



Youth Arts Action- Individual Identity and Nurturing Belonging

Summary

Over 10-weeks, our program will explore individual identity of youth through the therapeutic benefits of traditional art mediums through lessons, discussion and shared experiences with a professional facilitator. Each session will be a unique opportunity for self-expression, exploration and fostering a sense of belonging within the group. Cultivating in a Youth Zine Workshop where youth ages 12-18 will explore their individual identity through creating their own Zine and participating in creating a Collective Youth Arts Action Zine to distribute throughout the city.

Objective

This program cycle is focused on empowering youth to explore their individual identity, creating a sense of belonging within themselves and ultimately how that translates to their community at large. By way of self-awareness youth will explore their individual expression of self, discuss ways to access natural supports and grow connectedness. Through the construction of a collaborative Zine as youth across Youth Arts Action youth will develop a sense of unity among their peers while exploring their individual place in society.

Rationale

This semester's purpose is to empower youth to engage in self-reflection and provide them with the tools to articulate their voices to constructively contribute to societal conversations. Through engaging in reflective creative processes throughout the 10 weeks and ultimately collaborating on a Zine for the community youth will both explore their individual identity and cultivate a sense of belonging with community in the process.

Social Emotional Learning Outcomes



All six domains of SEL outcomes will be addressed throughout this 10-week program with a focus Initiative and Problem Solving. These two SEL outcomes will be the primary outcomes as youth foster their own individual ideas for creating art that reflects their initiative and problem-solving skills. It will be evident that these outcomes have been addressed through the final survey and by the engagement and completion of their individual and collaborative Zine.

Weekly plan

Week 1: Belonging Exploration through Paint Marker Art

In the kickoff session, participants will embark on a journey of self-exploration and community building. Youth will delve into the elements of belonging that drive their own individual sense of community. Through thoughtful discussion, this week lays the groundwork for a collaborative and inclusive space within Youth Arts Action. Using vibrant paint markers youth will create an art piece that reflects both the feeling and the spaces where they experience belonging. The intention of this week is to create a foundation of how the youth in Youth Arts Action can co-create a space of connection and welcome belonging for all participants.

Discussion Point: How can the use of paint markers visually represent and communicate the diverse aspect of individual and shared experiences of belonging?

Week 2: Newspaper Connecting Community Stories: Weaving Narratives

In this session, youth will engage with the community through modern stories via newspapers, extracting stories that resonate with them. Through mixed media techniques, participants will creatively connect their own individual stories with broader community narratives, fostering a sense of belonging within the broader community.



Discussion Point: How do your personal stories intersect with broader community narratives?

Week 3: Individuality Explored through Acrylic Squeegee Art

Individuality is explored through colors, patterns and the playful creativity of Squeegee art during this week's session. Youth will engage in an expressive process, experimenting with colors and patterns to create personalized art pieces. The intention is to explore the uniqueness that each participant brings to the collective canvas of Youth Arts Action.

Discussion Point: What elements of your piece connect to an aspect of your individuality?

Week 4: Journal Collage

In this session, we will explore individual identity through the creation of collaging a journal cover and back page. Using colour, shapes, and images as connections and metaphors for aspects of the youths' individual identities. Focusing on how simple and small aspects of everyday life can draw a connection to who an individual identifies as. Youth will engage in discussions about what colours and shapes they are drawn to and what words they connect with these things, further then to how these words then connect to themselves and their experiences. These connections will then be expressed through the creation of a collaged cover and back panel for a journal. Which the youth can then use to continue this exploration of identity in any modality. Empathy and emotion management will center in this session's creativity.

Discussion Points: How does your piece connect to understanding and showing aspects of your identity?

Week 5: Self Portraits turned to Ash



In this week's session youth will explore the ever-changing nature of identity and self. Participants will engage in a unique approach to creating self-portraits by combining watercolor and charcoal in an expressive drawing. In attempts to release judgements to the finished product youth will not look at their page and instead create their self portrait entirely from a feeling in their brush not from visual stimuli. In a symbolic gesture of impermanence and perpetual changes of life the self-portraits will be burned, and the ashes will be used in next week's art piece.

Discussion Point: How did the process of drawing without looking impact your perception of self.

Week 6: Textured Ash Reflection-Embracing Transformation

Building on last week's symbolic burning of self-portraits, this week youth will explore how the transformation of individual identity can continue to shift and change as we learn more about ourselves through experiences and self-reflection. Participants will mix the ash from their self-portrait with acrylic paint to create a textured acrylic for an art piece that reflects their own becoming.

Discussion point: How does the process of transformation in art relate to your personal journey?

Week 7: What is a Zine? Community Zine Creation Begins

This week marks the beginning of the communal Zine project that all youth across each location of Youth Arts Action will participate in. Exploring the concept of Zines, and how they are powerful tools for capturing diverse voices and stories will be at the heart of this week's program. The collaborative effort of creating a unified Zine on the topic of Individual Identity and Nurturing belonging will commence during this session.



Discussion point: How can individual voices contribute to a collective narrative? How can everyone's individual voice emerge through a communal project?

Week 8: Zine Completion- Celebrating Unity and Diversity

In this week's session youth will finalize their contributions to the Youth Arts Action Zine. This celebratory week emphasizes the completion of the communal project that will be available for the community and at the Youth Zine Workshop Night. This Zine will highlight the diversity of voices within the group and the unity achieved through artistic collaboration.

Discussion Point: Reflecting on the completed Zine, where do you see yourself reflected in the project?

Week 9: Gelli Plate Printing: Unveiling the layers of Expression

This week youth will explore the layers of identity through gelli printing with acrylics. Gelli printing is a unique technique that involves creating captivating prints using a gelatin plate. Youth will explore the endless possibilities of this medium experimenting with color, texture and layering to bring their creative vision to life. As we prepare for the upcoming Zine Workshop, youth will transform their prints into vibrant collage elements to contribute for their peers to use in their zines. Today's session invites youth to create something of meaning to their individual identity and share it with fellow youth across the city.

Discussion point: How do your prints and collage items convey elements of your individual identity? And how does it feel to know that these pieces will be used by other youth in their zines?

Week 10: Youth Workshop Zine Night



In the final session of this program cycle youth will come together for a Youth Workshop Zine Night where they will create zines that express their individual identity. The event will be open to any youth, age 12-18 in the city including the participants of Youth Arts Action. The communal event will invite youth to showcase their individual identity and foster a sense of belonging among peers. Additionally, the Youth Arts Action Collaborative Zine will be on display and available for viewing at the event.

Discussion point: What stories emerge from the Zines and how does the exploration of your individual identity relate to fostering a sense of belonging with community?