

## Creative activities; meaning making, belonging and the capacity for change

This presentation concerns creative activities; how they could be flexibly implemented in mental health care, and how they might contribute to meaning making, sense of belonging, group-support, and a positive identity.

I will give a short historical perspective and present visual art and creative writing activities at an in-treatment psychiatric unit in Gothenburg and the results from two reports I was invited to write about these activities. I will also discuss the current mainstream perspective on mental distress and treatment which states that diagnosis, structured interventions and symptom reduction should be in focus. This perspective underestimates the importance of agency, meaning making, capabilities, and belonging. I propose that artistic activities might counteract this tendency and be beneficial for users as well as for mental health care as a practice that currently run the risk of being instrumental.