

Why art and music therapy appear to ease brain disorders, from Parkinson's to PTSD

Arts therapies are increasingly being used to treat brain conditions including PTSD, depression, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

But most of these treatments, ranging from music to poetry to visual arts, still have not undergone rigorous scientific testing. So artists and brain scientists have launched an initiative called the [NeuroArts Blueprint](#) to change that.

The initiative is the result of a partnership between the Johns Hopkins International Arts + Mind Lab Center for Applied Neuroaesthetics and the Aspen Institute's Health, Medicine and Society Program. Its leadership includes soprano Renée Fleming, actress and playwright Anna Deavere Smith, and Dr. Eric Nestler, who directs the Friedman Brain Institute at Mt. Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine.

One goal of the NeuroArts initiative is to measure how arts therapies change the brains of people like [Michael] Schneider.

"I had a traumatic brain injury when I was involved in a helicopter incident on board a U.S. Naval vessel," he explains. That was in 2005.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

"Relearning music took away that fight-or-flight, that ingrained piece of how I trained," he says. "It was able to open up all these new pathways through my brain."

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)