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Creative Practices for Wellbeing: A Toolkit for Victims and Survivors



Funded by
the European Union



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



This toolkit is the culmination of two research projects and the desire to offer accessible information to individuals and organizations that may benefit from it. The primary project was funded by the European Research Council for Dr. Katharina Karcher's work on urban terrorism (grant agreement No. 851329 UrbTerr). Building on this work, the second project was designed and carried Joanne McCuaig's idea to create a toolkit to share the creative practices of survivors and victims of terrorism.

We explain what we mean by creative practices in section 4 of the toolkit. Saray Falcón Trejo explains about the psychology and wellbeing of creative practices followed by our usage in the two research projects. The results of a survey we conducted are included along with quotes from the respondents. We have also approached specific contacts within our network to present more detailed responses as to the types of creative practices people are involved in and how they got started (see Section 8). There is also a summary of the different types of creative practices and suggestions for how individuals or organisations may begin their own creative practices.

The toolkit is currently available in English, French, German, Spanish. It will be freely available for use. Should you translate the toolkit into another language and wish to share it with us, please do get in touch with Dr. Karcher (k.karcher@bham.ac.uk).

We are deeply grateful to the individuals who shared their time, experiences, and inspiration with us. If you use the toolkit and feel comfortable sharing your experience of using the toolkit, we would love to hear from you.

<https://forms.gle/VBzZkabz1vC7PpoEA>



Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



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1. Abstract

The *Creative Practices for Wellbeing Toolkit* is a resource developed by Joanne McCuaig and Dr. Katharina Karcher. Informed by more than five years of fieldwork and an international online survey, it highlights how activities such as art, writing, gardening, music, sports, and spiritual practices can foster healing, emotional expression, and community connection. The toolkit defines creative practices as imaginative processes rather than outcomes, emphasizing their beneficial impact on participants' wellbeing. Our research shows that most individuals discover creative practices independently but many would value more support (with 92% expressing a desire for more guidance). Real-life examples discussed in the toolkit include photography, journaling, knitting, and collaborative projects. The toolkit stresses the importance of inclusivity, recommending flexible formats and sensitivity to physical and psychological needs. Whilst developed for and with people with lived experience of terrorist violence and organizations supporting such individuals, we hope that the toolkit can also be of value to victims of crime, refugees, and others seeking creative pathways to wellbeing.

2. Introduction of who this is for and how it came about

This Creative Practices Toolkit was the culmination of a 5-year research project by Dr. Katharina Karcher and a second project of a joint-led survey with Joanne McCuaig. This included Dr. Karcher's work with victims and survivors of terrorism along with a follow up survey about the creative self-care practices people were doing to help themselves cope with their experiences of terrorism.

From the inspiring engagement and responses from those involved in both projects, Joanne McCuaig suggested creating a toolkit. The intention is to be able to share with more people what we found. This includes our research findings, and the practical steps others took to begin thinking about and engaging in their own creative practices.

Both projects were in multiple languages (English, French, German, and Spanish) and our respondents were encouraged to answer in the language they felt most comfortable expressing themselves in. People who have contributed to this project included adults from different parts of the world ranging from teenagers to seniors, living in small towns to large urban areas.

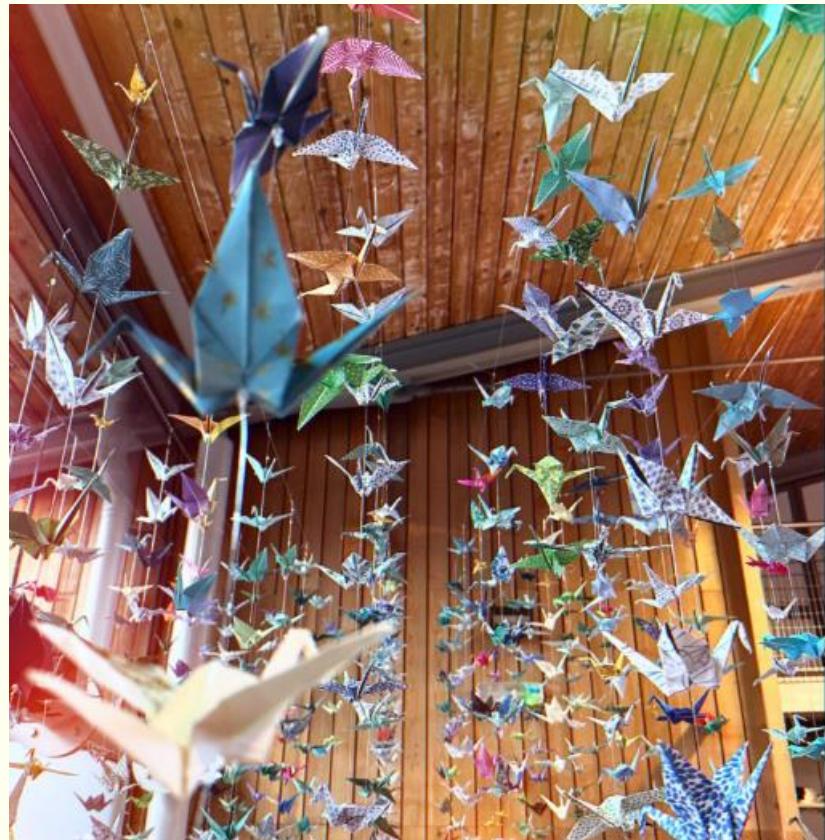
From these thoughtful and engaging responses, we wanted to do more to be able to help future individuals whose lives may be impacted by unforeseen events. While we have tried to include a range of creative journeys, we would like to stress that this is not a representative sample. We have specifically approached people in our networks, who had already shared their creative work with the public or who were ready and able to take this step.

Whenever possible we have tried to maintain the inclusion of their voices to recognize their agency in their own lives and experiences. For this toolkit, we have provided translated responses in addition to the quote in the original language. In some cases, there were slight alterations for grammar or spelling in translations. In others, we have left the word choices as per how they were given to us, to maintain the 'voice' of our contributors. We have attempted to keep the answers as close to the original intention as possible.

We have also focused on the positive aspects for their own healing via creative practices. In doing so we want to support sharing their efforts and the actions they have taken with others who may have similar experiences. While this project focuses on the creative journeys of victims and survivors of terrorist violence, we feel that it can be used by other demographics such as victims and survivors of crime, along with refugees and other displaced individuals.

*The Peace Crane Project
at the Peace Collective.*

*Photo from Suzanne
Atkins*



*Painting as a creative
practice.*

*By Julie Anna Freund
(a Splash Studio
Commission)*

*Over the Moon—
Acrylic on canvas 2014*



3. Research background:

3.1 Urban Terrorism in Europe project

Compared to armed conflicts around the world, the death toll from terrorism in Europe seems small. Yet, thousands of survivors live with the traumatic memories of attacks and/or have lost loved ones to terrorism. As a cultural and political phenomenon, terrorism impacts us all – albeit in different ways. In 2019, Dr Katharina Karcher won funding from the European Research Council to explore the material and cultural impact of urban terrorism in contemporary Europe since 2004 ([UrbTerr](#)). Together with her team, she conducted fieldwork and collected a range of data, including field notes, court documents, interviews with victims and survivors, and news articles.

A key aim of UrbTerr was to use art as a creative tool to develop and experiment with alternative forms of remembering and approach different visions of the future. That's why the project was not limited to academic conferences and scholarly publications. Equally, if not more important, were creative collaborations and exhibitions. Creative partners included established and emerging artists, as well as people with little or no experience with creative practice. We found that people employ a range of creative methods to keep alive the memory of victims of terrorist attacks. Art can be a powerful tool in addressing patterns of exclusion and marginalisation in public debates about terrorism. Many creative partners for the project were people with lived experience of terrorist violence. This collaborative work enabled us to witness and share some inspiring creative journeys.

David Fritz Goeppinger, for example, has shared with UrbTerr PhD researcher Yordanka Dimcheva how photography and writing have helped him overcome feelings of passivity and helplessness during the trial of the 13 November 2015 attacks. David was one of more than 1,000 people attending a rock concert at the Bataclan theatre on that day, when it became the target of a terrorist attack. David survived, but he later acknowledged: 'I came out of it bruised, with burnt hair, partially deaf, and with a deep scar in my mind and soul' ([Karcher et al, 2024](#)). Against this background, the prospect of the trial of the 13 November attacks in Paris and Saint-Denis felt daunting.

For some people, it can be positive and empowering to embrace the victim label. For David, the opposite was true. He used a journal to reflect on his experiences in the courtroom and reconnected with an old passion to document the trial: photography. He found that journalling and photography were vital tools for '*shedding the garment of victimhood*' and developing a sense of agency in the aftermath of his traumatic experience ([Karcher et al, 2024](#)).

The research that we conducted in the context of UrbTerr gave us vital insights into the experiences and creative journeys of survivors and victims of terrorism in Europe. However, due to the qualitative nature of the research, we had in-depth conversations with a very small group of victims and survivors. Another limitation was that the research was focused on four European countries. Against this background, we made the decision to use a multi-lingual online survey to gather views and experiences from a larger and more diverse sample of survivors and victims to complement and enrich our data.

3.2 Creative practices survey

Using our existing networks and through communication with organizations that assist survivors and victims of terrorism we invited people to share their motivation for participating in creative practices. There were 61 respondents to our survey, with more female respondents ($F = 35, 57\%$) than male ($M = 26, 43\%$). There were no non-binary / third gender responses. Many had taken up activities to help with their mental health, *to cope better with stress, anxiety, and negative thoughts* (58%). Some were motivated by learning about an activity because *they saw others do the activity and wanted to try it themselves* (38%).

We were surprised to learn that only a few had *learnt about their creative practice from a victim association or from members of the association* (6%). As such, most people are finding and participating in creative practices on their own. At the same time, an overwhelming majority of people (92%) thought that there should be more information and guidance about the potential benefits of participating in creative activities. Thus, there is an opportunity for victims' associations to take an active role in identifying, organizing, and sharing the benefits of various creative practices.

In our survey, we also wanted to know if people were interested in participating in future creative activities. For the most part, people indicated they would like to continue their current practices (81%) but more than half were also interested in taking up new creative activities (58%). Some were also interested in sharing their creative practices with others (34%). We took these answers to mean that there is the potential for additional community creation and long-term engagement between victims' associations and the communities they serve.

4. What are Creative Practices?

We invited Saray Falcón Trejoto write the following explanation of the psychology of creative practices and wellbeing based on her expertise as a psychologist and personal experience.

Painting as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



4.1 The Psychology of Creative Practices and Wellbeing

In 2004 my father was present at the terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain. From that moment on, our lives changed completely. He was on the train that exploded, suffering from severe deafness and post-traumatic stress disorder. But he is the bravest person I know. Thanks to his resilience and the work that psychologists have done and are doing, I chose my career. I want to help as I have seen how others can be helped. I see the creativity represented in my family, as my father, after the attack, draws strength and love from creativity. All of us in my house did it in different ways, expressing what we were not able to say in words. But now we see it with love, and it is a way of shaping our pain.

The role that creativity plays in people who have gone through psychological trauma, in this case victims of terrorism, helps people who have difficulty expressing themselves through words, to express themselves (Read, 1987).

But what exactly is creativity? The most used definition of creative ideas is those that are original and effective, and an honest expression.

At the brain level we see coordination between the cognitive control network (such as planning and problem solving) and the default mode network (active in wandering or daydreaming). This is almost unique to creativity, because these areas are normally antagonistic, when one of these areas is working, the other is normally not active (Weir, 2022).

Regarding the benefits of using these arts and creativity-based therapies, they reduce symptoms in people with post-traumatic stress disorder. This also applies to children and adolescents who have been through trauma. Creative practices help the healing process by supporting the expressions of emotions (Tayyip & Özel, 2024).

For some people, using art to express trauma is healing. But for others for depicting experiences creatively triggers consequences. Just as with conventional therapies, these can include experiencing anxiety, nightmares, and sleep problems. Another limitation is that there is a risk of exposing the authorship of that person's art. This can lead to a feeling of psychological and physical insecurity (McMahon, McGannon, & Zehntner, 2024).

We can affirm that in the presence of a stimulus that is threatening, creativity increases as it is often found when we need to choose between multiple alternatives. It is divided into two phases: generating possibilities, followed by exploration and choosing what will generate the most satisfaction. The things a person generates are based on beliefs, how the person sees the world, and their attitudes. Our surroundings reflect how we feel and vice versa (Riley & Gabora, 2012).

Doing these activities in a group allows people to be seen and heard, even when no words are used. Being able to share this experience also makes it easier for them to normalize how they behave and makes it easier for them to express themselves. Being able to share with others opens conversations that would otherwise have been difficult to access. Group participation also opens you up to different cultures, religions, and faiths, and it allows people to feel inspired. Sharing different ways of seeing the world, along with sharing of suffering, has influenced artistic approaches (Kalmanowitz & Ho, 2016).

Both physical and psychological accessibility needs to be taken into consideration for people to participate in creative activities. Physically, there may be visible limitations and hidden limitations that people may not feel comfortable sharing or disclosing. Psychologically, it can affect the person's own conscience and generate a great deal of trauma and mistrust towards others (UNODC, 2018). We see stories like that of Irene Villa, who suffered a

terrorist attack when she was 12 years old. In her we see how it is possible to transform pain into something inspiring through creativity. After the attack she lost both legs and several fingers. After this, she decided to study psychology and gave motivational talks, transmitting hope. Moreover, she wrote about her life and what she had learned (Marín, 2024). She has also created his own foundation to integrate people with various disabilities into different aspects. After this she also became a member of the Paralympic ski team (Suñer, 2015). As a result, we can see that, even though she is restrained in the physical aspect, nothing has any boundaries for her.

In my family, my father has worked in the fields since he was a child. It is a family tradition. His father and grandfather also worked in the fields. So, he always found love in doing it. In this case it was something he had been doing since childhood, only when he moved from the village to the city, was when this place turned into a little space of calm and peace in the big city. He loves to do it in a group, because he also says that it is very complicated to do it individually.

Gardening in a group, along with psychological therapy, helps to generate a positive connection with one's sense of self and the environment. In addition, exposure to such situations helps to generate a new narrative space. Integrating creative practice in therapy with visualization and EMDR allows people to deconstruct past experiences and build new ones from the new narrative. It is introduced as a calm activity where attention can be focused (Lorber, 2011).

On the other hand, my mother, when she was a little girl, knitted. Although she had stopped this activity a few years ago, she started up again. My mother has always been very creative, but she gave up due to lack of time. However, having time for yourself is vital. Knitting can make you feel calmer and happier. It is also great for cognitive functioning. And if done in a group, it increases perceived happiness, contact and communication with others. On the other hand, if you do it alone you will have a lot of time for introspection that sometimes can be uncomfortable. Part of the benefits come from the rhythmic and repetitive nature of it, which is accompanied by calm and relaxation. It can be used as a coping strategy for those with anxiety problems, pain, or depression. It also improves thinking, concentration, problem-solving abilities, and memory (Riley, Corkhill, & Morris, 2013).

Knitting as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



My sister decided to study creative writing as a way to express all her thoughts and creative ideas. She loved to write and draw since she was a child, so she found a way to express everything she felt through it. Writing about trauma or stress has been shown to improve health and reduce stress but can negatively affect mood (like higher levels of anxiety and negative mood). This is more related to the increase in thinking and organizing of thoughts. But there is a greater processing of negative events. Writing about stressful or traumatic events is consistently successful in decreasing rumination over stressful matters (Pizarro, 2011).

Finally, I have always been very creative and loved to make gifts for all my friends by hand. From creating a Funko out of clay to making a t-shirt from scratch and painting it. I think it's a nice way to express both my pain and my love. Handcrafts, like painting or making any kind of crafts, make survivors able to work through fear, anger, resentment, and isolation. Art therapy has been used as a treatment for trauma. These art expressions can increase self-esteem, lower stress, productivity, validation from others, and connection with other people. These results validate the idea that creative activities help people to maintain a generative identity (Adams-Price & Steinman, 2007).

T-shirt design as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



4.2 Our definition of creative practice and examples from the Urbterr project and the survey

Many people think that a creative practice is another way of describing the creation of art works. It is certainly true that some forms of creative practice involve the making of paintings, sculptures, and other art works. However, creative practice can take many other forms, including some that are characterised by a deliberate refusal to produce or keep tangible outputs. A first key fact about creative practice, as we understand it, is that it *refers to a process rather than a specific result*.

What distinguishes creative practice from other activities is that it is a process that involves the use of our imagination. Cooking, for example, is something that many of us do routinely. It can be a chore that we do because we need to feed ourselves or others without experiencing a great amount of joy or stimulation. However, cooking can also be a creative process. For example, when we look for new recipes or feel inspired by familiar ingredients, dishes, and meals we used to make and enjoy. Unfortunately, other forms of stress and pressure can make it hard for people to get creative, such as a lack of time and financial resources. It is thus important to identify and tackle barriers that prevent people from engaging in creative practice.

A second key fact about creative practice is that it can take many forms including some that have nothing to do with art in the conventional sense. We have deliberately included activities like gardening, cooking, and sports in

our research on creative practice because these activities can also involve the use of our imagination. They, too, can provide positive challenges for our minds and familiar routines that previously brought enjoyment and improve our wellbeing.

Creative practices are an important and powerful tool in therapy for trauma survivors (Baker (2006), Lev-Wiesel and Kissos (2019); Tayyip & Özal (2024); Thomson & Jaque (2020);). However, it is also something that we can cultivate and grow in our daily lives – in the form of activities that we practice on our own or that we share with others. Even at the best of times, some people find this easier than others. Many victims and survivors of terrorist attacks face a range of emotional and practical barriers when it comes to creative practices. This toolkit was developed with input from victims and survivors and makes concrete suggestions to reduce these barriers to enable more people to enjoy the benefits of creative practices.

**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#6**

“creating contexts for survivors to both connect as a community as well as to share and/or learn various arts/crafts/skills to enrich their lives as well as to heal opens the door to long term health and well-being as well as processing the immediate/acute injury. Long term follow up of some sort as the trauma is being resolved allows for a true transcendence and even the arts/crafts/etc can then become an offering to the wellbeing of others above and beyond even one's own personal healing. "We are the world"! May our individual healing and wellbeing be a blessing that trickles out to all who need Love and Healing and Connection”

**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#32**

“Creativity is part of individual evolution and development and manifests itself or does not manifest, both are part of that creativity. I don't quite understand the express relationship between "being or becoming creative" after having suffered a terrorist attack. However, all activity (creative or not) is healthy and beneficial for anyone if chosen voluntarily.”

“La creatividad forma parte de la evolución y desarrollo individual y se manifiesta o no se manifiesta, ambas forman parte de “esa creatividad”. No entiendo muy bien la relación expresa entre “ser o hacerse creativo” después de haber sufrido un atentado terrorista. No obstante, toda actividad (creativa o no) es sana y beneficiosa para cualquiera si se elige voluntariamente.”

In our survey, there were different types of activities people were doing. We categorized the activities into six groups and welcomed survey participants to add examples of their own. The categories were: arts and crafts; writing;

music; gardening; sports; meditation, spiritual, faith based, or religious practices; and other (for additional creative practices beyond the ones we listed).

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



5. Who has participated and benefited from creative practices?

Our work has been with people ranging in age from 16 - 65+ who live in a variety of urban settings from less than a thousand to more than a million.

Creative Practices Survey Respondent #36

“Any activity that requires capturing and expressing the pain makes me feel less heavy. And new activities, such as crocheting, help me focus my attention and lower my anxiety”

“Cualquier actividad que requiere plasmar el dolor me hace sentir con menos peso. Y las actividades nuevas, como el ganchillo, me ayudan a enfocar la atención y rebajar la ansiedad”

Creative Practices Survey Respondent #32

“Any activity that requires a thought, is beneficial for everyone, whether you are a victim or not. Even deciding not to do activities, whether creative or not, in itself, is a good option.”

“Cualquier actividad que requiera un pensamiento, es beneficiosa para todos, seas víctima o no. Incluso, decidir no hacer actividades sean o no creativas, ya en sí, es una buena opción.”

Previous research suggests that engaging in creative practices is beneficial at all stages in life (Adams-Price et al. (2017); Fancourt & Finn (2019).) However, many survivors and victims of terrorism live with posttraumatic stress, lifelong injuries, and/or grief. This can make it difficult to access and maintain creative practices. People told us that there are other barriers, too. Some are practical, e.g. a lack of time or financial resources. Others are psychological, for example when people fear that they are not creative enough, or don't feel 'worthy or "able"' to engage in creative work – as one participant in a workshop we organised noted. Due to these barriers, many survivors and victims of terrorism miss out on the benefits of creative practices.

While creative practices cannot replace therapeutic support, one contributor to this project rightly stressed that it can serve as a lifeline for victims and survivors who are waiting for therapy and other forms of support. Moreover, survivors and victims from various countries told us that creative practices helped them overcome feelings of helplessness and powerlessness during trials and inquests. Many survivors and victims find it crucial to attend trials and inquests, even if this can be unsettling and (re)traumatising.

Our research has shown that creative practices in the context of trials and inquest can vary greatly. Many people told us that they reflect on their experiences and emotions in written journals. We also heard from people who found it helpful to engage in photography, drawing, and knitting while attending court proceedings. In many cases, such forms of creative practice have remained personal and private. However, there are also people who have shared their creative practices with national and international audiences. Bahareh Akrami, for example, began to draw court scenes during the trial of the 13 November attacks in Paris. She posted some of her art on Instagram, and it attracted great interest.

Bahareh Akrami was one of the international artists who featured in our 2025 exhibition *Remembering is Painful, Forgetting is Unbearable: Creative Responses to Terror* at the RBSA Gallery in Birmingham (UK). Developed in collaboration with survivors and victims of recent terror attacks, as well as international artists and researchers, this exhibition presented critical, victim-centred perspectives on recent acts of terrorism in Birmingham and other European cities. The displayed works provided a powerful illustration of the role that art can play in remembering, bearing witness, confronting, and transforming trauma.

UrbTerr exhibition in Birmingham featuring photography, poetry, film, knitting and other forms of creative practice.

By Katharina Karcher



6. Inspiration for participation in creative practices

We wanted to understand the motivations and reasons why people participate in or want to participate in their chosen activities. The most common responses related to mental health and socialization. For many people, their creative practice is a *distraction* (52%), closely followed by *using the activity to process the experience* (48%), and *to be part of a community* (46%). For some, they *previously had the hobby and continued to participate in it* (33%).

At the same time, some people are not interested in participating in creative activities because the interest has never been there, they lack energy, or they lack time. While it is important to respect individual choices and decisions, our research suggests that more survivors and victims of terrorist violence would participate in creative practice if they were provided with accessible options and tailored support.

Our research highlights that creative practices are part of the healing process for our respondents. As such, we suggest that the introduction and opportunities for activities be presented and done so in a healing and supportive manner. Furthermore, when possible, continuous enrolment opportunities should also be made available.

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#10

“Doing repetitive activities that result in some visual accomplishment (like crocheting, knitting, wood sanding or staining, even folding clothes or unloading a dishwasher or vacuuming) is meditative in that it allows the mind to do the task but also step away from the task mentally and process information in the back of the mind. At the end of the task you can step away and visually observe what you have accomplished, especially in creative activities because that requires a learning curve (vs vacuuming). This, for me, results in a feeling of creating rather than the destruction feelings of my memories of tragic events. And that in itself helps counteract despair, if only for a little bit of “lightening up”.”

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#51

“The activity allows you to reconnect to reality while having a distraction. It allows you to forget for a moment, to be proud of having accomplished something. Realize that you are still able to achieve things. It also allows you to maintain relationships with people, to have a social bond.”

“L'activité permet de se reconnecter au réel tout en ayant une distraction. Elle permet d'oublier pendant un moment, être fier d'avoir accomplie quelque chose. Se rendre compte d'être toujours capable de réaliser encore des choses. Elle permet aussi de maintenir des relations avec des personnes, d'avoir un lien social.”

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#16

“It is always important to be able to do. The transformation of pain is only possible from that place. This is for life and having tools is essential to get ahead.”

“Siempre es importante el poder hacer. La transformación del dolor solo es posible desde ese lugar. Esto es para toda la vida y tener herramientas es fundamental para salir adelante.”

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#7

“Creative activities uplift survivor's spirit.”

7. Examples of creative practices shared by our survey respondents

7.1 Types of activities people are currently doing

The most common creative activities were gardening, sports, meditation, spiritual, faith based, or religious Practices, arts and crafts, music, and writing. For some people, they participated in different types of activities at the same time.

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#56

"I have both a creative activity (mainly writing books and articles) and a sports practice,"

"car j'ai à la fois une activité créatrice (principalement l'écriture de livres et d'articles) et une pratique sportive, "

Arts and Crafts

For arts and crafts, the most common answers were photography (57%), drawing (39%), participating in documentaries or films (30%), painting (26%), and sewing (22%).

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#42

"Ceramics and pottery provided me with mindfulness and meditation that traditional meditating could not facilitate, I used ceramics to quiet the noise in my head and help to create a sense of calm in my nervous system / fight or flight"

Sports

For the sports, many people enjoyed walking (69%), running or jogging (31%), cycling (31%), and swimming (26%).

Creative Practices**Survey Respondent****#26**

"I play golf as I played it as a kid and enjoy now getting back into it. I also lift weights and play badminton."

Writing, Journaling, or Diaries

For writing, journaling or diaries were the most popular at 62% along with writing short stories (27%).

Creative Practices**Survey Respondent****#50**

"Write your memoirs"

"Écrire ses mémoires"

Gardening and Being Outdoors

Outdoor gardening was very popular creative practice (85%) with people also enjoying indoor gardening (30%).

Meditations, Spiritual, Faith Based, or Religious Practices

Our respondents also shared about activities involving meditation, spiritual, faith based, or religious practices. These included walks in nature (71%), mindful meditation (46%), yoga (34%), and self-practice (29%).

Music

Many of our respondents preferred to engage with music on their own (69%). Some people enjoyed being part of a choir and band (16%) or others in musical groups (16%).

Other Creative Practices

There were many other creative practices that people mentioned they were involved with. These included: reading on their own, reading groups, hiking,

crocheting, braiding leather, theatre, language classes, Pilates, Bailar, Qigong, ceramics and pottery, going to the beach, fishing, retreats, Taichi, woodworking, furniture restoration, bird watching, and AA meetings (unspecified as to type).

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent

#48

"I am learning to work with braided leather and creative sewing through YouTube videos but I would like to go to face-to-face courses on these activities."

"Estoy aprendiendo a trabajar el cuero trenzado y la costura creativa a través de videos de YouTube pero me gustaría ir a cursos presenciales sobre estas actividades."

7.2 What participation can look like: as an individual, in a group, or both

We were curious if people used their creative practices for socialization, participated individually, or as per their feeling at the time. For some, they preferred to participate in their activities alone (37%) and for others as a group (31%). Some also indicated that it could depend on their mood if they participated in a group or on their own (31%). From this range of answers, we can see that people want to have options and choices to how and potentially who they interact with for their creative practices.

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent

#30

"I think the important thing is that you need something other than the tragedy to focus on (i.e., a distraction), plus find a community of people that understands what you are experiencing (that is really hard to do in my opinion...most people can not relate)"

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent

#5

"Creating contexts for survivors to both connect as a community as well as to share and/or learn various arts/crafts/skills to enrich their lives as well as to heal opens the door to long term health and well-being as well as processing the immediate/acute injury."

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#19

"I think sense of community is really important in the healing process. You need to be able to find a group of people that understand what you have gone through. At the time of the tragedy I was living in a smaller city (population 150,000) and there was no one there that could understand the situation. After about 20 years I met people who had also been impacted by this tragedy and it was very comforting to be able to speak with them."

7.3 Benefits for physical health and mental health from participating in creative practices

Participants in our research expressed that creative activities were worthwhile for a range of reasons. The most common answer was that creative practices gave them a sense of mindfulness or being present and aware of their own feelings and thoughts (64%). Their chosen creative practices also helped to improve their physical health (45%), gave them a sense of control or empowerment (43%) and/or a sense of achievement (43%), and provided a welcome distraction (42%). There were also connections to community and a sense of belonging (30%), and a sense of connection to someone they had lost to terrorism (23%). For others, the creative practice they are involved in was simply fun (23%).

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#16

"These activities reconnect us to our emotions (introspection) and to society (sharing)"

"Ces activités nous reconnectent à nos émotions (introspection) et à la société (partage)"

Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#26

"Awareness & not feeling alone is a vital part of our healing journey."

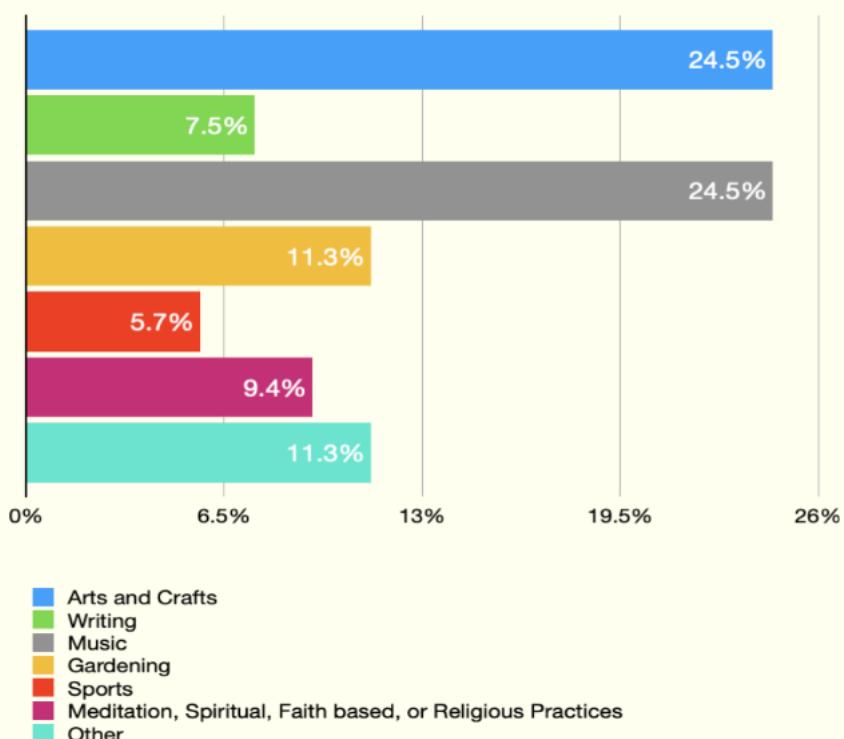
**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#54**

"I did a degree in fine art, so come from a fine art background. When I was caught up in the terror attack, I knew that I would need to do something creative to be able to process the trauma as I had already done art and knew its benefits. I had been taking a pottery evening class, and so after the attack enrolled on a ceramics masters. It was the one thing that really helped me process the trauma. I would be happy to help promote creativity or run courses etc. Now I have the privilege of teaching pottery in evening classes and it is hard work, and sometimes triggering, but it is a great source of solace."

7.4 Future interest in activities

Most of the people involved in our projects were more interested in participating in familiar activities than in taking up or learning new ones. One possible reason for this is that they may want something comforting and familiar rather than taking on something new. For those who were interested in new creative practices, the most common categories were arts and crafts along with music.

Which creative activities have you not tried but are interested in?



From these answers, we suggest that victims' associations may want to offer culturally and sensitively appropriate arts, crafts, or music sessions. While

these may not be of direct interest to all individuals, they are a starting point. From there, people may be reminded of previous creative practices that they participated in and are interested in starting again.

**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#4**

"Regardless of the field (art, culture, sport...) in which you invest, the important thing is to go out and evacuate or momentarily remove the worries of the moment or the effects of the traumas suffered. In the community there is little encouragement to achieve this."

"Peu importe le domaine (art, culture, sport...) dans lequel on s'investit, l'important est de sortir et d'évacuer ou d'éloigner momentanément les soucis du moment ou les effets des traumatismes subis. En communauté peu encourager à y parvenir."

**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#26**

"I found that keeping myself busy was very important afterwards...otherwise there was too much "empty" time to think about the tragedy."

**Creative Practices
Survey Respondent
#5**

"Long term follow up of some sort as the trauma is being resolved allows for a true transcendence and even the arts/crafts/etc can then become an offering to the wellbeing of others above and beyond even one's own personal healing."

8. How to get organized / started

Depending on how people are feeling, they may have different levels of comfort for where they participate in various creative practices. There might be a preference to be at home compared to participating outdoors or in a third location. Some people may want to transition between these spaces.

Artistic endeavours such as painting, knitting, or working with clay can be done in set locations, using materials in a fixed place such as at home. This also applies to say, writing, or gardening but there is also the opportunity to paint, write, knit, or garden outdoors.

These are transition activities because people can start them in a location that they feel comfortable, such as in their homes, and then decide if they want to participate in other locations. As such, an activity like photography, which would most likely be done outside of the home, is something to consider when proposing creative practices.

8.1 With a Partnership Organization:

Survivors and victims around the world have teamed up with organizations to explore and promote creative practices. Often, these collaborations happen on a grassroots level and are the result of individual efforts or informal networks. We believe that there is much to learn from these collaborations. Utilising the connections we made from the two projects, we contacted different people to share their experiences about engaging with specific organizations or specific people and creative practices.

8.1.1 Vicki Brown, Peace Collective

We begin with Vicki Brown's reflection on her work for the Peace Collective:

*The Peace Crane
Project at the Peace
Collective.*

*Photo from Suzanne
Atkins*



**What is the Peace
Collective?**

Peace Collective is an organisation which has its origins in the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation, which has been providing support to anyone affected by an act of terror for over 25 years. We support people, regardless of how they have been affected, how long ago the attack was or if they are receiving or have received any other support. We provide support on a one-to-one basis as well as in groups. Our group work focuses on developing strategies to promote coping and recovery. Group work centred on creative practice has become our most popular type of session, with participants feeding back not only how much they have enjoyed the workshops but also

how they have been able to use the skills developed in times of stress and anxiety.

***The Peace Crane
Project at the Peace
Collective.***

***Photo from Suzanne
Atkins***



We then wanted to know more about Vicki Brown's collaboration with the Peace Collective.

***How did your
organization get
started in
promoting creative
practices among
victims and
survivors of
terrorist violence?***

Bringing people together who have shared experiences to develop coping strategies is at the core of our group work. We recognise that everyone's experience of a terror attack is completely unique, however we find that people benefit from hearing about coping strategies developed by others who are at different stages in their journey. Workshops providing information about sleep hygiene, nutrition, mindfulness and trauma awareness are well received, but people really enjoy the distraction of creative work. We have always used creative work to engage young people, however this has been expanded to adults and has been adapted to be used for on-line sessions to maintain connections during the pandemic initially, and now to ensure that as many people as possible can access support from wherever they may be.

What challenges did you face in the context of this important work?

We did find that people were initially reluctant to try something new for fear that they wouldn't be able to keep up with instructions however we found that doing the sessions online was really helpful for people being able to feel that they can participate or not and show their work or not! We encouraged a really relaxed atmosphere with opportunities to ask questions or access written instructions/videos if needed.

We were keen to make the creative workshops as accessible as possible in terms of materials and cost which meant carefully considering types of activities we could undertake.

It was also important to consider any physical impairments which may have been a barrier to participation and take steps to mitigate these.

The Peace Crane Project at the Peace Collective.

Photo from Suzanne Atkins



What are the benefits of this work?

- Learning new skills
- Achieving something
- Interacting with others who have experienced trauma without having to focus on the trauma
- Developing coping strategies
- Developing a sense of solidarity
- Enjoyment
- Distraction
- Support engagement with traditional therapies or psychological support services

(Here we are thinking particularly about small organisations who may have a small budget or no budget at all).

What advice would you give organisations wanting to promote creative practices among victims and survivors?

Online sessions are a very cost-effective way of engaging lots of people in an activity and encouraging them to source materials themselves. Selecting activities which will only require materials readily available will therefore be essential e.g. pencil and paper for mindful drawing, magazines or leaflets and natural materials for collage making.

Empowering participants to consider if they have any existing creative skills/coping strategies they would like to share and supporting them to do this.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?

Our creative sessions are by far the most popular sessions we run and the collaborative projects we have undertaken as part of these sessions have offered a common goal, a sense of solidarity and achievement and raised public awareness of the impact of trauma and even prevention of terrorism.

They have inspired people to access previously forgotten creative outlets or develop new creative skills to help them to cope with the impact of act of terror.

8.1.2 Suzanne Atkins, Artist and Educator working in collaboration with Peace Collective

We have also asked Suzanne Atkins to reflect on her experience. She is a creative professional who has worked in collaboration with the Peace Collective. Suzanne is also survivor of terrorist violence.

**The Peace Crane
Project at the Peace
Collective.**

**Photo from Suzanne
Atkins**



**What is your
creative practice?**

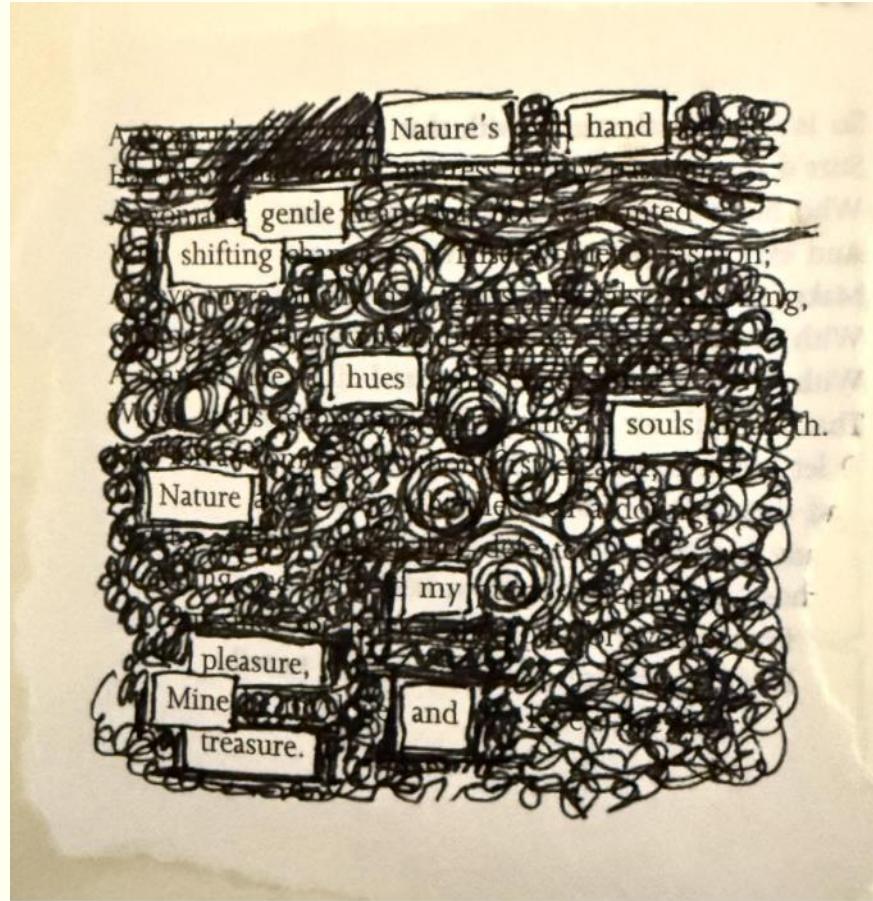
I am a Graphic Designer and Illustrator. I have worked in Higher Education for the majority of my career but have always continued practising professionally as an artist.

My work is a mix of manual and digital and includes drawing and making images as well as working with a range of Graphic Design outputs such as typographic design and branding.

As a creative and an educator my focus is on creativity for purpose and positive change. I believe that artists and designers can and should use their talents to make the world a better place. On a personal level, I promote the idea that creative practice can be healing; it can aid wellbeing and can support traditional modes of therapy for more successful outcomes. Through discussion with other survivors, and based on my own experience, we have found that creative techniques can work in tandem with other processes such as talking therapy or EMDR. It can also provide useful tools to focus on while awaiting access to traditional therapy.

**Writing and
design as a
creative
practice.**

**Photo from
Suzanne
Atkins**



**How did you get
started? (Was this
something that
you used to do or a
new activity?)**

I graduated with a degree in Graphic Design in 1993 so have always been creative. I have also painted from an early age.

After being injured in a terrorist attack in 2017, I found I wasn't able to paint portraits or observational studies; my ability to visualise and translate images had been affected. It took 5 years and a great deal of support, therapy and practice for me to regain that ability and once I did, I realised how good it was for me. It was this realisation that made me want to share creative practice with others.

I approached the support team at the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation with the suggestion of running art workshops. This idea developed into a collaborative project and a series of mindful drawing workshops.

The Peace Crane project aimed to bring survivors together who had been affected by many different attacks in a variety of ways through a shared creative task.

Inspired by the story of Sadako Sasaki, we asked people to join us in creating an installation made from 1000 peace cranes to be hung in the Peace Centre in Warrington. Each of the paper cranes included was made by or for a person affected by a terrorist attack.

What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

The final display of 1000 peace cranes was completed and unveiled on 20th March 2024. Many of the cranes contain private messages, wishes and prayers. Some have been decorated or illustrated. All are full of meaning and love and a combined hope for peace.

All of the cranes are made the same way, but each one holds a personal significance for the person that made it. They have been sent from far and wide and represent attacks that have taken place all over the world.

Following the success of the Peace Crane project and the positive experience of the participants, we developed a series of creative workshops exploring the process of drawing as a form of guided meditation; finding calm and mindfulness through artistic expression.

Unlike some traditional image making, mindful or 'slow' drawing is all about the doing rather than the end result; tuning in to your feelings, connecting with your breath and taking notice of the marks you make, helping you to pay attention to the present moment.

The Peace Crane Project at the Peace Collective.

Photo from Suzanne Atkins



The Peace Crane project required fishing line, beads and lots of origami paper! Most participants bought or made their own paper but we were able to send this out where needed in order to make the project as accessible as possible.

In terms of cost, the mindful drawing workshops helped to dispel the myth that art is expensive. We structured the sessions to need only basic equipment and collated materials into a kit that was sent out to participants. Each kit cost £11 plus postage and contained a 12cm square sketchbook, a black and a white drawing pen, a small paintbrush and a half pan of blue watercolour. We also included a few squares of black, squared, dotted and tracing paper.

I already had the equipment needed to deliver sessions and demonstrations online including an overhead camera so this made it easy to guide participants through techniques.

***The Peace Crane
Project at the Peace
Collective.***

***Photo from Suzanne
Atkins***



Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

I practice origami and drawing as an individual which is what led me to want to share it with others.

The feedback from the groups that took place was overwhelmingly positive. We can provide quotes and testimonials if needed.

The process of making cranes brought people together in person and online enabling us to come together in shared experience. Others were made individually allowing for quiet thought and personal reflection.

The different approaches meant we could be fully inclusive and reach individuals that could not participate in group work. We also introduced survivors to the mindful art of origami, giving them a tool that could be used as a coping mechanism in times of distress.

For those that were unable to join the sessions for practical reasons, the team arranged for materials to be sent out via the post to make this project accessible for as many people as possible.

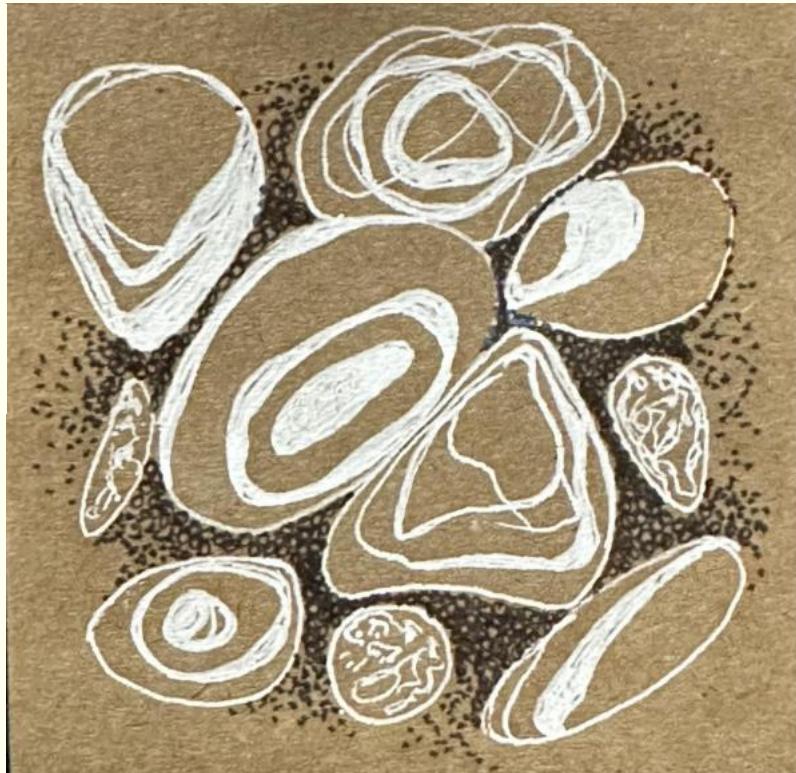
Painting as a creative practice.

Photo from Suzanne Atkins



Painting as a creative practice.

Photo from Suzanne Atkins



What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

Don't worry about being able to draw!

For both types of work, the process is the key to this being healing creative practice. You don't need any existing skill level and it isn't about the outcome. This takes the pressure off as there are no expectations as to what you will produce.

It's something you can do anywhere and any time, even if you only have two minutes. The way we do it, you don't produce a finished outcome so you can return to it. You don't even need to have your sketchbook with you, all you need is a pen and a piece of paper!

We have heard from participants that had previously tried yoga, meditation and other self-help methods that they had found mindful drawing particularly impactful and accessible. One individual took their sketchbook to a therapy session. Others said it helped them create time for themselves.

Research shows that mindful interactions with art and drawing can result in a deeper experience and a heightened sense of well-being. Right-brain stimulation helps calm the mind and body and art that engages us in a focused, creative activity, can help to quiet the mental noise that can overwhelm us. Becoming completely immersed in an activity can be calming and therapeutic and drawing in rhythmic, sometimes repetitive ways can even be a form of meditation.

8.1.3 Çetin Gültekin, in collaboration with Mutlu Koçak to co-write a book

Here we present an example of how collaboration can help to identify what creative practice might be possible for individuals. This example takes place in Germany where Çetin Gültekin, through collaboration with Mutlu Koçak, was able to co-write a book about a tragedy that occurred in 2020. For many years, the two men worked on this project without any formal support.

On 19 February 2020, Çetin Gültekin lost his only brother in the most brutal way possible. Gökhan 'Gogo' Gültekin was one of nine people killed in a racist terror attack in the German town of Hanau. Çetin describes this day as 'the longest day' because of not only the brutal attack that left him and his family traumatised, but also the police failings in the case and the lack of respect shown to them and other victims by the authorities (<https://blog.bham.ac.uk/urbterr/2025/03/26/652/>).

When anti-racist campaigner Mutlu Koçak heard Çetin speak powerfully about these experiences at a public gathering, he decided to contact him. From that initial interview, they developed a co-authored book that became an international bestseller. While working on this project together, Mutlu and Çetin developed a deep friendship. Çetin did not consider himself a writer when he embarked on this project, but the collaboration with Mutlu enabled him to write a truly remarkable book about the life and death of his brother.

The book is titled ***Geboren, aufgewachsen, und ermordet in Deutschland: Das zu kurze Leben meines Bruders Gökhan Gültekin und der Anschlag von Hanau*** [Born, raised, and murdered in Germany: The All Too Short Life of My Brother Gökhan Gültekin and the Hanau Shootings]. It begins by imagining how Gökhan might have reflected on the attack from the hereafter. Below is the book's opening passage, translated by Elizabeth Sun:

My name is Gökhan Gültekin. For 37 years, hardly a soul on this earth took an interest in my story. But now, the time has come for all to know what transpired. This is a story for which I paid the ultimate price. Yet, my soul will live on.

Death is inevitable, yet never without significance. Pain, anger, and disappointment often blind us to this truth. May my journey on this Earth, which so often led me through rugged paths, leave a positive mark on the lives of those I leave behind. May my end serve as a lasting memorial to the world, against hatred, against violence. Let us learn, once more, what it means to be human.

Writing as a creative practice.

Photo of the cover of Çetin Gültekin and Mutlu Koçak's book



8.2 Individuals on their own

Next, we present five profiles, with pictures, from survivors and victims who participate in creative activities. They have shared their thoughts about their activities, how they got started, their motivation, and suggestions for others on how to get started. The skills and levels of expertise vary. We wanted to show a range of possibilities and beginning points so that people could scale up their involvement at a level they feel comfortable.

8.2.1 Julie Anna Freund's Paintings in the United States

Julie Anna Freund is a fine artist from the US. Her vibrant paintings reflect her love of horses and other animals and engage with a range of themes and issues. At a young age, Julie Anna has lost her father in a terrorist attack. Today, she balances her time between being a mother and creating art.

www.julieannafreund.com

*Painting as a
creative practice.*

*By Julie Anna
Freund*

*Regal as Duck—Oil
on canvas 2014*



*What is your
creative practice?*

Fine artist. Painting, primarily in oil on canvas. However, I have been working on a few pieces each year on stretched watercolor paper and mixed media (watercolors, acrylic, pen, etc.).

I first start with a reference image and skew the photograph in a computer program. Playing with contrast, colors, darks, lights, etc. I am looking for an interesting image and enjoying using unique colors in a recognizable image.

<https://www.julieannafreund.com/equine-artwork>

I also do commission paintings for clients, typically of their pets (mostly horses and/or dogs).

I can paint realistically but what really feeds my creative soul is painting a horse with a unique color scheme.

I also make a painting or two a year revolving around the theme of Firefighting. I donate all the proceeds from my Firefighting painting series to

charities that support Firefighters (Ignite the Spirit Fund).
<https://www.julieannafreund.com/firefighter>

Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

***Open the Roof –
Mixed media on
stretched watercolor
paper 2025***



Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

***Rooftop silhouette –
Oil on canvas 2022***



How did you get started? (Was this something that you used to do or a new activity?)

Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

Azul – Oil on canvas 2014



Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

A Mother's Glow – Oil on canvas 2022



What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

For my artistic practice I need paints (oils, acrylic, watercolor), brushes and a painting surface (canvas, panel, watercolor paper).

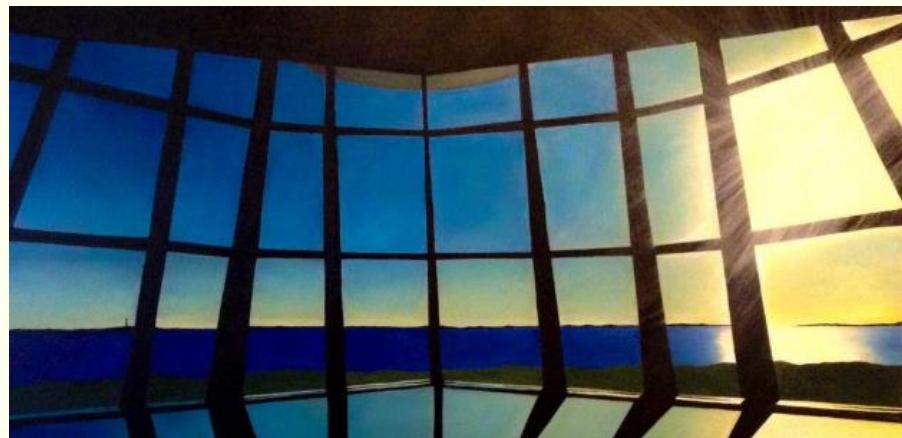
My paints tend to last several years. White tends to be the color that gets used the fastest/quickest.

Surfaces, paints, and brushes can be bought in specialist shops or ordered online.

Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

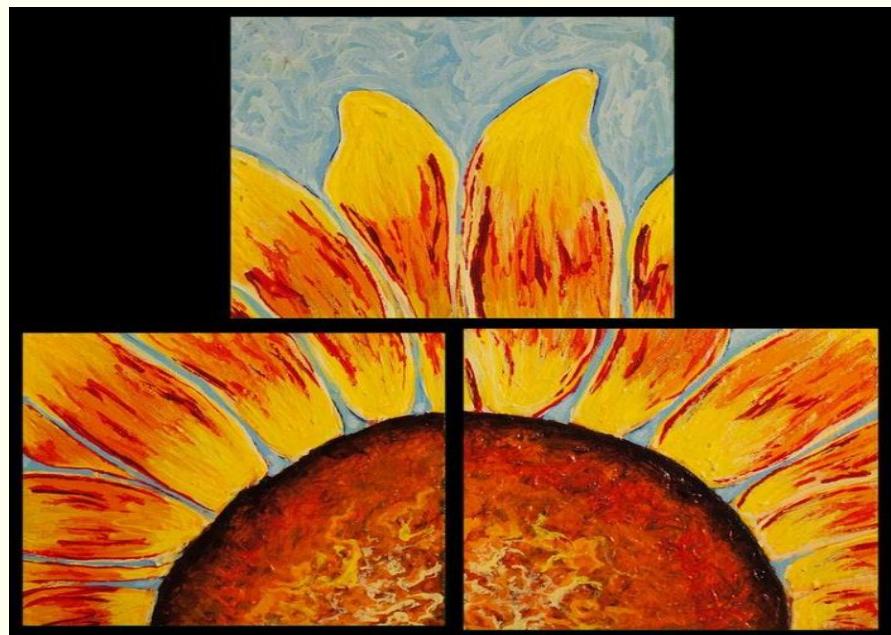
Museum Sunrise – Oil on canvas 2016



Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

Midday Sun – Oil on canvas 2016



Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

I typically paint alone. I do find my creative practice meditative. I am a mother of a young child. I paint while he is napping. My painting time is limited to his nap, which lasts for 2 hours.

From time to time, about once a year, I will do an artist residency where I will work on pieces during that studio time.

When I was in my 20's I did teach at a painting bar and would teach very simple paintings using acrylic on canvas in a 3-hour time span to a "class."

I find artist residencies via social media or through my local artistic community.

Painting as a creative practice.

By Julie Anna Freund

I am a baby, hear me ROAR – Oil on canvas 2021



What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

Like anything else, it takes practice and the first time anyone tries anything new it can be a humbling experience. Having a good foundation of preservation will lead to artistic breakthroughs and enjoyment in the process and product.

I would start by making art for your own enjoyment. If other people also find enjoyment in your artwork, that is merely a bonus.

8.2.2 Lisa Ghiggini's Sculptures in the United Kingdom

The traumatic experience of being caught up in a terrorist attack had a transformative impact on Lisa Ghiggini's life. She has become a passionate advocate for victims and survivors and helps create new mental health resources. She has a long-standing interest in art and creative practice and holds degrees in Fine Art and Ceramics.

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini

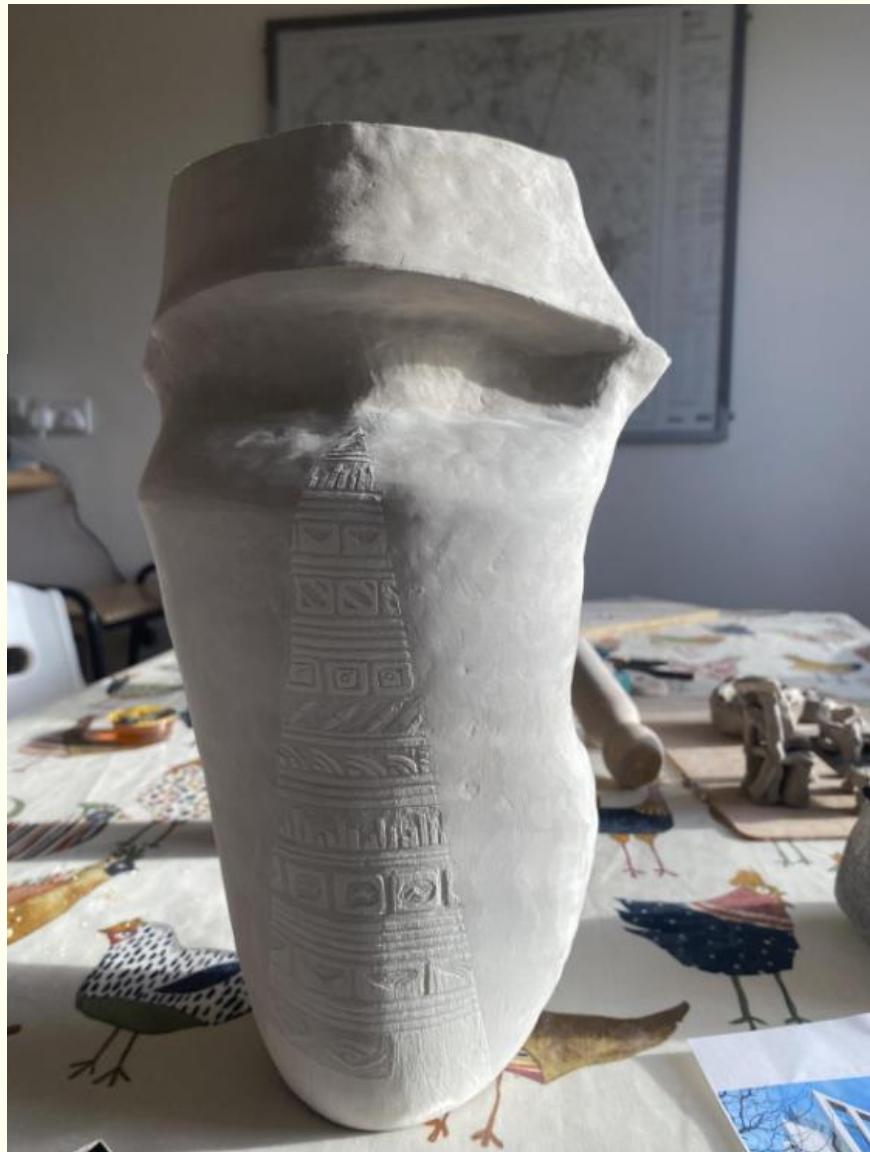


My creative practice is ceramics.

What is your creative practice?

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



How did you get started? (Was this something that you used to do or a new activity?)

I have a Fine Art degree, so have always been creative. When my children were born, I needed an 'outlet' and so tried a pottery evening class. This quickly developed into a keen interest as I found the process both grounding and releasing.

After the terror attack, I knew quite quickly that I would need to do something creative to begin processing everything that had happened, and so applied to do a Masters in ceramics. Thankfully, I was accepted onto the course.

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

In the first instance, the evening class was a relatively affordable way to access ceramics, and I didn't need any equipment for this as it was all provided. As my passion developed, I bought a kiln which was costly, I bought clay and tools. There are no clay shops near me, so everything was bought online. Eventually, I began digging for local clay, but clay isn't a huge cost anyway.

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



*Ceramics as a
creative practice.*

By Lisa Ghiggini



*Ceramics as a
creative practice.*

By Lisa Ghiggini



Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

Learning pottery at evening class was a great way to be introduced to this creative practice.

It was even more inspiring to do the Masters in Ceramics. Developing my creative practice was stimulating and peer conversations throughout the Masters were invigorating. Throughout all of these stages, having a group of people that also work with clay around me has given me a sense of community and understanding. There is something special about clay which creates a safe space for people to open up, and it is lovely when relationships flourish. I am still in close contact with the people who I studied on my master's with, and with people from the evening class.

Ceramics as a creative practice.

By Lisa Ghiggini



What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

I would say let go. Try not to listen to the harsh voice in your head, there is no right or wrong, only a conversation with the clay, and exploration. Experiment. Be patient! There are many moments that a ceramic creation changes. In each firing the work will change, which means that there are many ways that a piece can go wrong. It is part of the process but can be frustrating. It can also be enriching and rewarding when you make something you love, and you develop this skill.

It is a very mindful and calming activity.

8.2.3 Francisco Falcón Pozo's Gardening in Spain

Francisco, who lives in Spain, has always been connected to nature. It has always been a refuge for him, especially since he survived a terrorist attack. It is where he finds calm and peace.

What is your creative practice?

Mi práctica creativa es el huerto, el cuidado de las plantas. Primero me gusta sembrar, hacer hueco para las plantas cavando y después regar, para finalmente recoger lo que me de la tierra.

My creative practice is the garden, the care of plants. First, I like to sow, make a hole for the plants by digging and then watering, to finally harvest what the earth gives me.

Gardening as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



How did you get started? (Was this something that you used to do or a new activity?)

La cosa del huerto empezó de tradición, mi padre y mi abuelo eran agricultores y aprendí de ambos, donde lo realizaba desde mi infancia en mi tierra natal (Extremadura). Cuando llegué a Madrid decidí continuar con aquello que me apasionaba. Un agricultor me prestó el terreno y empecé a sembrar y fui ampliando el terreno, el tipo de plantas y la compañía que tenía.

My father and grandfather were farmers, and I learned from both of them, where I used to do it since my childhood in my homeland (Extremadura), so it is like a tradition. When I arrived in Madrid, I decided to continue with what I was passionate about. A farmer lent me the land, and I started to sow, and I started to expand the land, the type of plants and the company I had.

Gardening as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

Las herramientas las hemos comprado todas, lo ibamos haciendo poco a poco, ponemos dinero cada mes y vamos juntando material. Alguna de las herramientas las hemos ido comprando y otras nos las han dejado los hortelanos de los huertos cercanos. Las herramientas que usamos son zahilla, motosierra, mula mecánica, podadora y motores de riego. También claramente debemos tener nuestras semillas, como nosotros que plantamos cebolla, tomate, pepino, patatas, calabazas, ajos, habas... Estoy intentando que a mi hija le crezca una planta de arándanos, de valeriana y unas amapolas. Y también acabas aprovechando las cosas que te da la tierra, por ejemplo cerca de nuestro huerto hierbabuena. Para facilitarte el movimiento también debes de tener una ropa de trabajo con la que te sientas cómodo.

We have bought all the tools, we have been doing it little by little, we put money in every month, and we are gathering material. Some of the tools we bought, and others have been left to us by the gardeners in the nearby orchards. The tools that we use are a hoe, a chainsaw, a mechanical mule, a pruner and irrigation motors. Also, clearly, we must have our seeds, as we plant onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, pumpkins, garlic, beans.... I am trying to grow my daughter a blueberry plant, a valerian plant and some poppies. And you also end up taking advantage of the things that the land gives you, for example mint near our vegetable garden. To make it easier for you to move around, you should also have work clothes that you feel comfortable in.

Gardening as a creative practice.

**Photo by Saray Falcón
Trejo**



Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

Ahora somos cuatro socios, yo soy más o menos el que lo dirige porque soy el que tengo más conocimientos. Empezamos juntandonos cuatro amigos y nos repartimos el trabajo, hay personas más mayores que hacen menos y gente más joven que hacemos más. Charlando con diferentes personas encontramos el grupo, la gente se iba apuntando, había gente que trabajaba más o menos, a veces el grupo se reduce porque la gente no se da cuenta del trabajo que supone un huerto. Mi grupo ahora está formado por Santi al que consideramos un "abuelillo", Miguel mi vecino, Jesús que tiene conocimientos de mecánica y yo.

Now we are four partners, I am more or less the one who runs it because I have the most knowledge. We started by getting together as four friends and we divided up the work, there are older people who do less and younger people who do more. Chatting with different people we found the actual group, people were signing up, there were people who worked more or less, sometimes the group gets smaller because people don't realise how much work a vegetable garden is. My group now consists of Santi, who we consider a 'grandfather', Miguel, my neighbour, Jesús, who knows about mechanics, and myself.

Gardening as a creative practice.

Photo by Saray Falcón Trejo



What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

El consejo es sencillo, deben seguir la temporada de siembra. Deben aprender sobre el sitio donde se encuentren realizando, porque hay un mundo de diferencias. Es complicado empezar, pero a la vez apasionante. Recomiendo hacerlo en grupo, porque solo trabajas mucho y es más aburrido.

The advice is simple, you have to follow the planting season. You have to learn about where you are doing it, because there is a world of difference. It is complicated to start, but at the same time exciting. I recommend doing it in a group, because you work a lot alone and it's boring.

8.2.4 Figen Murray's Knitting in the United Kingdom

After Figen Murray lost one of her children in a terrorist attack, she embarked on an inspiring professional and creative journey. She led a successful campaign for legal change ('Martyn's Law'), became a counter-terrorism expert, and has made hundreds of knitted teddy bears that are now travelling the world.

What is your creative practice?

I knit teddy bears.

How did you get started? (Was this something that you used to do or a new activity?)

I had a very rare medical condition that overnight reduced my hearing on one side by 60% and gave me permanent tinnitus. I became depressed and as an ex-therapist I realised that creative activities may help me reduce my depressive feelings. I initially made vintage hearts and glove puppets but then moved on to make teddy bears. I have made over 2000 so far.

What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

I bought children's knitting needles as the bears are reasonably small. Also, I can easily pop the needles in my handbag as I tend to knit everywhere.

I also have large quantities of wool everywhere around my home. Drawers and storage space under sofas, baskets and tables are full.

Knitting as a creative practice.

Photo by Yordanka Dimcheva



Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

I knit the bears on my own. I wrote a therapeutic teddy bear book for grown ups a few years ago and whilst I wrote the book over a period of two months I had a few ladies help me knit bears. I was selling them at that time and had orders to fulfil. I mentioned all the ladies including family members in my book as a Thank you.

Knitting as a creative practice.

Photo by Yordanka Dimcheva



What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

Creativity is so good for humans. It brings us in touch with our heart and our soul, brings us and others joy and is relaxing. It is good for the brain as it floods us with endorphins.

Please don't think you cannot be creative. Simply give things a go. Try out different things, different textures and materials. Find out what appeals to you. And most of all - enjoy the process!

8.2.5 David Fritz Goeppinger's Photography around the world

David Fritz Goeppinger is a Chilean-French photographer and writer, who survived the 2015 Bataclan mass shooting in Paris. Throughout the trial, he shared reflections and photographs with the world in the form of an online diary. He has also authored two books: '*Un jour dans notre vie*' (A Day in Our Life) and '*Il fallait vivre*' (It was necessary to live).

Photography as a creative practice.

David Fritz Goeppinger photographing Jesse Hughes during the November 13th attacks trial.

Photo by Les2Palais



What is your creative practice?

Photography

How did you get started? (Was this something that you used to do or a new activity?)

What tools or equipment did you need? How did you get these? Were there any costs associated with your activities?

Who participates in this activity – do you do this alone or in a group? How did you find the group?

What advice would you give to others just starting out in this activity?

I started photography when I was 15 by sneaking the family digital camera. I took it everywhere with me and captured both my daily life and more abstract things. I already had a crazy dream: to be a professional photographer.

To work as a professional photographer, I need a digital camera, a few lenses capable of covering a wide range of situations, and a computer to process the images. All of this comes at a cost, and I couldn't buy everything at once, so I saved up and over the years bought what I could.

As a photographer, you spend most of your time alone, but there are times when, during certain assignments I carry out for my clients, I work in pairs or with more people when the subject requires it.

I am now 33 years old, and I know that I have accomplished part of the dream I had as a child. The life of a photographer remains precarious, but it is a fascinating profession full of encounters, incredible situations, and enriching experiences. Despite the financial difficulties I have encountered throughout my career, I have always fought, keeping in mind what I told myself when I was barely 15: 'One day, I will be a photographer.'

9. Suggestions for how to get started

From our work we have gathered a list of possible creative practices people may be interested in starting again, learning from scratch, or sharing with others. These are only some of the possibilities and we encourage them to be used as a starting point to help others think of additional activities.

We included the categories of sports, and meditation, spiritual, faith based, or religious practices to understand a wholistic view of creative self-care approaches. While they may be beyond a traditional understanding of 'creative', including them gives a wider range of the different types of activities people are participating in.

Gardening	Indoor gardening, Outdoor gardening, Flower arrangements, Others?
Sports	Golf, Running or Jogging, Marathons, Martial Arts, Swimming, Team sports, Walking, Dance, Cycling, Extreme sports, Others?
Writing	Poems, Short Stories, Journaling or Diaries, Others?
Meditation, Spiritual, Faith based, or Religious Practices	Attending services, Pilgrimages, Self-practice, Mindful meditation, Walks in nature, Yoga, Others?
Arts and Crafts	Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Participating in documentaries or films, Photography, Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting, Cross stitch, Others?
Music	Choir, Band or musical group, Drum Circles, On your own, Others?
Examples from the people involved in our projects	Reading on their own, Reading groups, Hiking, Crocheting, Braiding leather, Theatre, Language classes, Pilates, Bailar, Qigong, Ceramics and pottery, Going to the beach, Fishing, Retreats, Taichi, Woodworking, Furniture restoration, Bird watching, AA meetings

"I told them about how knitting helped and as an ex-therapist I would really urge them to get creative in some form. They asked me what to do and I suggested writing stories or poems, knitting, crocheting, painting, etc. One of the ladies who lost her son at the mosque has now written two published children's books and has definitely found comfort in doing so."

9.1 How to make activities accessible and inclusive

When asking people about the creative practices they may want to participate in, we gently suggest that inclusive language be used. This includes using welcoming words and phrases. For example, using language that recognises and respects the diversity of different people and their experiences. It is also important to note that people will differ in how much they want to share about themselves. Respecting people's privacy, to only share information about themselves when they feel comfortable. Also understanding and accepting that people may change their minds on how open they are to discussing their experiences.

It is important to avoid generalising statements about the experiences and mental health of survivors and victims. Every journey is unique. While many people experience PTSD and other diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health problems, this is not the case for all individuals. Adjustments to the physical environment may be necessary for some people to feel comfortable. In the case of group activities, considerations as to the differing physical requirements of participants are also necessary.

People will have a variety of reasons they may or may not want to participate in creative practices. We found that some people value the opportunity to discuss their experiences and/or mental health while engaging in activities, whereas others want to use creative practice as a distraction. If arranging for group participation, these differing perspectives need to be acknowledged and respected. Doing so will allow for a safe, inclusive environment that allows people to participate in a manner that feels best for them.

9.2 Finding local resources, partnerships, or existing organizations

When introducing or suggesting creative practices, some considerations about costs, materials, and learning resources need to be made. Some activities require more materials and resources than others. Decisions need to be made as to who will obtain and pay for these materials. If there is interest in an activity, is there anyone available to guide or teach skills needed for the participants? For example, if someone wants to take up knitting, who has not done it before, is it possible to find volunteers in your area that can teach knitting? Who will supply and pay for the materials needed to start the activity?

This can apply to other creative practices such as gardening; is there a local organization that someone can join? A person may want to join but not yet be able to make long-term or consistent commitments to the activities. Sharing this information with both the organizers and participants will help to communicate what is possible for everyone involved.

9.3 Additional Considerations

To help you organize and keep track of information we have made a table with suggestions. This can be modified and used in any way that best suits your needs.

Considerations regarding participation:

1. If people want to do this in a group, who will arrange times and locations, and lead a group?
2. If there are costs associated with materials, who will pay?
Are there any local organizations in your area that may help to offset the costs?
3. What barriers to participation need to be considered for people to be involved? For example, are there hesitations to meet in large open spaces or conversely, smaller spaces with fewer windows and doors. Are there physical considerations such as mobility, sight, or hearing that should be addressed to allow for accessibility. If an organizer is in doubt, they may need to ask the people participating and determine what if any modifications can be made to accommodate these needs.

Activity:

Number of people of want to participate:

Contact information of local organizations:

Materials or supplies needed:

Volunteer organizers or instructors OR online instructional videos:

Locations for activities:

Other?

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