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Art as a therapy  
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Individuals have been dependent on art to reexamine themselves, communicate, and rebuild for many years. Art refers to the process of applying the imagination and creative skills of a human being to a visual form to produce works that can be appreciated for their physical beauty and the emotional power that they hold. Visual arts are the form of art that meets the eye of a person and evokes some emotion in them by just looking at the art. Forms of visual art involve drawing, making of prints, painting, sculptures, making of films, designing, photography, ceramics, and architecture. Art plays an important role in the comprehension of culture, history, and the general understanding of the area we live in. Moreover, it presents a way of experiencing the feelings and emotions of other people in a way that cannot be achieved differently. Moreover, art can be used as a form of therapy. That is, art as a rehabilitation is a strategy fixed on the knowledge that creative expression of ideas through visual arts can lead to mental, emotional, and psychological well-being, and healing. For instance, art can be utilized to help people to get over stress, effectively communicate, and realize the unique aspects of their personalities. The whole process of art therapy involves a patient creating art and describing how it made them feel. Therefore, this paper aims at analyzing a painted image to determine how art therapy would help in the sustainability of their mental, physical, and psychological health.

According to research by (Nielsen et al, 2017), the art displayed in hospitals and mental institutions acts as an environmental safety component. That is, it helps in advancing socialization and allowed for the maintenance of identities outside the hospital setting. Therefore, finding free time on everyday schedules is not an easy task, and a person's day is usually filled with a lot of distractions. Thus, before starting the coloring, I considered the following factors. First, I decided to pick a time when I would have little or no distraction from phone calls, emails, and the general noise of the household. Moreover, if I decide to color between 7 pm to 8 pm, then I will often end up starting later than that. Thus, I needed to consider a time when I would start immediately since I would not have a lot of other tasks to complete at that time. Third, I needed to consider that there was nothing wrong with repetition. That is, I could work on the coloring several times to ensure it was good, and that I had worked over my emotions and thoughts. Therefore, I decided to paint at night between 9.30 pm to 11 pm every day since my phone would be in the don't-disturb mode, and most of my friends and family would be asleep by that time. The colored photos showed a difference in colors on the first day compared to the last day. This is because, throughout the week, I had been coloring depending on the emotions I felt which were then reflected in the image. Therefore, art is utilized as a therapy method by allowing patients to look at the themes and the conflicts that mess with emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. For instance, an image filled with red can represent love, anger, or passion while blue can represent responsibility, calmness, and sadness. Therefore, if the emotions of a person are changing from anger to sadness to hope to energy, then creativity, an image contained the colors red, blue, yellow, orange, and purple. Therefore, allowing a patient to work on the same image can help a therapist to analyze the images and determines the thoughts and emotions of the patient by looking at the transformation of the colored images.

I decided to paint at night since, at that time, there are no distractions. Getting away from distractions while coloring allowed me to think more effectively and clearly, to silence my thoughts so that I could focus on the more important ones, and it allowed me to focus on the intuition of the authentic thoughts. To ensure that there were no distractions, I turned off my phone, videogame, computer, and television. Getting in touch with the most authentic thoughts will fasten the process of self-treatment. Self-treatment refers to the act of medicating oneself without medical

supervision. According to Orem's theory of self-care, people can launch willingly to make sure that the quality of life is advanced by ensuring effective psychological, mental, physical, and social health. Orem theory is important because it helps patients learn that they can recover faster and efficiently if they take control of their health (Borji et al, 2017). Self-treatment can involve ensuring self-awareness, coping with stress, boosting self-worth, and reduction in societal anxiety disorder. Self-awareness refers to the ability of a person to focus on themselves, their actions, and their thoughts, and how they relate to the internal standards. Self-esteem refers to the sagacity of individual worth and value that outlines how much an individual respects, escalates, and appreciate themselves. Social judgement disturbs self-worth and self-concept because most people make verdicts about themselves by evaluating the self-comparative to peers, therefore changing in what way they notice their talents, skills, and information regarding a precise subject, thus confirming that an individual can function informally, and achieve their reactions successfully. Since anxiety disorder involves feelings of anxiousness and worry, art acts as a form of cognitive therapy that examining how negative thoughts lead to anxiety and how the patient is likely to react to the event, situation, or the activity that stimulates the anxiety attack. The main aim of the therapy is to help a patient when they are likely to be anxious, recognize their fears and learning skills that will help them cope with their fears.

When it comes to linking art and emotions, the concept of meta-emotions is commonly utilized. Meta-emotion refers to the ability of a person to experience more than one emotion at the same time. It can be triggered when a person is looking at art or creating art by analyzing the quality of the art and its complexities. However, if art is not effectively created, it can lack the ability to trigger meta-emotions in a person. Moreover, Art acts as an effective way of communicating. That is, a person's heart can tell whether they were happy, or sad, or frustrated during the time when they created the art. Therefore, art gives the artist and their viewers a way to release their emotions, allowing a person to work through their mental challenges. While coloring this image, I felt sad, and frustrated thus most of the colors were blue but as the days went by, the colors of the image shifted to purple which showed calmness showing how my emotions had shifted from frustration to calmness. The responses to these emotions are what is reflected in the art. Based on research by (Mastandrea et al, 2019), positive emotional outputs brought by art promote a positive mood in both the artist and the viewers while a negative emotional output from the art leads to a negative mood. That is, the appreciation or criticism of art is dependent on the aesthetic experience brought by poetry, music, sculptures, paintings, and other forms of visual arts. Moreover, the article argues that the immediate emotional response to art and artwork is associated with the involvement of the part of the brain that is responsible for the regulation o emotions. Therefore, while coloring the image, a lot of emotions were evoked. This is because the artwork can evoke memories of the artist or the viewers which then trigger emotions of the people. Through meta-emotions, emotions such as grief, sadness, frustration, and stress cannot be suppressed since the suppression of these emotions can lead to other health implications such as affecting the blood pressure, memory, and psychological state.

Art ensures that interaction with oneself and the community is improved, getting rid of feelings of loneliness and aging. It can help in boosting the confidence of a person and making them feel more engaged. Besides, it can help a person fight depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder by allowing them to relieve their pain and frustration through drawing or painting. Therefore, after finishing the coloring, I felt like all the built-up frustration, anger, and pain had reduced. That is, which image I colored as the days proceeded, I felt like my sad emotions were

slowly disappearing. Therefore, art as a therapy has helped in treating mental challenges since it allows a patient to think more effectively a clearly, to silence my thoughts so that I could focus on the more important ones, and it allows them to focus on the intuition of the authentic thoughts, that is, the thoughts that need to be worked upon. For those that experienced art through observation, artworks in a similar way as the artist. That is, it can trigger the different emotions that were being concealed to the surface. For instance, a person looking at the artwork of a child with a sad face can trigger feelings of sadness and pity which may be brought as a possibility of a sad memory held in the viewer's memory.

Therefore, I believe that art as a therapy is an effective way for treating depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety. This is because it is cost-effective. That is, it is a cheaper treatment method rather than paying a professional therapist. Moreover, art as therapy can enable a person to take responsibility for their health. That is, through self-treatment, a person can improve their self-esteem, cope with stress, and anxiety. Furthermore, therapy provides independence in patients by allowing them to work on emotions by themselves. That is, Orem's theory argues that a person can be in control of their own and improve the quality of life. Therefore, I feel that therapy in form of art can be effective in the treatment of mental illnesses and fighting negative emotions. Moreover, it can ensure that levels of independence and curiosity are managed.

In summary, treatment of mental illnesses required different therapeutic and non-therapeutic strategies. Art can act as a strategy that helps in the treatment and management of those emotions. That is, it improves reasoning, resilience, and health since the beneficial aspects of creating art are not dependent on the talents or skills of a person but their ability to turn their thoughts, feelings, and emotions into art by triggering the brain patterns to send signals to the nervous system. Therefore, the art I colored enabled me to be able to change the emotions from negative ones to positive ones. Therefore, art as a therapy is important because it enables people to take control of their lives.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

**Instructor**

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