

The Power of Drumming: Healing through Sound and Rhythm

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Drumming and rhythm making has been used for centuries as a tool to provide deeper connections and stronger communication within and between people in communities. With the help of a great facilitator, Babatunde Olatunji, drumming was introduced and welcomed in North America as a tool for expression and connection. Ancient wisdom on drumming has been translated to recent research. For example, a study by Dr. Barry Bittman, indicates that a 6 week drumming group resulted in increased immune functioning and an increase in the production of natural killer cells that fight cancer. So what does this tell us? Drumming and rhythm making is not only a powerful tool to connect, reduce stress, increase health and immune functioning, but it is also a fun and expressive way of sharing our experience!

Bringing my experience and knowledge as a psychologist with my passion and love of drumming, a rhythm group at Wellspring was formed that allowed drumming and percussion to serve as instruments or tools to express the experience of coping with cancer. The program served to be a powerful opportunity to use sound and rhythm making in a medicinal form to

reduce stress, to express the challenges of living with cancer, to find one's rhythmic potential and to develop community support. In April the first 6-week group at Wellspring was run with the help of 10 open and adventurous Wellspring members who shared their experience with cancer rhythmically, laughed, cried, and found a sense of wholeness within, combined with a sense of community support. They also created some awesome sounds together, with some contemplation of recording because of the power of the music that was created together. And this included people who had never before touched a drum!

I think we did a fabulous job together of honouring the centuries of community building through rhythm as well as finding wholeness within the brokenness of cancer. Members left with a sense of inspiration to keep drumming and they are continuing to meet to drum and share the groove as well as the joy of playing in community.

We all have rhythm within us:
If we can breathe we can play.

For more information about the drumming program please call Wellspring at 416-961-1928.



Members of the drumming program at Wellspring
Odette House & The Coach House, June 2005.