

## Roundabout Dramatherapy

Roundabout is a dramatherapy charity founded 35 years ago to meet the mental health and well-being needs of people of all ages and all abilities London wide. Roundabout is dedicated to transforming the lives of vulnerable people, using the creative power of dramatherapy to enhance mental health. Our work is professional, effective, creative, empowering, supportive, inclusive, and authentic. We offer dramatherapy sessions to all age groups in a variety of settings including older people in residential care. Sessions can be group or individual and are non-judgmental and confidential. Roundabout aims to give their clients a voice and space to express themselves, to tell their story, understand themselves and make positive changes in their lives.



Our work includes running dramatherapy sessions in residential care homes. Sessions are held weekly on the same day and time each week. People are referred for various reasons including feeling isolated or self-isolating, feeling depressed, having difficulty communicating and interacting, struggling with the transition from their own home to the care home, coming to terms with debilitating conditions etc. Often the people we work with are physically frail and have dementia.

We use different creative media and techniques in the sessions including: art images, collage work, music and movement, poetry, traditional folk tales, story creating and telling, reminiscence, puppets, props and costume, etc. The dramatherapists plan the session around the themes and issues that are brought to the sessions by group members. Themes that often arise include: loss, change and family relationships. Sometimes strong emotions emerge, including sadness, anger and frustration. At other times and quite frequently, feelings of levity, enjoyment and fun are present in the sessions.

This is an example of one intervention used within a group that has been working together regularly for some months. This will be worked with and developed over a number of weeks.

Group members are invited to select a portrait postcard they like out of a wide choice of images. The dramatherapist gently elicits conversations through questions about the image and their selection: e.g.

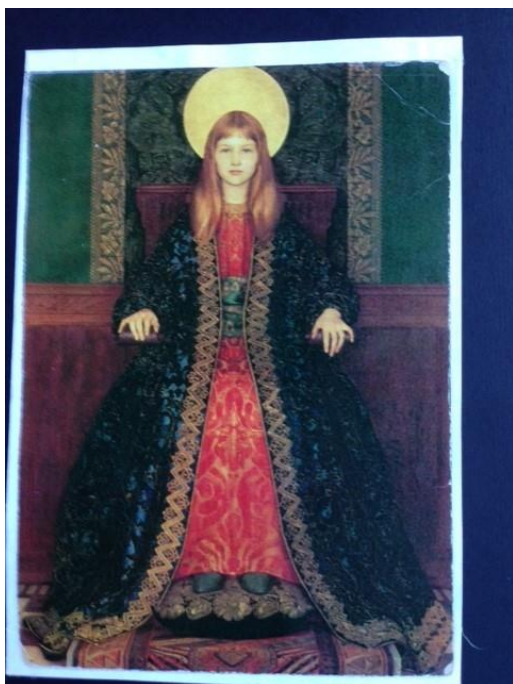
What is it about this picture – why might you have chosen this one?

Who do you think this person might be?

What do you think their name is?

What do you think they are saying/thinking/doing?

What might they do next?



Slowly the character from the image develops and their background story evolves and unfolds. The group members then have the opportunity to recreate their chosen image by dressing up using pieces of costume and material and props. They match the pose in the postcard they have selected and a group member (usually with support) or the dramatherapist takes a photo. Group members often really 'come alive' during this exercise and become more animated, showing their creative and artistic sides. The group members continue to have an opportunity to 'become the character' they have chosen and talk as this character and tell their story.

By the end of the sessions the images have been collated within a group book which contains a creative record of the work done week by week. On each double page is a portrait postcard on one side and the re-creation photo next to it on the other side. This book of images and new memories remain with the group members, when the sessions have finished.

We have used this particular method of working in different groups and we have always been surprised by the level of engagement and creative flair and level of support and interaction that the group members have shown and been able to give to one another. Reactions from the group members themselves have often been those of surprise and delight.

*'I didn't know we had it in us!'*

### **More feedback from dramatherapy sessions**

*"Today was very good. We've had music, poetry-an array of goodness"*

*"I feel as though I've been lifted out of this contraption (wheelchair) and walked."*

*"What you feel inside you've got to let it all out"*

### **And from staff**

*"Members in the group also became good friends so the sessions had a great positive impact on our members. Member's moods after each session were upbeat and they appeared content and happy and said they had been on a lovely journey"*

**For more information please visit our website**

<https://www.roundaboutdramatherapy.org.uk>

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