



Art as a therapeutic tool

Bridget Rush is our Artist in Residence at Gilgal and has been running highly popular painting workshops with our women and children.

An accomplished artist, Bridget has a Master's degree in Fine Art and a profound dedication to the charity sector. Her expertise lie in using art as a therapeutic tool, specifically for residents in refuges. Through painting, she provides a means for individuals to express themselves, particularly when words fall short.

At Gilgal, Bridget conducts highly popular one-to-one art sessions with women and children, giving them her undivided attention and support. These sessions have proven to be transformative for those taking part. Initially, many residents were reluctant to engage in the sessions, doubting their ability to paint; the use of professional art supplies and the presence of a new person added to their apprehension. Some participants did not even speak during the first few sessions, feeling as though there were intimidating expectations placed upon them. Bridget's calm, kind, and patient nature helps the residents to feel comfortable. She allows them to open up at their own pace, free from peer pressure and the distractions of fear, learning over time that art is for everybody.

In the first session, Bridget typically introduces students to art by showing them a book of paintings, suggesting they start by copying a piece. This approach helps to break the ice and build initial confidence; reducing the feelings of pressure to "be creative". Over time, she has noticed students beginning to conduct their own research and return to class with ideas on how to improve and refine their practice, showcasing their growing confidence and creativity.

**"I didn't know I could paint!
All my life I've been told
you can't do this, you can't do
that, you're no good at it. Before
Bridget I would have
laughed at the idea of me
painting - I thought I'd find
it boring, but I don't and
now I really look forward
to it every week."**

– Vicky*, current Gilgal resident

**name has been changed for privacy*



Bridget's art sessions have had a profound impact on both women and children at Gilgal:

- **Therapeutic Benefits:** The act of painting has been described as calming, focusing, and empowering, providing a therapeutic outlet for participants.
- **Skill Development:** Residents learn new artistic skills, which contribute to their personal growth and self-esteem.
- **Self-Expression:** Painting offers a unique form of expression, allowing individuals to convey emotions and stories that they might struggle to articulate verbally.
- **Sense of Achievement:** Completing a piece of art provides a tangible sense of accomplishment, boosting confidence and morale.

Despite the immense value of these sessions, Gilgal is currently facing financial challenges that threaten the continuation of the program.

Bridget's art workshops at Gilgal are more than just painting classes; they are a lifeline for many residents, offering hope, healing, and a sense of community. Your support can help sustain this vital program and extend its benefits to more individuals in need. If you can, please consider donating today to allow us to continue Bridget's painting sessions with us.

Bridget is also available for mentoring and tutoring sessions in other establishments; she has extensive experience within refuges and working with all ages. If you know someone or somewhere who would benefit from her expertise, do not hesitate to get in touch:

07863 988138
bridgetrush1@yahoo.com

Did you know that activities like Bridget's painting classes are entirely funded by generous donations?

Help us to keep offering this rewarding service to our residents.

Scan the QR code or visit www.gilgalbham.org.uk to donate now.

