

The “Write” Stuff: Implementation and Evaluation of a Virtual Therapeutic Writing Program for Young Adults with Cancer

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INTRODUCTION

- A cancer diagnosis during adolescence and young adulthood (AYA) can significantly disrupt physical, emotional, and social development.
- AYAs experience challenges related to identity, meaning-making, emotional processing, loss of normalcy, and uncertainty.
- Despite the need for psychosocial support, **AYAs face barriers to accessing care**, including geographic limitations, financial constraints, stigma, and lack of age-appropriate services.
- Virtual psychosocial interventions facilitated by LCSWs can **increase access** to developmentally responsive support.

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the development and implementation of the virtual Healing Through Writing (HTW) Workshop for AYAs affected by cancer
- To examine the role of expressive writing and storytelling in promoting emotional processing, meaning-making, and peer connection
- To evaluate participant satisfaction and perceived impact of the workshop

METHODOLOGY

- The Healing Through Writing (HTW) Workshop was developed by Elephants and Tea as a 90-minute virtual psychosocial support program for AYAs impacted by cancer.
- Each workshop is co-facilitated by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and an Elephants and Tea staff member in collaboration with hospitals and community organizations.

Sessions include:

- Grounding exercises
- Reflective writing prompts
- Optional participant sharing
- Facilitated group discussion

- The intervention uses trauma-informed, narrative-based approaches to support emotional expression and peer connection. Post-program survey data were collected from participants (n=421) to assess satisfaction and perceived benefit.

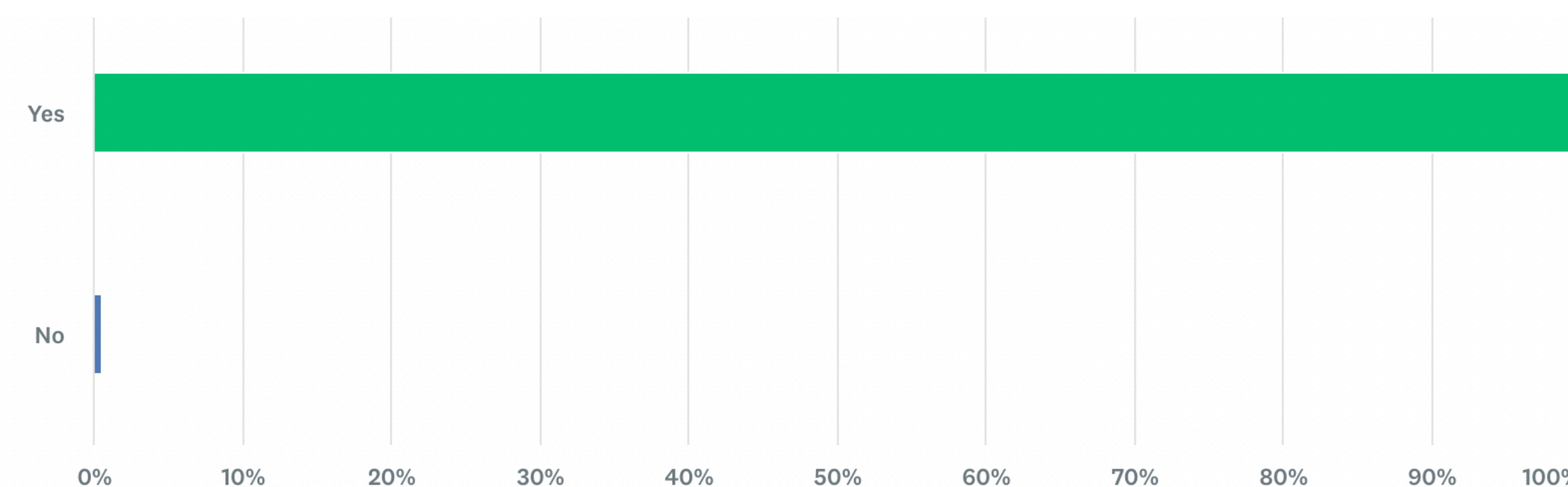
RESULTS

- Since 2020, 146 workshops have been conducted with over 2,100 participants across the United States and internationally.
- Over 50 partnering organizations and hospitals
- Participants benefited from:
 - Increased emotional expression and reflection
 - Opportunities for meaning-making and identity exploration
 - Reduced feelings of isolation through peer connection
 - Accessible psychosocial support regardless of geographic location

IMPLICATIONS

- Demonstrates the potential of clinically facilitated virtual expressive writing programs to provide accessible and responsive psychosocial care for AYAs affected by cancer.
- By reducing barriers related to cost, geography, time, and access to AYA-specific mental health support, virtual storytelling interventions can expand the reach of high-quality psychosocial services.
- LCSW-led facilitation plays a critical role in creating psychologically safe spaces that foster emotional resilience, connection, and healing.

Would you recommend this workshop to others?



Did this workshop inspire you to continue to use writing as a coping/healing tool?

