

## Healthcare clowns help patients laugh and recover

17th December, 2020



An English adage says, "laughter is the best medicine". In these troubling times, good humour is in need more than ever. Doctors and medical staff are taking heed of this and incorporating it into their care treatments. One

product of this is the emergence of clown doctors and healthcare clowns in hospitals around the globe. There is even an organisation that sets standards. The European Federation of Healthcare Clowns Organisations was established in 2011. It says: "Healthcare clowns bring moments of happiness and distraction to children who are ill or who have special needs....Clowns also bring smiles to vulnerable adults, including seniors and people with dementia who are in hospital care."

Healthcare clowns are becoming especially popular in Israel, which is considered a world leader in the field. The first university ever to offer a Bachelor's degree in medical clowning was Haifa University, in 2007. One healthcare clown in Jerusalem, Leah Weiss, decided to divert her inner clown to help patients after a COVID-19 ward opened in March. She said she knew the clown in her would have therapeutic benefits for her patients. She wants to reduce their anxiety and improve their wellbeing. She enjoys working alongside doctors and said: "Obviously, the doctors, they take care of the body. And we come in and take care of the soul. And it integrates together - the doctors understand this."

Sources: euronews.com / effco.eu / haarretz.com

### Writing

All hospitals, clinics and dentists need healthcare clowns. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

adage / laughter / medicine / treatments / hospitals / globe / happiness / smiles / leader / degree / patients / therapeutic / benefits / anxiety / wellbeing / body / soul

### True / False

- a) The article says laughter is needed with troubled people. T / F
- b) Healthcare clowns are becoming more and more common worldwide. T / F
- c) There is a European healthcare clown organisation that sets standards. T / F
- d) The organisation says healthcare clowns help those with dementia. T / F
- e) The article says Israel wants to be a world leader in healthcare clowning. T / F
- f) The first healthcare clown degree started in Israel. T / F
- g) A healthcare clown wanted to use her outer clown to help patients. T / F
- h) A woman said healthcare clowns take care of the soul. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <b>adage</b>          | a. therapies           |
| 2. <b>taking heed of</b> | b. healing             |
| 3. <b>treatments</b>     | c. mental illness      |
| 4. <b>sets</b>           | d. reroute             |
| 5. <b>dementia</b>       | e. paying attention to |
| 6. <b>considered</b>     | f. worry               |
| 7. <b>divert</b>         | g. saying              |
| 8. <b>therapeutic</b>    | h. thought             |
| 9. <b>anxiety</b>        | i. combines            |
| 10. <b>integrates</b>    | j. establishes         |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of clowns?
- b) What do you think of the idea of healthcare clowns?
- c) Do you think laughter is the best medicine?
- d) Why might laughter be the best medicine?
- e) What kind of training might a healthcare clown need?
- f) Would you be a good healthcare clown?
- g) What else could hospitals do to bring smiles to children?
- h) What else can we do to make people with dementia laugh?

## Phrase Match

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. laughter is the                | a. distraction to children |
| 2. In these troubling times, good | b. to vulnerable adults    |
| 3. medical staff are taking       | c. care of the soul        |
| 4. bring moments of happiness and | d. heed of this            |
| 5. Clowns also bring smiles       | e. to help patients        |
| 6. considered a world leader      | f. anxiety                 |
| 7. divert her inner clown         | g. best medicine           |
| 8. the clown in her would have    | h. in the field            |
| 9. reduce their                   | i. therapeutic benefits    |
| 10. we come in and take           | j. humour is in need       |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why do many people think clowns are scary?
- What might you learn on a healthcare clown degree?
- To what extent is there an inner clown in you?
- What other things could clowns do to help society?
- What do you need to take care of your soul?
- What helps reduce your anxiety?
- What questions would you like to ask a healthcare clown?

## Spelling

- An English gdaae
- cnrpoaiitong it into their care
- the eeegrnmce of clown doctors
- an organisation that sets adntasdrs
- tdcrastiion to children
- people with emdneita
- clowns are becoming cpeislaely popular
- a Bachelor's ergdee
- rteapeuthic benefits
- reduce their nxiatey
- improve their elwebling
- it neiargtttes together

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. h	7. d	8. b	9. f	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Laughter

You think laughter is the best medicine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least medicinal of these (and why): sleep, healthy food or reading.

### Role B – Sleep

You think sleep is the best medicine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least medicinal of these (and why): laughter, healthy food or reading.

### Role C – Healthy Food

You think healthy food is the best medicine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least medicinal of these (and why): sleep, laughter or reading.

### Role D – Reading

You think reading is the best medicine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least medicinal of these (and why): sleep, healthy food or laughter.

## Speaking – Medicine

Rank these with your partner. Put the best medicine at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| • Healthy food | • Laughter |
| • Reading      | • Sleep    |
| • TV           | • Hiking   |
| • Exercise     | • Vitamins |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.