

## **KIAL CENTER WORKSHOPS - UNCOVERING THE LOST SELF: CREATIVITY & THERAPEUTIC RECREATION**

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The creative impulse is a potential in all of us. In more than twenty years of facilitating creative workshops in health care institutions, schools, art centers, and businesses, I have become convinced many kinetic and/or intuitively dominant people are lost in a cognitively dominant world. Their natural mode of meeting the physical world has been stifled or at best fragmented. Talent potential is snuffed out before it ever gains a rooting system, and these talents are further eroded by com-partmentalization of every facet of their lives.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if there could be a way to bring into conscious awareness each person's creative abilities as well as natural transdisciplinary nature? That was the question which brought the KIAL Center into existence. It would be a place of facilitation rather than instruction and each facilitator would give value to products of the imagination and seek liberation, not domination.

All KIAL Center workshops are designed to be projective, that is, each workshop is composed of a flow of activities that is moving toward a goal defined and understood by the participant. This goal would in some way empower the participant to the point where his or her true sense of self could be recovered and validated.

To evaluate the chosen flow of activities, KIAL Center programs take into consideration the creativity within the personality, within the process or act of creating, and finally, the creativity within the work itself. First phase exercises are designed to build a climate which is non-threatening. Anxiety and fear must be acknowledged. To accomplish this, simultaneous right/left brain exercises are incorporated which make use of the entire body as well as the brain. These exercises are designed to lead to a state of relaxed arousal, the optimum mode for facilitating change.

Phase two deals with group-owned activities in which success is dependent upon interaction within the group. How to "lighten up" through the use of humor is also introduced during this period. The purpose of these exercises is to help participants play with more than one concept and to begin to assume an internal locus of evaluation. In the safety of a group in which there is trust, participants are better able to tolerate tension and to operate outside their own previous fund of experience. Once phase two is completed, problems of alienation, loss of self-esteem, negative attitude, and lack of motivation can begin to be met intrinsically by each participant.



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The focus of phase three is to help each participant develop images cooperatively with the project itself. Maslow, in his book, Toward a Psychology of Being must be credited with expressing the framework for this phase. He borrowed from the ideas of primary and secondary thought processes to define an act of creativity as primary, secondary, or integrated. The primary process springs from an unconscious base; the individual is not in conscious control of its organization. New ideas can surge into the mind on brain waves too low (as in dreams) or too high (as in peak experiences) to allow calculated planning. The secondary process lies in the realm of the conscious and relates more to the telling of dreams rather than the act of dreaming. This dualistic relationship of unconscious-conscious, primary-secondary is what Maslow calls integrated creativity and forms the underpinnings of all the activities designed by the KIAL Center.

Some form of structure must be created to convey the creative content. In many KIAL Center workshops, the multimedia art form called "Kinaesthetic Imagery" is used. This involves wall-sized slide environments which are created by workshop participants. These slides are then projected against a blank wall to make a colorfield within which one can become part of the projected image. Colorfields can be further altered with special effect filters and focus changes. Because the point of concentration is the colorfield, the participant is free to develop his or her ideas further with the collusion of the work of art itself. This leads to a natural discovery of metaphorical images. Participants are often able to process hidden thought and memory blocks as well as realize new ideas and insights as a result of their perceptions of these self-created images.

Within the physical work, participants can learn to generate and take charge of their own ideas, organize patterns of activities, and evaluate the results of their own creativity through a process of editing and adjusting ideas, skills, and content. In all KIAL Center activities, each participant is an active partner, rather than a passive recipient of his or her therapy experience.

KIAL Center programs are now used in Therapeutic Recreation programs all over the world in therapy of all kinds including chemical and drug abuse programs and in special projects for the differently-abled including mentally fragile children and adults. Therapists who use KIAL Center programs consider them the perfect transdisciplinary vehicles because they are process-driven and incorporate many different fields simultaneously, as well as resonate with today's visually-oriented clientele. As one KIAL Center participant stated, "We all have the same colors within, but each of us emphasizes different hues and shades, which are constantly in a process of change as we move through our lives".

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