

Creative Coping

*A Collection of Poetry and Art
Celebrating Mental Health and Resilience*

2022

Published by Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i

“Creative Coping: A Collection of Poetry and Art Celebrating Mental Health and Resilience 2022”

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Aloha kākou,

Kākou means “all of us” in Hawaiian. We can all support each other and help each other heal.

This collection of poetry and art brings together the works of those who attended our “Creative Coping” workshops in the summer of 2022, or were inspired to share the ways that they cope with life’s challenges.

We hope that this collection shows you that it’s okay to feel the way you feel. And we invite you to do the guided exercises at the back of the book and share your creativity with us.

Thank you to NAMI Hawai’i, Destiny Sharion, Nidhi Chabora, Nancy Jo Moses, ’Ihilani Lasconia, event coordinators Alofa Carpenter and Anisa Wiseman, and our wonderful poets and artists, for making this collection possible.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of creativity, hope, self-expression, and self-healing.

With aloha and appreciation,

Rachelle Chang
Executive Director
Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai’i



Creative Coping 2022 Workshop Sponsors:

Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i (SCCH) provides professional and accessible mental health counseling sensitive to the spiritual traditions of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i, regardless of their ability to pay. SCCH also participates in community events and outreach to increase awareness about mental health resources and help reduce the stigma of mental illness.



National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Hawai'i offers programs of education and real-life recovery for families affected by mental illness and anyone interested in being better informed. Programs and support groups are prepared and delivered by people who know firsthand the struggles of having a loved one afflicted with a mental illness as well as those who live in recovery.

Creative Coping 2022 Presenters:



Creative Coping: Poetry

Destiny Sharion, MSW, poet is an accomplished spoken word artist and poet who believes in "Art as Activism," delivering powerful testimony at the legislature on issues like police violence and the horrors of mass incarceration in spoken word form.



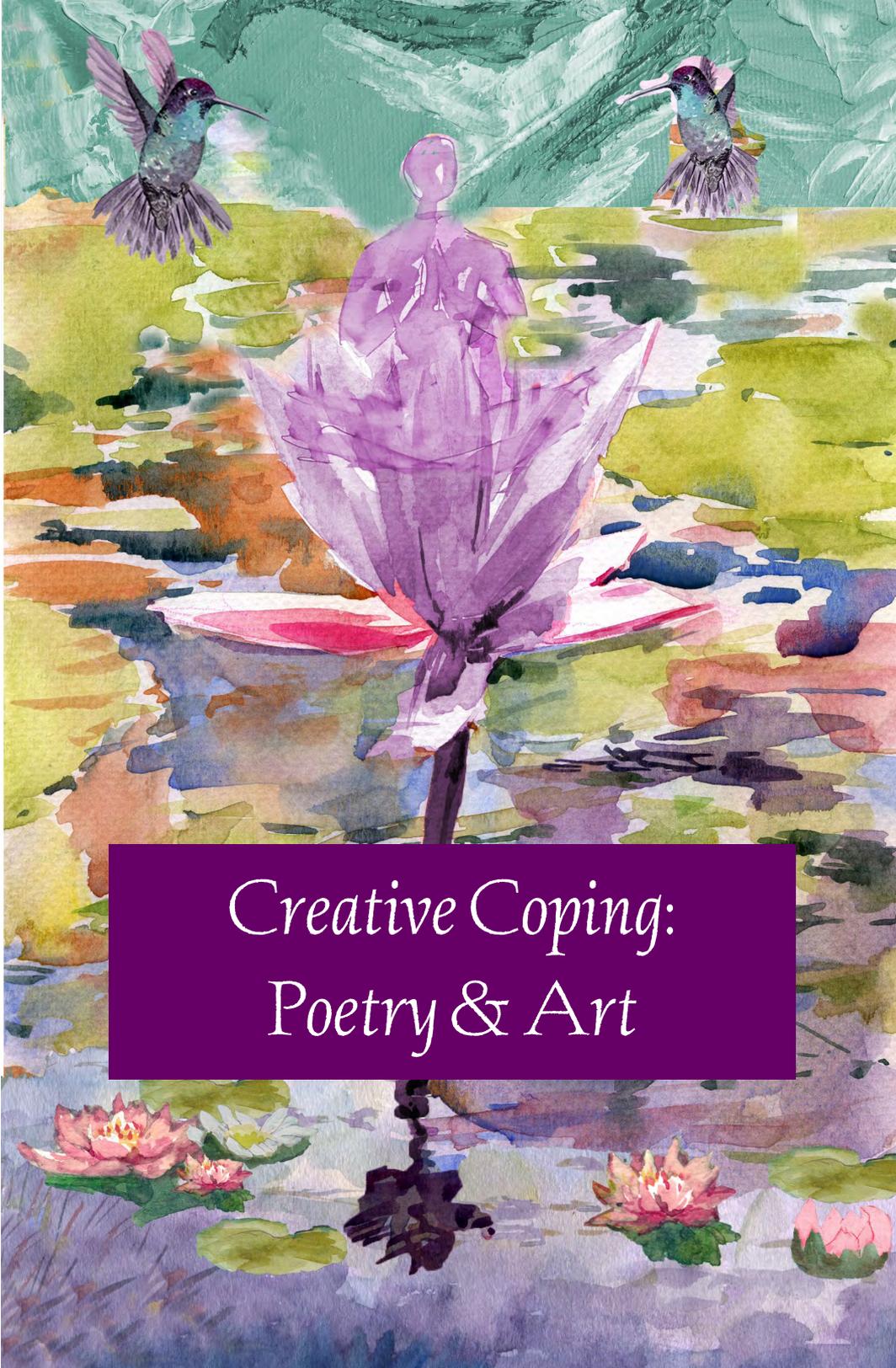
Creative Coping: Drawing

Nidhi Chabora, APRN-Rx, BC is an Advanced Practice Nurse working on the Big Island of Hawai'i, and co-creator of the Self Discovery Through Art program. **Nancy Jo Moses, BS, MA** is an accomplished public school visual art educator with 37 years of teaching experience, and co-creator of the Self Discovery Through Art program.



Creative Coping: Odes

Thilani Lasconia, poet is a kanaka maoli scholar, organizer, and activist from Waimānalo, O'ahu. She graduated from the University of Hawai'i with a Master's in Education and was part of the 'Ōiwi Undergraduate Research Fellowship program.



*Creative Coping:
Poetry & Art*

Eiko Emily Uehara

A Map of My Heart



Sometimes a variety of feelings
Make confuse to live

I wish I never bogged down into a sad swamp.
I wish I could stay only in the meadow of joy

I know that everyone's life is full of peaks and valleys
Even no matter how hard we make efforts to change it

However, when I draw a map of my heart
I will see where I am now

So draw a map of my heart
I will see that all the terrain are there for the reasons.

Davy Yue

Leave No Lingered Man Behind

Leave no lingered man behind on the battlefield
Lose a courageous comrade such out of left field
Lavish legacy only persists if we do not yield
Collective solidarity seals society in a shield

Dawdling dillydallying dragging dried entity
Slowest sloth slumbers to signal posterity
Triumphant turtle tardy yet tenacious travels
Sightful snail seeing soon as journey unravels
Tentative tortoise traverse ample razzle dazzle
Stalling slug struggles to surmount the frazzle

Encompass all who endeavor even those whose ailed
Their thematic tardiness to soon be tallest tales
Mindful provisions to seek the holiest of grails
Providence's persistent progress soon prevails
Strength solidified through unity set smooth sail

Save all the sinking souls lest this boat drown
No man left behind if we all reach king's crown
Monumental mission that heroic history went down
Every soul saved sings serenity to airs all around
Celebrate captain's love for crew all the way down

Dream of delicious destiny if all here to see indeed
Tell fate and faith that here be to intrigue me be
Only if all my friends stand by me to rejoice thee

Chaz Hill

Proud

I am proud of myself because today I kept some promises;
even though I woke up off balance I am proud because
I refused to be carried off down the rocky river rapids of fear;
they can make me feel I have no control over
anything that happens in this world. When it starts . . . wait.
I did not go there today.
Love made still my heart for a moment

So I am grateful I did not give up today on Destiny, or the
power of a healing word to calm the shaking leaf of me; I wonder
does it matter (and I know it does most of the time)
when I feel too real too soon, too soon anxious then I think
I will swoon, not know how to fall gently into meeting someone with
our same sorrow and learn how to make something new and
beautiful and beneficial to read and start feeling better;
yes we can. We are. Getting better all the time.

I am proud of myself today for listening to the wind blowing in living
leaves outside my window, not imaginary elm leaves from my
hometown; they are magical green leaves of plumeria and wisteria and
lavender; they are real. They can heal. They are home.

I am proud of myself this moment listening to the sound of my lover-
spouse's hands holding his chopping knife with a good grip slicing up
masterful things in the kitchen; delicious things we will eat soon.
and for another day they will make us stronger than ever.

I am proud that today I write as South African Steve Biko did until his
last breath was taken — to honor him I write with the freedom to act
up. I am proud we can and I can write what I like.

And what I like today and am proud of writing today is
an anthem for the me + you creating the we we are on this page.

A Board Member

Pottery

Sitting down at the wheel, getting my hands muddy, and shaping the moving clay helps me focus on something completely different from my ordinary role in science and administration.

I think about what I am forming with my fingers and the skill which takes all my focus and allows me to forget about the normal stresses of life. In other words, I enter the “zone.”

It gives me perspective on the many aspects of life that sometimes can be eclipsed by the intensity of career.



A Tiny Step into the Light

The yellow flowers of the shower tree
seem too vivid to me, too bright,
but you lift me out of the shade
and the world is bathed in soft light,
and now I can tolerate a light blue
and clouds like pillows, white
and your strength lets me soar
as when I'm near to you at night.



Identity Poem

I was called an Early Star
to carry on a quiet splendor
that could inspire others.
I stood ten feet tall,
a clear white lotus flower
on a green stem, strong and slender,
until Tricky Bear and his cronies
contaminated the water
and now my face is bent low,
away from the sun and I shiver.
I fear that I will never flourish again,
but I believe that love and friendship
will nourish me, as sure as rain
that purifies polluted water
and I will rise again.

The Spirit in the Valley

Every morning, the storm moves in,
nervous, turbulent, internally
and I can hardly think or see.
I've planted flowers, I wave my hands,
feebly believing the storm will go away.
Help me, kind and gentle Spirit.
Fill the valley with soft waters,
so that I might walk on its sides
and see the view in clear light.



Another Cat Poem

Look at you, cat, padding along a line
like the edge of a rooftop in old Paris,
soft as the cushions on the armchair,
secure as those who live here.
Climbing up to the top of the couch,
you glance below, just for a while,
like a gargoyle at sunset, only
impermanent and when I reach out
for a hug, you leap down on the rug
and start to walk away. In this room,
where there is no night or day,
you spin and turn your eyes to the wall,
like a four-year-old girl, lost
in another world, while her granddad
tries to amuse her, if he can,
but this is not my home
and they are not my family.
Caresses mean nothing to you
and I can have no comfort here.

Chaz Hill

Facing the Fire

ANGER BATCHES

My anger sounds pop **pop poppin'** electric fire sizzlin' in my head.

My anger shivers in the heat; I can't be chilling it here much longer
gotta fly say goodbye it's been too many years since I lost what I knew up until that night.

In 1963 a warm summer evening as it got dark Mama called my brother and me to come in and wash up for supper.

As we started eating our hot dogs, dad got a strange look on his face,

“I think I . . .”

daddy got up from our Saturday night supper table and went to check in the bathroom in the back of the house thinking he heard a sound like shower water left running; and then he came like a lightning bolt back yelling, “Get out! The House is on fire!” and then we were

wild rabbits trying to escape a raging inferno running this-away that-away yelling our heads off counting on each other to get out the screen door and off the back porch in time.

Pieces of the ceiling
falling.

We made it out.

We were safe.

The day after
smelled of total loss; after church we went back down to the
house that was no more; sifting through charred branches and
smoking ruins trying to remember what it looked like one day
before next to leafy elms below blue June skies.

the day after

so much for a summer breeze;
forget about how we lived after the fire -
until now my anger stays; grief churns deep in my bones;
frozen in a blazing night a nine year old child waits in a line for
someone else to light a match,
in front of Jesus place a candle, say a prayer, heal the scar.

Carol Anne Gordon, LCSW

Check-in and Check-out

“This was a good exercise for me to make me realize I don’t need
to be afraid of art!”



Rev. Kimberley Houff

Sunrise on the Beach



“Running on the beach and snapping a photo of the sunrise makes my day so much better!”

Caryl Murphy

Depression

Depression, it feels like a lost ship on rough seas.

Its sound can go from a terrorizing roar
to a dead silence within me.

The taste of depression would be void of sweetness and can look
like a cluttered room, all messy and far from neatness.

a.m

Time, and Time Again

Time, and Time Again

Though the days repeat
on an endless loop,
the memories fade
with time.

Last year's today merges into this one,
blending experiences and
tainting what was once exciting
with a dreary grey.

An overlay of ego filters the
pureness of smelling the evening
primrose and nightshade that reside outside,
the giddiness of hearing the
ribbits of tiny frogs that
surround the house and
pierce through its structure.

The visits of little creatures
grow less frequent with lackluster
attempts at seeing them.

The days blend into groups of
moments recycled.

Newness is a rarity.

Change is longed for--
yet out of reach.

- a.m

Chaz Hill

Check-in and Check-out



Rachelle Chang

Thankfulness, Today and Always

Today and always, I express my infinite gratitude for my family, my home, and my spirit.

I'm grateful for my family, for making me feel accepted and cherished, in a world where we are becoming more isolated.

I'm grateful for my home, for sheltering me in safety, comfort, and peace, in uncertain times.

I'm grateful for my spirit, for giving me understanding, purpose, and joy, reminding me that we are all connected and life is unbroken.

Thank you, family. Thank you, home. Thank you, spirit.

Today and always, I am infinitely grateful you are here.



Chaz Hill

Well a Love I never had to Win

Ode to Harris Spring in West Stanly County North Carolina

“When the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there”

I remember the way Grandma Harris in her long black striped grey dress and white apron toddled and teetered from the Hatley Grove primitive baptist church cemetery to the edge of Harris wood; over field rocks she stepped into the quiet shadows of a canopied glade where the water flowed.

a cup suspended from a watering hole stick she took hold of, dipped into the freshly minted spring waters, then drank her fill while the passing spring went on flowing by flowing by; her thirst thus slaked she laid the cup aside and sat down on a rock humming
in the sweet by and by spirit lifted by the coolness of spring water on a hot summer day.

I remember the shiny silver steel of the stainless cup lifted under her cobalt blue eyes to her wrinkled lips, gazing to one side or t’other taking in sweetness of honeysuckle and daffodils, and appreciating bushy lusty primroses growing close together at the edge of the wood out where there was enough sunlight

After drinking, we sat listening quietly to the trickle of natural rhymes,
“ddook, dook” “ddook, dook doook dook”
sterling water drops strumming a fallen hollow log before rolling down and around disappearing into their final loamy redemption

Now she comes back in the smell of mossy green and fallen
brown oak leaves
a bracken invasion on my common sense
coming into present tense cracking open the egg of fragile
experience long ago committed to memory in the ever pouring
run out from deep inside a ferny hill;
homespun medicine to treat forgetfulness, good for healing worn
joints
miracle waters flowing forth under a bee-strewn honey pie blue
sky
all the while lilacs and lilies of the field sway measured in time;
delightful breezes kiss us under the trees; we taste wind filled
with Atlantic sea salt traveling for hours sweeping inland on
clouds after first swooping down over
Carolina's sandy beaches, shores Grandma Harris never saw in
her life.

we prayed after sipping our turns before we said good-bye
as we left the spring as we found her, holy and wholly
undisturbed.



Rachelle Chang

O Wai 'Oe

I remember the taste of clean warm water from the garden hose wetting my dry mouth, wetting the front of my shirt, until the water cooled and it was clean cool chill and I flicked some water onto the ground like a blessing before turning off the hose;

I remember the way the bamboo pole felt in my hand as I crouched along a stream, it might have been Kalihi Stream or Manaiki Stream near Moanalua Gardens, fishing with my dad. It was never about catching fish;

I remember the feel of the salt waters of Waimanalo as they surged around my young uncoordinated self, tumbling me in the shallow surf, flashes of sand and fractured light revolving;

I remember the smell of salt and fish food as I peered into the salt water aquarium my husband nurtured, beautiful vivid colors of fish who had little left to fear, they had already lost the ocean;

I remember the sound of rain pit-patting on the windshield like kitten's paws with a sunlight diffusing through the clouds along the highway near Manoa, turning clear glass into spotted patterns;

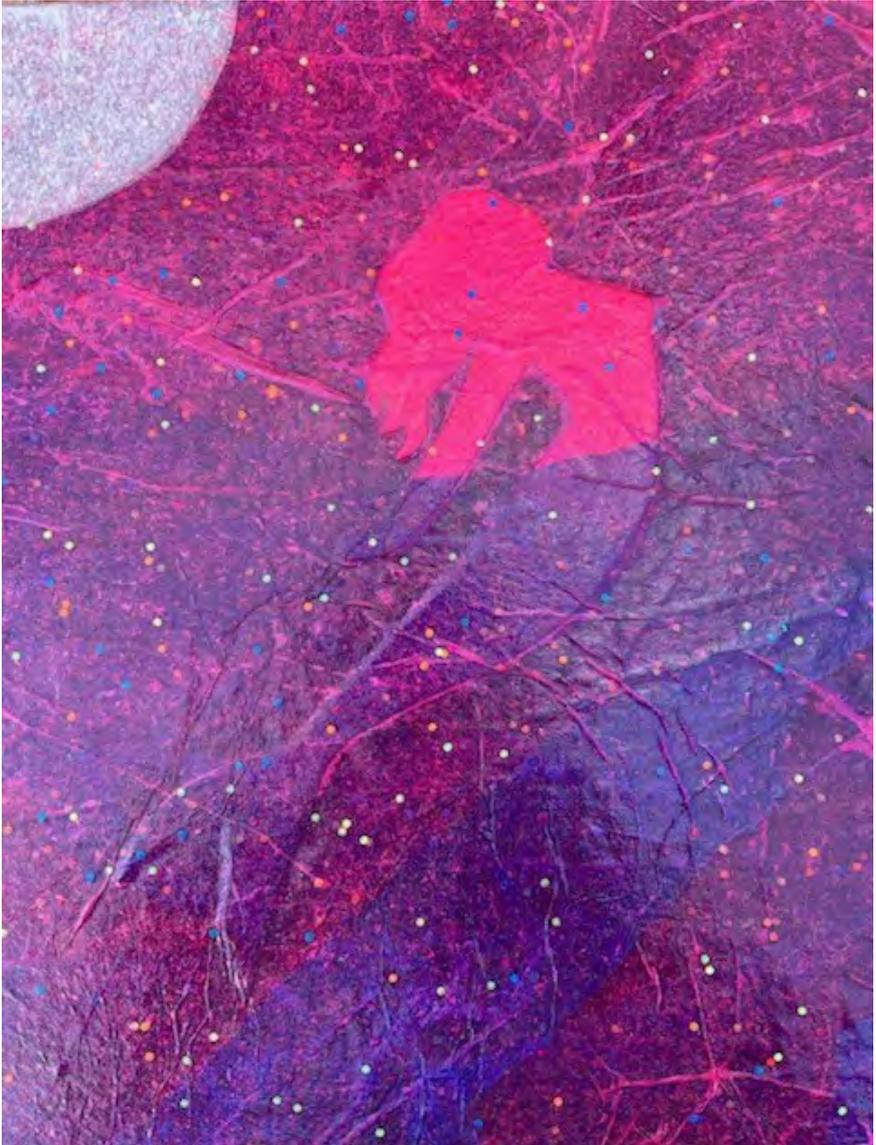
Most of all, I remember water is a blessing.

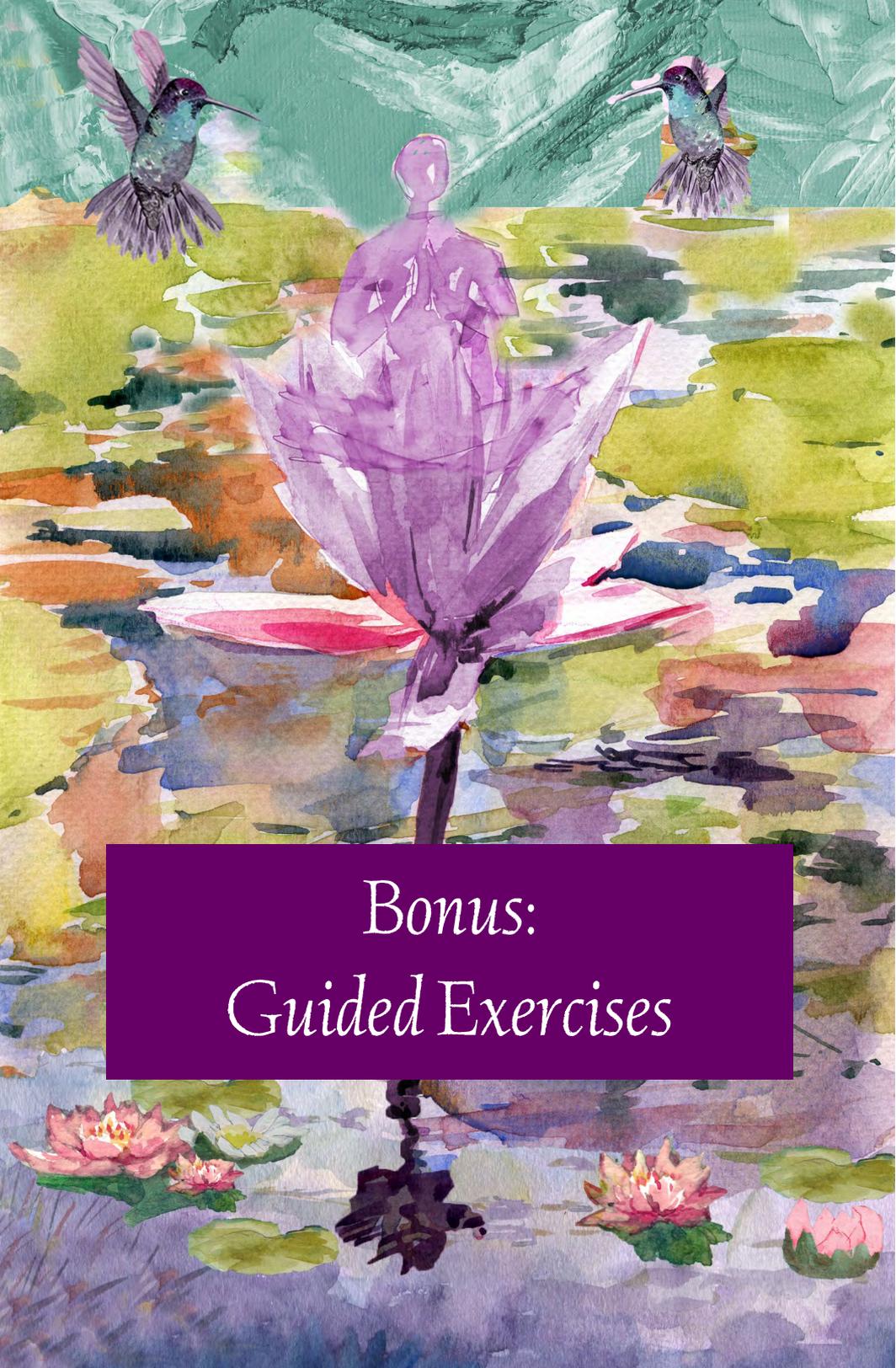


Anonymous

Breaking Free

Made with paper mache, “Breaking Free” is the relief represented by the mermaid as she surfaces to a magical full moon night.





*Bonus:
Guided Exercises*

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Guided Exercises

We invite you to follow along with these guided exercises and express your feelings and creativity.

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Courtesy of Destiny Sharion

Exercise #4: Artful Check-In

Exercise #5: Rigid Thinking Through Art

Exercise #6: Flexible Thinking Through Art

Courtesy of Self Discovery Through Art

Exercise #7: O Wai ‘Oe?

Courtesy of ‘Thilani Lasconia

You are welcome to share your creativity by emailing info@samaritanhawaii.org.

We hope to see you at future “Creative Coping” workshops!

Creative Coping Exercise #1

Sensory Poem

Purpose: To reflect on a feeling or behavior you are struggling with or would like to change. For example, anger, anxiety, depression, nail-biting, insomnia.

Date: _____

My feeling or behavior: _____

My _____

sounds like _____.

It feels like _____.

It tastes like _____.

It smells like _____.

It looks like _____.

My _____

feels like _____.



You can also dive deeper into your feelings, adding more detail and descriptions, memories, fragments of stories, even actions you would like to take in the future.

Creative Coping Exercise #2

Gratitude Poem

Purpose: To alleviate anxiety, reflect on everything you have to be grateful for, and promote mental and emotional well-being.

Prompt: Today and always, I express my infinite gratitude for...

- List three things you are grateful for
- List why you're grateful for each one
- Say "Thank you" to each one, individually

Date: _____

Today and always, I express my infinite gratitude for
_____, _____, *and*
_____.

I'm grateful for _____
for _____.

I'm grateful for _____
for _____.

And I'm grateful for _____
for _____.

Thank you, _____ *. Thank you,*
_____. *Thank you,* _____.

Today and always, I am infinitely grateful you are here.

Creative Coping Exercise #4

Artful Check-In

Purpose: To visually show how you feel *right now* (Note: this is not how you feel physically).

Materials: 1 sheet of paper and colored pencils.

Directions: Using 1-3 colored pencils, draw lines and scribbles (no recognizable images or shapes).

Date: _____

Name your feeling(s):

Source: Self Discovery Through Art

Creative Coping 2022

Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i

Creative Coping Exercise #5

Art and Rigid Thinking

Purpose: To visually show what rigid thinking looks like. Rigid Thinking is learned. It tells that us that things are black and white, either/or, with no common ground, and limited choices.

Materials: 1 sheet of paper and a black pencil.

Directions: Using a black pencil, draw lines and scribbles. In the largest shape, color in the shape completely. In the second largest shape, draw a dark outline around the shape.

Date: _____

*Examples of rigid thinking: It's my way or the highway.
You either win or you lose.*

What is one example of rigid thinking you sometimes hear, think, or say?



Sample image

Source: Self Discovery Through Art

Creative Coping Exercise #6

Art and Flexible Thinking

Purpose: To visually show what flexible thinking looks like. Flexible Thinking, or reframing, can be learned. It helps us separate *what we do* from *who we are*. It helps us find common ground and see possibilities.

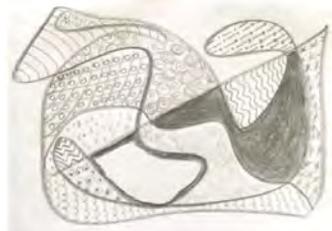
Materials: 1 sheet of paper and a black pencil.

Directions: Using a black pencil, draw lines and scribbles. In the largest shape, color in the shape completely. In the second largest shape, draw a dark outline around the shape. In the rest of the shapes, fill each shape with different patterns and textures.

Date: _____

Which is more appealing — rigid thinking or flexible thinking?

If you are facing an either/or decision, what other choices can you think of?



Sample image

Source: Self Discovery Through Art

Creative Coping Exercise #7

O Wai 'Oe?

Purpose: To remember and express a sense of connection to each other and our home and nourish our relationship with the waters that sustain us.

Prompt: Pick a *wai* (water) that you want to remember or commemorate. _____

Date: _____

I remember the way _____

I remember the smell _____

I remember the taste _____

I remember the sound _____

I remember the feel _____

Most of all, I remember _____



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