

## **Shakespeare as Medicine ®**

Our Shakespeare as Medicine ® program naturally developed in the search for finding how to positively influence the health of people who are recovering from illness and who are receiving the best medical care.

Rather than considering people who are recovering from illness as "siloe individuals" who happen to be related to other people in their community, we considered the problem from a tribal perspective.

Drawing on neurobiological research clearly demonstrating that the same areas of the brain are active during both physical pain and social pain, we considered the problem from the point of view of a social nervous system.

Social animals who withdraw and isolate themselves from other members of the tribe are vulnerable to being preyed upon, and as such, the nervous system evokes a heightened inflammatory response in preparation for being wounded.

As the response to injury moves through its arc of protection & defense to repair & restoration, the social animal receives the necessary support of members of its tribe and the response to injury comes to rest.

This process occurs at all levels of wound healing.

Acute wounds can become chronic when this process does not move to completion.

Wounds that are hidden cannot be healed.

The response to injury system, which is designed to protect and defend the body against further injury, becomes over time more sensitized and less specific.

It is as if the response to injury remains cycling in the first act - protection & defense - of a two act play and does not transition into the second act of repair & restoration.

Such is the state of both chronic pain and post traumatic stress.

Something new needs to enter into the play so that the wound can become visible and be healed.

This is an active area of research in all branches of medicine.

Shakespeare as Medicine ® considers this from the point of view that there is a "wounded person" who bears a chronic injury, who as a social animal, needs a tribe for the wound to be witnessed by oneself and others.

Such "wounded persons" exist throughout all of Shakespeare's roles and his plays provide the form for such a "wounded person" to become visible within the tribe of the cast of the play.

This gradual and courageous process of people coming together in common cause to engage with such a form with such an intent is the heart of Shakespeare as Medicine ®.

Through the careful direction of a physician-actor, specifically trained in acting and directing Shakespeare, Shakespeare is Medicine.

We provide a specifically structured 12-week program designed to serve the healing of unseen wounds of patients with chronic medical conditions, at risk youth and veterans.