T59). Ps identified renewing the mind as key to building good habits.

Awareness of self and others.

HO14 - Awareness of feelings (T1, T5, T25). P1, P2 and P3 expressed both positive and negative emotions, notably guilt and shame, in the art as well verbally in the interviews. P2 was aware of her own anxieties and along with P3, noted that making the vine art was calming.

HO15 - Ability to acknowledge past mistakes (T38, T43, T47). Ps took

responsibility for past mistakes and expressed varying degrees of regret.

HO16 - Acknowledgement of denial in the face of addiction (T15, T20). Two Ps stated that they had been in denial and did not comprehend how much they were in bondage to the addiction until they entered the recovery Centre.

HO17 - Forgiveness of self and others (T38, T51). P1, P2, and P3 spoke of forgiving themselves for past mistakes and seeing themselves in a different light, although they were at various stages in this process. They also mentioned forgiveness of others for past wrongs.

HO18 - Creative growth (T6, T8). P1 and P2 expressed an interest in continuing to explore artistic growth.

HO19 - Mental focus and clarity (T26, GAP2). P2 interviewed stated that the meditation and artmaking gave her increased mental clarity and focus. P4 noted that her head was clearer and she didn't feel so much "like a spaz."

HO20 - Somatic awareness and connection (T3, GAP4). P1 acknowledged the correlation between the body-incorporated visual awareness exercise and the resulting art in her mandala (GAP4, Figure 15). P2 could identify the physical location of her anxiety. By splattering paint in her mandala, she was able to alleviate some of the anxiety.

HO21 - Social awareness (T6, T49). P1 stated a desire to teach others about the reality of homelessness. P2 wants to share her personal testimony to encourage other addicts.

HO22 - Concern for the environment (T32, GAP1, GAP2). Through the art and interviews, P2, P4, and P5 expressed concern that nature is being destroyed. P5 wrote that humankind's abuse of the environment is destroying the vine (GAP1, Figure 2). P4 stated

that man-made rules are ruining the natural world (GAP2, Figure 7). P2 stated that holes in the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect are cumulatively wreaking havoc on the earth (GAP3, Figure 11).

Themes, metaphors, and images of nature.

HO23 - Trees (T12, GAP1, GAP5). Trees in the images and in the sacred sticks had both a positive and negative quality. P2 spoke of the transformation of the black poplar at her old home, a tree in danger of toppling over due to its brittle nature. In P2's sacred stick, this poplar later transformed into something of beauty with the addition of silver paint as "hoarfrost makes anything look beautiful" (GAP5, Figure 18). For P3, the tree was a fearsome element—her self-vine was dying on it (GAP1, Figure 5).

HO24 - Sun (T40, GAP4, GAP5). P2 and P3 incorporated images of the sun into their art. Both Ps expressed that the sun was life giving, P2 noted, "without it, we would die." P3 incorporated the sun in consecutive pieces, relating that there is "just enough sun for hope" (GAP4, Figure 14; GAP5, Figure 17).

HO25 - The natural elements (T18, GAP2, GAP4). Water appeared in the art of three Ps. P3 found water to be calming and "never knew that I liked water so much." P1 connected the visualization exercise of moving through water as inspirational in her mandala (GAP4, Figure 15). P4 related that water was a natural pruning instrument (GAP2, Figure 7). P3 connected to the earth element, viewing herself as a very grounded person "under all the chaos I've created for myself" (GAP4, Figure 14).

HO26 - Garden (T33, GAP2). In the interviews and the art, P's referred to aspects of the garden and gardening. P2 spoke of her "secret garden." P3 incorporated the words "healing garden" in her pruning collage and related the gardening metaphor to her

own growth and change (GAP2, Figure 8).

HO27 - Fertilizer (T54, GAP4). P2 spoke of the experiences of a "crappy upbringing" being fertilizer for life experience and the humus for her present place on the recovery journey. P3 used 'fertilizer' as a central theme in her mandala as a requirement for soul nurture (GAP4, Figure 14).

HO28 - Soil (GAP4). Two Ps related the necessity of having fertile soil for growth on a personal and spiritual level.

HO29 - Flowers (T57, GAP3, GAP5). Three Ps incorporated flowers symbolically in their artwork. P1, P2, and P3 used flowers in the sacred stick art invitation (GAP5, Figures 16, 17, 18). The flowers were symbolic of self and also children.

HO30 - Birds (T34, GAP5). P4 saw herself in her sacred stick as being able to get a birds'-eye view. The bird was an owl and had the quality of "big brother" (GAP5, Figure 19). P2 spoke of hummingbirds with tenderness especially in preparing the feeders for their return each spring. P2 incorporated a bird image in her collage (GAP5, Figure 20).

HO31 - The seasons (T37, GAP2, GAP4). The seasons were connected to Ps' own seasons of life. P2's favourite season was fall, reflected in the dried leaves in her collage art as well as in her poetic response (GAP5, Figure 20). P2 spoke of the winter when she neglected to bring her grapevine inside and it froze (GAP2, Figure 6). P2 and P3 both viewed spring as a time of rebirth.

HO32 - Roads (T42, GAP1). P3, P4, P5, and P6 mentioned highways, side roads, and paths. P4 and P5 created their art on maps of Canada (GAP1, Figures 1 & 2). Side

roads can take one off-course. P3 in her interview viewed her journey as taking the road less travelled: “I want to achieve something greater in my own way on my own path.” P6 noted through her art that there are going to be crossroads (GAP1, Figure 3).

HO33 - Bugs (T54, GAP2). P1 and P2 used the metaphor of bugs to describe harmful past relationships. These relationships were pests that needed to be eliminated.

Metaphors of nature as symbols for the Divine. Ps, in their art as well as in their interviews, used images of nature to symbolize or connect with God.

HO34 - Water (GAP2, GAP4). Two Ps related the element of water to their concept of God. For P4, water was God’s pruning’s instrument (Figure 7). P3 stated in her interview that water was an analogy for God, illustrated in her mandala (Figure 14).

HO35 - Rose (T57). P3 stated in her interview that the rose was connected to Christ.

Core meanings of vine metaphors.

HO36 – Connecting to God and self through the vine metaphor (T27, T60, GAP1, GAP2, GAP5). In her first poetic response to the self-vine invitation, P2 used the metaphor of a neglected grapevine to describe herself. P2 depicted herself as a morning glory, a vine trying to flourish but possibly being compressed by expectations of others (GAP1, Figure 5). P5 preferred the messiness of her vine to a “sculptured vine” (GAP1, Figure 2). P1 described the vine in her art as God reaching down to her (GAP1, Figure 4). P3 named finding her new identity in the “True Vine.”

HO37 - Vine being destroyed by the world (GAP1). P3’s vine was dying on the large tree which was the world “taking up a lot of energy” (GAP1, Figure 5). For P5, conforming to the world could destroy the vine (GAP1).

HO38 - Grounding and roots (T18, T58, GAP2). In her interview, P3 viewed good roots as necessary for being grounded and contributing to a sense of empowerment. P1 illustrated her self-vine with a developed root system extending below the surface (GAP 2, Figure 9). However, in her interview, P1 did not relate or find meaning in the idea of grounding.

HO39 - Pruning as an uncomfortable but necessary process for growth (T59, GAP1, GAP2) **and** ***HO40 - Pruning as a pre-requisite for leading fruitful lives (T60).*** Ps stated that pruning requires personal sacrifice (GAP1). This sacrifice was marked by a struggle to let go. Ps mentioned that they must trust that what is being taken away will be replaced by something even more abundant. P1 and P2 stated the toxic nature of relationships to ex-husbands, which needed to be pruned and have boundaries established. Pruning was literally illustrated by P1 (GAP2, Figure 9).

HO41 - Grafting (T46, T60). Ps saw that spiritual grafting to Jesus as the true Vine in the Biblical Scripture of John 15 was necessary for spiritual growth and development.

HO42 - Connection to others (T4, T5, T22). In interviews, P1 and P3 noted a connection to others at the Centre as they moved forward in recovery through support and dependence instead of self-sufficiency.

HO43 - Connecting past to present (T37, T41, T47). Ps interviewed described vignettes from their family history and relationships. Even though painful memories emerged, Ps were able to find present meaning through their art. P2 stated that although she had a tough upbringing, her father was a good provider.

HO44 - Disconnection (GAP1, GAP3, GAP4, GAP5). Ps portrayed elements of

disconnection symbolically in the art. In P4's mandala, she place the "shrinks" and two parallel forms outside the circles. (GAP4, Figure 12). In her dyad piece, P4 cut the picture frame into halves (GAP3, Figure 10) and later in her sacred stick; P4 alluded to disconnection by describing her owl as big brother watching (GAP5, Figure 19). P1, in her first vine art, stood outside the wall, disconnected from God (GAP1, Figure 4).

HO45 - Cultural disconnection (T23). When interviewed, P3 felt culturally displaced, feeling neither a part of nor identifying with Native culture. She also feels a remote, if non-identification, with the white culture in which she was brought up. Growing up, P1 experienced a disconnection from her native heritage.

The manifestation of fruit in the participants' personal journeys extended to primary relationships and the community at large. Ps related various aspects of fruit through the following:

HO46 - Purposefulness (T6, T30). Ps interviewed noted a desire to move forward in fulfilling personal purpose by sharing their recovery testimonies, either verbally or through other creative endeavours.

HO47 - Passing down wisdom and spiritual values to children, grandchildren, and others (T28, GAP5). Ps noted in the interviews that passing down of wisdom was seen as fruit of the recovery process (GAP5). Ps found meaning in providing inspiration for others to move forward on their spiritual journeys.

HO48 - Awareness of cultural heritage (T2, GAP5). In the art and in the interview, P1 expressed a current deep pride in her Aboriginal heritage. P3 named her Métis background in the sacred stick invitation (GAP5). Feathers and painted bands, symbolic of the medicine stick, were noted (GAP5, Figures 16, 17, 18).

Experience of the Divine and personal spirituality.

HO49 - God perceived as active in creative process (T52, GAP3). Ps interviewed said they received their inspiration from God in their creative process during the sessions. Ps indicated that the integrative poetic weavings at the end of the grafting/connections session had a transcendent quality (GAP3). P2 shared that they continued to discuss this process outside of the art therapy sessions.

HO50 - Spiritual awareness and growth (T55, T60, GAP5). Ps spoke of God or spirituality in their poetic post-art reflections. Ps expressed interest in and a desire to grow spiritually and expressed cultivating a deeper relationship with God. They linked devotional time with God and Bible study to growth. P2 and P3 incorporated Scripture verses into their sacred sticks. For P2, John 3:16 (NKJV) was significant: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.”

HO51 - Powerless without God in recovery (T15, T27, T39, T40). Ps attributed their recovery to God, named in the interviews as “Father God,” “Jesus,” and the “Holy Spirit.”

HO52 - Faith and trust (T50, GAP4). Ps interviewed mentioned faith and trust directly and indirectly in talking about their spiritual growth and recovery.

HO53 - Sharing spirituality with others (T4, T30). Ps stated a desire to share their personal testimony with the church community as representatives of the Centre, by writing for the newsletter, or by extending God’s love to new residents and children. Ps also felt strongly about sharing their recovery journey with other addicts, particularly how God has been instrumental in this process.

Other common higher order themes.

HO54 - Gathering table (T41, T53). Two Ps interviewed found the gathering table to be a visually beautiful and a stimulus for creativity.

HO55 - VINES groups as connecting to 12-step programs (T29, T40). Ps interviewed saw a relationship of the VINES groups to the 12-step program, but more as a compliment than a replacement. In their interviews, two Ps saw a connection between the VINES group and other educational programs at the Centre.

Unique higher order themes.

HO56 - Safety in group (T1). P1 felt initially felt more secure in the group, because she was not sure how personal an individual session would be.

HO57 - Frustration in group (T9). P2 expressed frustration in working with another group member, particularly her frequent interruptions and inability to connect to the grafting metaphor.

HO58 - Pride in Native heritage (T2). P1 expressed a deep pride in her Aboriginal heritage both in the interview and in the art groups.

HO59 - Hibernation (T22). P3 connected the theme of hibernation to her time in recovery at the Centre. In focusing on her healing and growth, she will emerge as a new person. The words “spring renewal” was expressed in her collage art (GAP2, Figure 8).

HO60 - Hope (GAP2). P3 expressed that hope also can be tenuous and is dependent on the support and prayers of others.

HO61 - Freedom to dream (T7). P1 expressed in her interview that she can now dream again. Most of her life was about survival and living from day to day.

HO62 - Creativity for cultural transformation (T6). P1 wanted to use her creative gifts to make a difference in the world by producing a video telling the story of the homeless.

HO63 - Curiosity at how God created the world and end-times prophecy (T32, GAP3). P2 articulated questions she would like to ask God about creation. She wondered too about the event of Christ's return as predicted in Biblical end-times prophecy.

HO64 - Awareness of recurring imagery and themes (T10). P2 noticed the synchronicity in her art and the recurring appearance of external symbols that related to the VINES group work.

HO65 - Shears as metaphor for pruning (GAP2). P1 drew a pair of golden shears being used by God for her personal pruning (GAP2, Figure 9).

HO66 – Contentment in the present (T18, T20). P3 singularly expressed contentment in her present place of recovery.

HO67 – Previous lack of self-worth (T43, GAP5). P1 was able to be vulnerable in the group. She shared her deep lack of self-esteem while growing up when she did not view herself as beautiful and was ashamed of being Native.

Validity and Reliability of Results

Carola Ackery (MA, RCC, RCAT), my art therapy supervisor and an official "reader of the themes," shared that the themes were clear, well written, and resonated as faithful to the work. They were also true to her experience as art therapist. Dr. Bonnie Lee (Reg. MFT), assistant professor in the Addictions Counselling program at the University of Lethbridge, also read the revised and edited themes. Via email, she indicated that the phenomenological methodology was followed by a thorough reflection

on the mundane data and first order themes to get to the higher order themes.

Dr. Lee's comment also validates the incorporation of the organic inquiry approach. She wrote: "It is a joy to read this. The themes have a very organic feel. It looks like you did a careful step-by-step job to get to your higher order themes. I hope you'll be able to publish this and share your methods with others. I really like the spiritual aspect of it as well."

Within this context, validity upholds that the research approaches are thorough in representing the participants' interview answers and processes during the art therapy. Validity in this research was demonstrated through 1) accuracy, 2) reflexivity, 3) relationality, and 4) transformational potential. These elements emerged in transpersonal approaches to research (Anderson, 1998, 2000; Braud, 1998; Clements, 2004; Curry & Wells, 2006; Ferrer, 2002). Transpersonal describes a branch of psychology that goes beyond the individual to embrace and explore the spiritual as another way of knowing as expressed in the "sacred, mythic, archetypal, and symbolic in human behaviour, desire, and wellbeing" (Curry & Wells, 2006, p. 132). Operationally, I will define these key terms and how they were demonstrated in the research.

Accuracy means truthfully and precisely representing the phenomenal experience. In the careful and reflective gathering of themes that were given to the participants for their feedback, I ensured that my mundane descriptions accurately or truthfully represented their phenomenal experiences. Accuracy was also supported by the feedback of the external theme readers. The intention was to see if these themes resonated with their experience in the areas of art therapy and addictions as authentic or accurately representing the phenomenal experiences as they know those things to be.

Reflexivity is a process by which the researcher examines and confronts her/his own biases, social background, and assumptions throughout the research process. It also includes being sensitive to the relationship dynamics between the researcher and participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 146). Reflexivity was illustrated by my reflective or contemplative processes in the therapist/researcher observations (Results, Section 1, GAP). After bracketing what I reflected upon as my possible presuppositions in entering this thematic research, my chosen readers in the recovery and art therapy fields sustained my belief that I kept faithful to the descriptions within the mundane data, letting the phenomenal experiences and themes unfold. The bracketing efforts appear to uphold my sincerity in disclosing my background and setting aside possible presumptions while the themes unfolded through my intention to have fresh eyes. Another criteria for evaluating reflexivity is "how transparent the research processes are, and how clear are the steps for replication" (Curry & Wells, 2006, p.62). As researcher, I rigorously followed the procedures as described in the methods (chapter three) to the best of my ability. The comments of the external readers support the likelihood that I was faithful to the procedures as outlined. The methods are also clearly repeated in the VINES manual, available for another researcher to follow.

Relationality in the research process describes the careful development of the relationship between the researcher and participants as co-researchers and builders of knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 15). It also applies to the researcher detecting the commonalities and essential characteristics of participant experiences and how these relate to the literature. Relationality can be evaluated by "how well the parts depict or

support the whole, and how much empathic attunement is achieved between researcher and participants" (Curry & Wells, 2006, p. 63). This attunement began with myself as therapist/researcher partnering with participant/group members and continued through the dialogic process of the interviews. Relationality was also validated by the external readers who were able to clearly follow, and found resonance with, my process of distilling first order themes from the mundane data leading to higher order themes.

Transformational potential means that there is a possibility of personal change or viewing reality from a different perspective (Curry & Wells, 2006, p. 132). Transformative change can also include selfless, broader acts that carry over into the community at large. Transformation that occurred for both myself and the participants can be seen in the progression through the five VINES sessions group art processing. Transformative comments are highlighted in the following discussion chapter. As well, a degree of transformation is reflected in the statements of the external readers.

Reliability within the research was demonstrated by using data triangulated from multiple sources both verbal and non-verbal: the art and art processing, somatic experience, video, and voice recorded interviews. After thorough reflection on this mundane data, I gathered the first order themes from which the reader can see, through a paper trail, how I derived the higher order themes. This data remains for further reflection, "where each successive interpretation has the possibility of uncovering or opening up new possibilities" (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 56). Chapter five's discussion will focus on the highlights of the higher order themes. Relevant literature is brought forward to support the discussion.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The discussion highlights the significance of this study's thematic results compared to the literature. I have coalesced the highlights in the following areas:

- the gathering table and the therapeutic container;
- ritual;
- individual experiences within group context and group dynamic experiences;
- metaphor and symbol;
- cross-cultural observations;
- issues of addiction and recovery in relation to art therapy;
- spirituality and addiction recovery; and
- therapeutic experience of client/participant and therapist/researcher experiences.

The Gathering Table and the Therapeutic Container

The Centre's boardroom was the designated space for art therapy. The groups opened with a check-in to gather verbal information and encourage dialogue regarding the participants' way of being as they entered the art therapy environment. Each week the participants found their places at the boardroom table as they entered the therapeutic space. My intention behind the gathering table concept was three-fold: to create a metaphor for the holding environment of the art therapy group, to design a visual focal point for the weekly themes, and to help form the group identity in the physical space. The participants had other classes as part of their program in the boardroom, and the

transformed “common” space was noticeable: even the staff who entered the room prior to a session commented on the space having a different energy. As such, the gathering table contributed to the formation of the VINES group’s unique identity, described by Shirley Riley (2001) in *Group Process Made Visible: Group Art Therapy,* as a “ceremonial expression” reflecting the group personality (p. 28). The group personality began to gel through this initial phase (Malchiodi, 2002; McNeilly, 2006; Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005).

The transformation of the boardroom’s table appeared to create movement between the mundane and the sacred. The gathering table added an element of the sacred, which often, but not always, appears in an art therapy environment or culture. In the context of this art therapy recovery group, it was my therapeutic intention to add a sacramental aspect to the symbol of the gathering table. Catherine Moon describes sacramental rites as a “call for communal myth and ritual actions in daily life, which bring about recognition of the holy in the everyday” (2001, p. 38).

Just as care and attention are given to setting the table for a communal meal, I, as therapist, prepared the gathering table to set the space for the “sacred” activity of making art together and taking in the soul nourishment of the creative process. Ferrara (2004) allows that the designation of “sacred ritual” in the context of art therapy is not necessarily spiritual activity, but does acknowledge that “transformation and a re-establishment of self-harmony” happens for the client in the ritualized space that sets itself apart from the “secular world” or everyday life (p. 102). While ritual was not brought up in a theme, participants noticed the ritual surrounding the gathering table.

This gathering table offering was also an extension of my artist self in creating a

spatial image and metaphorically, to establish trust that I could safely hold the space as therapist. I attempted—and felt to some degree I succeeded—to model creativity for the group members in a unique way. In my observations of the group, I noticed that the gathering table did generate a lively response and became a jumping off point for check-in and anticipation of what was to transpire.

The gathering table held common recurring elements that reappeared each week with the addition of objects unique to the week's theme (See Chapter 7 - VINES Manual, Figures 22-26). Catherine Moon (2002) suggests that regarding motivators for making art and what constitutes a visually rich environment, more is not necessarily better: "A visually rich environment is not achieved by accumulating the greatest possible number of objects! Visual stimulation has to be balanced with visually 'quiet' places where what is seen can be fully absorbed and where ideas for artmaking are given the opportunity to germinate" (p. 180). The natural beauty and arrangement of the selected elements contributed to creating a still point much like a moment of quiet in nature. Two participants stated in their interviews that the gathering table generated their sense of creativity and their perceived creativity.

The gathering table was a way of connecting to the natural world by bringing the outdoors inside. In this vein, art therapist Farrelly-Hansen (2001) introduces a nature basket as a tool to awaken the senses while "stimulating the imagination's symbol-making capacity" (p. 142). Three of the four participants incorporated available objects from the gathering table in their art, culminating with the branches brought in for the sacred stick invitation (GAP5). Several participants found their own natural objects outside of the group time and brought these objects to subsequent sessions.

Within the VINES groups, the metaphoric theme of “garden” as healing and also in need of tending manifested a facet of Bassoff’s (1992) view that nature can complement loving human relationships. Clinebell (1996) describes horticultural therapy, a facet of eco-therapy that has flowered since the 1940’s, as being particularly effective with alcoholics and drug addicts, again providing the grounding by direct connection to the earth (p. 221). The nurture and care put into a plant’s growth parallels the nurture and care of self.

I observed that the VINES group participants were connected and sensitive to the natural world for personal healing. Participants spoke of themselves in metaphors from the natural world. P3 noticed her own connection to the earth by being a grounded person “under all the chaos I’ve created for myself” (HO25). I also saw concern for the present state of the environment manifest in the art and in the art processing of three participants (GAP1, GAP2, GAP3). Anecdotally, I noticed one of the participants exhibited a re-use attitude by bringing her newsprint cover sheets from the previous week and cleaning rags so as not to continually use more paper and paper towels.

Ritual

Ritual is a normative part of every day life. Achterberg, Dossey, and Kolkmeier (1994) anecdotally suggest that our modern technological culture is devoid of rituals that honour body, mind and spirit, and “fail to honour deep human feelings, our need for sacred connection, and the ultimate power of the conscious mind” (p. 3). Rituals fulfill a multi-purpose healing function in the art therapy group. Simple rituals establish continuity and a security in the process. Canadian art therapist Nadia Ferrara (2004), in her work with the Cree nation, also puts forward that ritual is a therapeutic component of

the art therapy milieu. Drawing on the work of Bell (1992) who defines ritual as “a strategic way of acting that creates and privileges a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane,’” and Rappaport (2009), rituals are “intensive forms of communication by virtue of their repetition and sacredness” (p. 97).

In choosing the rituals, I hoped that they might facilitate group themes or would be relevant to the group themes and add another layer of richness to frame the artmaking. Rituals that can appear on the surface as overly simple, or obvious, are rituals germane to art therapy: the same space, the same therapist, preparing the space for artmaking, choosing materials, naming and dating one’s art piece, and cleanup (Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005; Schnetz, 2005).

Within the VINES groups, these rituals were also germane to the beginning, middle, and end of each group session. My intention in establishing the ritual of folding the tablecloth was a way of building group unity by demonstrating “we are all in this together.” Anecdotally, P2 commented when I forgot to do this ritual, leading me to suggest that meaningful rituals quickly become integral to the process. The participants did not comment in the interviews about the repetition of ritual elements, but they noticed when those rituals were absent. For example, one participant commented when I forgot to put on the background music. Achterberg, Dossey, and Kolkmeier (1994) see ritual functioning as a “comforting rhythm” for exploring and containing uncomfortable or painful subconscious material that emerges. This seemed to be the case for the VINES group participants.

The authors also support the idea that effective rituals require consonance with personal beliefs. Opening and closing prayer found resonance with the participants

interviewed who had personal rituals of prayer and Bible reading (HO50). The theme of God as source of their recovery reflected their spiritual beliefs (HO51). These beliefs were supported in the rituals.

For the VINES groups, rituals of opening prayer meditation, artmaking, journaling, group processing, and closing prayer provided structure and boundaries. The concurrent elements of ritual and art therapy could contribute to ordering the chaotic minds of those emerging from the physical withdrawal of addictive substances. The uncluttered mind was also noted as a thematic result although the participant did not directly attribute the mental clarity to ritual (HO19). Applied within 12-step addiction recovery programs, I would suggest that ritual could function as a bridge to facilitate connection with a person's understanding of a Higher Power.

On occasion, I found that the additional rituals could get in the way of the artmaking process. Involved rituals could be distracting to the ritual inherent in the art therapy itself. The latter seemed to me to be true in the communion ritual due to its length. From my felt sense as therapist/researcher, the group's bridge to the artmaking needed to be re-established by the time the ritual was completed.

Individual Experiences Within Group Context and Group Dynamic Experiences

Art and multi-sensory engagement. Art by virtue of its very nature incorporates multi-sensory awareness (Dissanayake, 1988; Schnetz, 2005). I observed the art therapy process as it transpired in the VINES groups in these words of Martina Schnetz:

> A way to reintegrate lived experience through images and text in a way that they are grounded in perceptions guided by our senses (visual, sensory motor, auditory, emotional, intuitive, and intellectual) and whole being…the external images are

> grounded in the kinesthetic and sensory level, the perceptual and affective level, and the cognitive and symbolic level…(p. 230)

In order to guide the participants, the senses needed to be activated. I observed that a door of opportunity seemed to open for the VINES group participants to engage in the sensory experience and not be caught up in evaluating or judging what was happening on the page. They were able to be open to see what arises from a point of view of curiosity (Hinz, 2009, p. 66). The participants expressed a fresh outlook, almost encountering the world as if for the first time, and conveyed that artmaking was a pleasurable and anticipated activity (HO3). The gathering table provided multi-sensory stimulation in addition to creating a visually rich environment to make art, and participants commented on the table's visual and olfactory appeal.

Participants tasted the juice and loaf in the sharing of communion. The fall leaves and branches and the smell of the roses in the closing ceremony activated their sense of smell (GAP2, GAP3, GAP5). While waiting for check-in, I heard the participants comment on these scents with a kind of newfound wonder. I observed the tactile response of participants as they touched the silky softness of the sari and the nubby texture of the tapestry. In her expressive therapies continuum, Hinz (2009) suggests that "tactile stimulation can provide the most straightforward example of how focusing on an external sensation can lead to the realization of an internal state or emotion" (p. 67). My own level of sensory appreciation for these visual and tactile offerings increased as a result.

Participants' auditory senses were enervated by the gentle background music. In the last session, P2 noted the music's absence when I had forgotten to play the CD. She anecdotally remarked that a particular song connected to her childhood. As therapist, I

observed that the women also found the music calming. The music seemed to dissipate some of the chitchat that takes the participants out of the creative space.

Art therapists differ in their views on the value of music in the therapeutic container. While calming, music can function as a cover-up to anxious or disturbing feelings that may need to surface, or music may be a pre-determining force in the artmaking. Music can also generate negative feelings or associations. Moon (2002), Rubin (2005), and Schnetz (2005) prefer an atmosphere of silence to allow the artmaking alone to fulfill what needs to happen for the individual. In working with this group, I found that nonverbal background music contributed to a soothing environment and helped mitigate some of the anxiety that often surrounds the emergence of uncomfortable feelings.

Making art is a physical, kinesthetic activity as the body movement translates idea through medium (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001; Hammond-Meiers, 2005; Hinz, 2009; Lummis, 2004). The body must be felt in order to activate the senses (Hammond-Meiers, 2012; Levy, 1995; Pleven, 1999; Waller & Mahony, 1999). In splattering paint in her mandala, P2's use of this movement alleviated her anxiety and created a significantly different image from her previous work (See Figure 13). I also noticed an increased physical engagement in the participants as they constructed the three-dimensional art forms of the dyad pieces.

The sense of touch comes alive in the feel of different art materials, as evidenced by several participants' enjoyment of pastels and paint (HO4). Hinz (2009) correlates the degree of fluidity of medium with the corresponding evoking of emotion (p. 106). In several of the sessions, participants used paint, which is on the low end of the control

continuum. This usage could indicate a healthier degree of functioning in that emotions were allowed to surface (Hinz, 2009). Several participants' willingness to engage the medium of paint, which is more difficult to control, aligns with their statements that they were willing to let the art lead them (HO6). They appeared to be comfortable with an unpredictable outcome, reflecting an openness to personal change (Lummis, 2004).

All participants engaged with a variety of media in the artmaking process; they did not need prompting to experiment with different materials. This phenomenal experience is particularly evident in the dyad pieces and sacred sticks in which frames, netting, ribbons, and other three-dimensional materials were offered and incorporated. All participants worked in such a way that they were not intimidated by using large sheets of paper, and seemed to be open to the scope or expanse of their creative vision. Riley (2001) suggests that this phenomenon occurs as a result of the group establishing trust (p. 29). The swiftness of this occurrence in the VINES group process could also be a result of the group's pre-bonding in their intimate living environment and my already-established therapeutic relationship with several of the group members.

I chose to model and embody movement while verbalizing the grounding exercises rather than speaking from a seated position. My own movement pattern connected me to the group experience. I noticed several participants embodied the visualization in their movements, and perhaps it was this visceral experience that was reflected in the mandala directive. I observed that the participants' art appeared characteristically different from the first three sessions (GAP4). The images appeared embodied with a transcendent quality and became less literal. Embodiment is a term that can also be applied to an image produced in the art therapy milieu. Schaverien (1992)

describes attributes of the embodied image as "…transcending what is consciously known and revealing unconscious aspects of the client's intra-psychic life" (p.87).

P1 noted in her interview that her mandala captured the movement experience and it felt like departure for her, as her first two art pieces were diagrammatic and representational. The diagrammatic image needs verbal explanation and often comes with writing (Hinz, 2009; Schaverien, 1992). P1's emerging awareness corresponds to Schaverien's description of that an emerging sense of self can create the embodied image: "the circle the self fills with its activity becomes larger" and how "a new impression of self is created through the recognition that the picture is undeniably created by the self" (p. 87).

Gentle and simple movements can facilitate integration when there has been disconnection from the body, particularly in cases of traumatic stress or abuse (Hammond-Meiers, 2012; Levy, 1995; Pleven, 1999). Dance therapists have also found particular dance/movement therapy approaches to be healing in traumatic therapy and recovery work (Burt, 2012; Hammond-Meiers, 2005, 2012; Levy, 1995; Rose, 1995). Dance therapist Fran Levy employs artmaking as a less-intimidating mode of non-verbal expression to connect to emotions, acting as a bridge to movement exploration (p. 36). Hammond-Meiers used both movement and art in her group work with women who were in recovery or had other traumatic or life disturbing experiences. Rose finds symbolic movement expression as a means of addressing the conflicting feelings that addicted individuals can have towards themselves (1995, pp. 103-104).

The participant's initial description of artmaking leads to insight on an inner reality, connecting the art to the art-maker's inner experience. Schnetz (2005) describes

this experience as an infinite feedback loop (p. 46). I observed a high degree of the attunement by the group to the significance of the images, not only to their own images, but also to the images of each other. The VINES groups also manifested an outcome of group art therapy by facilitating group interaction through image sharing and discussion (Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005; Schnetz, 2005).

Two participants interviewed were aware of their thoughts and feelings below the surface that were being addressed in the art therapy milieu, and that probably many more observations and feelings could emerge if there had been more sessions. Moon (2002), Riley (2001), Rubin (2005), and Schnetz, (2005) suggest, generally, that if possible, group art therapy be complemented by individual sessions to explore more in depth the issues that can emerge for members within the group. For P1, P2, and P3, the interview provided the opportunity to explore some of these issues along with their art, mirroring the processing aspect of an individual art therapy session.

Lummis (2004) addresses the phenomenon of negative statements made by women in addiction recovery about the quality of the art as a reflection of self-perception, but it could be applied more generally within group art therapy. In the first VINES group session, P2 described herself as not being artistic and saw others in the group as more gifted than she (HO1). Her first art piece was sparse and tentative, but by the end of the sessions, she exhibited pride in producing a dense and “bushy” collage (See GAP2, Figure 6; GAP5, Figure 20). Thus, in the relatively brief time frame of the VINES group sessions, it was quite astounding to note the development of this participant’s greater valuing of self as viewed through the developing richness of her collage and in her own self-reflective statement.

Betensky (1992), Hammond-Meiers (2005), and Schnetz (2005) use an image/word approach method of inquiry within the art therapy container. I also found that personal journaling deepened the meaning of the visual image. I noticed that several participants in the group art processing would speak poetically about their images rather than engaging in a logical description, indicated by statements such as "I'll just read what I wrote." While meaning making will engage the logical, it goes beyond logical interpretation. McNiff (1992) adds a transcendent quality to this dialogic process, saying that "talking supports the articulation of the image, and as the characters of both mediums are deepened, the speakers experience sympathetic changes" (p. 106).

Intermodal transfer. The participants' artful use of language is displayed in the group art therapy processing (See Results: Section One). The poetic response became a highly significant element in the group flow as a way of giving nourishing feedback to each other (GAP4). The poetic as artistic response resides in the creative space and adds another dimension to personal meaning making. I incorporated the poetic response also to instill participants' confidence in their ability to artfully respond in another modality. On occasion, I observed that participants' poetic responses generated a positive group response such as "You're a poet!" which could enhance their self-confidence when they were tentative about their artmaking ability.

Expressive arts therapy pioneer Paolo Knill (2005) speaks of the poetic response as facilitating a deepening the engagement with the work. McNiff (2009) characterizes poetry as a universal method of expression that "involves introspection, the heightening of perceptual awareness, and the expression of emotion through language, all of which lend themselves naturally to the therapeutic process" (p. 112). Clinebell (1996) also

recommends using poetry in his eco-therapeutic approach as a way for clients to access an emotional healing connection to the earth (p. 215).

Metaphor and Symbol

The vine as directive metaphor and natural image. P1 and P3 expressed in their interviews that they were unsure of how the vine metaphor would actually unfold in the art therapy group. The literal directive of the vine seemed to predispose a mindset of predictability. While these participants were surprised that the outcomes were quite different, P1 noted an initial concern that her creativity would be limited.

The vine was a semi-directive metaphor and symbol within the VINES groups. Participants referred to themselves as types of vines as well as connecting to other metaphors from nature (HO23, HO25, HO29, GAP5). Participants related meaning for their personal growth in recovery to the elements of vine growth: pruning, grafting, nurture, and fruit. These thematic directives, while specific, opened the door to much imaginative work, leading me to suggest that support for such specificity can be valuable particularly in brief therapy groups.

The ability to access personal meaning through metaphor and symbol underlies the therapeutic value of art therapy (Betensky, 1995; Lummis, 2004; McNiff, 1992; Schaverien, 1992). Marie Wilson, in her work with addiction clients, uses art therapy in recovery to address addiction's many facets, notably shame reduction, as a "language for their thoughts and feelings" (2003, p. 284). Long-entrenched defenses can be by-passed through metaphor and symbol and can ease the psychic distress of confronting painful emotions (Rose, 1995). The participants seemed to connect to the vine metaphor with fairly deep levels of self-awareness as supported by statements such as "I didn't know

what kind of a vine I was and now I know what kind of a vine I am" (self-vine), and "it's about my growth…the vine speaks for my growth" (fruit as personal and spiritual growth). This depth of engagement and levels of personal meaning led me to surmise that the vine as an image has the quality of archetype.

Archetypes. Based in Jungian psychology, archetypes are symbols innate to humanity's genetic makeup that have universal meaning. Jung describes them as "systems of readiness for action, and at the same time images and emotions" (Sabini, 2002, p. 198). Qualities of the vine emerging in this research align with Jung's description of an aspect of the archetype as being embedded within the natural world Schaverien (1992) sees the archetype manifesting in the image when "a universal pattern is discernible in such material which combines aspects of the personal and the collective unconscious" (p. 157).

The meaning of archetype was not sufficiently explored with the participants in this study. They exhibited little, if any, awareness or understanding of this concept. Yet based on the participants' personal statements and the above descriptions, their experience could be seen as having an archetypal dimension, that is, extending beyond the individual to the community at large (HO47, HO53). McNiff (2009) describes this occurrence "when the pain…is related to more universal human phenomena and difficulties shared by all people" (p. 115). P1's statement that she is "becoming part of the vine and reaching out to another person who hasn't yet become part of the vine" supports this view (GAP3). Specifically, she expressed a desire to produce a video to educate about the plight of the homeless.

The vine appeared to be a bridge to the natural world in the predominance of

metaphors from nature (HO23, HO24, HO25, HO29, HO30, HO34). The participants mentioned several natural archetypes which contained personal meaning: trees, water and earth elements, and the rose. The rose had significance for several participants who related it to their emerging sense of self as valuable and worthy of gentle care. The seasonal metaphors seemed to provide a sense that both good times and bad are limited (HO31).

Farrelly-Hansen (2001) has observed that nature reflects the ebb and flow of life and can help in finding balance to life rhythms (p. 147). Finding balance in stressful life situations is critical in recovery and relapse prevention, as addicts tend to think in extremes (Rose, 1995). Chickerneo (2008), Clinebell (1996), and Farrelly-Hansen (2001) view the natural world as having an innate quality to speak and heal at a soul level, opening the portal to spiritual integration. Within the art therapy milieu, metaphor and symbol are a way to describe the ultimately indescribable Divine (Moon, 2001, p. 29). As a central theme in the artmaking, the vine generated metaphors from nature that related to participants' spiritual journeys and their connection with God. They identified God with the vine, the rose, and water (HO34, HO35, HO36). They also related to three metaphors from outside the natural world: pruning shears, fences, and roads (HO32, HO65). Paying due attention to these natural symbols as well as clients' metaphorical language in general has been a significant learning for me as therapist.

Cross-cultural Observations

P1 noted pride in her Aboriginal heritage while P3 felt connected to neither her Caucasian nor Aboriginal heritage. Both women were raised in foster homes. While growing up, P1 had been ashamed of her cultural heritage. Coyhis (2000), in a

transcription of an oral presentation on addiction recovery for Native Americans, described both these polarities as present in Aboriginal culture. Large-scale adoption out of Native families and boarding school experiences had played a significant role. Coyhis, of the Mohican Nation, founded White Bison, Inc. to contribute to a culturally specific recovery model. He cautions that "you have to be careful making any assumptions about how much they [Aboriginal people] are connected to their culture…some people who have lost much of their culture are turning back to their culture for recovery" (p. 80).

Of particular note is Coyhis' referral to research conducted by Rose (1995) of "internalized oppression" –how an individual carries a shame and dislike for one's own culture long after the actual oppression has ceased (2000, p. 82). This deep shame emerged thematically from P1 in that she would say she was Filipino or Hawaiian– anything other than Aboriginal (GAP5). However, within the VINES groups, while P1 now expressed pride in and desire to explore her heritage, she did not verbally link her recovery or cultural reconnection with a return to traditional ways. Yet, P1 did use cultural symbols such as feathers in her sacred stick. P3 presently found herself in a cultural no-man's land, not really connecting to Caucasian or Aboriginal culture and linked her recovery to her deepening spiritual awareness and Christian values (T72, T77).

P1, P2, and P3 exhibited a strong connection to the natural world that appeared to exist before these sessions commenced. P1 noted in her interview that her relationship to the natural world had not changed that much as a result of the groups. P2, who was Métis, generated metaphors and themes deeply connected to the land of her family's farm. In Clinebell's (1996) eco-therapeutic approach to healing past "eco-traumatic" memories, he recommends asking clients to tell their personal histories as connected to nature. This

story naturally emerged in P2's VINES group work. Early painful memories of being almost slavishly tied to working the family garden emerged in her first collage, yet by the end of the VINES groups interview, she was able to identify her father as a good provider and talk about how the land supported the family. In working with natural metaphors, P2 was able to revisit childhood experiences "with both the positive resources of one's adult personality and a more positive outcome" (p. 204).

Coyhis (2000) and van Wormer & Davis (2003) link returning to nature as a source for accessing spirituality in Native recovery. Coyhis adds that for society as a whole, addiction is essentially a "crisis in spirituality and loss of true purpose" (p. 85). These participants' connection to nature could correspond to what Clinebell (1984) describes as a point of healthy recovery spirituality: "an intimate bonding with the natural world instead of alienated from God's natural creation" (p. 276). One might wonder if these participants could perhaps more easily relate to the vine metaphor because of their prior relationship with nature, or if this connection with nature metaphors is present in many people from many cultures.

Two of these women noted in their interviews that they welcomed the artmaking experience (HO3). They stated that they could allow the process to take them where it flowed (HO6). P1 and P2 expressed the desire to continue their creative growth (HO18). P1 looked forward to the art therapy time to "let go of reality and just be creative." Nadia Ferrara (2004), in *Healing through Art: Ritualized Space and Cree Identity*, noted an innate connection to the creative process in her work with the Cree people. She compares the ritual and character of the art therapy milieu to the traditional healing practice of the bush experience: "There is a withdrawal from normal modes of social action during the

designated art therapy time and place, which allows a reconfiguration of signs and possibly concords with mythological meanings of a 'healed' autonomous self" (p. 107). Coyhis (2000) characterizes Native culture as right-brain dominant, that is, operating comfortably in the realm of art, "using rhythm, music, song, dance, creativity, picture, vision, story and imagery" (p. 97).

Issues of Addiction and Recovery in Relation to Art Therapy

Experiencing positive and negative emotions. Participants identified in the group art processing and in the interviews, both positive and negative emotions (HO14, HO15, HO16). In addiction, the euphoria produced by addictive substances shuts out and shuts down painful emotions and past traumatic experiences. Thus, within the recovery journey, allowing oneself to feel both pain and joy without substance mediation and however tentative, can be viewed as a positive step (Lummis, 2004; Maté, 2008; May, 1988; Olthuis, 2002).

In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addictions, Gabor Maté, palliative care physician and psychiatrist, tells of his work with substance-dependent individuals in Vancouver's lower east side. He describes the essence of this shutting down of painful experience as allowing the individual to "engage the world with excitement and meaning…The drug restores to the addict the childhood vivacity she suppressed long ago" (p. 39). Two participants in their interviews stated that they were reconnecting to early creativity experienced in their childhood. Connecting to Maté's (2008) statement that addicts use substances to recapture their early innocence and joy, art can fulfill what the substance had previously accomplished (Lummis, 2004; Waller & Mahony, 1999).

McNiff (2009) reframes images expressing early childhood memories, whether good or bad, as a source of healing: “the imagination of childhood is the lost soul that we strive to regain in order to heal and live more complete lives” (p. 54). McNiff credits the influence of James Hillman, who challenged the assumptions of traditional psychology and pioneered the redefinition of psychology as exploration of soul rather than pathology. In traditional psychoanalysis, childhood creativity is viewed as regression, but through non-judgmental creative expression, both polarities are free to emerge.

In the VINES groups, the theme “art is experienced as a pleasurable and anticipated activity” (HO3) affirms Lummis’ (2004) work with women in addiction recovery. Lummis reflects that re-establishing creativity enhances self-esteem and self-confidence, thus adding to women’s sense of empowerment. In the VINES groups, the themes of self-esteem and self-confidence emerged as well as the unique theme of hope and finding the peace within (HO9, HO10, HO60). P1 named a newfound ability to dream (HO61).

Other positive emotional experiences identified by participants included self-forgiveness and a transformation of the internal critical voice into one of compassion and curiosity (HO17). Rappaport (2009), in her focusing-oriented art therapy, also uses the vantage point of curiosity and non-judgment to allow the individual to distance from the experience or object of concern. Within the art therapy process, McNiff (1992) refers to a repositioning of the mind out of critical judgment to one of the responding mind, allowing the person to take risks (p. 34).

Guilt and shame are underlying and complex negative emotions in addiction (Clinebell, 1984; Coyhis, 2000; Lummis, 2004; May, 1988; Murray-Lane, 1995; Wilson,

2003). Shame is much more than an emotion but “intangible and elusive, yet complex and complicated” (Wilson, 2003, p. 282). Lummis observes that guilt arises for women over shameful past behaviour involving sexual relationships and neglect of self and children. Shame can also emerge as a result of sexual abuse (Murray-Rose, 1995). Krestan (2000) describes fear and shame as “the demons that make our knowledge and acceptance of human limitation so painful” (p. 27).

Within the art therapy group, Riley (2001) observes that individuals have an opportunity to express these emotions in a less threatening manner through the art, seeing other members of the group as sharing in their struggle (p. 5). Guilt and shame were mentioned by P1 and P2 as especially difficult to work through. I observed that the participants’ spiritual grounding provided a significant framework for working through these emotions, moving them along the continuum to a healthy shame (HO7, HO50, HO51, HO53). Wilson (2003) distinguishes between a healthy shame as in “what I did” as opposed to a toxic shame, “what I am” (p. 283).

Addictive substances have been used to escape anxiety, fear, and grief (Lummis, 2004). The emotions of anxiety and grief are significant in addictions and can manifest in diverse ways. Clinebell (1996) has discovered that generally “many of those we serve are suffering from conscious or subconscious ecological angst. This often included anticipatory anxiety and grief about what they fear is the impending fate of the natural world” (p. 13). This ecological angst emerged as a theme expressed in the art of three participants (GAP1, GAP2, GAP3). P2 expressed an ecological anxiety in her art of an asteroid colliding with the earth, and how she spoke of possible cataclysmic end-time events (GAP3, Figure 11). While Clinebell notes that this expression is more likely to

occur in an educational setting, I observed this phenomenon in the VINES group as a theme generated in the art therapy milieu.

Control and surrender. Schierse Leonard (1989) describes the addict as in a "blind addictive way of living ruled by clinging and control" (p. 340). The fear of being out of control manifests itself in anxiety (Lummis, 2004; Schierse Leonard, 1989). In addiction, one seeks to maintain control through the use of addictive substances, but as James Olthuis (2002) affirms, this control is only an illusion. As the addict continually fails in being able to control or break the addiction, self-esteem continues to erode (Clinebell, 1984; May, 1988; Olthuis, 2002). P4 exhibited a need to control and some ambivalence, stating in the art processing that she didn't like things "disheveled." She found it difficult to enter into the uncertainty of the artmaking, stating in the earlier sessions she felt like a "spaz," by "not knowing what I was doing" (GAP4). Often, those in addiction recovery need to control their feelings and the process of recovery.

Surrendering acknowledges denial, which means that that the person can control the substance and its myriad life-altering effects. As those in recovery surrender, they begin to move toward "right relationship" which involves an appropriate sense of self—they are no longer "masters of the universe" (Krestan, 2000, p. 32). P2 acknowledged her own denial of her addiction. She did not comprehend the extent of her bondage to the addiction until she entered the Centre (HO16).

The VINES group participant experience appears to connect the process of surrender to a Higher Power and personal powerlessness as essential to recovery. I did not observe a negative connotation of powerlessness as noted by Clinebell (1984), Krestan (2000), and Matheson (2005) in the thematic results. Thee participants linked

their admission of powerlessness to dependence on restoration and transformation by God (HO51). These themes of the participants' recovery experience align with Wilson's (2003) description of surrender as accepting the limitations of our humanity, thus engendering a radical shift in the addict's view of the world (p. 288).

As a person with an addiction pattern in her history, P3 attempted to control life situations and her self-esteem suffered when she could not accomplish everything by herself. Through the process of surrender, she now feels more in control. P3 is able to depend on others for encouragement, prayer, and support. P3 is exhibiting what Krestan describes as grounding in interdependence, "accepting limited dependence on a community that acknowledges interconnectedness" (pp. 33-34).

Self-control could be viewed as establishing a boundary to protect the self. This containment is depicted in several images in the pruning art (GAP2). P3 spoke of self-control as a harnessing of personal power and actually becoming stronger as a result (T21). P4 and P5 illustrated the opposite polarity—boundaries as rules limiting personal freedom. This illustration reflects an addictive view of powerlessness as one of limitations (Krestan, 2000, p. 29; Wilson, 2003). P4's description of boundaries could reflect an aspect of her ambivalence toward the structured recovery environment (HO12).

In the art therapy milieu, surrender can be facilitated on several levels. Artmaking requires a certain surrender of control. With gentle therapeutic guidance at a pace suitable to the client, some of the fear of being out of control can be alleviated. This experience can be brought forward into other life circumstances. In the art therapy group, individuals surrender a degree of self-autonomy to experience the healing potential of the group environment as observed by McNeilly (2006).

Meditation. Within the VINES group process, several participants commented on the various meditations as a means of clearing the mind for mental focus (HO19). P2 noted in particular that the meditation helped to alleviate anxious feelings prior to artmaking (GAP4). Within the art therapy groups, my sense was that the meditation grounded the participants in the present, promoted relaxation, and provided an imaginative space to enter into the artmaking. Schierse Leonard (1989) beautifully describes meditation as a "clearing, a sacred space in which to dwell. This dwelling is the silent source from which the creative life arises" (p. 335). Meditation has been described in the literature to be part of the ongoing spiritual discipline necessary for long-term recovery and cultivating an ability to just be with the self in an attitude of non-judgment (Clinebell, 1984; Maté, 2008; May, 1988; Schierse Leonard, 1989). Being in the moment is critical in addictions recovery as the individual easily reverts to judging past errors and omissions or fears a future without drugs or alcohol.

Relapse. Just as relapse is a part of physical ailments, relapse is part of addiction (Maté, 2008; May, 1988). The predominant reality is that relapse may occur several times before a successful recovery (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Maté; 2008; May, 1988). The loss of two VINES group members may have been due to relapse, but I was not sure if relapse was or was not their reason for their leaving the Centre. Enthusiasm on entering the Centre and desire to change can perhaps wane quickly as the reality of leaving the addictive lifestyle sets in or when defenses arise. Rose (1995), in her work as dance therapist, found that the chemically dependent tend to be impatient with the process of recovery: "Unaccustomed to dealing with frustration of any kind, they lack the patience to accept recovery as a process that requires time and sustained commitment" (p. 107).

Springham (1999) describes the euphoria experienced in the early recovery phase as a “sudden burst of positivity about their recovery which appears to be an increase of motivation” (p. 149). But it may relate to an addictive symptom of the fix or pattern of euphoria often found in the addictive substance or the habit of immediate gratification. Relapse often occurs when the individual faces the hard slugging of working through uncomfortable and ambivalent feelings around the addiction. They may experience this as a block to dealing with unconscious material which emerges in the art therapy process. Springham further suggests that relapse is more likely for “those patients who resolve never again to touch the ‘demon brew’ ” (p. 149).

P2 was in the Centre for the second time as she had relapsed after leaving too soon in her previous residency. She viewed relapse as part of the recovery journey. P2 stated that she was in a better state of readiness to follow through with the program. She commented with understanding about P4, who left the Centre, that she herself “was there [relapse] a year ago.”

Social awareness. Participants in their interviews noted a desire to reach out to the community through personal testimony and future goals (HO21, HO42). This reaching out and desire for relationship indicates a positive step forward in recovery as moving out of the self-focused mindset and isolation of addiction (Clinebell, 1984). P1 described in her interview a desire to befriend those just entering the Centre. P2 wanted to share her recovery journey to inspire others in addiction.

The participants’ identification of personal purpose gave them hope for a future that has direction and meaning (HO46). This theme is significant for these women who are lifting out of the despair of addiction to a place that is “joyful, uplifting, and

celebrative of the good gift of life…instead of experiencing life as boring and mainly a chronic struggle and trial" (Clinebell, 1984, p. 276). McNiff (1992) speaks of a sense of purpose as "the best medicine I can offer a troubled person…the feeling that what he is going through may contribute to the vitality of the community" (p. 25). P1 regarded her newfound ability to dream of future possibilities as pivotal in her breaking with her former life of addiction (HO61). The themes addressed in this section reflect what Krestan (2000) describes as optimal elements for recovery occurring "in a context that stresses community, interconnectedness, deflation of false pride or ego, and acknowledgment and subsequent healing of shame" (p. 37).

Spirituality and Addictions Recovery

I noticed that the participants did not verbally relate from their early experiences a negative attitude towards God, which could manifest an existential alienation (Clinebell, 1984). Clinebell would associate the latter with an addiction spirituality: an understanding of God based on the egocentricity of the addict. The data obtained from participant journaling and interviews does not reflect blaming, questioning, or abandonment by God. Rather, the participants exhibited what Clinebell names as recovery spirituality, one that is "reality respecting and non-manipulative of God instead of magical, manipulative, and trying to make God adjust to one's personal desires" (p. 276).

The worldviews expressed by Maté (2008) and May (1988) can be described as esoteric and exoteric respectively. Levin (2001) characterizes an exoteric pathway as one involving "organized denominations, religious services, officially sanctioned prayers and beliefs, and accepted ways to channel one's faith and research has shown that they

involve behaviours, social relationships, emotions, beliefs and thoughts that are strongly health-related" (p. 154). Maté's framework could be seen, in Levin's terms, as esoteric in that individuals consider themselves spiritual but do not ascribe to an outer religious belief system. They may have mystical or transcendent experiences through "meditation, personal growth activities, creative arts, bodywork, or just being with loved ones or in nature (Levin, 2001, p. 155).

May's *Addictions and Grace* (1988) is used in the recovery program at the Centre and the VINES group participants reflect the assimilation of May's work in their recovery experience. They attributed their recovery to God of the Christian spiritual tradition, referred to as "Father God," "Jesus," and "the Holy Spirit" (HO50, HO51). Their source of strength came from outside of themselves in order to affect personal transformation. P1 stated that she really believes she's "a part of the branch of Jesus Christ" and is "letting Him be a part of me." P1 and P3 identified their personal transformation as connected to "identity in Christ." Faith and trust were specifically mentioned as integral to their recovery (HO52). The interviewed participants named grafting as critical to their healing and growth (HO41). They referred to grafting as becoming part of the true Vine, as Jesus refers to Himself in John, Chapter 15.

This theme finds resonance in how May (1988) describes Jesus' words on attachment as "unequivocal…a call to relinquish attachments that we can't do alone…of aligning one's intention to the God within and with us, through love and grace" (p. 114). May goes further to say that this alignment is made possible through a radical forgiveness which allows one "to be freed of attachment to one's own guilt for or justification of the wounds one has inflicted upon others…True love of self, a reverence for the essential

goodness of God's creation, is made possible" (p.114). P3 expressed a burgeoning love of self as she became more self-forgiving. P1 was now proud of her Aboriginal heritage, so different now than in her youth, when she was embarrassed and ashamed. She now sees herself through the new lens of her recovery (HO58).

This "power of the divine Spirit" as described by Clinebell (1984) emerged in the VINES group art therapy processing and in the interviews (HO49, HO50). The worldview of the interviewed VINES group participants align with Levin's (2001) definition of an exoteric religious framework. However, their experience could also be esoteric in that they were attuned to God's transcendent workings in the art therapy sessions as well as in their personal lives (GAP4, HO49). Participants integrated their personal spiritual journeys in recovery throughout the course of the VINES groups.

All of the participants interviewed had an experience of Christianity in their formative years. P1 and P3 had been baptized while at the Centre. They specifically credited their empowerment and strengthened inner resources to their relationship to God (HO50, HO51). These participants' lived experience would suggest that they experienced the spiritual awakening component of Step 12, giving them the desire to carry their message to others (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1984).

Faith and trust were present in the VINES group participants' spirituality (HO52). Their views of self at this point in their recovery reflect meaningful growth and change. They are willing to submit to divine pruning and sacrifice the present good for something more abundant (HO39). I would suggest that they have experienced the numinous as recorded by Levin (2001) and have increased their faith by assimilating Biblical teaching.

Therapeutic Significance of Client/Participant and Therapist/Researcher Experiences

Group observations and dynamic flow. As the group members were at different places in their art therapy experience and recovery, I observed that the more experienced members of the group mentored and supported the newcomers. When members left, the group members spoke of the loss in the subsequent group session's check-in. Their response was primarily empathic, but they did not appear to dwell on the participants who had left. P1 did state that the longer she was at the Centre, the quicker and deeper were her attachments to the residents.

As researcher, but primarily as therapist, I found the sudden departure of group members disconcerting given their previous enthusiasm in the sessions. Generally speaking, my feelings were triggered by these participants' creative potential, rather than due to something I had done as therapist. As researcher, I needed to learn to stand back and let the process unfold. Romanyshyn in *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind* (2007), states this well: "The ego as author of the work has to die to the work to become the agent in service to those for whom the work is being done" (p. 6).

In recounting personal experiences of art therapists in the literature, the nature of the group composition is that it tends to be in a state of flux (McNeilly, 2006; Rubin, 2001; Schnetz, 2005). The VINES research group was a semi-closed group in that a core membership could receive new members. I remained open to new members joining for research purposes, but only if early enough in the process, that is, within the first two weeks. Even with knowing the Centre's regulation that the residents were expected to attend the group, what could be perceived as a consistent group configuration was not the

case. My experience supports that flux should be expected because of the often fragile, unpredictable nature of those in recovery as described earlier by Springham (1999). This instability of attendance would be even more pronounced in an open recovery group that receives new members continually (Lummis, 2004).

Group art therapy experience. Participants were respectful and generally supported each other in the group art therapy experience. New members to the group were encouraged in their creative efforts. Other group members often displayed or held up the art for the person processing. Lummis (2004) observes that "an attitude of acceptance and respect expressed in the art translates as an acceptance of the individual" (p. 33). As such, the group ethos developed in a way that generally welcomed all members.

Although the group appeared to be a welcoming environment, P3 often found it difficult to express the depths of her thinking in the group processing. Her behaviour suggested that she tended to be less verbal within the group. She commented that she needed more time to reflect on and share her thoughts as she was concerned about how others would perceive her. P3's experience suggests that while the art therapy group is largely growth-producing, it may not be the ideal milieu for all individuals. Individual art therapy session would be an opportunity to have the therapist's attention for a greater length of time than is possible in a group setting (Malchiodi, 2007; McNeilly, 2006; Rubin, 2005).

Generally speaking, I observed that the participants appeared to appreciate other group members' insights on their art, particularly when they themselves had not thought of it or seen it in the art. I noticed that their body language was open and receptive at

these times and they would comment: “Oh wow, I never saw that,” etc. The therapist, with the participant’s permission, can invite observations from other group members. In group art therapy, Allen (2005), Moon (2002), Rubin (2005), and Schnetz (2005) promote the group’s role as witness to the individual’s dialogue with the art.

The participants did not comment in the interviews at length about their group art therapy experience. This could have been influenced by the reality that group activity is normative for the participants. They are in other group sessions together as well as living in an intimate environment. The initial bonding phase of the group had already transpired to some extent, and they were able to progress to the third phase of group development more quickly (Liebmann, 1986; Yalom, 1995). Thomas (2001) notes this group stage as being one in which members “work on its tasks and issues, having established basic membership in and of the group” (p. 213).

Transference and counter-transference in the therapeutic relationship. Schaverien (1992) describes transference within the art therapy milieu as client projections of subconscious feelings and emotions onto the art, facilitated in the safe environment. Transference, one of the major functions of art therapy, allows the client to distance from his/her issues. Schaverien also describes the image as scapegoat, which holds the projections of the client rather than the therapist. The theme of the vine as a description for the self emerged as participants manifested the splitting referred to by Schaverien (pp. 35-37). They were able to face unhealthy aspects of themselves by describing them through vine characteristics (HO36).

Counter-transference occurs when the therapist’s own inner material is triggered by the participants and/or their art. McNeilly (2006) observes that counter-transference at

its most basic level is “experiencing a feeling that feels alien to me” (p. 79). Hinz (2009) underscores the necessity for therapists to “carefully assess and understand their own most preferred and least preferred information processing strategies, and be aware of how these preferences and aversions potentially can influence work with clients” (p. 238). As therapist, I became aware of my own preference for working in the symbolic rather than the cognitive realm and feeling comfortable with a low end of control in the media. This discovery was critical for me working in addictions recovery as these individuals may initially need “more organization and structure for their emotional experiences” (ibid., p. 238).

The transitional object surfaced in the participant-therapist relationship within the VINES groups. The concept of transitional object first emerged in the work of Winnicott (1965) as an object of safety and security (Schaverien, 1992). On several occasions, participants brought outside objects to the group sessions. P2 had brought some of her own found objects from nature, including a bright burst of mountain-ash berries and leaves. Both were incorporated into her collage (See Figure 20). She also brought her own cleanup rag and newsprint cover sheet which formed part of her ritual of structuring her artmaking space. Bringing outside objects to group sessions manifests the participant’s own engagement with the work by connecting it to everyday life. In return, a feedback loop is established that connects real life to the group work (Schnetz, 2005).

Bringing outside objects to the group can also be a way of seeking therapist approval (J. Hammond-Meiers, personal communication, June 2011). P4 brought outside items to show me prior to the group sessions. She also introduced these objects at check-in which appeared to also be her way of connecting to the group (GAP4). I incorporated

some of these offerings into the gathering table centrepieces to honour participants' unique contributions to the group as a whole. In essence, these offerings were parts of themselves that they entrusted to me. Perhaps by making room for participant contributions, I honoured them and their symbols. Ferrara (2004) notes the significance of validating client symbols in the ritualized space of art therapy as enriching "the semiotic power of the interpretive signs my patients attribute to their work" (p. 101).

Participants exhibited transference through the art with colour, as they could speak of themselves indirectly in these terms (Betensky, 1995; Hinz, 2009; Schaverien, 1992). Hinz (2009) points out that therapists need to put aside generic assumptions of colour meanings, as colour can have individual kinesthetic and cultural associations and particular memories (p. 108). P2 related that the greens and browns in the gathering tablecloth reminded her of her home. P2 also identified herself as a "blue" person desiring peace and calm. P3 connected to the colour blue in a similar fashion. P4 exhibited transference by speaking through her art, saying she's "not a pink person." She spoke of the pink as being "weak" and black as being "strong." Perhaps she was experiencing a connection to her feminine side, in the end saying that she liked the pink. P4's incomplete circles appeared to join, almost like embryonic eggs, perhaps symbolic of aspects of the self beginning to connect (GAP4, See Figure 12).

Another transference issue emerged as I sensed a connection with me as feminine influence. Pleven (1999) pinpoints the mother/therapist functioning as transformational object (Winnicott, 1965). Pleven observes that the "phenomena of projective identification to be powerfully present within the substance abuse population" (p. 79). As therapist, it was an opportunity for me to build trust by being the "good enough"

mother and modeling a healthy attachment.

In the closing VINES group (GAP5), the sacred stick as transitional object also symbolically embodied the transformation of the participants and was imbued with “a magical atmosphere” in what Schaverien (1992) describes as a talisman quality (p. 139). The sacred stick became a concrete form that held individual learning and shifted the focus from me as therapist to participants’ self-empowerment. In the rose ceremony, I gave a gift of a rose which could have meaning as another transitional object, partly symbolizing me as well as each participant. I gave a second rose to each participant to pass on within the Centre, thus creating a chain of connection for the group experience.

Other therapeutic issues. I observed that my own style in these groups could be quite directive, so I had to do a mental check-in and step back to let the process flow in an organic fashion. The participants appeared to appreciate that I noticed image flow and recurring images in their work with a comment that they wouldn’t have noticed this phenomenon themselves. I found Gerry McNeilly’s (2006) observation on the therapist’s perceived role as group “leader” to be personally meaningful: that a therapist feels she/he has to earn his/her keep by always commenting on the groups’ art. My attunement to the group’s organic flow sometimes brought forward only a simple affirming statement. I wonder at this point if it is my perception or reality that the group expected me to comment in a substantial way on their art.

The VINES group participants were open to receiving comments from other members of the group and appeared to expect it as part of the group processing. Although regularly reminded to refrain from commenting spontaneously on others’ art, P4 continued to do so. As therapist, I continued to gently address this issue from several

standpoints, noting how the same image can generate very different interpretations. Premature commenting can derail the individual's personal meaning making as noted by Moon (2001) and Schnetz (2005). Lummis (2004) adds another crucial component from an addictions recovery perspective: "helping women to listen without interjecting promotes the ability to delay gratification" and "separate out personal responses from the responses of those who are sharing their art and personal experiences" (p. 33). The latter also connects to establishing personal boundaries, as in "where do I end and where does the other person begin?" With trauma or abuse, these boundaries can be murky and often nonexistent (Burt, 2012; Carey, 2006).

Sense of play. I noticed little hesitation in entering the artmaking. With each week's new theme, participants demonstrated eagerness in their body language and facial expressions in anticipation of what was to come. Sometimes group members would ask what they would be doing in that particular session. Hinz (2009) would describe this as a willingness to enter a sense of play, which is an attribute of the creative environment (Betensky, 1995; Malchiodi, 2007; McNiff, 2009).

There was much laughter throughout the artmaking in several of the sessions, with the group members commenting that they needed to laugh more. I wanted to allow room for laughter, as it helped to relieve the stress accumulated during the day with the participants' other educational work at the Centre. Laughter has been shown to release endorphins that addictive substances had previously been used to generate. Bennet, Zeller, Rosenberg, and McCann (2003) have demonstrated the therapeutic value of humour. Laughter would also be significant for those in addiction recovery to diffuse the stress arising out of facing painful emotions within the therapeutic milieu.

One of the participants brought her infant daughter to the sessions. The infant would fuss as she reached her limit in self-soothing while Mom was still engaged in the artmaking. This phenomenon of having excess dynamics within the group was not a new occurrence for the women, but I found myself disturbed and would sometimes take the initiative to soothe the infant. I then found myself wondering about my role as therapist. If I attend to the baby so mom could work, will it take my attention from the group? Yet I also felt guilty if I did not, as I had "a free hand." In the end, I concluded that I could do both with the small size of the group. Perhaps this gesture reinforced my role as mother/therapist, but in reflection, this gesture linked me to the group in a way that models practical, ongoing community support.

Best Practices: Treatment and Rehabilitation for Women with Substance Use Problems (Health Canada, 2001) notes this type of support as critical for women in addictions recovery. Many who have left abusive partners and spouses will need support as single parents not only financially, but also spiritually and emotionally. As women progress through the 12-step program, they also are being prepared in Steps 10-12 to reach out to others in similar circumstances (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001).

The Essence

The essence distilled from the women's experiences in the VINES art therapy groups was: through the vine and other natural metaphors, they artistically expressed their emotional experiences and struggles through addiction behaviours and trauma triggers as continuing in the healing work of recovery; they transformed their life-world by creatively portraying entrapment, confusion, fear, pain, and survival along with

deepening faith and trust in God's love and care; and in the expression of love and healthy attachment, they could value themselves as worthy of care.

Been trapped behind this wall for ages
Growing and growing, a jumbled mess
Spazzy spaces overtaking me
My grapevine, a part of it froze just like me. You feel like you're dead
It feels like you're just holding on by a thread, too weak to survive
I didn't know how to prune that thing
At first it was uncomfortable and scary
I wanted to run - Prune the rules!
But slowly I began to trust the Hands that operate the pruning shears.
A tiny rose breaks through with hope.
The strong help the weak, working together.
I'm well cared for, protected by my Father
Trust the rich dark soil of your heart, the secret garden.
You hold the cure within yourself, starting to feel beautiful again.
Living our lives heaven bound.
(Personal response poem incorporating participant poetry)

This poem expresses my sense of the VINES group participants' experience after spending reflective time with their poetry. For these participants, personal growth was intimately intertwined with spiritual growth. They attributed growth to God's transformative work in their lives and expressed future goals of sharing their experiences with others and contributing to positive societal change. A summary and conclusions follow with recommendations for future research applications.

Chapter Six

Summary and Conclusions

This study has explored the experiences of women in addictions recovery with art therapy and spiritual practice featuring the metaphor of the vine. The idea was not to prove that it was the best nature image for healing, but rather a possible one, and to look at what would happen for the group dynamics and individual process when it was initiated. The wealth of data from multiple sources of the art, art processing, video, and verbal interviews generated many themes, and possibly more, which may yet be uncovered. Using a phenomenological approach, delving into the themes that arose brought further understanding of the participant experiences of addiction and recovery.

The women verbalized varying degrees of transformation through the creative process. They related positively with their art therapy experience and saw it as a means of exploring deeper personal issues that might not have otherwise emerged. The women were cognizant of their creative growth and could express themselves poetically as well as artistically. The art therapy group was generally a supportive and safe environment with trust established in the therapeutic relationship, but several participants noted personal challenges within the group.

The essence distilled from the women's experiences in the VINES art therapy group supports spiritual exploration as an integral thread in addiction recovery as well in the art therapy process. For the VINES group participants interviewed, personal growth was intimately intertwined with spiritual growth. These women acknowledged God as the Source of their healing and transformative work in their lives. Mimi Farrelly-Hansen (2001), in describing the outcome of many spiritual practices, captures an essence

of these women's experiences:

> A heightened awareness of self and other, a reawakening of the senses and the body, a new ability to inhabit fully the present moment, a sense of awe at the mysterious ways that the images which visit us speak of realities beyond our conscious understanding, a greater sense of acceptance for all aspects of ourselves and others, love, compassion and gratitude for some larger, deeper, ineffable presence to which we all (human beings, animals, plants) belong. (p. 24)

The VINES group art therapy session themes generated a meaningful symbolic and metaphoric language through which the women participants could express their lived-world experiences before entering the recovery centre and working in their recovery program. Self-awareness statements embedded in the themes were displayed when the women related and developed art images and verbal metaphors. The vine metaphor generated other images from the natural world and appeared to initiate other healing metaphors for the participants. Combined, they opened a door to participants' exploring and speaking of past painful experiences.

Several participants were at a place in their healing where they could view their feelings as transformative. They could acknowledge that submitting to pruning was painful in the recovery process as demonstrated by several themes. Fruitfulness was expressed as sharing their experiences with others and contributing to positive societal change. Several other participants spoke through the art images with metaphoric meanings, but they were not at the stage of relating the metaphor to their concept of their own identity or their changing selves. The themes demonstrated that participants in the recovery centre did explore their evolving sense of self, and care for self, others, and the

world through the metaphor of the vine.

As vintners will plant rose bushes surrounding a vineyard to detect the quality of the soil, the themes indicate that to some degree, the women can potentially detect situations that trigger relapse. In varying degrees, they have drawn on their own inner resources, both personal and spiritual, as an alternative to their old recourse in substance abuse. Addiction recovery is not merely a return to the straight and narrow. It involves a continual re-grafting through self-reflection—the essence of Step 11. Thorns still linger to remind participants of the past pain of their addictive lifestyles. Healing, as described by Riley, involves "acceptance and understanding, the transformation of suffering into affirmations of life, and the ability to perceive individual struggles as part of a larger life purpose shared by all people. Art enables us to give dignity to our difficulties and find a purpose in our troubles" (2001, p. xi). I would offer that the higher order themes from this study testify to art's capacity to heal and art therapy's effectiveness as an addictions treatment modality.

The metaphor of the vine has multi-layered significance for addictions as it can embrace the polarities of human existence: clinging and control vs. freedom and growth. The vine appears to have an archetypal quality, which fulfills a deep yearning within the core of humanity: "[T]he need for archetypes is great" (McNeilly, 2006, p. 81). Future exploration of the VINES art therapy group model with different configurations of participants could explore the vine's archetypal nature. If the vine has archetypal meaning, rituals could be developed that would be consonant with various spiritual belief systems.

I initially thought that the VINES group sessions could possibly replace the 12-

step program, but my research journey showed otherwise, humbling me in this opinion. Comparing the VINES group themes to the 12-step program offered at the Centre, some participants felt that the vine's scriptural basis could play a complementary role, but the VINES group was not identified as a substitute for working the 12 steps.

"Spiritus," Latin for wine, contains the word "spirit." The fruit of the vine can destroy or provide sacramental nurture. Participants related many aspects of the vine metaphor to their spiritual growth. If the root source of addiction is spiritual, the vine as a spiritual metaphor can potentially be a source of spiritual connection to a Higher Power. This last idea means allowing for the spirit of God to ultimately effect the healing. Christian-based recovery programs could incorporate components of VINES' scriptural basis, using its themes and rituals in their approach to healing.

The VINES rituals seemed to provide a sense of comfort and regularity, a structure to process traumatic, difficult material, and bring order to chaotic lives. On occasion, I found that added or involved rituals could be distracting to art therapy's inherent ritual. Just as in the appearance of a double rainbow, the primary prism captures the eye. The secondary prism adds to the richness of the rainbow, but is not the main focus. For future applications, I would suggest placing the primary emphasis on the artmaking and secondary emphasis on rituals based in nature or with a sacred quality.

This study, just over two months, was limited in scope. The VINES groups could be facilitated with individuals of various spiritual traditions and/or without previous art therapy experience, devoting two sessions to each theme. The program could run over an eight to 10-week period and still fit within the reality of brief therapy. The VINES manual outlines a therapeutic model for addiction recovery groups but could be applied

in multiple settings. Such settings could be as specific as a religion-framed program as promoted by the recovery centre in this research, or as general as a personal spiritual retreat. The manual also presents a possible way of conducting a thematic art therapy group.

This research supports a recovery model embracing a body-mind-spirit approach. The natural world was a resource for addressing women's issues in addictions recovery, thus adding to research on the eco-therapy model. The gathering table concept would be a unique addition to the work on ritual development and setting of the space in the art therapy milieu. The metaphors that arose out of the VINES groups could be added to the collection of emerging healing symbols for addiction recovery. Having explored transcendent experiences of the participants, this study adds richness to research about art therapy as spiritual practice and the importance of spirituality in addictions recovery.

From a methodology perspective, this study contributes using phenomenology as a way to explore lived experience in the art therapy milieu. It incorporated some elements of organic inquiry, perhaps adding to the growing body of work exploring transpersonal themes with this emerging methodology. The phenomenological approach contributed to my growth as an art therapist: the more I "can get out of the way," the more I can focus on the experience of the client. "The participants help me to help others by affording me the opportunity to learn about what they think is helpful or, perhaps, more importantly, not helpful" (Hammond-Meiers, 2012, p. 260). As a new researcher using the above methodologies, it was like watering a freeze-dried capsule and seeing it transform into all manner of colourful blossoms.

I was honoured to work with these women who have faced the abyss of recovery,

the unknown of the dark night of the soul, with courage and grace. Their unique creativity and high level of self-awareness enriched my research process. Facing their addiction, a beautiful resonance is found in the words of Christine Lummis (2004): “their vulnerability in the context of artmaking and group work, takes an incredible amount of courage” (p. 33). I have experienced these women, each like roses, with their own beauty. I offer these words of thanksgiving for the gift of allowing me to enter their world:

Ebb and flow careens into a cascading rapid

I don’t know where one begins and one ends

I think sometimes it will never end, but vine-like

It is entwined. It is my life.

The girls and I are grafting into a Vine transcending time

With roots so deep and trunk so sturdy

We live in its shelter forever.

Personal writing, August 13, 2010

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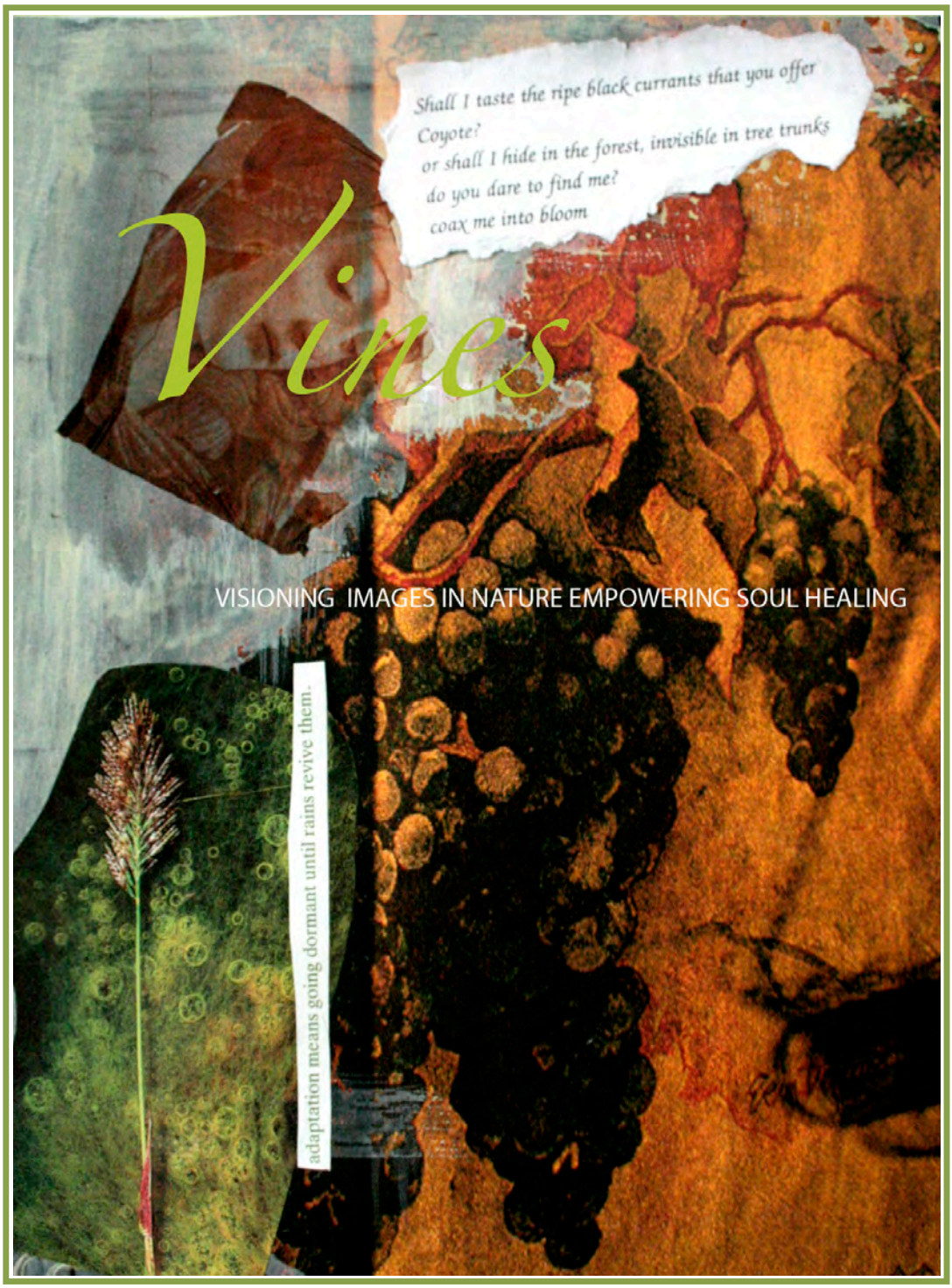
Appendix A

The VINES Manual



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The heavens declare the glory of the Lord and the earth proclaims His handiwork

Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech nor language

Where their voice is not heard.

Their line has gone out through all the earth,

And their words to the end of the world.

Psalm 19: 1-4 (NKJV)

Visioning Images in Nature Empowering Soul-healing (VINES)

Introduction

Visioning Images in Nature Empowering Soul-healing (VINES) is a group art therapy frame using images from nature developed as a pilot therapeutic model for working with women in addiction recovery. The founding premise is that recovery necessitates connecting into personal spirituality (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1992; May, 1988). Nature as a reflection of Divinity can be the bridge to this connection (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001). VINES is grounded in the Christian spiritual tradition and undergirded by the Scripture of the vine and the branches (John 15:5 NKJV). Celtic spirituality, one such Christian tradition, has been a source of personal reflection that I have integrated into the sessions.

This manual incorporates themes from nature around vine growth that form a suggestive framework that can potentially ignite the creative imagination. Thus, the program can be adapted to work with various spiritual frameworks. The manual is also designed for beginning therapists to get a feel for conducting a group art therapy session. The research behind the manual was based on weekly sessions, but depending on the configuration of the group, sessions may need to span several weeks, particularly sessions one and two.

Relevance for Addiction Recovery

Women in addiction often have experienced physical and emotional abuse and can be either disconnected or grafted in a diseased manner in their personal relationships (Lummis, 2004). Viewed through the metaphor of the vine, their dark journey to the underworld takes them to the undergrowth of repressed memories and feelings that need

to be brought to the light for healing (Schierse Leonard, 1989). Pruning and burning may be required to break bondage to long-entrenched patterns of behaviour. Branches that require pruning prevent the vine from bearing fruit. Part of the recovery process involves pruning past destructive habits and thought processes. The ultimate goals are personal and spiritual growth. These are fragile tendrils that require gentle handling.

Basic Framework of VINES Group Sessions

Establishing the ritual. Ideally, the gathering table is where the art therapy group begins and ends, establishing security and consistency. It makes the art therapy environment a special space, "safely separated from the demands of everyday life…with its own rules and boundaries, within which the patient can be free to explore the inner world" (Schaverien, 1992, p. 63). It also functions as a metaphor for the holding environment of the art therapy group. Just as care and attention are given to setting the table for a communal meal, the table is prepared as a welcome to the art space (Farrelly-Hansen, 2001). I used a vine tapestry and leaf-decorated sari with a copper bowl centrepiece to hold each week's thematic elements. My gathering table photos are included as examples for therapists to create their own welcoming visual image.

Opening the group. The therapist can begin with an opening prayer, scripture or poetic inspiration. It has been my experience that the ritual should not be too drawn out or complicated as the art therapy itself has its own inherent ritual. Making opening rituals too long or complex can detour the participants' creative imaginings as they begin to germinate. The therapist can also be open to contributions from the group towards the ritual as these will enhance group cohesion. Simple and clear are optimal.

Grounding meditation. A meditation grounding body, mind and spirit, begins

each session. Meditation has been demonstrated to have positive properties for addictions recovery (Clinebell, 1984; Maté, 2008; May, 1988). Guided meditation can bring participants into the moment, relax the body, and provide an imaginative space to enter into the artmaking time (Achterberg, Dossey, & Kolkmeier, 1994). “Meditation is a practice to which one attends to being in the moment” (Schierse Leonard, 1989, p. 335). Resources for meditation themes can be found at the end of the manual.

Artmaking time. Allow 45 minutes to one hour for artmaking. After the artmaking is completed, invite participants to journal any thoughts and feelings that arose from the artmaking process, the materials, or the images. Having a conversation with the image can activate the imagination, allowing the right brain to speak as well as to integrate deeper meaning logically (Allen, 2005; McNiff, 2009). Signing and dating the art piece establish a time frame for the work. Giving the artwork a title also provides an opportunity to distill an essence of meaning. These elements also contribute to the inherent ritual of art therapy. Allow time to clean up materials and clear the physical space for display and processing of the art. Cleanup also is part of the closure ritual for the art therapy group (Schnetz, 2005).

Group processing. The group concludes with a processing and sharing time. The therapist establishes safety within the group by outlining the boundaries for sharing. Sharing is always optional and need only happen at a depth that is comfortable for the individual. The therapist also reminds participants that the meaning arising from the art is very personal, and therefore comments are withheld unless or until they are invited. It is important for the therapist to be sensitive to the moment, as participants can appreciate insight from other group members that may enhance their own personal meaning. The art

can be displayed or held up by other group members so it is visible to all.

Closing/Centering together and being with Spirit. As closure, a meditation on the scripture of John 15:5 can be read or the therapist can engage the participants in a short ritual that connects to the following week's theme.

Materials

In addition to thematic elements brought by the therapist, include a selection of art materials:

Large sheets of drawing paper, Bristol board

Oil and soft pastels

Coloured pencils, markers

Acrylic paints and brushes

Yarn, fabric, buttons, natural objects such as bark or rocks

Glue guns, glue sticks

Magazines for collage

Construction paper, tissue paper

Small cardboard boxes (for inside/outside boxes, Session 2)

Circular plates or embroidery frames

(for tracing mandala circles, Session 4)

Tree branches (4-5 ft length) (for sacred sticks, Session 5)

Figure 21. *The Vine* - Session 1 gathering table with philodendron vines and vine images

Session 1 - The Vine

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. John 15:1 (NKJV)

Thematic goal. Finding self-vine in relation to the group; introducing the metaphor.

Theoretical grounding. Seeing the individual in relation to the group; gaining an understanding of their self-vine; establishing trust and safety within the boundaries of the group as vineyard (Riley, 2001; Rubin, 2005).

Art invitation. A selection of vine images is laid out on the gathering table. These images can be literal or pictorial images of vine-like concepts or words. Consider also photographs showing dark and light aspects of both fecundity and decay (e.g., Internet images, photography and magazine photos, photocopies of vines). The photos

can be both literal and non-literal images and associations of vines. Participants are instructed to select two images without thinking, one that attracts them and one that repels them (Weiser, 1993). Invite them to create a piece of art imagining themselves as a vine, using these images as a starting point. A variety of media can be offered. Photographic images can also be extended beyond their boundaries and/or altered with other media.

Artmaking time. Allow the artmaking to unfold.

Group processing.

Closing ritual. For a closing ritual, I brought philodendron vine cuttings that had been incorporated into the gathering table centrepiece. These cuttings are given at closure to the participants who need to put them in water for later transplanting if they so desire. Philodendrons work well as they are easy to root. The vine cutting's rooting can be a visual reminder of the participants' personal growth over the course of the group sessions as well as function as a facet of eco-therapy—care of plant as metaphor for care of self (Clinebell, 1996).

Centering together and being with Spirit. The therapist chooses a closing prayer or meditation suitable for the group.

Therapist notes. As stated in the introduction, the therapist will develop an individual flow to the sessions. Too long a ritual can impede artistic flow. If closure is too long, it becomes anticlimactic for the participants. Care should be taken not to overextend the session beyond the participants' attention span, particularly if they are just entering recovery.

*Figure 22***.** *Pruning* - Session 2 gathering table with branch prunings set in copper bowl.

Session 2 - Pruning

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. John 15:2 (NKJV)

Thematic goal. Recognizing negative emotions: guilt, shame over past behaviour, fear of the unknown, and a life without substance dependence.

Theoretical grounding. Recognizing denial is a critical element in addictions recovery (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Clinebell, 1984; Lummis, 2004; May, 1988; Wilson, 2003). When the individual personally acknowledges the stranglehold of the addiction, life change becomes possible. This recognition also coincides with the first step of 12-step programs in acknowledging personal powerlessness in the face of the

addiction (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001). Fear and anxiety can be present when facing negative emotions.

Ritual. For the gathering table, bring the copper bowl or other chosen centrepiece from the previous week in which to lay the branches. As the sessions progress, participants could also add their own elements to the table. The therapist can invite the participants to fold together the tablecloth in preparing the table for the artmaking.

Art invitation. Several art invitations can offer possibilities for pruning. The construction of inside/outside boxes allow the participants to put away what they want to prune, giving the therapist further insight into their interior and exterior selves. Cardboard boxes of various shapes can be supplied, but participants might also want to construct their own boxes. Participants can be invited to incorporate branches from the gathering table centrepiece into an art piece, creating what pruning means to them. A variety of media can be offered, including mixed media such as yarn, fabric, ribbons, etc.

Artmaking time. Allow the artmaking to unfold.

Group processing.

Closing ritual. The therapist can initiate a collective “fire” for symbolically burning the branches. These pruned branches can be lifted up with an acknowledgement that out of the ashes new life will emerge. Participants can construct their own fire out of elements of their art that they may wish to destroy with a question: “If you could prune something from this art, what would it be?”

Centering together and being with Spirit.

Therapist notes: In closing, the therapist can invite participants to bring objects from nature or personally meaningful objects for session 3 - grafting and connections.

Figure 23. Grafting/Connections - Session 3 gathering table with leaves and branch prunings

Session 3 - Grafting and Connections

> *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me…He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.*
>
> John 15:4 (NKJV)

Thematic/Therapeutic goal. Inviting group members to work in dyads (pairs) brings group dynamics to the surface and can challenge relational skills. It also has the potential to incorporate problem-solving skills as participants work together to create a mutually satisfactory art piece (or not). Hopefully, the artmaking process establishes trust within the group, deepens the connections, and perhaps fertilizes new relationships.

If working individually, the participants can construct a personal life vine, thus

connecting their past to present and future (Lummis, 2004). Incorporating an intermodal transfer to poetry deepens the engagement with the art and provides a different dimension of meaning (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005; McNiff, 2009).

Theoretic orientation. Women are relational beings who thrive in relationships (Health Canada, 2001). Women in addictions recovery are in a rebuilding phase, not only of self, but of new and healthy relationships. Past destructive relationships that have been left behind often leave them with few friends. The grafting and connections session can provide an opportunity to explore what new and healthy relationships would look like on both a personal and spiritual level.

Gathering table. The centrepiece can incorporate the prunings and dried vines from the previous week, with branches and leaves scattered across the table for combined visual and olfactory stimulus.

Ritual. Open with a centering meditation (See Resources at the end of the manual). After the meditation and the established ritual of the group folding the tablecloth, the theme of grafting can be introduced with its Scriptural basis in John 15.

Art invitations. Create a life vine of addiction history, illustrating past, present, and future; or in dyad, create a three-dimensional art piece of mixed media on the theme of grafting. If there is access to the outdoors for natural materials, the group could also be invited to create an environmental group sculpture with each participant contributing random elements.

Artmaking time. Allow the artmaking to unfold.

Intermodal transfer. To deepen the work after the artmaking, invite the participants to each write a poetic response to their pieces. After each person reads their

individual piece, the poems can be “grafted” by each dyad reading alternate lines in sequence. The resulting composite poetry can be quite transcendent in its unpredictability and bring the two persons together in their writings. Depending on the size of the group, all participants can be invited to integrate their respective poetry into a group poem.

Closing ritual. Working together, participants can together bundle the branches from the gathering table with yarn. This bundle can be brought to the following session on nurture.

Centering together and being with Spirit.

Therapist notes. The transcendent quality of the poetic grafting could lead the therapist to keep going further. It is important to be aware that more is not always better, and to allow the participants to be in the moment, staying with the art and poetry.

Figure 24. Nurture - Session 4 gathering table with bound branch prunings and communion

Session 4 - Nurture

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

John 15:9 (NKJV)

Therapeutic goal. To explore spiritual and personal nurture, self-empowerment, and self-care.

Theoretic grounding. Forgiveness of self and others can be viewed as a component for self-nurture and is essential to the recovery process (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; May, 1988; Schierse Leonard, 1989). Participants will be empowering self, building on internal resources being developed in the recovery process as well as further connecting to their higher power or how they define God. Within the

12-step program, forgiveness and making amends encompasses steps eight and nine. The incorporation of a guided meditation facilitates participants being in the moment and receptive to what comes, without judgment (Schierse Leonard, 1989, p. 336).

Ritual. The bundled branches from the previous week's session return to the gathering table. The Christian sacrament of communion can provide spiritual inspiration for a ritual of nurture. The therapist can supply elements as simple as a small, fresh bun and a chalice of grape juice, and then administering them with the words Jesus used at the Last Supper: "This is the body and blood of Christ broken and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Do this in remembrance of Me." The ritual could be simplified for different spiritual traditions to sharing the elements of sustenance with the group. The group members are invited to fold the gathering tablecloth. The ritual is symbolic of the group communion in sharing their art (Knill, Barba, & Fuchs, 2004).

Grounding meditation. The therapist can read a guided visualization, such as being nourished by water as an element of nature, going from deep to the surface, from darkness to light (O'Malley, 2008). The participants can be invited to stand for a more total body experience. If participants are comfortable, they can do the visualization with eyes closed. The therapist always introduces an option to closed eyes. Those who are uncomfortable with closed eyes can be encouraged to participate with soft focus.

Art invitation. The therapist introduces the mandala as a means of spiritual practice (Malchiodi, 2007). Transitioning from what flowed out of the meditation, the participants are invited to create their own mandalas on what nurture means to them, or what they would need to give themselves or experience as nurture. The therapist can provide a circular plate or other round object at least 12 inches in diameter for tracing.

Artmaking time. Allow the artmaking to unfold.

Group processing. Invite the participants to journal reflectively on their experience with the art or the guided visualization. While the participants are writing, the therapist gives each group member a piece of paper. They can then be invited to walk around, take in the art, and write a few words as poetic response, metaphorically giving each other nurture. When they return to their own place, the participants can write a poem from their fellow group members' contributions. They can then read the resulting poetry aloud to the group.

Centering together and being with Spirit.

Therapist notes. This ritual is presented as an option to incorporate at the therapist's discretion. The therapist should be aware that there could be unfamiliarity, and possible discomfort, with taking communion in an out-of-church setting. This can be the case even if participants have grounding in various Christian traditions where communion is a sacramental ritual. I found it somewhat difficult to make a smooth transition from the communion to the artmaking process. Perhaps it could be offered as closure to the session.

*Figure 25***.** *Fruit* - Session 5 gathering table with roses set in copper bowl

Session 5 - Fruit

…but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,

and that your fruit should remain,

that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 15:16 (NKJV)

Therapeutic goal. Establish termination and closure for the group; the sacred stick is a compass as transitional object from the life of addiction with renewed self-empowerment (Matheson, 2005; Schaverien, 1992). It symbolizes the sturdy trunk of the established vine. It is an art invitation that can symbolize a marked point in the addictions recovery process, wisdom learning integrated for the healing of self and others in

community. The sacred stick is a walking stick symbolic of pioneering a new path and physical reminder of the awareness to stay grafted into the True Vine (Murray, 1897).

Theoretic orientation. The participants' construction of a sacred stick will be a talisman artifact to "test their soil" as they transition back into the world (Schaverien, 1992).

Gathering table. The gathering table is set with red roses on the copper plate or other centrepiece. The rose is related to the vine metaphor in that rose bushes are planted around the vineyard's perimeter to test the soil. The red roses provide visual and olfactory stimuli.

Art invitation. The therapist can bring a selection of branches at least four feet in length from which the participants can choose their sacred sticks. Time permitting, if there is access to a wooded area, the therapist could accompany the participants on a nature walk so participants can find their own unique branch. The branches can be painted and enhanced by adding personal objects, found art, jewelry, magazine photos, lines of verse, or Scripture. As a vintner lovingly labours over the vineyards, the construction can be tended with care: sanding, pruning, painting, decorating, grafting with sacred objects of spiritual and personal significance.

Artmaking time. Allow the artmaking to unfold.

Group processing.

Closing ritual/Centering together and being with Spirit. Participants form a circle, joined by holding on to each other's sacred sticks. This holding onto the branches is important particularly if participants have sensitivity to physical touch. The group can "twine" the sacred sticks together, symbolic of community and connectedness.

Depending on the therapist's comfort level, she/he can present the rose to each individual in the circle, using a movement gesture. Alternatively, each person could pass the roses to each other. Each participant will receives two roses, one for themselves and one to give to another, metaphorically extending the healing out into the community. After the roses are distributed, the therapist can read a blessing to conclude the session. (O'Donohue, 2008).

Therapist Notes: The rose itself says much. Too many words can diffuse the essence of the experience. I found the time stretched with the rose ceremony, as the group processing of the sacred sticks needs substantial focus.

Creative Resources

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Websites

For daily Scripture devotion with a Celtic perspective:

http://www.sacredspace.ie/daily-prayer/2011-07-23#Consciousness

For a 30-day meditation on the vine and the branches in John 15:

Murray, A. (1897). *The true Vine.* (Book Catalog #0016, Electronic Version 1.00, A. Woeger (Ed.) Retrieved from the web July 23, 2011) 2011.http://www.spiritoffire.org/ebooks/The%20True%20Vine%20by%20Andrew%20Murray.htm

For information on the Cara Mayan movement meditation to Scripture: http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=144602862408; www.caramayan.com

For creative worship ideas that inspired the rose ceremony, see Interface Worship at: http://altarwalk.ca/

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VINES Manual Appendix

The Metaphor of the Vine in the Christian Tradition

The vine is a significant spiritual metaphor in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures (Philips, n.d.). In the Old Testament Scriptures, the vine is a metaphor for Israel, God's chosen people. Israel was the vine taken from Egypt and transplanted to the soil of the Promised Land.

> You have brought a vine out of Egypt. You have cast out the nation and planted it. You prepared room for it and caused it to take deep root and it filled the land. The hills were covered with its Shadow and the mighty cedars with its boughs. She sent out her bows to the Sea and her branches to the River. Why have you broken down her hedges so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit; the boar out of the woods uproots it and the wild best of the field devours it. (Psalm 80:8-13 NKJV)

Israel's vine was prolific, fertile and abundant until it intertwined with the idol worship of the surrounding culture, turning away from the living God who gave it life. The fruit became bitter as illustrated in the following passages from the prophetic books of Isaiah and Hosea:

> My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth *good* grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. (Isaiah 5:1-2 NKJV)

and in Hosea: "Israel empties his vine; he brings forth fruit for himself. According to the

multitude of his fruit he has increased the altars; According to the bounty of his land they have embellished his sacred pillars" (Hosea 10: 1 NKJV). Israel, the wild vine, is also the "Outcast Vine:" "the fire devours both ends of it, and the middle is burned. Is it useful for any work? (Ezekiel 15:4). Israel's branch became "a spreading vine of low stature; its branches turned toward him, but its roots were *under* it" (Ezekiel 17:6 NKJV- emphasis mine).

In the Song of Solomon, the vine is a metaphor for a woman's body, a vineyard that can be rapaciously plundered by the fox. The Shulamite woman's brothers protect her virginity, captured through this metaphor: "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes" (2:1 NKJV). In the Psalms, when a man walks in God's ways, one of the blessings is that "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house" (Psalm 128:3 NKJV).

The vine also becomes an earthly metaphor for the Divine. Jesus used symbols of life and growth in His ministry. In the New Testament Gospels, as one of the seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to Himself as the True Vine (Kelley, 2010; Philips, n.d.). The people of Jesus' time would be intimately familiar with the metaphor, as certain aspects of earthly vines would easily be identified with His character and message:

> I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the

> vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:1-5 NKJV)

In the Christian belief system, the necessity of remaining grafted to Him for nurture and growth ensures spiritual health (Kelley, 2010). The living Word of God is the ultimate pruning instrument for spiritual growth. The fruit of the vine continues in the Scriptural books written by the apostle Paul. Being filled by the Holy Spirit produces the fruit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22 NKJV).

Celtic Spirituality

In Celtic spirituality, God is experienced as both immanent and transcendent. The planting of the Christian faith on the Celtic islands did not uproot, but grafted onto the indigenous traditions. The resulting spirituality produced a unique vintage that was more holistic than its Roman counterpart, escaping the dualism that marked the western European Christian tradition (O'Donohue, 2004; Sellner, 1998).

Within the Celtic tradition, gifts of women were valued and nurtured (Sellner, 1998). They fulfilled roles of pastoring and leadership in partnership with men. Describing the partnership of St. Bridgette with a bishop, the fruitful vine is used metaphorically in the writing of Cogitosus in the seventh century A.D.: "By their holy partnership and with the helping aid of all the virtues, she built her principal church at Kildare. Because of the talents of them both, her episcopal cathedral and monastery spread like a fruitful vine with branches growing in all directions throughout the entire island of Ireland" (Sellner, 1998).

Celtic spirituality had a distinct recognition of beauty and it was found on the

borderlands of physical existence (O'Donohue, 2004). The Celts were a people who lived on the borderlands on many levels:

> The Celts, both pagan and Christian, were certainly a people who valued marginal places within themselves: the imagination, intuition, second sight, dreams, visions, tears. Even their art expressed the sometimes "terrible beauty" of marginality, for the most beautiful images and extraordinary poetic passages are not in the main text of such illuminated gospels as the Book of Kells, but in the margins, on the boundaries, where, for them, the sacred and wisdom itself are found. (Sellner, 1998)

Sellner's mentor in Celtic history, Rosemary Haughton, portrays Celtic spirituality as one that "valued imagination and intuition, adventure and poetry, lay leadership and women's gifts. It was "a person-centred church…flexible, devoted, and produced saints and scholars as a meadow grows daisies." It was a church that reminds us of the need "to include not only all the conscious areas of human life, personal and communal, but all the dark, peculiar, unexplained areas that open out into the totally 'other' world in which even the mystics are merely temporary guests." (as cited in Sellner, 1998, par. 3).

Haughton's description could aptly be applied to the art therapy process. Celtic spirituality recognizes the unique value of the person and the value of relationship for fullness of living. Within Celtic spirituality, one can perhaps see Jungian elements of light and shadow as welcomed, acknowledged and integrated. Art therapy also seeks to explore those "dark, peculiar and unexplained" areas of the subconscious human psyche.

Within the Celtic tradition was the anam cara—literally, soul friend. In the early Celtic church, "It originally referred to someone to whom you confessed, revealing the

hidden intimacies of your inner life. With the *anam cara* you could share your inner-most self, your mind and your heart" (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 13). Sellner adds this dimension to the anam cara:

> With its one-to-one focus, Celtic soul-friend ministry contributed greatly to Western culture's emphasis on the integrity and worth of the individual person and upon his or her spiritual and psychological development. It was the predecessor of our modern disciplines of counselling, psychotherapy, and spiritual direction. (1998)

The essence of this relationship prefigures the unconditional positive regard of Carl Rogers' person-centred therapy. The therapist can become a kind of anam cara, modeling creativity, love, and compassion, and providing a safe place to experience the full range of human emotions.

The Celts were also renowned storytellers and poets. In the addictions recovery art groups, women can view their lived narrative through the eyes of poetry and metaphor. There is a mystical poetry to the borderlands journey that women in addictions recovery will possibly experience. I found myself softly touched by Celtic spirituality in my therapeutic approach, hoping to be that still water about which Yeats so beautifully writes:

> *We can make our lives so like still water that beings gather about us that they may see, it may be, their own images, and so live for a moment with a clearer, perhaps even with a fiercer life because of our serenity.*
>
> Earth, Fire and Water
>
> W.B. Yeats, *Celtic Twilight*

VINES Manual Appendix References

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End of Manual

Appendix B

Personal Statement and Response Art

I am still waking up, still crossing the thresholds, still healing, still grounding, and always scraping up the bravery to plant my heart in the world.

(Kidd, 1996, p. 227)

As artist, art therapist, and researcher, artmaking and poetic response documented my reflexivity. As an art therapist, I am finding my theoretical grounding. God has been my constant Companion in the research process. When I felt overwhelmed and hopelessly inadequate, I found comfort in the Psalms.

Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I will cry to you,
When my heart is overwhelmed;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I
For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
I will abide in your tabernacle forever,
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah.

Psalm 61: 1-4 (NKJV)

Now I sense the pieces falling together at the proper time, knowing the process cannot be forced or rushed. I am allowing myself to be carried along, much like the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, climbing a vine that reaches to the heavens. I come with my body, mind, and spirit in service of the Divine Husbander. I am getting a glimpse of

many facets of sacred, and how, most often, the profane is profoundly sacred.

I am learning to remain unknowing as to what lies ahead, learning that client sessions will take many unforeseen twists and turns. As part of the phenomenological approach, even within a structured metaphorical directive, ideas and experiences are gelatinous. As a therapist, I have become more open to shift and a congealing that often happens in the last moment. This was my experience on the way to my first VINES group session. During the walk from work to my car through the serenity of the river valley, the idea came to give each participant a vine cutting as a symbol of the sessions. I found meaning in the prunings of a plant discarded as trash:

I rescued a vine from the kitchen garbage at work today

Discarded on top of spahettied styrofoam

Leaves still waxy, alive, a variegated philodendron I believe

Personal reflection, September 21, 2010

I was eager to plunge into these waters but need to put on diving gear.

I have none, really more like the tools of cultivation,

the collage image distinctly lacks pruning shears.

These are the sole property of the "Husbander."

Personal reflection, August 13, 2010

I pass the turtle labyrinth daily on the way to my working day

An installation of solid rock mounds point north south east west

Fullness in all directions, overlooking the river's waters

I build my humble heart altar to praise Him.

Personal reflection, September 8, 2010

This painting was started in September 2010. Inspiration came from *Sangiovese* by watercolour artist Jane Witty in *American Artist Watercolour* (2010, Summer). Her depth and richness using a transparent medium inspired me. As a metaphor for my journey, I am learning from those who have gone before me. The piece remained unfinished for almost a year. Anticipating a longer process, I finally completed this watercolour on August 14, 2011, in an afternoon. The theme of the grapevine proved to be synchronous. Only very recently, I discovered that the Alcoholics Anonymous newsletter is called *The Grapevine.* Again, the completion of the art piece provided a metaphor for the thesis process. What often appears as a

Figure 26. Unfinished Vines (above) - Watercolour on Arches paper, 10”x14”
Figure 27. Finished Vines (right) – Watercolour on Arches paper, 10”x14”

monumental task, once you begin, it happens much quicker than anticipated. In reflection, the unfinished and finished vines connected me to P2 who began with a sparse collage and proudly completed it to dense fullness.

This work is slow, almost painfully slow, but with sudden sprints

that leave me gasping for air. When I am too tired to think,

I allow the Mystery to carry me along,

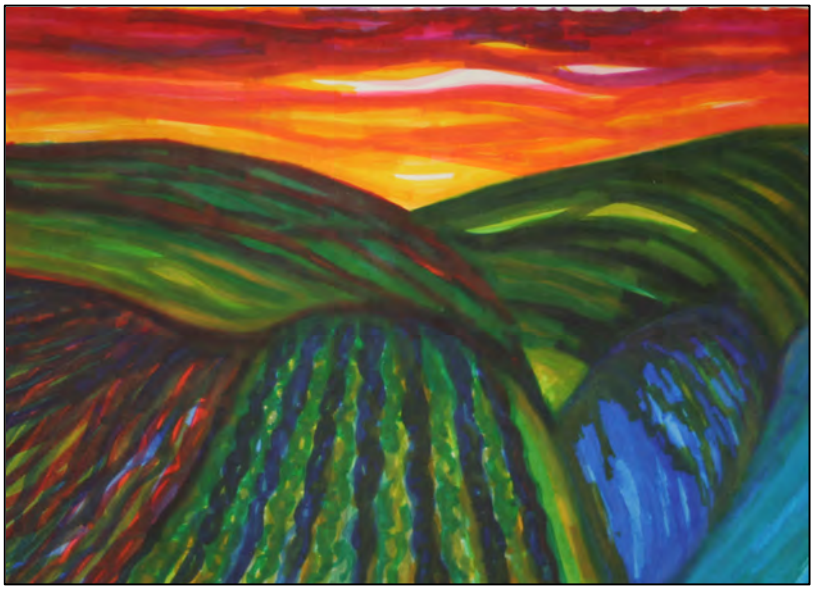

Figure 28. Vineyard Sunrise – Marker on paper, 10”x12”

run through me and away from me

like the fountain image I present in session.

I shake off the dust with wonder and surprise.

Personal reflection, September 2010

.

Vineyard Sunrise became a meditative reflection with the repetition of strokes. Layers of marker brought forth deep colour, both transparent and opaque. Metaphorical for the thesis process, it is built layer upon layer, deepening with time. I created *Ashes to Ashes* during the 2011 Easter season marking the transience of humanity's earthly journey. The gray areas are gel medium mixed with ashes from VINES groups branches that I burned as a symbolic closing ritual for my research. The dark is pierced by light, lifeblood coursing through, ever shifting.

Figure 29. Ashes to Ashes – Acrylic and gel medium on gessoed canvas, 15"x 30"

As researcher, I took a position of abiding and surrender, allowing myself to be the squeezed-out grape (Chambers, 1935). Sue Monk Kidd expresses a truth that resonates with my reflexivity and experience as a phenomenological researcher and art therapist:

> …in order to heal we need to tell our stories and have them witnessed...The story itself becomes a vessel that holds us up, that sustains, that allows us to order our jumbled experiences into meaning…I also needed to hear other women's stories in

> order to see and embrace my own. Sometimes another woman's story becomes a mirror that shows me a self I haven't seen before. When I listen to her tell it, her experience quickens and clarifies my own. Her questions rouse mine. Her conflicts illumine my conflicts. Her resolutions call forth my hope. Her strengths summon my strengths. All of this can happen even when our stories and our lives are very different. (1996, pp.172-173)

I stand before God as artist, therapist, and researcher. I felt a certain companionship with the women at the Centre. We are all broken and in need of healing.

Appendix C

Dynamic Flow of Individual Participant Art

(P1, P3, P2, P4)

Figure 30. Dynamic flow of images, P1 (left to right, counterclockwise) self-vine (with photo image of strawberry), pruning, grafting (dyad, mixed media collage), nurture (mandala), and fruit (sacred stick)

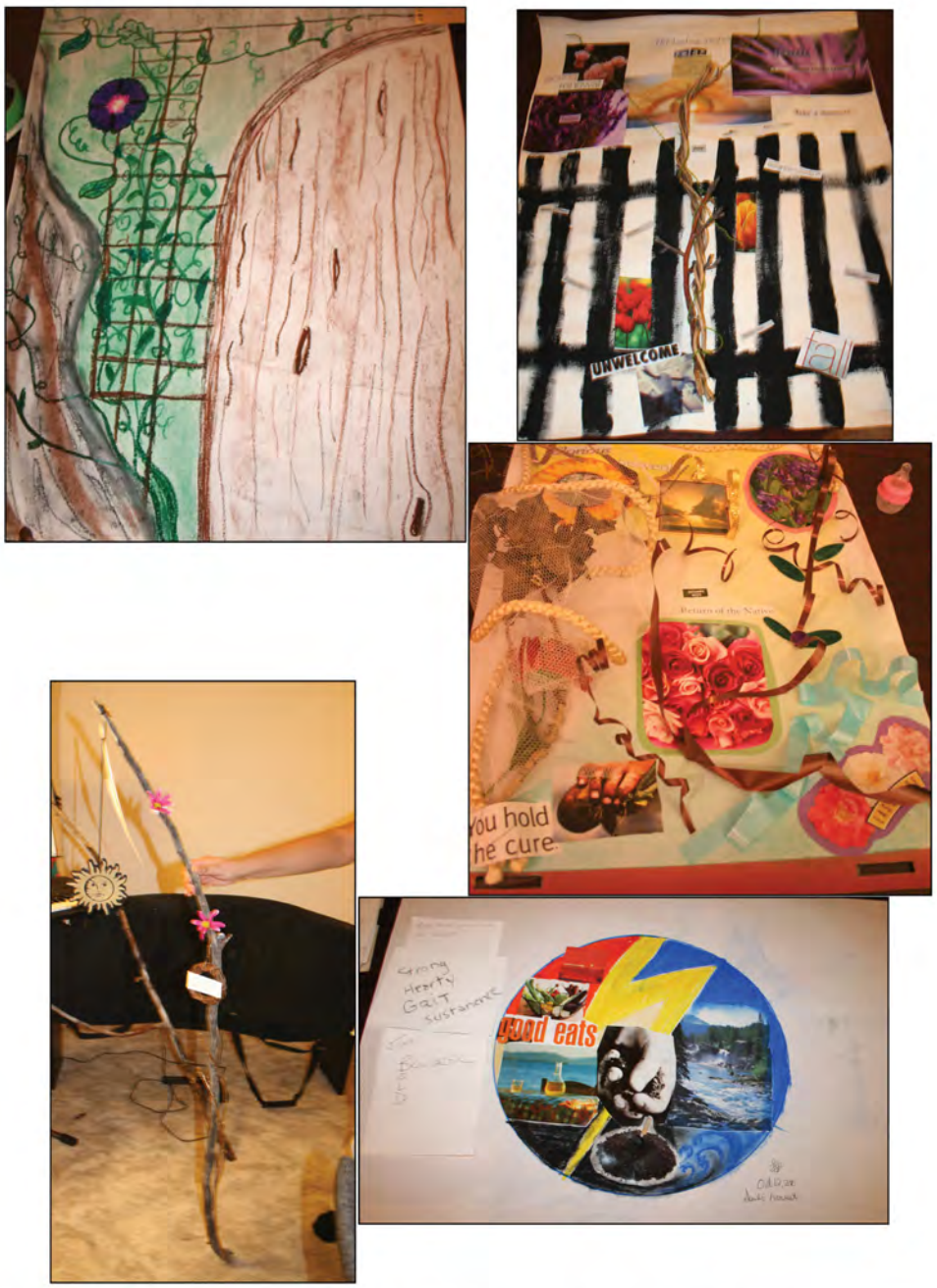

Figure 31. Dynamic flow of images, P3 (left to right, counterclockwise) self-vine, pruning, grafting (dyad. mixed media collage), nurture (mandala), and fruit (sacred stick)

Figure 32. Dynamic flow of images, P2 (left to right, counterclockwise) self-vine collages (pruning, session 2, and completed collage), grafting (dyad mixed media collage), nurture (mandala), and fruit (sacred stick)

Figure 33. Dynamic flow of images, P4 (left to right, counterclockwise) self-vine, pruning, grafting (dyad, mixed media collage), nurture (mandala), and fruit (sacred stick)

Appendix D

Art Therapy Research Study Forms*

(**All specific references to the recovery centre have been removed to protect confidentiality. They are replaced in the text with* *the Recovery Centre.***)*

Art Therapy Research Study
Information Sheet

Background &Purpose:
My name is Nancy Olthuis and I am a masters student at St. Stephen's College, Edmonton in the Pastoral Psychology and Counselling Program, Art Therapy Specialization. I am currently undertaking research for my masters' thesis on art therapy and its effectiveness for women in addictions recovery and you are invited to be a part of this study. I am exploring your experience as women in addictions recovery, using the artmaking process. The group and individual sessions will take place at *the Recovery Centre.*

Procedures and Time Commitment:
I will be asking you to be part of a 4-6 session art therapy group and then to be available for two individual interviews after the group sessions are completed to discuss your experiences in the group. I will also ask you to read my written themes and narratives of your experiences in order to see if this feels true to your experiences and offer the opportunity to give your feedback if something does or does not seem to ring true for you.

The group sessions will be approximately 1.5 - 2 hours in length, involve artmaking and story around a particular topic, and will use different art materials including the possible use of photographs. The sessions with your consent will be videotaped. The individual interviews will take place after the group sessions are completed. The two interviews should take no more than 60 minutes (each) of your time and, with your consent, will be audio recorded. If not everyone in the group consents to the video recording, then as an alternative -- my notes made during and/or after the group and an audiotape will be used with consent.

I will use the video and audio recordings to complete my research if consent is obtained. Audio- and videotapes and digital photos will remain with me under lock and key for five years, except for any participants who choose to withdraw from the study and that can happen at any time before or during the research.

As a participant in a research study, you have rights which include:

- Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary.

- You are free to refuse to answer a question at any time.
- You are free to withdraw from the project at any time and all data will be returned or destroyed as specified to you in the initial information.
- Any identifying information about you will be changed to keep anonymity in the thesis.

The information gathered from the group and individual interviews will be used in the thesis, but under no circumstances will your name or any other identifying characteristics be included in this report.

Confidentiality will be insured throughout the transcription process and the transcriber involved will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. External readers will only read the themes, narratives, and the paper itself, without any identifying data.

Information from the thesis will be presented in a final presentation (October 2011)** required for completion of my degree requirements. To maintain anonymity, *the Recovery Centre* will not be mentioned in the information.

Art Exhibit:
I would like to put together an exhibit of artwork produced by the group to display for my thesis presentation. The purpose of the exhibit is to transform people's awareness of women's experiences in addiction recovery. Names and any identifying items in the art will be covered. The art could be displayed in future venues for a specific period of time with your permission. Your art will be returned to you after the exhibit(s). After the group research has been completed, you will be notified by phone or mail or e-mail, to pick the art up within a reasonable time frame. If you do not pick up the art up within this the time frame, then the art will be disposed of by * the Recovery Centre* because of space limitations.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact me at your_wellspring@yahoo.ca or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers, at psychrec@telusplanet.net

** *Thesis presentation will be in the fall of 2012.*

Art Therapy Research
Group and Individual
Consent Form

My name is Nancy Olthuis and I am a masters student at St. Stephen's College, Edmonton in the Pastoral Psychology and Counselling Program, Art Therapy Specialization. I am currently undertaking research for my masters' thesis on art therapy and its effectiveness for women in addictions recovery.

The group sessions and individual interviews will take place at *the Recovery Centre*.

I will be asking you to be part of a 4 to up to 6 session art therapy group and then to be available for two individual interviews after the group sessions are completed to discuss your experiences in the group. I will also ask you to read my written interpretation of your experiences for accuracy. The group and individual sessions will take place at *the Recovery Centre*.

The group sessions will be approximately 1.5 -2 hours in length, involve artmaking and story around a particular topic and will use different art materials including photographs. The sessions with your consent will be videotaped. The individual interview will take the form of a conversation and will take place after the group sessions are completed. It should take no more than 60 minutes of your time and, with your consent, will be recorded. If not everyone in the group consents to the video recording, then as an alternative -- my notes made during and after the group and an audiotape will be used with consent.

I will use the video and audio recordings to complete my research. Audio and videotapes and digital photos will remain with me under lock and key for five years, except for any participant who should withdraw from the study.

As a participant in a research study, you have the following rights:

- Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- You are free to refuse to answer a question at any time.
- You are free to withdraw from the project at any time and all data will be returned or destroyed.
- The individual interview will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential and will be available only to the interviewer. Please see comments in the Art Therapy Research Study info sheet

Information from the group sessions and individual interviews will be used in the thesis, but under no circumstances will your name or any other identifying characteristics be included in the final thesis report.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact me at your_wellspring@yahoo.ca or contact Dr. Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers, my thesis supervisor at psychrec@telusplanet.net. While doing this research, I am also under supervision for art therapy with Carola Ackery, (MA, RCC, RCAT) for my practicum at *the Recovery Centre*.

I _____ understand that I have the above rights as a participant in this study as explained to me by the researcher. I understand that a copy of this consent form will be given to me and one will be kept by the reseacher.

_____	_____
Participant's signature	Witness Signature
_____	_____
(printed name)	(printed name)
_____	_____
(Date	Date

Art Therapy Research Study
Thesis Presentation Consent Form

Background &Purpose:
My name is Nancy Olthuis and I am a masters student at St. Stephen's College, Edmonton in the Pastoral Psychology and Counselling Program, Art Therapy Specialization. I am currently undertaking research for my masters' thesis on art therapy and its effectiveness for women in addictions recovery and you are invited to be a part of this study. I am exploring your experience as women in addictions recovery, using the artmaking process. The group and individual sessions will take place at *the Recovery Centre*

Procedures and Time Commitment:
I will be asking you to be part of a 4-6 session art therapy group and then to be available for two individual interviews after the group sessions are completed to discuss your experiences in the group. I will also ask you to read my written themes and narratives of your experiences in order to see if this feels true to your experiences and offer the opportunity to give your feedback if something does or does not seem to ring true for you.

The group sessions will be approximately 1.5 -2 hours in length, involve artmaking and story around a particular topic, and will use different art materials including the possible use of photographs. The sessions will be videotaped if and when there is consent from all group members. The individual interviews will take place after the group sessions are completed. The two interviews should take no more than 60 minutes (each) of your time and, with your consent, will be audio recorded. I will also make notes in the group sessions and/or immediately after groups. As an alternative, if not everyone in the group consents to the video recording, I will use audiotapes for both the groups and the interviews.

My first preference is that I will use the video recordings of groups and audio recordings of sessions to complete my research if consents are obtained since this will maximize the completeness of the mundane data. Audio- and video-tapes, digital photos and my notes will remain with me under lock and key for five years, except for any participants who choose to withdraw from the study and that can happen at any time before or during the research.

Confidentiality will be insured throughout the transcription process and the transcriber involved will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. Readers initially chosen to read for a "resonance or lack of resonance check" will only read the themes, narratives, and the paper itself, without any identifying data.

Thesis Presentation:
Information from the thesis will be presented in a **final presentation (October 2011**)** required for completion of my degree requirements. To maintain anonymity, *the Recovery Centre* will not be mentioned in the information.

As a participant, you have rights which include:

- You are free to withdraw your information from the thesis presentation at any time.
- Any identifying information about you will be changed to keep anonymity for yourself and for *the Recovery Centre.*

If you have any questions or concerns about the **thesis presentation**, please contact me at or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers. I am under the art therapy supervision of Carola Ackery (MA, RCC, RCAT) for my practicum at *the Recovery Centre*.

I _____ understand that I have the above rights as allowing my information to be used in the thesis presentation as explained to me by the researcher. I understand that a copy of this consent form will be given to me and one will be kept bythe researcher.

_____	_____
Participant's signature	Witness Signature
_____	_____
(printed name)	(printed name)
_____	_____
(Date	Date

** *Thesis presentation will be in the fall of 2012.*

Art Therapy Research Study
Art Exhibit Consent Form

Background &Purpose:
My name is Nancy Olthuis and I am a masters student at St. Stephen's College, Edmonton in the Pastoral Psychology and Counselling Program, Art Therapy Specialization. I am currently undertaking research for my masters' thesis on art therapy and its effectiveness for women in addictions recovery and you are invited to be a part of this study. I am exploring your experience as women in addictions recovery, using the artmaking process. The group and individual sessions will take place at *the Recovery Centre*

Procedures and Time Commitment:
I will be asking you to be part of a 4-6 session art therapy group and then to be available for two individual interviews after the group sessions are completed to discuss your experiences in the group. I will also ask you to read my written themes and narratives of your experiences in order to see if this feels true to your experiences and offer the opportunity to give your feedback if something does or does not seem to ring true for you.

The group sessions will be approximately 1.5 -2 hours in length, involve artmaking and story around a particular topic, and will use different art materials including the possible use of photographs. The sessions with your consent will be videotaped. The individual interviews will take place after the group sessions are completed. The two interviews should take no more than 60 minutes (each) of your time and, with your consent, will be audio recorded. If not everyone in the group consents to the video recording, then as an alternative -- my notes made during and/or after the group and an audiotape will be used with consent.

My first preference is that I will use the video recordings of groups and audio recordings of sessions to complete my research if consents are obtained since this will maximize the completeness of the mundane data. Audio- and video-tapes, digital photos and my notes will remain with me under lock and key for five years, except for any participants who choose to withdraw from the study and that can happen at any time before or during the research.

Confidentiality will be insured throughout the transcription process and the transcriber involved will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. Readers initially chosen to read for a "resonance or lack of resonance check" will only read the themes, narratives, and the paper itself, without any identifying data.

Art Exhibit:
I would like to put together an exhibit of art work produced by the group to display for my thesis presentation. The purpose of the exhibit is to transform people's awareness of women's experiences in addiction recovery. Names and any identifying items in the art will be covered. The art could be displayed in future venues for a specific period of time with your permission. Your art will be returned to you after the exhibit(s). After the group research has been completed, you will be notified by phone or mail or e-mail, to pick the art up within a reasonable time frame. If you do not pick up the art up within this the time frame, then the art will be disposed of by *the Recovery Centre* because of space limitations.

The art gathered from the group will be used in the thesis, but participation in the art exhibit is entirely optional.

Information from the thesis will be presented in a final presentation (October 2011) required for completion of my degree requirements. To maintain anonymity, *the Recovery Centre* will not be mentioned in the information.

As a participant, you have rights which include:

- Your participation in the art exhibit is entirely voluntary.
- You are free to withdraw your art from the project at any time and all art will be returned or destroyed as specified to you in the initial information.
- Any identifying information about you will be changed to keep anonymity by covering over names and any identifying data on the art.

If you have any questions or concerns about the art exhibit, please contact me or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers. I am under the art therapy supervision of Carola Ackery (MA, RCC, RCAT) for my practicum at *the Recovery Centre*.

I _____ understand that I have the above rights as a participant in the art exhibit as explained to me by the researcher. I understand that a copy of this consent form will be given to me and one will be kept by the reseacher.

_____	_____
Participant's signature	Witness Signature
_____	_____
(printed name)	(printed name)

Art Therapy & Addictions Recovery
Research Study
Confidentiality Agreement

1. Confidential Information

This Confidential Information shall include data from audio and/or videotapes and other information disclosed or submitted, orally, in writing, or by any other media, to _____by Nancy Olthuis.

2. Obligations of the Transcriptionist

A. _____ hereby agrees that the confidential Art Therapy with Women in Addictions Recovery research study is to be used solely for the purposes of said study. The confidential information should only be disclosed to Nancy Olthuis and/or her supervisor, Dr. Jo Ann Hammond-Meiers, R. Psych #1321 (AB), RCAT, BC-DMT, GDDET. practicum supervisor Carola Ackery, MA, RCC, RCAT or *the Recovery Centre* contact, (*Recovery Centre email*).

_____ hereby agrees not to disclose, publish or otherwise reveal any of the Confidential Information received from Nancy Olthuis to any other party.

B. Materials (audio and/or video tapes) containing confidential information must be stored in a safe location so as to avoid third persons unrelated to the project to access said materials. Confidential Information shall not be duplicated by _____ except for the purposes of this Agreement.

3. Completion of the Work
Upon the completion of the work and at the request of Nancy Olthuis, _____ shall return all confidential information (audio and/or video tapes) received in written or tangible form, including copies, or reproductions or other media containing such confidential information, within ten (10) days of such request.

I, _____, shall hereby adhere to the terms of the agreement.

Signature_____ Date _____

Witness
Signature_____Date_____