

# MY TIME MY SPACE

A 'think kit' to set up the project in your local area



**Supportive, creative workshops for women with post natal depression**

## Why Creativity Works

My Time My Space is a creative and empowering preventative programme to promote positive relationships and recovery for women with postnatal depression.

- Creativity is vital to the process of change and growth - it is fundamental to being alive and to making sense of the world around us. It is a quality that can be nurtured or repressed...
- Materials are transformed and something new is made - acting as a metaphor for change
- Learning, expression, sharing, communication and celebration take place
- The social setting brings people together on a level playing field- it is non-hierarchical and everyone is treated as an Artist
- Taking creative risks in a supported environment enables individuals to gain confidence
- Creative processes arouse curiosity and interest and help meaningful engagement and positive focus
- Heightened awareness leads to experiences being enriched
- Transferable skills are learned such as research and development, problem solving and communication
- Art can make you escape, think, question the world, tell stories, record and keep memories alive, challenge ideas and the world and make political and personal statements

**'It's truly transformative. This is a multifaceted approach that meets the needs of women socially, creatively and psychologically.'**

*Health Visitor*

# My Time My Space!

A supported, professionally run creche is fundamental to give women space from their children and vice versa. It is key in allowing 'social healing' and peer support and giving women the time and space to rediscover a sense of self. It also contributes to smoother transitions and separations (e.g in to nursery and school).

Some Mums may worry at first that they are not 'arty' or creative, but the process and experience enables them to relax and they soon let go of this misconception.

## The importance of the right Artist:

- The Arts activity must be led and held by a skilled, experienced and facilitative Artist.
- We are not prescriptive about the 'artform.' My Time My Space brings well qualified, experienced, flexible, responsive Artists that ensure participant led activities. These Artists understand the requirements of working with people with mental health.
- Creativity Works ensure that all of our Artists are socially engaged:- meaning they work with genuine depth and 'an expanded repertoire' – this means that the women feel supported and have time and space for personal and social reflection, development, and progression. They explore social issues, creative learning processes and artistic production. Artists interweave real quality in to creative processes and individual and group outcomes.
- The participants learn transferable skills - as well as the art form itself, they learn communications, reflection tools, how to research and develop an idea, group communications and interpersonal skills.

Call **Creativity Works** today on **01761438 852**

"I don't know why art works but I can see it in action, I can see the lifting of spirits. It has had so much impact on so many peoples lives I just wish I could offer it to more women."

*Health Visitor*



"I still use my journal, regularly adding something. I keep it in the living room and I often look at it and reflect." Mum



'As health visitors we can do all the listening supportive visits we like but we cannot give that element of raised self-esteem and self-confidence and I think that's what's so powerful about 'My Time My Space.'

*Senior Health Visitor*



## The Power of Partnership and Project Management

A Health Visitor always takes part to help support the group and is there to answer questions and concerns. Children's Centre workers provide on-going support and information, in and outside of the course.

Creativity Works Project Co-ordination and Partnership Management provides Artists with support and development. The role of the 'broker' is key to strengthen relationships between HV's, Participants and Artists, aid communications, signpost to new progression and development opportunities for the participants and support and develop mechanisms for success. The Artist may need to 'offload' their emotional burden. We help support and develop the Artist by offering on-going training and mentoring.

An absolutely fundamental role of Creativity Works' brokering expertise is to help develop the groups so that they can continue to meet and perhaps even become independent mother-led groups in the future.

**It stands testament to the potency of the My Time My Space model that independent mums- led groups, such as 'Out of the Blue', (originally met in 2006) continue to meet and support themselves and others to this very day.**





"If I hadn't have done MTMS firstly my husband and I would definitely not be together now without a doubt...the boys are happier, because obviously when they were younger I was sad and it rubs off on them. Now my confidence is pretty sky high and I am a much stronger person."  
*Mum*

"I go to psychotherapy and I don't say a word, but in the nine weeks of My Time My Space I've said more than I have in eighteen months of psychotherapy."  
*Mum.*



## Costs and Time

MTMS is complementary to the 8 'listening visits' recommended by the 'Healthy Child Programme' (DOH, 2009).

MTMS improves efficiency and cuts Health Visitors caseload and time. It provides a 12 week service for up to 10 women at a time; only requiring 1 health visitor for the 2 hour session each week.

The length of the course needs to be a minimum of 10 sessions, ideally 12 sessions. This ensures progression and opportunity for the participants.

An abundance of tea, coffee, juices and yummy cakes create a homely comforting ambience.

## The right venue!

Ideally a space which is conducive to creative thoughts will, of course, help. This may be light, airy, comfortable, pleasant, colourful. If the space needs help, make it work.



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# Some things to look out for...

## External Support

Creativity can be cathartic, therapeutic; it can throw up things from the past or sometimes things are divulged that are currently happening in the lives of the participants that deserve some further discussion or action, outside of My Time My Space. You need to have the right processes and systems in place to deal with this.

## Evaluation

We use the Edinburgh postnatal score, alongside a wide ranging selection of other creative and 'ladder of change' reflective evaluation tools. We have found that, for example, on the last session of the course, some women are 'upset' about the course coming to an end and so score themselves according to their current feeling, rather than a summative approach to how much better they may feel as a result of the course overall.

## Creche location

The room the women are working in should be far enough away from the crèche so that the participants are not disturbed by their children's noises.

## Mental Health Support

Traditionally we have run the group with the support of a mental health support worker. As purse strings tighten you may have to find alternative volunteers, trainees or accredited art therapists to support the Artist.

## Progression & Development

The participants should be able to access a key project member or aligned organisation which can help signpost or have an understanding of what is happening in the wider community that they can progress on to.

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**"Now that the group has finished I feel much happier, contented and confident. As a direct result of the group I even managed to secure a job in design and I feel so much better, more relaxed and at ease."**  
*Mum*



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