

# HEALING through ART



Many women come to Interval House so wounded and traumatized they can't even describe it. They're not ready or able to talk about their experiences. They don't want to relive their trauma by recounting it to a counsellor. Sometimes, they've been living with abuse for so long they don't even completely recognize it.

That's where Brittney comes in. She's a Women's Counsellor/ Advocate at Interval House, and she specializes in art therapy. Part of her job is to harness the power of art to give survivors of intimate partner violence the opportunity to heal.

"At some point, most of the women who come to us have felt numb, angry, defeated, or like they've lost hope," Brittney says. "And it's hard for them to put that into words. Art gives them the chance to express their feelings before they are able to articulate them. When women don't have the words, they are able to express themselves through art way more than if we were to just talk in a counselling session."

Brittney describes one example of art therapy she's found incredibly

successful. "We ask the women to draw their faces, divided in half. One half is how they feel and the other half is what they're expressing to the world. Or it could be their past and their future. It's incredibly insightful for us counsellors. It's like a window into feelings they haven't been able to tell us in words."

Art also transcends cultural, language and socioeconomic barriers. It gives every woman a voice and a way to express how she is feeling on the inside.

In Brittney's experience, art therapy is one of the most effective ways to help women heal from their trauma. "Once they've put their feelings out there through art, then the words come," she says. "It's a huge part

*Your gifts help support the art therapy program that is giving an alternative form of expression and healing to women survivors of abuse. THANK YOU!*