HF2743   
Health Finance and Policy Committee  
Position: **Favorable**  
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Testimonial from Maddie Johnson, LMFT, ATR

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Chairwoman Liebling and members of the Committee,

As an art therapist early in my career I worked in partial hospitalization programs where children and adolescents received individual, family and group therapy services to support their mental health. These kids/teens struggled with behavioral dysregulation and suicidal ideation. Often times they struggle to participate in any of the services provided in programming except for the art therapy groups I provided. While I offered art therapy, kids and teens never had behavioral outbursts in my room. They created meaningful pieces, worked together with other group members and shared thoughts/feelings that they would not have otherwise unless they had the art to support them. I know this because I also facilitated process groups (talk therapy groups) that did not generate the depth that art therapy groups provided. I often had clients tell me on their discharge day, that art therapy was the most beneficial part of their treatment within the program. I was lucky to have a psychiatrist on my team that valued my work and involved me in treatment planning. This was not always the case among other programs and at other hospitals which led to the work provided by art therapists being overlooked and undervalued.

Maternal mental health has become a big topic in the medical field especially in terms of perinatal mental health. As a mother of three children myself, I understand firsthand the pressure and stress that comes from this period in a woman’s life. I began a creative workshop for women called Mothering(+Me) which has been successful from day one. Mothers have attended the group and said that the opportunity to use art therapy significantly changed their mental health and attunement in their home. They noted that it created space for them to feel grounded, connected and strong, which put them in a much better position from which to mother their children. All because they had the opportunity use art to express themselves in ways words cannot, and to do so in the presence of other moms.

Client Testimonial:

"The Mothering+Me workshop was a transformative experience that exceeded my expectations. As a new mom, I was looking for a safe and comfortable space to connect with other moms and explore my new role. The workshop provided all of that and more. The prompts and materials were thoughtfully curated and of the highest quality, allowing me to tap into my creativity and reflect on my experiences as a mother. Maddie's experience and guidance were invaluable in creating an environment that was accessible, supportive, and rejuvenating. I came away from the workshop feeling empowered and refreshed, with a deeper sense of connection to myself and to the other moms in the group. I would highly recommend this workshop to any new mom who is looking for a meaningful and enriching way to navigate the joys and challenges of motherhood."-Melissa, a participant in Mothering (+Me) a creative wellness workshop for new mothers, facilitated by Maddie Johnson, Registered Art Therapist and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Client Testimonial:

“I am a person who loves to plan and create art as it allows me to let the life noise drain away. The short time I was guided by Maddie reminded me that the visual outcome of a piece isn’t the main benefit of doing art. It’s easy to become motivated to just get through the list of things to reach your desired goal and forget that the process is still a huge part of the journey. Fully immersing myself in the art directive, I was able to let my body take the reigns from my brain for a while. I felt free to allow myself to just be, to feel, and to let go of things that I didn’t need to hold on to anymore.” -Hannah R, a participant in an art therapy-based supervision workshop led by Maddie Johnson, Registered Art Therapist and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Respectfully,

Maddie Johnson, LMFT, ATR