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艺术治疗诠释人生

在当全职妈妈期间，陈慧凌逐渐对艺术治疗产生浓厚兴趣。于是，她去年报读为期两年的艺术治疗硕士课程。

陈慧凌（44岁）生了第三胎后，当了五六年的全职妈妈。原本她也没料到，自己在毕业多年后还会再次回到校园。

曾经从事技能培训员和艺术教师的她，素来与艺术有着不解之缘。中学毕业后，她曾考上拉萨尔艺术学院，但最终没如愿往艺术方向深造，而是攻读社会学和历史学。

艺术治疗的概念对陈慧凌而言并不全然陌生，但在当全职妈妈期间，她逐渐对这个专业领域产生浓厚兴趣。经过数次亲身体验，她感受到艺术治疗带来的启发，让她对人生有了新的诠释。

她说，以前曾遇过身边的人想不开而轻生，深知压

抑已久的情绪若未及时抒发，最终可能无法挽回，因此希望借助艺术治疗帮助更多人敞开心扉。“我也接触过一些人，他们习惯隐藏个人情绪，甚至故意抹杀一些不愿回想的记忆。这些经历令我更希望唤起人们对心理健康的关注。”

于是，陈慧凌去年毅然入读拉萨尔艺术学院为期两年的艺术治疗硕士课程。

平时喜爱创作雕塑的她分享说，当一名艺术治疗师，和当一名艺术或教育工作者是截然不同的体验。比起“指导”他人如何创作，艺术治疗师的角色主要是“引导”客户，透过分享和解读他们创作时的想法，帮助他们一步步进行更深入的自我审视。

对于有些人误以为接受艺术治疗也讲求艺术天分，陈慧凌说，其实客户若没有这方面的专业知识，反而可能是好事，因为他们对画笔和颜色的运用不会受到原有的观念限制。“不只是绘画，音乐和游戏等不同媒介的治疗形式在本地都比较鲜为人知。我希望让更多面对精神困扰的人知道，他们无须默默承受，可透过这些管道获得帮助。”



（受访者提供）

Interpreting life through art therapy

As a full-time mother, Aletheia Tan Hui-Lin became interested in art therapy and so in 2019, she enrolled into LASALLE College of the Arts' two-year MA Art Therapy programme.

The mother of three and former art teacher did not expect to return to school after graduating many years ago with a degree sociology and history, but her passion for art triumphed.

The concept of art therapy is not completely unfamiliar to Aletheia. After witnessing the ability of art to heal, she felt inspired by the medium and its ability to encourage new interpretations of life. She hopes that art therapy can help individuals open their hearts and express long-suppressed emotions before it leads to irreversible consequences such as suicide.

"I have also encountered people who are used to hiding their emotions, going so far as to deliberately obliterate memories to repress traumatic experiences they don't want to recall. This makes me even more determined to draw people's attention to mental health," Aletheia shared.

As a sculptor, Aletheia noted that being an art therapist is completely different from being an artist or art educator. Rather than instructing others on how to create art, the role of an art therapist is to guide clients and help them carry out deeper self-examination through interpretation of their creative ideas.

Many also hold the misconception that one has to have artistic talent in order to undergo art therapy. According to Aletheia this is not the case, stating that the outcome might even be better if clients do not have professional knowledge of art because their use of colours would not be restricted by pre-existing concepts.

"Therapy through art, and even other mediums such as music and games, is relatively kept under wraps in Singapore. I hope that individuals facing mental distress will be better aware of the help they can get from these channels so that they need not suffer silently," she said.