



Evidence Search results

Search topic:	Any Academic literature on Art Therapy Groups for young adults 18-25. If possible, focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effects / impacts on psychological and emotional wellbeing – what evidence is there that being part of a mental health therapy group or art psychotherapy group can affect psychological and emotional wellbeing.• Connection with others – what evidence is there that being part of a mental health group or art therapy group supports connecting with others.• What evidence is there that being part of a mental health therapy group or art therapy group can promote individuals understanding of themselves better.
Date requested:	26 th February 2026
Date completed:	1 st April 2026
Search completed by:	Laetitia Delaleuf
Number of results selected:	36
Time taken:	12

Citing this evidence search

If you reference this search in any paper, publication or presentation, please let us know and use the following format:

Delaleuf, L. (2026). *Evidence summary: Group Art therapy for young adults: 18-25 years old*. Taunton, UK: Somerset NHS Foundation Trust Knowledge & Library Service. Note part of the search strategy has been adapted from FMD(3S)/CHLA [Adolescents and young adults search filters](#) [2018] [filters available for MEDLINE via EBSCO, Ovid and PubMed]

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Summary of results

This evidence summary may have been generated in part by using AI

I have organised the report into four sections to support the various questions. In the section [Impacts](#), there is an article that I thought may give the most information about the impacts / effects of art therapy groups on the mental health and wellbeing of young adult. The section [Connections](#) contains articles that highlight the most the connection with others and the integration into communities. Finally, the section [Understanding](#) contains articles that focus on young adults' understanding of themselves and others.

General observations:

- The trials found that young adults address specific aspects such as helping students starting their first year in university ([Price, E. W and Swan, A. M. 2020](#)) or helping young mothers ([Oystrick, V. and Coholic, D. 2025](#)). It also uses various artistic mediums such as creative arts ([Cole, A. et al. 2018](#)) or claymation ([Ursuliak, Z. et al. 2020](#)) or in conjunction with other interventions such as mindfulness ([Oystrick, V. and Coholic, D. 2025](#))
- I have also found a substantial number of articles about art therapy using mandala as a psychological support ([Li, J.-J. et al. 2025](#); [Sari Ozturk, C. and Kilicarslan Toruner, E. 2022](#); [Li, F. et al. 2025](#); [Angellim, C., Satiadarma, M. P. and Subroto, U. 2020](#)) and usage of technology for art therapy ([Cohen, L. 2026](#); [Klassen, B. and Duff, M. 2021](#); [Datlen, G. W. and Pandolfi, C. 2020](#)). Regarding online art therapy, this was adapted to respond to the pandemic.
- A majority of studies and trials assessed the specific psychological effects of the therapy, such as anxiety or depression, but do not assess the group effects, so even if the group may have an impact, this is not fully evaluated.

Impacts on psychological and emotional wellbeing – only one article ([Coles, A. and Harrison, F. 2018](#)) was found that highlighted the benefit of the art therapy group. Particularly, the fact that the therapy was done in a museum. This has fostered a better interaction between young adult in the group and help developed greater social skills and create relationships that they are able to sustain.

Connection with others – the studies show that art therapy groups support connections to others ([Oystrick, V. and Coholic, D. 2025](#); [Serricchio-Joiner, M. and Metzl, E.S. 2024](#); [Cole, A. et al. 2018](#)), improve awareness, and participants develop stronger coping mechanisms. It also increases the sense of belonging, decrease loneliness, increases positiveness and social connections through shared experiences ([Henrickson, L., Jennings, G. and Bewick, B. M. 2024](#); [Price, E. W and Swan, A. M. 2020](#); [Sonnone, A. and Rochford, J. S. 2020](#)). When art therapy group is used in minority ethnic group it may increase the feeling of connection, empowerment, emotional support and safety ([Goerd, M.N. et al. 2022](#)).

An intervention done with young people with early psychosis showed that after 3 months following the interventions, some benefit with creating connections through art, particularly with other persons with lived experience ([Ursuliak, Z. et al. 2020](#))

Participants and their understanding of themselves.

As per the general observation, articles in this section highlight an understanding of patients' own emotions ([Van Lith, T., Beerse, M., Smalley, Q. 2022](#)) and a self-awareness of the environment. However, it is not clear if these effects are specifically linked to the group component or the therapy. I can only hypothesise that both contribute to these impacts. Nonetheless, there is a greater understanding of themselves as well as a positive impact on wellbeing, resilience and life satisfaction ([Arriaga P. et al. 2024](#), [Sari Ozturk, C. Kilicarslan Toruner, E. 2022](#)) even in the face of adversities such as grief ([Li, J.-J. et al. 2025](#); [Zahmatkesh, M. et al. 2024](#)). A study also mentioned engagement and focus and the use of a strength-based approach ([Lougheed, S. C, Coholic, D. A. 2018](#)) The connectivity with others may also contribute to the understanding of themselves and vice versa ([Li, Y. and Peng, J. 2022](#))

Additionally, various variations of art therapy recorded positive impacts: creative art ([Arriaga, P. et al. 2024](#)); expressive art ([Li, Y. and Peng, J. 2022](#)); mindfulness-based art therapy ([Van Lith, T., Beerse, M., Smalley, Q. 2022](#); [Lougheed, S. C, Coholic, D. A. 2018](#)), mandala group art ([Li, J.-J. et al. 2025](#)), mindfulness and mandala activity ([Sari Ozturk, C. Kilicarslan Toruner, E. 2022](#))



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Complementary documents.

This section contains articles that report positive effects of art group therapies on reducing anxiety, depression or stress.

I have also added studies (either articles or conference papers) done on specific art forms such as bonsai (Hermann, C. 2021), or storytelling ([Klassen, B and Duff, M. 2021](#)) or mandala drawing ([Angellim, C., Satiadarma, M. P. and Subroto, U. 2020](#)), or terrarium making ([Gavron, T. and Shemesh, H. 2024](#)) or using virtual art ([Cohen, L. 2026](#)) and references to book and book chapters.

I hope this is helpful. Please contact the Library if you would like any further information or would like to revise your search: library@somersetft.nhs.uk.

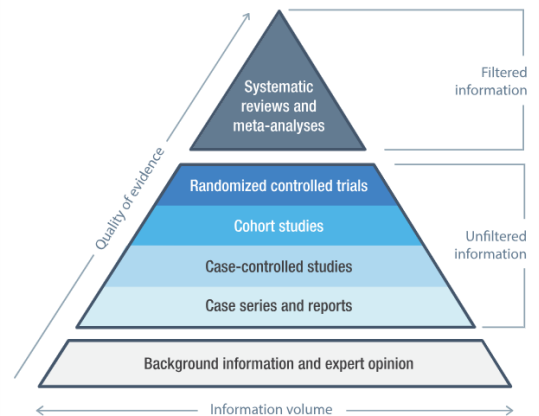
We would like to capture information about the impact this evidence search has had on your practice or decision—making. We can use this to promote this service to others within the Trust and it also ensures this service continues to develop and meet the needs of everyone who uses it. Please take a few moments to complete our short [impact survey](#).

Search results

Full-text access:

Abstracts are provided where available. To check if the full-text of an article is available, click on the links provided and log in with your NHS OpenAthens username and password, if prompted. You can register for an NHS OpenAthens username and password at: <https://openathens.nice.org.uk>. If there is no link, or the full-text is not available to you, please send the details of the article to library@somersetft.nhs.uk or and we will try and find it for you.

For your information, and to help you assess the quality of the research, here is a [hierarchy of the quality of evidence](#) that you may find useful:





Affective Scaffolds, Expressive Arts, and Cognition

Authors: Maiese, Michelle

Publication Date: -03-17 , 2016

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology 7

Abstract: Some theorists have argued that cognitive agents engineer their environment to sustain and amplify their cognitive abilities, and also that elements of the surrounding world sometimes play a crucial role in evoking and sustaining emotion. Such insights raise an interesting question about the relationship between cognitive and affective scaffolding: in addition to enabling the realization of specific affective states, can an affective niche also enable the realization of certain cognitive capacities? In order to gain a better understanding of this relationship between affective scaffolding and cognition, I will examine the use of expressive arts in the context of psychotherapy and peacebuilding. In these settings, environmental resources and interpersonal scaffolds not only evoke emotion and encourage the adoption of particular bodily-affective styles, but also support the development of capacities for self-awareness and interpersonal understanding. These affective scaffolds play a crucial role in therapy and peacebuilding, in fact, insofar as they facilitate the development of self-knowledge, enhance capacities associated with social cognition, and build positive rapport and trust among participants. I will argue that this is because affectivity is linked to the way that subjects frame and attend to their surroundings. Insofar as the regulation and modulation of emotion goes hand in hand with opening up new interpretive frames and establishing new habits of mind, affective scaffolds can contribute significantly to various modes of cognition.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00359>

IMPACTS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Tapping into museums for art psychotherapy: An evaluation of a pilot group for young adults

Authors: Coles, Ali and Harrison, Fiona

Publication Date: 2018

Journal: International Journal of Art Therapy 23(3), pp. 115–124

Abstract: This article describes a pilot museum-based art psychotherapy group for seven 18 to 25-year-old adults with severe mental health difficulties. We outline existing evidence for the psychotherapeutic value of museums and describe how we tried to harness the potential of museums as socially inclusive, accessible and inspiring venues, as well as a rich source of encounters with objects and environments which can mobilise introspection and meaning-making. We explain how we evaluated the group in order to assess therapeutic outcomes and the contribution of the museum setting to these, using quantitative data from outcome measures and qualitative data from the therapy sessions and post-therapy reflective interviews. Overall, the data suggested that the therapy group was beneficial to participants. The young adults reported that the museum setting helped them to reflect on feelings and experiences, facilitated interaction between group members, encouraged independence, fostered motivation and creativity and helped them to feel valued and connected with the world outside mental health services. These evaluation findings are an encouragement to other art psychotherapists to consider tapping into the therapeutic benefits of this rich cultural resource. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)

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CONNECTION WITH OTHERS

Exploring the Feasibility and Benefits of an Arts-based Mindfulness Group Program for Young Mothers

Authors: Oystrick, Vivian and Coholic, Diana

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Journal of Child & Family Studies 34(12), pp. 3288–3301

Abstract: The aim of our research was to explore the feasibility and benefits of an arts-based mindfulness intervention with young mothers. Adolescent mothers are more vulnerable to parenting stress due to their age and life circumstances. Maternal internal capacities to manage adverse feelings, and perceived social support, are protective factors for maternal and child outcomes. We discuss the experiences of nine young mothers who attended a 12-week arts-based mindfulness program. We utilized a qualitative approach that included group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and arts-based methods. Participants were asked about their experiences in the program and their ability to apply mindfulness to their day-to-day parenting. Inductive thematic analysis led to the development of themes relating to (a) connections with others, (b) new ways of coping, and (c) improved awareness. We discuss how arts-based mindfulness group methods may be an effective way to engage young mothers in interventions that help them develop supportive relationships, positive coping strategies, and improved awareness of themselves and their children. Highlights: Novel research exploring a 12-week arts-based mindfulness group program with young mothers ages 18–22 years. Participants reported learning new ways to cope with stress by applying mindfulness skills to their daily parenting. Participants reported improved sense of awareness that helped them focus on themselves and their children. The group-based model reduced social isolation by fostering positive relationships and friendships among participants. Arts-based mindfulness group work is an effective way to engage young mothers and to support positive outcomes.

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Belonging through Creative Connections: a feasibility study of an arts-based intervention to facilitate social connections between university students

Authors: Henrickson, Leah; Jennings, Grace and Bewick, Bridgette M.

Publication Date: December 31, 2024

Journal: Cogent Education 11(1), pp. 2373181

Abstract: Studies show that university students report higher levels of mental health problems and lower well-being than their non-student peers. As demand for university well-being services increases, so too does the need for alternative interventions to support student well-being for students in various states of mental health. In this paper, we introduce I Belong: Creative Connections, an arts-based intervention that aims to decrease student loneliness, increase senses of belonging, and support positive mental health and well-being by facilitating social connections through fun, positive, shared experiences based on students' own interests. We review the first two pilot years of the programme to evaluate the feasibility of the intervention using both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (focus groups and interviews) methods. We aimed to investigate if Creative Connections reached the intended participants, to evaluate if unconventional execution of focus groups can be used to effectively gain insight into student's experiences of the programme, and to assess the feasibility of a co-creative approach to the programme's design, implementation, and evaluation. Evaluation results show that Creative Connections is a feasible intervention that achieves its envisaged aims. These results also offer insight into how the programme's co-creative approach may be adjusted to better support students' social experiences of the programme.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2373181>



Learning from a Group Art Therapy Intervention for University Student Veterans

Authors: Serricchio-Joiner, Maria and Metzli, Einat S.

Publication Date: Jul , 2024

Journal: Journal of Creativity in Mental Health 19(3), pp. 383–405

Abstract: This study examined the meaning of an eight-week group art therapy intervention with student veterans in a large public university in California. We focused on grounded theory methodology, to evaluate the meaning of the program for participants while bringing their art and narratives as active contributors to the formation of the theoretical frame relevant to their unique lived experience. A systemic analysis integrated clinical notes from the art therapist facilitating the group, pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews with all participants, and a systematic exploration of participants' art responses. Findings indicate that the group art therapy intervention reduced isolation and increased overall well-being while supporting the veterans' need to process trauma and grief through visual narratives and identity formation. The findings also suggest the need to reconsider the timing of trauma processing and the potential benefit of forming groups based on types of trauma experiences and gender-specific needs.

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BIPOC Art Therapists: Antiracism Work Through the Virtual Circle.

Authors: Goerd M.N.; Resurreccion A.A.G.; Taziyah B.; Johnson R.; Lorenzo de la Pena S. and Johnson, T.

Publication Date: 2022

Journal: Art Therapy 39(2), pp. 103–107

Abstract: In the wake of 2020's racial tension and civil unrest in the United States, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) art therapists and graduate students found themselves in need of support from like-minded, social justice-oriented peers. A virtual monthly peer support group called the BIPOC Art Therapists' Circle was formed. A different member selected reading materials to which members created response art. Outcomes of the Circle include: shared experience of oppression; connection and empowerment through art sharing; safety; emotional support and validation; vulnerability and authenticity; widened perspectives; and motivation to advocate outside of circle meetings. The experience of the BIPOC circle confirms its critical importance as a source of support for BIPOC art therapists and students.

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Developing an online art therapy group for learning disabled young adults using WhatsApp

Authors: Datlen, Gillian W. and Pandolfi, Chiara

Publication Date: 2020

Journal: International Journal of Art Therapy 25(4), pp. 192–201

Abstract: Background: Learning Disabled (LD) adults commonly experience barriers accessing the same services as non-disabled adults. Communication issues may also contribute to difficulties forming relationships, leading to increased loneliness and isolation. Art therapy groups can help to counter social isolation, providing opportunities to creatively explore challenges within a therapeutic relationship. Context: This paper describes the development of online art therapy during the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Using social media, an online group was developed from an existing studio group for LD clients at risk of isolation. Participants continue to take part and have consented to their images and viewpoints being used. Approach: Primarily influenced by studio models of art therapy, the original approach used is an enabling, art-based approach. After transitioning into online art therapy, art making remains central to the process and intersectionality and the role of touch are explored. Outcomes: Participants of the online group consistently engage, sharing creative responses via the social media platform, WhatsApp. Ongoing participation is perceived as a positive sign and members predominantly agree the adaptation is helpful, however, challenges gathering feedback have arisen. Conclusions: The use of online art therapy in an accessible format enables the group to continue accessing support during the pandemic. The variety of communication methods available on WhatsApp allows participants to remain included.



Implications for research: Further research is required to establish whether this approach could be used as a template for other LD services and other client groups. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

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Connecting, coping, and creating: An expressive arts group for first year college students

Authors: Price, Eric W. and Swan, Alyssa M.

Publication Date: 2020

Journal: Journal of Creativity in Mental Health 15(3), pp. 378–392

Abstract: First-year college students are at-risk for mental health concerns that surface or are exacerbated by transition to college academics and new lifestyle. The purpose of this article is to: (a) investigate the mental health needs of first-year college students, (b) examine the benefits of an expressive arts group for this population, and (c) present an example of an eight-week expressive arts group curriculum. We describe the rationale for incorporating expressive arts into group therapy with first-year college students and describe an eight-week expressive arts group curriculum designed to help first-year college students connect to others, cope with college demands, and create new ways of expressing themselves. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

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Wellness at universities: A group art therapy approach

Authors: Sonnone, Ashley and Rochford, Jessie Spraggins

Publication Date: 2020

Journal: Journal of College Counseling 23(2), pp. 168–179

Abstract: Art therapy process groups can be used at university counseling centers (UCCs) to treat the mental health needs of higher education students. The authors, art therapists employed at a UCC, developed an art therapy group to engage undergraduate students in creative self-expression to increase social connection and learn healthy skills to improve insight and emotional well-being. Such groups offer unique benefits to participants and would be a valuable addition to current UCC services. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1002/jocc.12157>

Claymation art therapy in early phase psychosis: A qualitative study to explore participants' experiences with the program and identify outcome effects.

Authors: Ursuliak Z.;Hughes J.;Crocker C.E.;MacKenzie A. and Tibbo, P. G.

Publication Date: 2020

Journal: Early Intervention in Psychiatry 14(6), pp. 698–704

Abstract: Aim: Art therapy is a complex intervention that has mixed evidence for people with schizophrenia and scant research in early phase psychosis. Benefits appear to depend on level of engagement and more qualitative studies are needed to elucidate how it works and what outcomes to measure. The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of a 13-week Claymation art therapy group intervention for young adults with early phase psychosis, and to explore participants' experiences with the program and to identify outcome effects. Method(s): Thirteen participants completed the intervention in two cohorts. The participants' experiences were explored through qualitative thematic analysis of individual interviews postintervention and at 3-month follow-up. Result(s): The program had a 62% retention rate and an 80% attendance rate. Qualitative analysis of postintervention and 3-month follow-up interviews identified six themes that described program elements: (a) Claymation valued; (b) film screening fostered support; (c) getting to know each other through art; (d) connecting with others with lived experience; (e) opportunity to build skills; and (f) supportive facilitators. Five themes were identified as outcome effects from both time points: (a) stress relief; (b) self-discovery; (c) pride in art; (d) confidence and hope; and (e) engagement in meaningful activity postintervention. Two themes were unique to the 3-month follow-up interviews: (a) Claymation was enabling and (b) showing my film. Conclusion(s): This group Claymation art therapy intervention effectively engaged people with early phase psychosis and the qualitative analysis identified program



elements and outcome effects that can be evaluated in future studies.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1111/eip.12896>

Feeling Connected and Understood: The Role of Creative Arts in Engaging Young Adults in Their Mental Health Services

Authors: Cole, Andrea;Jenefsky, Nadia;Ben-David, Shelly and Munson, Michelle R.

Publication Date: April 3 , 2018

Journal: Social Work with Groups 41(1-2), pp. 6–20

Abstract: Young adults face an elevated risk of developing mental illness yet are less likely to engage in mental health services than other adult age groups. The purpose of this article is to describe and present qualitative data related to the use of the arts in a group intervention designed to increase mental health service engagement in young adults with mental health challenges. Participants described feeling more understood and connected to group members through the creative arts activities and stated the use of the arts was positive, effective, and helpful in processing grief and loss. Research and practice implications are discussed.

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Art making and the promotion of wellbeing in Samoa-Participants' lived experience of a recovery oriented intervention

Authors: Fenner, Patricia;Ryan, Brigid;Latai, Leua and Percival, Steven

Publication Date: 2018

Journal: Arts & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice 10(2), pp. 124–137

Abstract: Background: Set in the Pacific nation of Samoa, this study contributes knowledge about art, mental health and trauma recovery for people within a non-Western context. A total of 22 youth and young adults from two residential services participated in a six month weekly art programme set within a health promotion context. Methods: Focus group discussions with staff and consumers explored the participant experience of art making. Focus group data were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Results: The study revealed art making in the recovery context supported enhanced levels of self-awareness, a sense of identity, belonging and of being contributors to society. Conclusions: Making art in the group supported participants' sense of voice, empowerment, agency and the capacity to make a social contribution within their respective communities during a period of dislocation from the village and extended family. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2024 APA, all rights reserved)

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PARTICIPANTS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEMSELVES

The effects of mandala group art therapy on bereaved college students: An exploratory study.

Authors: Li, Juan-Juan;Ding, Xiao-Bin;Zhao, Hai-Yan;Wang, Lin;Jia, Ting-Ting;Zhong, Xi-Yun and Kang, Tie-Jun

Publication Date: Sep , 2025

Journal: Acta Psychologica 259, pp. 105399

Abstract: This study examined the efficacy of Mandala Group Art Therapy in alleviating negative emotions and enhancing personal growth among bereaved college students. Using a randomized matched-pairs design, 48 participants (16 males, 32 females) were assigned to either an 8-week mandala group art therapy intervention (120-minute weekly sessions) or a control group. Outcome measures including grief (PG-13), depression, anxiety (DASS-21), and personal growth (HGRC-PG) were assessed at baseline, post-intervention, and 2-month follow-up. Results demonstrated that compared to controls, the intervention group showed significant reductions in grief ($\eta_p^2 = 0.54$), depression ($\eta_p^2 = 0.26$), and anxiety ($\eta_p^2 = 0.19$), along with increased personal growth ($\eta_p^2 = 0.26$), with treatment effects maintained at follow-up (all $ps < .001$). These findings suggest that mandala group art therapy is an effective intervention for improving psychological adjustment in



bereaved college students.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105399>

From art to insight: The role of a creative arts therapies group workshop on college students' well-being, self-awareness, and loneliness (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Arriaga P., Simoes M.P., Marques S., Freitas R., Pinto H.D., Prior M.P., Candeias S. and Rodrigues, M.

Publication Date: 2024

Publication Details: United Kingdom: Arts in Psychotherapy; Elsevier Ltd,

Abstract: This study examined the effects of a three-hour Creative Arts Therapies (CATs) group workshop on perceived well-being, self-awareness, and loneliness among college students. Using a within-subjects design, participants completed surveys before and after the workshop and during a follow-up phase. Each workshop, facilitated by two certified art therapists, involved groups of 5 to 13 students. The workshops included 89 students aged 18-51 years, 87 responded after the workshop and 59 during the follow-up. Results indicated a short-term increase in subjective well-being, characterized by heightened positive emotions, life satisfaction, and reduced negative affect. Additionally, the workshop reduced state anxiety and enhanced awareness, fostering both inward self-awareness of feelings and thoughts and outward environmental awareness. A decrease in concerns about social judgments and feelings of loneliness suggested greater self-acceptance and social connection. Predictors of these changes included the perceived therapeutic value of the workshop and group cohesion. Moreover, depressive symptoms were associated with both negative affect and public self-awareness changes. However, follow-up revealed that increases in life satisfaction and loneliness were transient, returning to initial levels, suggesting the need for ongoing interventions and further research on the effects of CATs in group settings.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1016/j.aip.2024.102188>

The role of art therapy on quality of life of women with recent pregnancy loss: A randomized clinical trial.

Authors: Zahmatkesh, Masumeh; Faal Siahal, Shahla; Alahverdi, Fatemeh; Tahmasebi, Golshan and Ebrahimi, Elham

Publication Date: 2024

Journal: PLoS ONE [Electronic Resource] 19(7), pp. e0305403

Abstract: Background: Pregnancy loss and mourning can lead to psychological adverse effects on women's quality of life. This study aimed to evaluate the effect of art therapy on the quality of life of women with pregnancy loss. Methods: This study was a randomized clinical trial performed on 60 women who recently experienced abortion or stillbirth. After randomization in two groups (30 in each group), women in the intervention group received four session art therapy. In the control group, routine care was performed. The Perinatal Grief Scale and World Health Organization quality of life questionnaire, short version 26, was used to collect data before and eight weeks after intervention, and the result was compared before and after the intervention in both groups. Results: The mean age of participants was 26.5±4.75 years. Eight weeks after the intervention, the mean score of the total quality of life was significantly different between the two groups (348.64±13.12 vs. 254.46±58.35; P>0.01). Also, all physical, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions of quality of life improved in the art therapy group compared to the control group (P>0.01). Conclusions: Art therapy could improve the quality-of-life following pregnancy loss, and can be recommended as a complementary method next to routine care. Trial registration: IRCT20200104046002N1. Copyright: © 2024 Zahmatkesh et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1371/journal.pone.0305403>



Evaluation of Expressive Arts Therapy on the Resilience of University Students in COVID-19: A Network Analysis Approach.

Authors: Li Y. and Peng, J.

Publication Date: 2022

Journal: International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 19(13) (pagination), pp. Article Number: 7658. Date of Publication: 01 Jul 2022

Abstract: As an alternative to traditional verbal counselling, expressive arts therapy has been shown to be an effective method of mental health care, particularly when dealing with stressful public interactions, such as those associated with COVID-19. However, few studies have been conducted to determine the efficacy of expressive arts therapy on the resilience of psychologically exposed university students during COVID-19. Furthermore, since network analysis appears to be a popular approach in psychological research, it has not been used in recent intervention studies for resilience. As a result, the current study utilized a network analysis approach to determine the efficacy of expressive arts therapy on the resilience of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 263 students in a comprehensive university in China were selected for the therapy group between March and November 2021. In a pre-post design, students' resilience was assessed using the Resiliency Scale for University Students (RSUS). The extended Bayesian information criteria (EBIC) and graphical LASSO were used to estimate and define paired resilience networks, and the strength, betweenness, and closeness indices were utilized to determine the centrality of the six facets of resilience. Additionally, we verified the stability and accuracy. It was discovered that significant differences appeared between the paired networks before and after expressive arts therapy. Facets of self-efficacy, self-acceptance and problem-solving in resilience were notably improved after the therapy, with the variable of emotional stability sustained at the mean level. Meanwhile, the network analysis has highlighted the central variable of self-efficacy in the pre-intervention and support from friends in the post-intervention. The connectivity among the components of problem solving, support from friends, and support from family was enhanced, with support from friends playing the role of hub nod in the following network. By utilizing a network analytic approach, expressive arts therapy can be more targeted in intervening in resilience mechanisms. As a proxy for efficacious problem-solving, intervention should be calibrated to the cultivation of social support networks, especially in the support from friends.

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Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.3390/ijerph19137658>

The effect of mindfulness-based mandala activity on anxiety and spiritual well-being levels of senior nursing students: A randomized controlled study.

Authors: Sari Ozturk, Cigdem and Kilicarslan Toruner, Ebru

Publication Date: Oct , 2022

Journal: Perspectives in Psychiatric Care 58(4), pp. 2897–2909

Abstract: Purpose: This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of mindfulness-based mandala activity on the anxiety levels and spiritual well-being of nursing students who started clinical practice after distance education during COVID-19 period. Design and methods: This study is a randomized controlled study employing a pre-/post-test design with a single-blind, parallel group. The study was completed with a total of 170 participants (n = 84, intervention group; n = 86, control group). Data were collected using the Descriptive Characteristics Form, State-trait Anxiety Inventory, Spirituality Well-Being Scale, and Scale of Positive and Negative Experience. The intervention group participated in three mindfulness-based mandala sessions. This study was registered with ClinicalTrials.gov as NCT05053178. Findings: In three sessions, there was a significant decrease in the intervention group compared with the control group regarding the mean values of pretest and posttest anxiety levels. Evaluation of the mean scores Spiritual Well-Being Scale before and after the intervention showed a significant decrease in the scores between groups (p : In three sessions, there was a significant decrease in the intervention group compared with the control group regarding the mean values of pretest and post-test anxiety levels. Evaluation of the mean scores Spiritual Well-Being Scale before and after the intervention showed a significant decrease in the scores between groups.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1111/ppc.13138>



A qualitative inquiry comparing mindfulness-based art therapy versus neutral clay tasks as a proactive mental health solution for college students

Authors: Van Lith, Theresa; Beerse, Megan and Smalley, Quinn

Publication Date: -08-24 , 2022

Journal: Journal of American College Health 70(6), pp. 1889–1897

Abstract: Objective: College students experience unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety, impacting their desire to perform well and live a balanced life. Mindfulness-based practices along with art therapy techniques have been demonstrated to improve psychological and physiological impacts of stress and anxiety among college students. Participants: 12 undergraduate college students participated in pre and post-test interviews following their engagement in either mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT) or a neutral clay task (NCT) using a 5-week online format. Methods: Descriptive phenomenology and artful inquiry were used to elicit participants' perspectives. Results: Both MBAT and NCT elicited relaxing and calming effects, but MBAT provided more proactive and direct benefits, with participants reporting that they could identify and move through stressors. While NCT participants described their experience as fun or playful. Conclusions: These findings offer notable support for implementing online and accessible mental health strategies such as MBAT and NCT into college settings.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1080/07448481.2020.1841211>

Arts-based mindfulness group work with youth aging out of foster care

Authors: Lougheed, Sean C. and Coholic, Diana A.

Publication Date: 2018

Journal: Social Work with Groups 41(1-2), pp. 165–178

Abstract: This article describes the development of a 10-week arts-based mindfulness group program for youth aging out of foster care. This unique group program is briefly described, and examples of creative activities are provided. The use of an arts-based approach was engaging and relevant for the youth given the challenges they displayed such as paying attention and focusing. The authors discuss other convergent facets of the group including its strengths-based approach, social understanding of resilience, and holistic approach to facilitating mindfulness. This article contributes to an emerging field of practice regarding creative and holistic applications of mindfulness with youth who are marginalized. (PsyInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

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COMPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

- **Articles**

The Effect of Mindfulness-Based Art Therapy in Nursing Students: A Randomized Controlled Trial.

Authors: Duzgun N. and Ercan, F.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The Journal of Nursing Education , pp. 1–10

Abstract: background: Critical thinking and self-confidence are important concepts for nursing students. This study aimed to investigate the effects of mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT) on the critical thinking dispositions and self-confidence levels of nursing students.

Method(s): A randomized controlled trial was conducted using a parallel-group design with pretest and post-test measurements. A total of 53 nursing students completed the study. The intervention group participated in an 8-week MBAT program, whereas the control group received no intervention during this period. Result(s): During the pretest phase, the intervention and control groups showed no statistically significant differences in their mean scores on the Critical Thinking Disposition and Self-Confidence scales ($p > .05$). However, following the MBAT program, the intervention group showed notably higher mean scores than the control group in both the post-test and follow-up assessments ($p < .001$). Conclusion(s): The findings indicate that MBAT effectively enhances critical thinking disposition and self-confidence levels in nursing



students.

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Combined HRT-WB and mandala art therapy in university groups: A mixed-methods study.

Authors: Li, Feifei; Bian, Xiaoqian; Liu, Ruifeng and Syed Abdullah, Syed Mohamad Bin

Publication Date: Nov , 2025

Journal: American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis 67(4), pp. 390–407

Abstract: First-year university students often experience increased psychological distress during adaptation. Guided by the Dual-Factor Model, this study evaluated a combined intervention of mandala art therapy and Hypnotic Relaxation Therapy for Well-Being (HRT-WB) in reducing negative symptoms and enhancing well-being. Twenty-eight students with low mental health scores were randomly assigned to an experimental group (8-week intervention) or a control group (routine counseling). Outcomes were measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21), and post-intervention interviews. The experimental group showed significant increases in life satisfaction and reductions in depression, anxiety, and stress. The experimental group showed significant increases in life satisfaction and reductions in depression, anxiety, and stress. These effects were confirmed by mixed-design ANOVA and ANCOVA. Thematic analysis of interviews indicated enhanced self-awareness, emotional expression, and relaxation. These findings support the integration of mandala art therapy and HRT-WB in university counseling to address student mental health needs.

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"Happiness tree": a thematic art-based group counseling method for enhancing positive psychological traits in Chinese college students.

Authors: Xie, Fangzhou; Tang, Mengyao; Wu, Shanshan and Wang, Yong

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology 16, pp. 1651008

Abstract: Introduction: This study was a pilot study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a new counseling method "Happiness Tree" thematic art-based group counseling. Methods: We conducted an intervention study in which 36 psychologically healthy college students were instructed to create symbolic tree drawings and engage in reflective writing, helping them identify personal strengths and emotional resources. Students in the experimental group received six online group counseling sessions, while students in the control group received no intervention. Subjective well-being (SWB) and general self-efficacy (GSE) were measured before and after the intervention. Results: The results showed that participants in the experimental group experienced preliminary improvements in both SWB and GSE compared to the control group, suggesting potential benefits of the intervention. Discussion: These findings suggest that the "Happiness Tree" thematic art-based group counseling shows promise for cultivating positive psychological traits in young adults. Our research provides a useful tool for promoting mental health in educational settings.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1651008>

"I Am Actually Growing My Art": Building an Expressive Terrarium as an Intervention Tool in Arts Therapy.

Authors: Gavron T. and Shemesh, H.

Publication Date: 2024

Journal: Journal of Creativity in Mental Health 19(1), pp. 24–38

Abstract: The Expressive Terrarium is a new intervention tool in the field of ecological arts therapy. The terrarium is a glass bowl containing plants and other objects from nature, art materials, as well as miniature and found objects. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a sample of students and administrative staff from the same college to better understand the experiential process for future use as a clinical intervention tool. The findings showed that both groups had high positive attitudes toward the terrarium experience. The qualitative data showed that the participants experienced feelings of enjoyment and a sense of calm while engaged in building and tending their terrariums. The terrarium was perceived as enabling self-expression and as a symbolic-narrative-oriented personal space. Thus, this preliminary mixed-method study suggests that the Expressive Terrarium could be implemented in



individual and group therapy or as a community-based intervention in schools and academia.
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Assessing the stress-relief impact of an art-based intervention inspired by the broaden-and-build theory in college students

Authors: Liu, Chen;Xie, Yuan;Xu, Yiwen;Song, Zhenhai;Tang, Jiayi;Shen, Junjie;Jiang, Zhou;Shen, Chao;Zhan, Xingya and Zheng, Chu

Publication Date: -01-31 , 2024

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology 15

Abstract: Background and objectives: This study's primary objective is to investigate the impact of art-making on the mental well-being of college students, who often experience heightened stress during their initial university years. Methods: Employing a comprehensive methodology, combining interviews and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the research aimed to assess whether a four-week artmaking intervention can effectively alleviate stress levels among college students. In the experimental group, participants engaged in a variety of art-making activities, including freehand drawing, clay modeling, and crafting.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1324415>

Bonsai as a group art therapy intervention among traumatized youth in KwaZulu-Natal.

Authors: Hermann, Carol

Publication Date: Apr , 2021

Journal: The Psychic Journal 10(2), pp. 177–186

Abstract: Bonsai can be used as an art therapy tool during psychodynamic therapeutic interventions maintenance of good mental health. Bonsai is generally considered to be relaxing and is practiced by many to relieve stress and as an expression of art. The aim was to establish bonsai as an art therapy tool to overcome trauma. Fifteen isiZulu-speaking traumatized youths in a remote area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa participated in a qualitative study that investigated their narratives around experienced trauma and sense of hopelessness. Materials in the form of bonsai, tools, wire, and pots were supplied, and six sessions were held. Results indicated that the participants experienced an improvement in their mental state, which was attributed by them to the practice of the art of bonsai. Bonsai can be beneficial as a healing medium mental health tool when employed as art therapy and can be promoted in a group setting in potential rehabilitation situations.

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Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1002/pchj.440>

The birth project: using the Arts to Explore Birth

Authors: Hogan, S.

Publication Date: 2019

Abstract: The Birth Project is an arts-based research project, which has employed visual methods throughout, both as a means of elicitation, but also as a mode of dissemination of research results. It forms part of a larger investigation that has examined how creative practice, in the arts and humanities, can promote the kinds of connectedness and reciprocity that support 'mutual recovery' in terms of mental health and well-being. **Headline Finding:** Overall improvement in self-reported well-being measures with a significant increase in the overall scores for both of the arts interventions with the mothers (37%). This is such a substantial improvement that we believe it will have long term consequences for both the mothers and for their infant's development. **Key Findings:**

- Art elicitation workshops can increase participants' awareness and understanding of their birth experiences.
- It is less the actual intervention itself in childbirth, rather the quality of the engagement between health professionals and the birthing mother that is of crucial importance to mother's birth experience and sense of well being.
- Image-making and reflection can validate difficult birth experiences and mediate stress.
- Supportive art group experiences can help mothers in the transition to new motherhood.
- Supportive art group experiences increase confidence and self-esteem.
- The overall experience of being in the groups greatly enhanced the women's sense of



wellbeing.

- Birth professionals found the arts useful as an analytic tool for helping them to think about their practice.
- Birth professionals found engaging in a supportive art group allowed them to reflect 'holistically'

Access or request full

text: <https://www.derby.ac.uk/media/derbyacuk/assets/departments/business-services/documents/65835-The-Birth-Project.pdf>

Exploring art therapy group practice in early intervention psychosis

Authors: Parkinson, Sarah and Whiter, Claire

Publication Date: 2016

Journal: International Journal of Art Therapy 21(3), pp. 116–127

Abstract: This article aims to outline the process by which we set up an art psychotherapy group for young adults experiencing first episode psychosis. Our reflections on this process are discussed together with reflections from the individuals accessing the group in its first year. Our writing, evidence and discussion are based on an earlier report which aimed to identify good art therapy practice in early intervention for psychosis by meeting guidelines set out by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence and the Initiative to Reduce the Impact of Schizophrenia.

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- **Books and Book Chapters**

EMDR and creative arts therapies

Item Type: Book, Edited Collection

Editors: Davis, E., Fitzgerald, J., Jacobs, S. and Marchand, J. (eds)

Publication Date: 2023 Routledge; US. Series number, Edited Collection

Abstract: This book guides therapists trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) in the successful integration of the creative arts therapies to make the healing potential of EMDR safer and more accessible for patients who present with complex trauma. Building on the interdisciplinary foundations of the expressive arts therapies, this text offers practical applications for integrating theory and practice strategies within an EMDR framework to improve clinical care for the treatment of psychological trauma. Offering a well-integrated approach to understanding the complexities in trauma recovery, the book provides an incredible resource for integrating two powerful, evidence-based treatments to promote healing from trauma. EMDR has been around for over 30 years now and has become recognized as the most efficient of the well-established trauma therapies. Art therapy has been around for about half a century longer and has become an entire mental health discipline. Integrating creative arts therapies into the already well-established and researched framework of EMDR therapy provides an effective and accessible approach to complex trauma recovery which can reach across populations, cultures, languages, and developmental phases. The book aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of this integrative approach through the expertise of innovators in the field who offer comprehensive models, theoretical perspectives, and case examples that highlight the value of creative arts therapies in trauma recovery. The innovative EMDR therapists featured in the book bring together new developments in the field of neuroscience, attachment, and developmental psychology. Additionally, the book addresses current critical issues in the field, namely the importance of an integrative and responsive approach when addressing cultural, racial, and diversity issues. As the first book published in the field, it will provide a solid foundation to support a growing trend of interest in combining creative therapies and EMDR.

Access or request full text: [Book or Book Chapter Request Form](#)

Virtual art therapy: Research and practice

Item Type: Book, Edited Collection

Editors: Michelle, W. (ed.)

Publication Date: 2022 Routledge; US. Series number, Edited Collection

Abstract: Art therapy is not a soft and fuzzy intervention. It's not just playing with materials; it is a profound process involving our deepest emotions, connecting us with the areas of the brain that we can't access with speech. It allows us to be able to express ourselves through other



avenues. Thus, significant change can occur using art therapy as part of prevention in healthcare. One must try to lower the chance of mental health issues by starting at an early age, when most mental health concerns begin. In medicine, decisions are based on evidence. Many studies conducted around the integration of arts and medicine have demonstrated improvements in health outcomes, quality of life, and improved hospital experiences. Increasingly, more research is becoming available about the effectiveness of art therapy, as well as studies demonstrating the effectiveness of telehealth and tele-mental health. However, research on virtual art therapy is in its infancy, which is why this book is critical and timely. This book provides a practical and research-based exploration of virtual art psychotherapy, and how its innovations are breaking new ground in the mental health field. With seventeen chapters authored by leaders documenting their research on creative arts therapies online, along with findings from the Virtual Art Therapy Clinic, the book presents examples, strategies, and experiences delivering arts-based therapeutic services and online education. Clinical practice examples support and provide evidence for the transition from in-person to virtual sessions. By combining the collected expertise of all the contributing authors, this book encourages art therapists to support further growth in the field of virtual art therapy. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved).

Access or request full text: [Book or Book Chapter Request Form](#)

Art therapy in museums and galleries : reframing practice

Author: Coles, A.

Publication Date: 2020 Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Access or request full text: [Details for: Art therapy in museums and galleries : reframing practice / > SWIMS catalogue](#)

Chapter: Creative arts-based approaches to adolescent group therapy: The state of the art

Item Type: Book, Edited Collection

Editors: Haen, C. (ed.)

Publication Date: 2019 Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group; US. Series number, Edited Collection

Abstract: Research on treatment with young people has become more rigorous, specific, and developmentally sensitive within the past two decades. However, there continues to be a disconnect between researchers and clinical practitioners, so that therapists often do not incorporate the findings from research studies into practice decisions, nor does the body of research adequately speak to the contexts in which therapists are working, a phenomenon known as the research-practice gap. There also remains far more research on adults than on young people, despite the fact that half of all mental illnesses have their onset by age 14. This chapter promotes the kind of dialogue between therapists and researchers that Cruz and Koch suggest by summarizing studies relevant to the practice of group work with teens, as well as capturing the current state of research on creative arts-based group work more generally. It addresses the scarcity of focus on group process within the creative arts therapies literature, a lack that is surprising given how often these modalities are conducted in groups. The ultimate goal is for readers to walk away with a sense of the body of research that exists and how they can utilize this information to make better 'on-the-ground' decisions. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

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- **Conference papers**

Intervention effect of painting therapy combined with psychological counseling on students' academic burnout in English teaching (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Li, J.

Publication Date: 2025

Publication Details: International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine. Conference: International Conference on Psychiatry and Neurorestoratology & International Symposium on Syringomyelia and Cerebrospinal Fluid Dynamics (ICPN2024). Zhengzhou China. 60(Supplement 4) (pp 91S-92S); SAGE Publications Inc.,

Abstract: Introduction: Academic burnout is a common psychological problem among students in the process of English teaching, manifested as negative emotions and behaviors towards



learning, as well as a lack of self-efficacy. As an art therapy, painting therapy can effectively alleviate students' academic pressure. Therefore, in order to explore the intervention effect of painting therapy on students' academic burnout, a comparative experiment was conducted to analyze the intervention effect of painting therapy combined with psychological counseling on students' academic burnout in English teaching. Method(s): 146 students from a certain university who have a negative attitude towards English teaching were selected as the research subjects and randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group, with 73 people in each group. The experimental group received painting therapy combined with psychological counseling intervention, while the control group received psychological counseling intervention. After a one month intervention, evaluate students' aversion to learning and self-efficacy towards English teaching. Result(s): In Table 1, **indicates a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, with a significance level of $P < 0.05$). After intervention, the average evaluation of the experimental group's aversion to learning was 3.50 ± 0.56 , while the average evaluation of the control group was 3.65 ± 0.44 . The difference between the two groups was significant ($P < 0.01$). At the same time, the self-efficacy evaluation of the experimental group was 73.23 ± 14.06 , while that of the control group was 65.55 ± 13.61 . The difference between the two groups was significant ($P < 0.01$). Conclusion(s): The combination of painting therapy and psychological counseling has a significant intervention effect on students' academic burnout in English teaching, which can effectively reduce students' aversion to learning and improve their self-efficacy. In future research, efforts can be made to integrate painting therapy and psychological counseling into daily teaching and counseling, providing more comprehensive support for students' mental health and academic development.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/00912174251343125>

The auxiliary effect of therapeutic painting on the relief of depression and anxiety in college students by cannabidiol (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Ding, Y.

Publication Date: 2024

Publication Details: Journal of Psychopharmacology. Conference: International Conference on Pediatrics and Neonatology, ICPN 2024. London United Kingdom. 38(3 Supplement) (pp 24); SAGE Publications Ltd,

Abstract: Introduction: With the increase of social pressure, depression and anxiety have become increasingly common among college students¹. Cannabidiol (CBD), as a non-hallucinogenic component of cannabis, is widely used in the treatment of depression and anxiety disorders due to its potential anti-anxiety and anti-depressive properties². Meanwhile, healing painting, as an art therapy, is receiving increasing attention due to its unique emotional expression and relaxing effects. The research aims to explore the auxiliary effects of therapeutic painting combined with CBD on depression and anxiety in college students, analyze its potential application in psychological therapy, and provide new perspectives for research in related fields. Aims & Objectives: The study explored the impact of therapeutic painting on emotional improvement among college students and evaluated the role of combining therapeutic painting with CBD in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Method(s): A study recruited 100 students with depression and anxiety problems at a certain university and randomly divided them into an experimental group and a control group, with 50 students in each group. The experimental group received therapeutic painting therapy and CBD intervention, participated in therapeutic painting classes twice a week, and took CBD before each class. The control group only received CBD drug treatment. All participants are required to complete the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAMA) and Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAMD) assessments and sign informed consent forms before the start of the experiment. After one month of intervention, participants completed HAMA and HAMD scores again. Result(s): The scale scores of the two groups of students before and after the experiment are shown in Table 1. From Table 1, it can be seen that there was no statistically significant difference ($P > 0.05$) in HAMA and HAMD scores between the two groups of students before the experiment. After the experiment, the HAMA and HAMD scores of the experimental group were lower than those of the control group, and the difference between the two was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). At the same time, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$) in the HAMA and HAMD scores between the control group and the experimental group before and after the experiment in the intra group comparison. Discussion & Conclusion(s): The research aims to explore effective treatment methods for depression and anxiety among college students. The results showed that therapeutic painting can promote the therapeutic effect of CBD on depression and anxiety among college students. Among them, CBD can treat students' depression and anxiety symptoms from



a physical perspective. Healing painting can promote students' emotional expression from a psychological perspective and reduce their psychological burden. In summary, the combination of therapeutic painting and CBD provides an effective auxiliary treatment method for college students to alleviate depression and anxiety, laying the foundation for further research in the field of mental illness in the future. Future research needs to further explore the combined effects of different types of art therapies and CBD, as well as their applicability in other populations.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/02698811241300036>

Reauthoring self through online digital storytelling as art therapy during covid (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Klassen B. and Duff, M.

Publication Date: 2021

Publication Details: Current Oncology. Conference: Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology, CAPO 2021. Virtual. 28(4) (pp 2675); Multimed Inc.,

Abstract: Background/Rationale or Objectives/Purpose COVID-19 set conditions for CancerCare Manitoba to pivot delivery of psychosocial services. Therapeutic digital storytelling (TDS) offered a natural online fit. Using film production techniques, TDS empowers participants to create short videos that hold feelings and reframe stories in a clinical context. 2. Methodology or Methods Young adults are in the process of defining self when cancer disrupts their lives. Since technology is a primary way this group communicates, TDS provides relevant intervention for meaning making. TDS is based on filmmaking psychotherapy methods (Joshua Cohen, Lauren Johnson, Penelope Orr) and narrative therapy (Michael White). Informed by these perspectives, two approaches were developed by an art therapy student with a filmmaking background and a psychosocial oncology clinician trained in expressive arts therapy. A TDS group pilot was proposed for young adults. Due to time constraints, there was limited uptake; therefore, program development was facilitated with a patient consultant. Subsequent program variations showed increased participation. Individual TDS counselling sessions were offered to a young father with brain cancer who aspired to create a legacy video and reauthor his personal story. Participants reported an increase in hope, confidence, connectedness, and playful curiosity. 3. Impact on Practice or Results TDS offers an innovative online process to support cancer patients in eliciting emotional content, meaning making, and identity integration. The digital story is an immersive medium to understand patient experience. 4. Discussion or Conclusions TDS requires participants to possess technology literacy and invested curiosity. A knowledgeable therapist can facilitate this process using just-in-time learning to support self-efficacy. TDS is a potent multi-modal process we are only beginning to understand.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.3390/curroncol28040234>

Mandala Drawing for Reducing Test Anxiety in College Student (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Angellim, C., Satiadarma, M.P. and Subroto, U.

Publication Date: 2020/12/12 Atlantis Press, pp. 451

Abstract: Test anxiety is a set of cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses that are accompanied by concerns about the possible negative consequences of failure on the test or similar evaluative situations. High level of test anxiety can lead to negative impacts such as poor school performance, poor exam performance, psychological distress, cognitive impairment, and poor health. One effective therapy to overcome anxiety is art therapy. Art therapy is a form of therapy that involves art as a way to express feelings and communicate problems. Art therapy has many forms, one of which is mandala. Mandala is a form of art therapy that has been known to have therapeutic effects. The aim of this study is to investigate the reduction of test anxiety in college student by drawing mandala. The participants of this study were nine female college students, who are currently undergoing undergraduate study. This study used a quasi-experimental approach with one group pretest – posttest design. In this study participants were asked to take a mandala drawing session for six weeks, with one meeting session per week. Spielberg's Test Anxiety Inventory were used as the instrument for measuring the test anxiety level. The instrument was given before and after the intervention to determine the differences before and after treatment. The results show seven out of nine participants experienced significant reduction in test anxiety scores, one participant experienced an increase in scores, and one participant did not experience a change in score.

Access or request full text: <https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125948083.pdf>

- **Dissertation**



Art therapists' experience utilizing virtual reality's multibrush in group art making with young adults (Thesis)

Authors: Cohen, L.

Publication Date: 2026

Institution: Lesley University

Abstract: Young adults aged 20-35 experience disproportionately high rates of mental health conditions yet exhibit low treatment-seeking behaviors, creating a significant care gap. Digital interventions-particularly Virtual Reality (VR)-show promise for reaching this tech-savvy group. The primary research question explored art therapists' insights utilizing this modality, while a secondary aim examined whether creating VR response art (VRRRA) enhanced understanding of the group process. Three credentialed art therapists and nine young adults participated, sharing insights via interviews after VR group sessions and VRRRA creation. Thematic analysis revealed that adaptation to VR influenced group dynamics, self-expression through embodiment, collaboration, boundary management, sensory stimulation, and raised ethical issues. The VRRRA process revealed VR's transformative potential for group art therapy, deepening understanding of spatial, technological, and relational dynamics. Overall, VR presents a viable, engaging modality for young adults who are resistant to conventional interventions. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2026 APA, all rights reserved)

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text: https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=expressive_therapies_dissertation

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AI prompts (if used)

AI tool used: Copilot Researcher (m365 cloud
Microsoft)

Date accessed: 16th March 2026

Prompts used:


I am conducting an evidence search on the topic group Art Therapy for young adults (age between 18 and 25) and the impacts on emotional wellbeing, social connections and self-awareness. Please generate a list of 3-4 key articles in this topic. generate a table with the impact found, the age of the participants and the methods. Can you also search for reviews (including systematic reviews) and present them in another table with a summary of the findings. Please present the articles with the concepts and synonyms in another table and separate the MeSH terms. I am looking at peer-reviewed academic literature only.

Results used from it:



1. Henrickson L., et al. (2024). *Belonging through Creative Connections: Arts-based intervention for social connections in university students*. **Cogent Education**, 11(1): 2373181. – **Feasibility study** showing reduced loneliness and improved belonging in UK students through group art sessions.
2. Liu C., et al. (2024). *Art-based intervention and stress relief in college students*. **Frontiers in Psychology**, 15: 1324415. – **RCT** finding significant stress reduction in freshmen after a 4-week art-making program (vs. controls).

Databases/sources used		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pubmed	<input type="checkbox"/> KnowledgeShare	<input type="checkbox"/> BMJ Best Practice
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDLINE	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Policy & Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Trip Pro/AskTrip
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emcare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CINAHL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cochrane Library
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embase	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PsycINFO (2002-2025)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copilot Researcher
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