



**Acquired
Brain Injury
Network**

November 3-4, 2008
Hilton Toronto • Toronto

Conference Presentation Abstract ~ Workshop

Date/Time/Room: Tuesday, November 4, 2008 10:00 am – 10:45 am Carmichael / Jackson

Abstract ID: 5d

Title:

ABI, Substance Abuse And The Value of Art and Music in Therapy

Authors:

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Presenters:

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Summary:

BISNO has developed an outpatient Addictions Program within the harm reduction framework that utilizes a range of clinical techniques aimed at capturing the varied abilities of the individuals in the program. Most prominently, this program utilizes art and music based projects in a group therapy setting that are able to stimulate a range of perceptual and cognitive processes in an effort to maximize the therapeutic potential for the participants. The first reason that BISNO utilizes this method relies on the fact that a number of the participants have speech and fine motor difficulties resulting from their ABI, which makes traditional 'verbal/written' communication a challenge. BISNO met this challenge with its use of art related activities that allow all the participants to engage, thus the Addictions Program enables a multi-modal understanding of the dangers and effects of addictive behaviour. The second reason that this mode of therapy is invaluable to addictions treatment in the ABI population is that it is fun, interactive and engaging. The 'fun-factor' may seem trivial, yet it is of real clinical importance because it encourages participation and attendance in a fragile population. BISNO's method then is to capture the maximum abilities of all participants through interactive, flexible and fun activities.

The structure of the workshop proposed will begin with an introduction to our methods, paradigm and target population. The next step will be to go through one of the art exercises with the group. This will be followed by a short discussion and question period.

Outcomes/Objectives:

The primary goal of this presentation is to explain and show how art/music therapy can create a visceral experience that truly captures the abilities and potential of individuals living with the effects of a brain injury and concurrent substance abuse issues.