

Susan Massad – weird website about how she is a Newmanite (Fred Newman, inventor? Of Social Therapy) and bought a Bank St townhouse with him in 1993:
<http://www.paladium.net/usanycMayor-F.php>

Tuesday, June 8, 2010 at 12:00pm

End Time: Tuesday, June 29,
2010 at 1:30pm

Location: 920 Broadway,
14th Fl. (betw 20
& 21 St.)

Dancing, making funny faces, uttering strange sounds-what is this group of senior citizens doing? And why is a 72 year-old medical doctor leading them? Because for **Susan Massad** no one is too old, too ill or too impaired to play and perform, or to develop and learn new ways of being. In addition to doctoring, **Dr. Massad** is a seasoned community organizer whose latest endeavor is to challenge seniors to perform and be, in the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky's words, "a head taller" than they are. Here, as in all her work, **Dr. Massad** brings the humanism and creativity of social therapeutics to her understanding of health, illness and infirmity.

In this four week conversation **Dr. Massad** will draw upon her 30 years experience of growing older in a community that challenges many of the assumptions and categories of aging. She will share with participants how the work of Fred Newman and Lois Holzman's new psychology, social therapeutics, helped her to use play and performance in the service of life long emotional, physical, intellectual and social development.

This conversation is for everyone who wants to explore the potential for health, vitality, creativity and continued productivity that can (but often doesn't) come with growing older, chronic illness and disability.

Susan Massad, M.D. is an award-winning general internist who has for the past three decades helped to create and support programs that promote development across the lifespan. She is the founder of The New Timers, a performance based program for seniors at the All Stars Project, and hosts the East Side Institute workshop series, "What's Philosophy got to do with your Health?" **Dr. Massad** currently practices general internal medicine at Brooklyn Hospital Center.

Office locations for [Dr. Susan Massad](#)

Primary Location

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New York Magazine's Best Doctors

<http://nymag.com/nymetro/health/bestdoctors/features/9259/>

Susan Massad

She teaches doctors to listen to their patients.

- By [Steve Friedman](#)
- Published May 21, 2005

INNOVATOR: GENERAL PRACTICE

Research consistently shows that honest, accurate, and pleasant dialogue between doctor and patient leads to all kinds of good results—from greater compliance with prescribed treatments to lower blood-sugar levels in diabetics. But research also shows that most patients don't know what their doctors are talking about: Fewer than one in five understand what they've heard, and half leave their doctors' offices confused about what they're supposed to do. When communication breaks down, patients don't tell doctors what's bothering them, doctors miss important symptoms, and patients suffer and sometimes sue.

It's a cycle Susan Massad aims to stop.

The 66-year-old internist, who lives in Greenwich Village and practices in Brooklyn Heights, is the first doctor in New York to teach other doctors through improvisational-theater techniques to better listen to and interact with their patients. In conjunction with Performance of a Lifetime, a consulting firm with clients ranging from Condé Nast to Dun & Bradstreet, she's held group improv seminars for medical residents everywhere from Long Island College Hospital (her home institution) to Lenox Hill Hospital, and she regularly teaches crash courses at national medical conferences as well.

The hardest part, Massad says, is getting self-serious physicians to act like performers, so she begins by having her students talk about times in the past when they might have, say, sung or played the violin. "For them to loosen up enough to learn improv," says Massad, "they have to break their role as doctors."

Next, Massad uses games that stress listening and teach participants to ask follow-up questions—after the other player is done speaking (a recent study showed that on average, doctors allow patients to talk for just 23 seconds before interrupting them).

Prakash Chand, who has taken Massad's classes, says the most helpful game was one in which a fellow doctor acted like a patient and Chand had to mimic his every move. "You have to follow

the patient's face and how he verbalizes and moves his hands and do the same thing," says Chand. "You don't do that in real life, but it helps you to concentrate on the patient."

Case in point: Chand had patient who'd complained of constant headaches, back pain, diabetes, and shoulder pain. Painkillers hadn't worked. "But when I sat with him for a lengthier time and really listened to what he was telling me," Chand says, "I found out the real problem: He was depressed." Chand started the man on Lexapro, and when he saw him a month later, most of his symptoms had disappeared. "He felt better, and he was happier," says Chand. "That's what's important."

