WHAT ARE THE HEALING ARTS?

Healing arts use creativity—through music, visual arts, dance, drama, and creative writing—to promote health and well-being in a variety of ways. In clinical and community settings, credentialed professionals, artists and performers, and artists-in-residence are helping people improve their communication skills, emotional functioning, physical abilities, and cognitive skills—all through art.

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND HEALING ARTS

$4.85 M grants over the past 10 years to healing arts projects

218 grants since 2006

THE BENEFITS OF HEALING ARTS

NEUROLOGICAL
- Improves cognition and memory
- Improves brain function
- Improves impulse control and concentration

EMOTIONAL
- Reduces depression and anxiety
- Improves communication and interpersonal skills
- Helps confront and build resilience to trauma, grief, and loss

PHYSICAL
- Improves sleep
- Promotes physical rehabilitation
- Shorter time in hospital
- Provides an inexpensive and low-cost treatment option

THE MILITARY AND HEALING ARTS

The signature wounds from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars involve a complex combination of traumatic brain injury, depression, PTSD and other psychological health issues that often don’t respond to traditional treatments.

In order to confront these invisible wounds, the NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership is bringing creative arts therapies into the care of combat veterans who need them most.

- Neurologists
- Psychologists
- Physical therapists
- Others

Service members used visual arts, theater, dance, and therapeutic writing to help address emotional, physical, and neurological challenges.

"It allowed me to express feelings and thoughts I could only express with anger." - Service member who received treatment at NICoE Walter Reed Bethesda

YOUTH AND HEALING ARTS

With NEA support, Creative Clay Inc., partners with All Children's Hospital Johns Hopkins Medicine in St. Petersburg, Florida, to host part-time residencies with visual, performing, and literary artists.

These artists—trained to navigate healthcare settings—work with children facing challenging medical conditions to develop their skills, unlock their imaginations, and support the healing process for both children and parents.

OLDER ADULTS AND HEALING ARTS

An NEA grant to songwriting team Songwriting Works in Port Townsend, Washington, has helped train older adults in nursing homes to compose original songs, record their music, and socially resonate with their brothers-in-arms.

Researchers are uncovering more evidence on the medical benefits of art therapy for older adults, including improvements in cognition and loneliness.

The NEA is a leader in research, policy, and funding of programs bringing healing arts to communities throughout the U.S. To find out more about NEA programs, visit us online or on social media.