

Implementing Art Therapy to Improve Psychological Well-being in a Trauma Survivor Population: A Quasi-Experimental Mixed Method Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Women are meant to be protected, respected and cared for by men. However, instead of being treated as an equal, worldwide, a lot of women suffer from different forms of abuse and one of the most commonly experienced includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It is an alarming issue all over the world since one abuse can lead to another form of abuse that can be experienced by women. A woman who is sexually abused can also suffer from emotional and physical abuse and a lot more long term damages left to the person. This research aimed at identifying the level of psychological well being of trauma survivors before and after the implementation of art therapy and to propose a program that can help them improve their psychological well being in a more aesthetic way. This study used an experimental research design and was participated by 24 participants for the quantitative data collection and 8 participants participated in the interview. A translated version of the Ryff's Psychological Well being Scale and an interview question was used for data collection and for the data analysis, t test was used to compare the results and thematic analysis was used for the qualitative analysis. The results revealed that (1)trauma survivors after the facilitation of art therapy have increased personal growth and other domains such as environmental mastery, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance as they were able to process their trauma, sadness, anxiety, low self esteem and social interactions (2) Trauma survivors experienced significant difference or change since aspects or domains have normalized from being low prior to the facilitation of art therapy sessions and (3) The theme that has emerged in the study is the transformative goal of art therapy to psychological well being. These data were used to construct a proposed program to improve the psychological well being of trauma survivors through the use of art therapy and revisit the art therapy module used in the conduct of the study.

Keywords: Art therapy, Psychological Well Being, Trauma Survivors, Quasi Experimental.

INTRODUCTION

Women are meant to be protected, respected and cared for by men. However, instead of being treated as an equal, worldwide, a lot of women suffer from different forms of abuse and one of the most commonly experienced includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It is an alarming issue all over the world since one abuse can lead to another form of abuse that can be experienced by women. A woman who is sexually abused can also suffer from emotional and physical abuse and a lot more long term damages left to the person. Most of the time, people only talk about the abuse, but not all the victims are able to have intervention to help them deal with their traumatic experiences. Interventions such as counseling, psychotherapy, medication and even art therapy can be helpful on people with traumatic experiences. There is little study about the effectiveness of art therapy on psychological well-

being of women here in the Philippines which can be an additional intervention to be provided to the survivors. There is a limited exploration of other approaches that can possibly be of help to those people who suffer from abuse.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to help end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all the people will enjoy peace and prosperity includes health and wellness as one of its goals. SDG 3 focuses primarily on reducing health related problems and ensuring that the overall health of each individual by 2030 is better and it includes strengthening the mental health of people as well. This study aims to put an emphasis on mental health as a major part of the overall wellness of everyone in the society, especially those who are from the vulnerable groups. There are a lot of people who suffer from trauma and abuse that can have an impact on a person's psychological well-being. It can also influence their healing process and their ability to cope up and move forward in life. There are clients who were not given proper intervention or who cannot afford the costly psycho-therapeutic intervention or medication but may find healing in the benefits of the alternative approach of using art therapy. Most clients do not know how to help themselves or find ways or alternatives that can also serve the purpose and process of healing their trauma and depression.

More so, the World Health Organization reported that almost 30 percent of women experience abusive relationships. More than one billion children, half of all children in the world, are victims of violence every year. Girls exposed to severe abuse and neglect are at risk for deleterious short- and long-term outcomes, such as bullying in middle childhood and sexual victimization in adolescence (Yu et al., 2021). As the prevalence and profound impact of child abuse and neglect became evident programs were developed to help girls heal from adverse childhood experiences. In some of the most severe situations of child abuse and neglect, or abandonment, girls are unable to continue living with their families and are placed in residential centers. Violence against women and their children refers to any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty or the RA 9262 VAWC. Additionally, violence against women is an alarming problem experienced by many women worldwide. It ranges from simple physical abuses to severe life destroying consequences such as emotional disorder and death. The Filipino women are not exempted from this myriad, and though our constitution guarantees equal protection to all regardless of gender, we cannot deny the fact that there were numerous pitiful women who suffered violence from the hands of their cruel husbands, abusive parents or guardians, and some from their employers. Violence can have devastating consequences for victims. The effects can be loosely divided into psychological and physical categories (Radell et al., 2021; Shukla et al., 2022).

However, people are also aware that most of the time, abuse ends up with a legal action on how to help the victim without focusing much on how to actually help the victim in a way that she can still find meaning and purpose in life, move forward and set herself free from all her painful experiences. There are a lot of therapies and techniques that can help the clients have the ability to manage the impact of abuse on them. There are a lot of unexplored sides of arts which can also be beneficial to clients who are in the healing process because arts in different forms reflect the powerful effect that the arts and creative expression have on human understanding and communication. Art therapy works to harness that power for therapeutic means. According to the American Art Therapy Association, art therapy is a kind of therapy that integrates mental health and human services by using active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience. One of the main goals of art therapy is to improve people's well-being. It can help improve or bring back an individual's functioning. Art therapy takes place in educational, medical, and rehabilitation settings, as well as in private practices and mental health clinics. Art therapy is defined as the process of using art as a technique or strategy to be given to clients on scheduled sessions as part of their treatment plan or proposed intervention (Menigoz et al., 2020; Tong et al., 2020; Radell et al., 2020).

Although the practice of conducting art therapy has been going on for a few decades, its application in dealing with trauma survivors represents a relatively new approach. The target beneficiaries of this study are the clients of Regional Haven for Women and Girls. Thus, the output of the study will be an art therapy program specifically designed for implementation among its clients, offering an alternative to traditional interventions such as medication in their healing journey. It can also benefit psychology professionals and students conducting outreach programs to people who suffered trauma and depression on determining if they were to include art therapy for people with these cases. It can also benefit the UB Community such as the administration, counselors and psychology department because they can work hand in hand to empower women in the UB Community and their partner communities who cater to victims of abuse, those who suffer depression and trauma. They can help in the overall healing process through a very timely way of providing therapeutic intervention through art therapy.

The researchers personally experienced stressful events in their lives and that arts, in different forms, helped them. With their passion to extend support and care to people who have similar experiences with them, or worse, those who really suffer from trauma, abuse, psychological related concerns, can possibly be empowered and healed through arts. This field is not that explored in our country and we have limited studies about art therapy and mental health. This study will help promote mental health and well being of individuals in the community.

To be better guided by the study, the researchers used the following literature to support their research. At the foremost level, psychological well-being (PWB) is kind of the same as its alternative terms that see positive mental states, like happiness or satisfaction, and in some ways, it is not necessary or useful to find distinctions between such terms. The psychological feature is mostly appraisal of one's life. The emotive half may be a hedonistic analysis guided by emotions and feelings like frequency with which individuals experience pleasant or unpleasant moods in reaction to their lives. The belief behind this is often that almost all people assess their life as either smart or dangerous, so that they are able to provide judgments. Furthermore, individuals invariably experience moods and emotions that have a positive or a negative impact (Babaei et al., 2020).

The therapeutic technique of art therapy is based on multiple theoretical frameworks that bolster its effectiveness in enhancing psychological well-being, especially for individuals who have experienced trauma. These theories shed light on the ways that art therapy can assist people in processing and recovering from traumatic events. Psychodynamic theory, which was first influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, places a strong emphasis on how early experiences and unconscious processes shape behavior and emotions. In art therapy, people can use art-making as a way to communicate unconscious ideas and emotions that are hard to verbally express. Through this process, repressed feelings and trauma-related conflicts can be explored and resolved. Through the use of art, people can express unconscious material in a non-verbal way, bringing memories and emotions to the surface. Through the symbolic representation of their experiences in art, trauma survivors can help others comprehend and integrate traumatic events on a deeper level. Humanistic psychology places a strong emphasis on each person's potential for self-actualization and personal development, especially in the writings of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow (Papangelo et al., 2020; Jalambadani, 2020; Hu et al., 2021).

Since art therapy encourages self-expression, self-discovery, and empowerment, it is consistent with humanistic concepts. Individuals can feel more empowered and in control of their healing process when they create art, which can help them reach their full potential and improve their self-concept. Empathy, unconditional positive regard, and acceptance are the cornerstones of the therapeutic relationship in art therapy, and they are essential for trauma survivors to feel safe and understood. CBT, or cognitive-behavioral therapy, focuses on the connection between feelings, ideas, and actions. Through the process of assisting clients in recognizing and reframing the negative thoughts and beliefs connected to their trauma, art therapy can integrate CBT principles. Sandra Kagin and Vija Lusebrink created the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC) framework, which describes the therapeutic benefits of various artistic expression mediums, ranging from kinesthetic and sensory experiences to cognitive and symbolic processes. In order to provide a comprehensive approach to trauma recovery, the ETC emphasizes the advantages of incorporating multiple modalities into art therapy. According to the ETC, people can advance through various stages of artistic expression, which makes it easier for traumatic experiences to be integrated on both a sensory and cognitive level (De Sousa et al., 2020; Forouzandeh et al., 2020; Czamanski-Cohen et al., 2020).

This study focused on measuring the psychological well-being of the participants and evaluated the effectiveness of art therapy on abused women and provided the needed improvements of the art therapy based on the needs of the clients and those women with the same situations. The study focused on the following: (1) To measure the psychological well-being of the participants be described prior to art therapy; (2) To measure the psychological well-being of the participants be described after the facilitation of art therapy; (3) To measure if there is a significant difference between the psychological well being of participants before and after the facilitation of art therapy; (4) To determine the benefits that were encountered upon the facilitation of the art therapy; and; (5) How may the results be used to improve the psychological well being of participants through the use of the art therapy and meet the demands of the client.

METHODOLOGY

A quasi-experimental mixed-method design was used in this study and is described as a research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques within a quasi-experimental framework. This design is particularly useful in social sciences, education, healthcare, and other fields where randomized controlled trials are not feasible or ethical and helped the researchers to have a deeper understanding of how implementation of art therapy influences participants psychological well-being and how the art therapy can be improved based on the needs of the participants.

The participants of the study included 24 participants from Regional Haven for Women and Girls from Rosario, Batangas. Participants are selected through uncontrolled purposive sampling. Twenty four participants participated in the study since only 24 participants stayed within the duration of the art therapy session that lasted for 3 months with 1 session a week meeting. Women who participated are victims of sexual abuse catered by regional center while they do not have a safe environment to stay outside. On the other hand, 8 participants were interviewed using validated semi structured interview question for a deeper understanding of how art therapy influenced their psychological well-being. This can also be of help determine the effectiveness of art therapy to clients who are victims of abuse and the needed program with art therapy incorporated in it that can be used as intervention to trauma survivors.

The researchers used an adopted questionnaire for measuring the level of psychological well-being of the participants which is called the Psychological well-being scale by Ryff. Ryff's Psychological well-being scales were used as an instrument in this study. There are several versions of this scale, including 84 items, 42 items and 18 items. This study used a 42-item version, it measures six identified components of well-being: (1) self-acceptance, (2) environmental mastery, (3) personal growth, (4) positive relations with others, (5) purpose in life and (6), autonomy each component consists of 7 items. This test is confirmed to have good validity and reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$) among adults. Internal consistency was 0.88 for the short version in this study (Hu et al., 2021). Moreover, for the art therapy, clay molding and grounding were used as the main art therapy to be facilitated to the participants. Grounding is walking bare footed and as supported by science can help in therapeutic healing of clients with mental health related concerns. Clay molding will be used as well for the participants to have a way to release negative emotions and thoughts brought by negative experiences. The module of the art therapy used consists of 12 sessions done once a week for 1-2 hours every session including the pre assessment of their psychological well being and orientation to post assessment, interview and debriefing. An interview was also conducted to have a deeper understanding of the effect of art therapy sessions on the psychological well being of participants.

The data gathering procedure started with consent and sending of memorandum or letter to the regional center and upon their approval, a pre experimental measurement of participants psychological well being was conducted. After noting the record of their psychological well being, the conduct of art therapy sessions for 3 months was conducted following an art therapy module created. Post experimental measurement of the psychological well being using Ryff's PWB and the interview was included in the last session of the therapy.

The data gathered were analyzed through t-test in analyzing the comparison between level of psychological well-being of the participants before and after the conduct of 3 month-art therapy. The data that were gathered from the interview will be analyzed through thematic analysis.

The researchers assure all the participants that their participation was voluntary and any of them are free to withdraw from this study whenever they wish to do so. The researcher informed the participants regarding the broad outline of the subject to be discussed, the type of information needed by the researcher, and the purpose of the study. In order to protect the participants' rights and well-being, the researcher incorporated ethical issues into the current study. There should be no complications or discomforts associated with participating in this study. Section X, Article A, No. 1 of Ethical Guidelines of the Psychological Association of the Philippines states that in all aspects, we have to respect the rights, safeguard the dignity, and protect and promote the welfare of every research participant. Confidentiality will be highly given importance. Informed consent was given to the participants and an introduction and purpose about the current study was discussed.

To ensure the safety and anonymity of the participants, it was not required to include their names in the written and verbal materials of this study. The given data and information by the participants will be highly protected by the researcher and will only be used for research purposes only. Additionally, Section X, Article A, No. 4 of Ethical Guidelines of the Psychological Association of the Philippines states that Psychology practitioners shall respect the rights of research participants should they wish to discontinue their participation at any time. The participants are free to withdraw their participation anytime if they feel uncomfortable in this study. Furthermore, according to the Ethical Guidelines of Psychological Association of the Philippines, Section X Article A, No. 6 the researcher of the study must take reasonable steps to avoid harming the research participants to minimize harm where it is foreseeable but unavoidable. The researcher were responsible with their participants and should not put the participants in any harm. Also, the researcher took care and caused no harm to the participants throughout their involvement in the study. There was a debriefing done to the participants and assigned officers to discuss the overall results of the study conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results, analysis and interpretation of collected data from the respondents. The researchers utilized tables to describe the results.

Table 1 shows the pre experimental and post experimental weighted mean of the participants psychological well being presented into its components.

Table 1. Levels of Psychological Well Being Components for Pre-Experimental and Post Experimental

Psychological Well Being Components	Pre-Experimental Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Post-Experimental Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Autonomy	2.49	Low	4.02	Normal
Environmental Mastery	3.21	Somewhat Low	4.36	Normal
Personal Growth	2.98	Somewhat Low	4.48	Somewhat High
Positive Relations	2.71	Low	3.95	Normal
Purpose in Life	3.03	Somewhat Low	4.65	Somewhat High
Self- Acceptance	2.74	Somewhat Low	4.02	Normal
Composite Mean	2.86	Somewhat Low	4.25	Normal

Legend: 7.00-6.16 = Very High, 6.15-5.30 = High, 5.29-4.44 = Somewhat High, 4.43-3.58 = Normal, 3.57-2.72 = Somewhat Low, 2.71-1.86 = Low, and 1.85-1.00 = Very Low

Table 1 presents the levels of psychological well being components both for pre and post experimental.

For pre-experimental measures, the achieved weighted mean for Autonomy is 2.70 with Low as the corresponding verbal interpretation. Environmental Mastery gained a 3.25 weighted mean with Somewhat Low verbal interpretation while Personal Growth achieved a 3.20 weighted mean also interpreted as Somewhat Low in level as a psychological wellbeing component. 2.57 was the achieved weighted mean for Positive Relations with verbal interpretation of Low while 2.79 was the achieved weighted mean of Purpose in Life interpreted as Somewhat Low. Lastly, Self-Acceptance has received a weighted mean of 2.64 with Low as its verbal interpretation. Overall, the composite mean is 2.86 with Somewhat Low as the corresponding verbal interpretation. This indicates that the respondents' psychological wellbeing was comparatively poor before the therapeutic intervention was implemented.

On the other hand, post-experimental results revealed that the level for Autonomy and Environmental Mastery achieved a significant increase receiving a weighted mean of 4.29 and 4.24 respectively, both with Neutral as their corresponding verbal interpretation. Furthermore, Personal Growth gained a weighted mean of 4.75 as is interpreted as Somewhat High. Positive Relations, Purpose in Life and Self-Acceptance achieved increases in their weighted mean calculated as 4.05, 4.14, and 4.01 respectively, all with Neutral as their corresponding verbal interpretations. Overall, the composite mean is 4.25 with Neutral as the corresponding verbal interpretation. This demonstrates that following the application of the therapeutic intervention, the respondents' psychological wellbeing is already at a neutral level.

Environmental mastery received the highest weighted mean on the pre-experiment psychological well-being measure, but it is still interpreted as relatively low. This could indicate that victims of trauma, such as sexual abuse, may aspire to regain control over their lives, which may lead to the development of high environmental mastery as a coping mechanism. Victims of trauma frequently develop exceptional skills at reading and controlling their surroundings. Environmental mastery is the capacity to successfully manage and shape one's surroundings to meet personal needs and goals, such as the necessity for survival mechanisms to survive and protect themselves.

A low sense of autonomy is a common problem for trauma victims, including those who have experienced sexual abuse, as indicated by the fact that autonomy received the lowest weighted mean. However, this heightened awareness and ability to navigate complex or threatening situations can translate into strong skills in controlling and organizing their surroundings. These include social, psychological, and emotional elements that affect the victims' capacity to feel in charge of their lives. For example, when personal boundaries are crossed, victims may come to believe that they have no control over their surroundings or their bodies (Matthews et al., 2020)

A victim's sense of autonomy may be diminished in other aspects of their life as a result of this loss of control. Shame and guilt about the abuse are frequently internalized by victims. They could mistakenly believe that they are to blame for what occurred, which would lower their sense of agency and value. They may find it difficult to stand up for themselves and make independent decisions as a result of this internalized negativity. A victim of trauma may develop a condition known as learned helplessness, in which they believe they have no control over their circumstances. The idea that their actions are meaningless is what defines this psychological state, and it can seriously impair their capacity to exercise autonomy.

As part of the study's post-experimental phase, psychological well-being was assessed once more following the art therapy sessions. The two factors that were most heavily weighted in terms of their well-being were their sense of purpose in life and personal development. This can be explained by saying that victims of sexual abuse can greatly benefit from art therapy in terms of their sense of purpose in life and personal development. This is how art therapy contributes to these advancements. Through art therapy, victims can express complex and painful emotions that may be hard to put into words in a safe, non-verbal way. Processing trauma and making the transition to personal development may begin with this emotional release. The symptoms of trauma have decreased.

Making art can aid in easing the signs and symptoms of trauma, including PTSD, depression, and anxiety. By reducing these symptoms, people can stop being paralyzed by their past experiences and start concentrating more on their future objectives and personal development. Making art can help survivors feel in control of their creative process, in contrast to the helplessness they experienced during the trauma. A greater sense of autonomy and purpose can be fostered by this sense of control being regained in other spheres of life.

Enhancing positive relationships received the lowest weighted mean on the post-experimental psychological well-being measure because it can be difficult for trauma survivors to improve their relationships, even with art therapy's assistance. These difficulties frequently have their roots in the social, emotional, and psychological effects of trauma. Trauma, particularly from instances of sexual abuse, frequently results in serious problems with trust. Because of past betrayals, survivors may find it difficult to trust people, which makes it challenging to establish and sustain healthy relationships, even in therapeutic settings.

To cope, many trauma survivors isolate themselves from others in an effort to prevent triggers or re-traumatization. The maintenance of current relationships as well as the formation of new ones may be hampered by this avoidance behavior. Adoption patterns that are healthy can be upset by trauma. Survivors may experience difficulties with attachment or disengagement in relationships, both of which can be obstacles to building strong, enduring bonds.

Research consistently demonstrates that victims of trauma often experience lower psychological well-being due to the complex interplay of various factors. This seminal study conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlighted the significant impact of childhood trauma on long-term health outcomes. It found that individuals who experienced traumatic events in childhood, such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction, were at higher risk for a range of negative health outcomes, including mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Studies have shown the importance of social support in buffering the negative effects of trauma on psychological well-being. For instance, it was found that social support was associated with lower levels of PTSD symptoms following traumatic events. Conversely, a lack of social support or ineffective coping mechanisms can exacerbate psychological distress in trauma survivors. Overall, these studies collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of trauma's impact on psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of understanding individual differences, contextual factors, and protective mechanisms in addressing the needs of trauma survivors (Yu et al., 2021).

Anybody can become the victim of abuse at any time, and the abuser suffers serious, lifelong emotional, mental, and physical injuries. One of them is an increased risk of mental diseases like depression. Major depressive disorder is a common and serious mood ailment. It is also commonly referred to as clinical depression or depression. Abuse is defined as any intentional infliction of physical, psychological, or social harm on an individual. It is a pervasive issue that affects all societies on Earth. Abuse can take many forms, including financial, emotional, sexual, physical, and psychological exploitation. This could negatively affect the person's life, either directly or indirectly, and have a big effect on their relationships in the future, their physical and mental health, and their sense of self.

The next table presents the data about the difference between the pre-experimental and post-experimental levels of psychological well being.

Table 2. Test of Difference Between Pre-Experimental and Post-Experimental Levels of Psychological Well Being

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision	Interpretation
Pair 1	Pretest Autonomy - Posttest Autonomy	-6.409	23	0.000	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant
Pair 2	Pretest Environmental Mastery - Posttest Environmental Mastery	-2.984	23	0.007	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant
Pair 3	Pretest Personal Growth - Posttest Personal Growth	-4.995	23	0.000	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant

Pair 4	Pretest Positive Relations - Posttest Positive Relations	-4.094	23	0.000	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant
Pair 5	Pretest Purpose in Life - Posttest Purpose in Life	-5.786	23	0.000	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant
Pair 6	Pretest Self Acceptance - Posttest Self Acceptance	-4.863	23	0.000	p<0.01, Reject Ho	Significant

Table 2 presents the test of difference between pre-experimental and post-experimental levels of psychological well being.

Data revealed that for Autonomy, the achieved p-value is 0.000 which is <0.05 thus explaining that there is a significant difference in the levels of Autonomy between pre-experimental and post experimental. For environmental mastery, significant difference was also achieved as presented by the p-value of 0.000 which is <0.05. Same result was gained for Personal Growth, also with 0.000 p-value and is <0.05. For Positive Relations, 0.000 p-value was also achieved and is <0.05 thus concluding that there is also a significant difference between pre and post experimental measures. Furthermore, a significant difference was also the outcome for Purpose in Life with an achieved 0.000 p-value which is <0.05. Lastly, the achieved p-value for Self-Acceptance was also 0.000 that is <0.05 thus explaining that there is a significant difference between pre-experimental and post-experimental measures on the levels of psychological well being of the respondents.

Improved psychological well being reflected on their autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance. Art therapy such as clay molding and grounding techniques help them explore themselves, improve their self esteem and social relationship through the aesthetic experience provided to them through art therapy. Art therapy encourages introspection and self-reflection, allowing trauma survivors to gain deeper insights into their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Research by Hinz et al. (2018) examined the impact of art therapy on self-understanding among trauma survivors and found that it facilitated greater self-awareness and insight, contributing to enhanced psychological well-being and personal growth.

Engaging in artistic endeavors helps ease individuals' stress and dejection while also lessening the impact of long-term mental health conditions. It is well acknowledged in many cultures that artistic expression can significantly contribute to the healing process. Healing rituals have been practiced by people throughout history through painting, storytelling, dancing, yoga, and chanting. Health psychologists have studied closely over the past ten years how art therapy can help heal emotional traumas, improve self-awareness and that of others, develop the ability to reflect on oneself, lessen mental manifestations, and change behaviors and thought patterns.

Consequently, the next table shows the emergence of the theme transformative goal of art therapy to psychological well being.

Table 3. Emergence of The Theme Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being Based on Trauma Survivors' Experiences of Art Therapy and Its Help to Their Psychological Well Being

Significant Statements	Emerging Concepts	Categories	Themes
Sa pagdaan ng araw, habang nagmomold ako ay napagtanto ko ang tunay na ako, at kung ano ang tunay kong nararamdaman sa likod ng mga pagsubok. Kung titingnan mo parang ang bilis lang magmold pero sa pagsubok akala ng iba easy lang pero sa totoo, sobrang hirap. medyo helpful yung molding activity saken kase nag-explore ako	Self realization during art therapy sessions Clay molding is challenging but help her explore self	Development of self awareness	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Habang nagawa po kase ng clay, parang gumagaan ang	Art therapy served as a	Exploration of emotions	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological

loob ko at nawawala ang init ng ulo at masarap sa pakiramdam	form of release of negative emotions		Well Being
Para sa akin, medyo mahirap dahil hindi ko alam kung saan ihahambing o ihahalintulad ang sarili but at the same time okay naman at masaya at nakakarela	Art therapy helps in relaxation and feeling positive emotion	Stress coping	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Sa paggagawa ng clay molding ay nasiyahan ako dahil dito nakilala ko ng kaunti ang sarili ko. Kung ano ba talaga ang purpose sa mundong ito. dito ay napagtanto ko kung ano ang totoong kalagayan ko lalo na sa pagbibilog ng clay at sa pag breathing na ginagawa ko na itinuro niyo ay narerela na po ako, marami po itong naitulong sa akin	Art therapy cause positive feelings Helps in knowing oneself	Development of self awareness	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Una nahahirapan ako mag-isip kung ano ang gagawin ko.. pero nagawa ko, masarap sa pakiramdam yung activity na ginagawa ko about sa sarili ko.. kung ano ba ako sa paningin ng iba	Clay molding helps in self exploration	Development of self awareness	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Bukod sa limitado ang oras, sana mas madalas naming magawa ang art therapy, nakatulong sa akin ito ng sobra. Nabigyan ng kaalaman ako kung paano magkaroon ng positibong pagtingin sa sarili ko. Salamat po sa panahong inilaan nyo sa amin :)	Clay molding helps in having positive thoughts about herself	Boosting of self esteem Development of social skills	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Wala po. Madali po para sa akin ang gumawa ng clay dahil dito, nadiscover sa sarili ko kung ano nga ba ang hilig ko	Clay molding helps in self discovery	Self awareness	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being
Para sa akin masaya ako kasi natapos ko ang clay molding sa paghahambing ng aking sarili doon at nakatulong din po sa akin salamat po sa mga turo niyo sa amin lahat po kami ay natutuwa dahil may aktibidad na ganto para sa amin mas nakapagbonding po kami dito sa center at nakakatulong po sa pag angat ng tingin namin sa sarili salamat po :)	Helps in improving their personal worth Provides an opportunity to socialize	Boosting of self esteem Development of social skills	Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being

Theme: Transformative Goal of Art therapy to Psychological Well Being

Based on the interview, the theme formed is the transformative goal of the art therapy to psychological wellbeing of the participants. Categories formed include development of self awareness, exploration of emotions, stress coping, boosting of self esteem and development of social skills.

Development of self awareness

Self realization during art therapy sessions and the help of clay molding to explore oneself is evident as the benefit of the sessions to the participant. Through the help of the sessions and the processing,

Participant mentioned,

“Sa pagdaan ng araw, habang nagmomold ako ay napagtanto ko ang tunay na ako, at kung ano ang tunay kong nararamdaman sa likod ng mga pagsubok. Kung titingnan mo parang ang bilis lang magmold pero sa pagsubok akala ng iba easy lang pero sa totoo, sobrang hirap. medyo helpful yung molding activity saken kase nag-explore ako.”

Clay molding and grounding exercises are two examples of art therapy techniques that help people become more self-aware by stimulating the senses, fostering mindfulness, facilitating nonverbal expression, encouraging reflection, and strengthening the bond between the body and mind. These procedures assist people in exploring their inner experiences, which results in increased self-awareness and comprehension (Tong et al., 2020).

Exploration of emotions

According to the participant, art therapy served as a form of release of negative emotions for them since she cited,

“Habang nagawa po kase ng clay, parang gumagaan ang loob ko at nawawala ang init ng ulo at masarap sa pakiramdam.”

In art therapy, multisensory, nonverbal, safe ways of expressing emotions are provided by clay molding and grounding exercises. The promotion of emotional control, mindfulness, and cognitive-emotional integration—all essential for trauma processing and personal development—are all facilitated by these activities (Babaei et al., 2020).

Stress coping

Participants mentioned that art therapy helps in relaxation and feeling positive emotion. They were able to identify their emotions, acknowledge it and express it as a way of their coping mechanism. The client added,

“Para sa akin, medyo mahirap dahil hindi ko alam kung saan ihabambing o ihabalintulad ang sarili but at the same time okay naman at masaya at nakakarelaax.”

Art therapy methods that encourage sensory engagement, mindfulness, emotional expression, physical relaxation, empowerment, cognitive shifting, and self-reflection—such as clay molding and grounding exercises—help people manage stress. These exercises offer useful methods and techniques for stress management and improving general wellbeing.

Boosting of self esteem

Art therapy causes positive feelings, helps in knowing oneself and helps in improving personal worth. They were able to have reflections after sessions and learn more on how to value themselves and feel positive towards themselves and lessen self blame and low self esteem.

Development of social skills

Art therapy sessions provide an opportunity for the participants to socialize with their peers in the center and empower each other. The participant noted,

“Bukod sa limitado ang oras, sana mas madalas naming magawa ang art therapy, nakatulong sa akin ito ng sobra. Nabigyan ng kaalaman ako kung paano magkaroon ng positibong pagtingin sa sarili ko, makisalamuha sa iba at mag enjoy. Salamat po sa panahong inilaan nyo sa amin.”

Through nonverbal communication, teamwork, empathy, self-awareness, emotional regulation, confidence building, safe practice, observation, improved communication skills, and the development of supportive social networks, art therapy helps people develop their social skills. These facets of art therapy offer a thorough method for enhancing relationships and social interactions.

The theme that has emerged is the transformative goal of art therapy on psychological well being focuses on highlighting the gap that needs to be improved and was the basis of the proposed program through the application of the art therapy.

Aesthetic Experience, Recovery and Treatment (ART): A Therapeutic Guide for Trauma Survivors in Improving their Psychological Well Being

Rationale:

A comprehensive strategy for helping trauma survivors enhance their psychological wellbeing is provided by art therapy. A comprehensive strategy for helping trauma survivors enhance their psychological health is provided by art therapy. The following explains the reasoning behind its efficacy. Trauma that may be deeply ingrained in experiences that are hard to explain verbally can be addressed through nonverbal expression. A nonverbal channel for communicating feelings, experiences, and memories that might be too intense or difficult to describe is offered by art therapy. Survivors can process and communicate about their experiences in a safe and controlled way by creating art. Trauma frequently leaves behind long-lasting impressions on the unconscious mind, affecting behaviors, emotions, and thoughts without the victim's conscious knowledge.

Through metaphors, images, and symbols, art therapy accesses the unconscious, enabling survivors to investigate and make sense of their inner lives. On a deeper level, this can encourage healing and provide insights. Making art helps survivors escape from intense feelings or memories by externalizing internal experiences. People can regain a sense of agency and control over their trauma narratives by making concrete representations of their inner world. Objectification can lessen the severity of traumatic reliving and increase a person's sense of agency. Trauma frequently causes abnormalities in the regulation of arousal levels, which can result in dissociation, hypervigilance, or emotional dysregulation.

Making art is a grounding and calming activity that can help control arousal. Making art, whether it be painting, sculpting, or drawing, has a rhythmic and repetitive quality that can calm the mind and provide a sense of security. Trauma can shatter a person's sense of identity and interfere with the consistency of their own stories. Through the facilitation of the integration of fragmented aspects of the self and the development of cohesive narratives, art therapy supports the integration process. By creating art and reflecting on their experiences, survivors can reinterpret them and develop a sense of resilience and coherence. Art therapy incorporates embodied approaches such as movement, gesture, and sensory exploration to address the somatic aspects of trauma. Trauma survivors can achieve both physical and emotional catharsis by accessing and releasing the trauma energy stored in their bodies through the creative process. An individual's identity and sense of worth can be weakened by trauma. Art therapy fosters self-awareness by promoting reflection on one's own themes, patterns, and strengths. Survivors can cultivate self-compassion, externalize inner resources, and create a more positive self-concept through artistic expression. When their artistic expressions are valued and acknowledged by the therapist, it further strengthens their sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem.

General Objectives:

Applying art therapy to trauma survivors can serve several general objectives aimed at enhancing their psychological wellbeing:

1. Encourage trauma survivors to express and process their emotions in a safe and non-verbal manner through art-making. This can help them externalize and understand complex feelings associated with their traumatic experiences.
2. Facilitate the exploration and processing of traumatic memories, thoughts, and sensations through creative expression. Art therapy provides a medium for survivors to revisit and reframe their experiences, promoting integration and resolution.
3. Support trauma survivors in gaining deeper self-awareness and insight into their experiences, coping mechanisms, and strengths. Art-making can reveal subconscious thoughts and feelings, fostering introspection and self-discovery.

The last table presented shows the proposed program that aims to improve psychological well being of trauma survivors through the use of art therapy.

Table 4. Proposed Program for Improving Psychological Well Being Through the Use of Art Therapy

Key Result Area	Goals/ Objectives	Proposed Activities	Strategies	Persons Involved	Target Period/ Duration	Success Indicator	Evaluation
Improving their autonomy	<p>To enhance self-autonomy empowers trauma survivors to take charge of their lives and make decisions that align with their values, preferences, and goals.</p> <p>To enable them to regain a sense of control and agency that may have been lost during the traumatic experience, fostering a greater sense of empowerment and self-efficacy.</p>	<p>Decision Making and Problem Solving Exercises</p> <p>Independent Living Skills Training</p> <p>Personal reflection Activities</p> <p>Art therapy</p>	<p>The facilitator will conduct grounding exercises before providing a talk about decision making and problem solving focusing on developing independent living skills.</p> <p>Facilitation of art therapy after the seminar.</p>	<p>Facilitator of art therapy</p> <p>Mental health Professional</p> <p>Trauma Survivors</p>	Once a month for 3 months	There is improved self autonomy and regained sense of control over their lives that will be measured using Psychological well being scale (PWB)	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale
Environmental Mastery	To promote functional individuals in various areas of life, including relationships, work, and daily activities	<p>Social skills training</p> <p>Community involvement activities</p> <p>Life Skills workshop</p> <p>Grounding Techniques</p>	Conduct of art therapy by the professionals involves activities that will help promote social engagement.	<p>Facilitator of art therapy</p> <p>Mental health Professional</p> <p>Trauma Survivors</p>	Once a month for 3 months	There is an improved level of social skills that will be measured using PWB scale	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale
Personal Growth	To equip trauma survivors with the skills, resources,	<p>Journaling</p> <p>Mindfulness and Meditation</p>	Art therapy facilitators and mental health professionals will	<p>Facilitator of art therapy</p> <p>Mental health</p>	Once a month for 3 months	There is an improved personal growth that will be measured	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale

	<p>and mindset needed to adapt to future challenges, maintain healthy boundaries, and pursue fulfilling goals and aspirations</p> <p>To encourage post-traumatic growth, wherein individuals undergo positive psychological changes as a result of their struggle with trauma.</p> <p>To restore and strengthen the survivor's self-concept, helping them rebuild a coherent and positive sense of identity that incorporates their resilience, values, and aspirations beyond the trauma.</p>	Art therapy	<p>facilitate art therapy and mindfulness activity.</p> <p>After the art therapy they will be asked to do their homework which is journaling for self expression</p>	Professional Trauma Survivors		using Psychological well being scale (PWB)	
Positive Relations	To create a supportive community, fostering empathy and compassion, and promoting collective healing and advocacy.	<p>Appreciation circle</p> <p>Ice breaker activities</p> <p>Art therapy</p> <p>Grounding Techniques</p>	Participants will be grouped into four for them to have an opportunity to share their stories as survivors and empower	<p>Facilitator of art therapy</p> <p>Mental health Professional</p> <p>Trauma Survivors</p>	Once a week for 3 months	There will be an improved relations to other people and the community that will be measured using Psychological well being	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale

	By cultivating trust, empathy, and solidarity, survivors can create a network of support that empowers them to heal, grow, and thrive together beyond their traumatic experience		other women in the center. There will also be a 30 minute session for grounding technique and art therapy.			scale (PWB)	
Purpose in Life	To promote resilience, hope, and post-traumatic growth. By identifying values, goals, and aspirations that resonate with their authentic selves, survivors can cultivate a meaningful and purposeful life that empowers them to thrive beyond their traumatic experiences.	Values clarification Life Mission Statement Passion Exploration Art therapy	Participants will be given worksheets about values clarification and life mission statement. Passion exploration will be after the two activities. Passion exploration will be done through sharing.	Facilitator of art therapy Mental health Professional Trauma Survivors	Twice a month for 3 months	Participants will be more resilient, hopeful and will experienced growth that will be measured using Psychological well being scale (PWB)	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale
Self Acceptance	To reduce self blame and shame. To help them embrace compassion and understanding, survivors can release self-blame and shame,	Self portrait project clay molding Affirmation Card Grounding technique	Clay will be given to participants and will be given an instruction that they will mold an image of themselves through clay. They will share it during the session and	Facilitator of art therapy Mental health Professional Trauma Survivors	Once a week for 3 months	Participants will have an improved level of self acceptance and reduce shame and self blame that will be measured using Psychological well being scale (PWB)	Ryff's Psychological Well Being Scale

	cultivate self-compassion, and build a positive self-image that empowers them to thrive beyond their trauma experiences.		will tell the group their affirmation that they write on affirmation card				
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CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE USE

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that trauma survivors prior to art therapy have low autonomy, positive relations and positive acceptance as an effect of experiencing negative events in their life from people who should be protecting them. Trauma survivors after the facilitation of art therapy have increased personal growth and other domains such as environmental mastery, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance as they were able to process their trauma, sadness, anxiety, low self esteem and social interactions. Trauma survivors experienced significant difference or change since aspects or domains have normalized from being low prior to the facilitation of art therapy sessions. Lastly, the theme that has emerged in the study is the transformative goal of art therapy to psychological well being.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be recommended that mental health practitioners and other experts such as art therapists can work together to incorporate the use of art therapy in processing trauma among trauma survivors and improve their psychological well being.

Local governments catering to women who are trauma survivors can include the program created as an output of this study in their intervention efforts in the center. For example, the proposed program can be incorporated as part of the women’s month celebration, Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) campaign, and other activities that promote personal growth and empowerment. To further utilize the program’s transformative impact on clients’ psychological well-being, the center can organize monthly art sessions. This consistent engagement can help in fostering a safe and supportive environment for trauma survivors, allowing them to express themselves creatively, process their experiences and work towards healing and resilience.

Future researchers may consider exploring other art therapy techniques that could possibly be beneficial to trauma survivors in improving their mental health such as music therapy and other art therapy approaches aside from clay molding with psychological or therapeutic approaches.

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