



# The Harv Toback Creative Arts Therapy Fellowship Newsletter



The Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department

April 2020

## Monthly Update

Throughout the month of April, patients experiencing a range of diagnoses, such as cancer, renal disease, respiratory infections, gastrointestinal disorders, and COVID-19, used creative arts therapy services. Weekend art therapy services have been implemented to support adjustment, coping and emotional expression related to each individual experience.

Art Therapy services have been provided at bedside, in person and virtually, to patients ranging between the ages of four to twenty-three years old. In the month of April, *The Harv Toback Creative Arts Therapy Fellowship* has provided **23** individual art therapy sessions.



## Patient Spotlight – Kayla



Eleven-year-old Kayla was admitted for a sickle cell pain crisis, as well as monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19. Throughout this virtual session, Kayla shared multiple experiences throughout the pandemic that led her to feel many different emotions that she was unable to describe. Due to having an established rapport, through the camera this session focused on utilizing color association to assist with emotion identification. Throughout the creative process Kayla created a round image, beginning with green to represent 'germs' and continued to share situations that have happened throughout the pandemic. With supportive dialogue and modeling, Kayla was able to identify colors to represent each situation and the emotion it instilled in her such as: blue to represent feelings of sadness for those who have died, red for anger towards peers, and black to represent her fear of the virus itself. This creative process provided Kayla an outlet and safe environment to process each experience and emotion.

# Virtual Creative Arts Therapy

Over the last few months, the Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy department has been closely monitoring COVID-19 and the guidelines presented throughout the state. We have been taking all precautions, while continuing to provide the best possible care for our patients and families at Mount Sinai Kravis Children's Hospital. We are lucky enough to have resources in place that allow us to be in the room with the patient using technology. Through iPads and robots, the Child Life and Creative Arts Therapy Department has been able to provide virtual sessions for pediatric patients, as well as multiple videos created by our Child Life staff explaining COVID-19 for children and parents. Below is a statement from one of our music therapists, Jasmine, and her experience with virtual creative arts therapy:

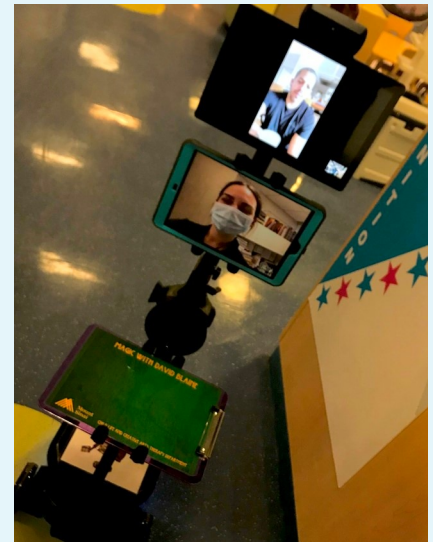


“Through iPads and robots, I have been exploring the ways in which I can provide music therapy sessions to our pediatric patients with COVID-19. In person, music therapy is dynamic, where the therapist can modify music in the moment to respond to the patient's singing, playing, mood, and energy level. Over video, that assessment is much more difficult. As a result, music therapy services offered through video calls end up in the realm of receptive music. I often find myself providing music to help soothe and calm, allowing the patient the opportunity to actively listen. Other times, the iPad or robot is turned on at the right moment, and I catch a patient in the mood for some energized music making. Leaving instruments in the room allows myself and the patient to play together at the same time. I am eager to continue learning about how to still provide effective music therapy services to our patients even in times when we can't physically be together.”

## Staff Support



While virtual art therapy has presented with benefits and challenges, it has been rewarding to join as a team to create new ways to support our patients and families. We have been able to support patients, families, and Mount Sinai employees through multiple outlets such as, wellness carts filled with coffee, tea and snacks; motivational messages throughout the hospital; staff support hour filled with mindfulness activities; staff support kits; and daily virtual magical interactions with David Blaine.



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See more patient art, stories and poems in our SURGE publication online  
[http://bit.ly/SURGE\\_spring2019](http://bit.ly/SURGE_spring2019)

We are thankful to our donors!

The Creative Arts Therapy Fellowship is generously supported by *The Harv Toback Fund for The Arts*