

Determination of Types and Conditions that can benefit from creative art therapy as perceived by Guidance counselors

BY

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Abstract

This study employs descriptive survey design and is carried out in Anambra state. Two research questions guided the study and 145 Counsellors are the sample size drawn through random sampling techniques. Types and conditions that can benefit from creative art therapies as perceived by counsellors questionnaire is used for data collection (TSACSTCBFCATAPBCSQ). The reliability co-efficient value of the instrument of 0.76 is established through the use of Split half method of estimation. On the sport method of administration of the instrument on the respondents is used by the researchers to ensure a hundred percent return of the questionnaire. Arithmetic weighted mean which criterion is 2.50 for any item considered as a factor while an item that is below this value is considered not being a factor and ranking are used for the data analysis. Among other things the findings on research question 1 indicate the following: dance, writing, role play, music, drawing and movement as some of the types of creative art therapies while findings under research question 2 revealed that depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and children's asthma are among the conditions that can benefit from creative counselling/ therapies. The researchers recommended that government will be organizing training, workshops and seminars for counsellors in order to equip them with the necessary techniques needed in each. Professional Counsellors will also disseminate information on the conditions that can benefit from the therapies.

Keywords: types, conditions, creative art, therapy, counsellor.

INTRODUCTION

Therapy is another name for psychotherapy or counseling. Every therapy is meant to inspire change in a client and also for improving his quality of life. Therapy enables a client to become aware of himself and also explore self. Legg (2020) opines that therapy is a form of treatment aimed at resolving mental or emotional issues a client is passing through. For Campbell, Norcross, Vasquez, and Kaslow (2013) therapy is the informed and intentional application of clinical methods and interpersonal stances derived from established psychological principles for the purpose of assisting people to modify their behaviours, cognitions, emotions, and other personal characteristics in directions that the participants deem desirable. Through therapy, self-destructive behaviours, habits, painful feelings, and sour relationships to

mention a few can be resolved through the services of a Guidance Counsellor or the therapist. A Counsellor or a therapist is a professional or an expert in the field of counselling that supports, listens attentively, models positive behaviours, provides appropriate feedback, and follows his client up till positive change in the client is achieved (Sternberg, Kaufman & Pretz 2001). A counsellor also makes referrals whenever it is necessary especially if the condition is not within his area of jurisdiction. There are different approaches through which people can be helped in order to come out of their troubling or frustrating situations. Guidance counsellors make use of different therapies to help their clients overcome their troubling or frustrating conditions that has been setting them back in life. He does this work within the profession's

ethical guidelines. In as much as there are different therapies in use, this paper is interested in that particular therapy that can work well both for children, adolescents, and adults who may not be able to express their feelings verbally with the therapist or counsellor. The therapy is called creative art therapy.

Creative ability depends on creative thinking which comes from hard work. Creativity belongs to everyone, and it can be seen almost in every field of endeavour of which counselling is included. Creativity and counselling go hand in hand. Creativity in counselling therefore, refers to the creative human capacity to effect change and it includes a process that involves shifts in thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and perspectives (Florida 2002). This author explains that creative arts therapy help counsellors achieve their goal of helping clients solve problems. It gives counsellors the flexibility to look at things differently and move in a new direction towards achieving a goal. Creativity also inspires hope and hope is a good thing in counselling and in life.

Creative art therapy is a type of therapy that uses non-verbal expression like art or music as a means to communicate one's inner world. Finding clarity in some persons' thoughts can often be difficult using words alone, so creative therapy can help one to communicate his inner experience and what he is feeling in other ways (<https://youngminds.org> 2020). Sternberg, Kaufman & Pretz (2001) also, states that creative art therapy is a form of therapy that enables a counsellor to work through issues making use of art-based exercises towards helping clients channelize their thoughts, emotions, and feelings by way of an artistic expression. Creative therapy uses art-based activities to help treat emotional and mental health conditions (Dorst & Cross 2001). Artistic methods of handling individual's problem as a technique is rooted in the idea that creative expression can foster healing and mental well-being (Van 2016). This therapy can take place in elementary schools, colleges, universities, community centers, private therapy offices, homes, and hospitals (Gussak 2015, Stuckey and Nobel 2010). Armstrong (2012) advocates that counsellors can use them regardless of their theoretical orientation that the tool can help clients work through the difficulties in their lives and learn how to be more resilient and can also [help in improving or bringing back](#) an individual's functioning. Sternberg (2011) asserts that in counselling practice, counsellors may use creative resources such as music, books, journaling, film, or any number of other resources to support their work. Creative art therapy did not need any additional training, skills, or qualification to practice. The training and experience a counsellor has gathered during his training in school and experiences gathered in the field of counselling can enhance the use of creative counselling. Creative art therapy, therefore, is refers to as a group of techniques that are expressive and creative in nature. The aim of creative therapies is to help clients find a form of expression beyond words or traditional therapy, such as cognitive or psychotherapy (<http://www.minddisorders.com> 2015). Therefore, the scope of creative therapy is as limitless as the imagination in finding appropriate modes of expression (Amabile & Pratt 2016). The purpose of creative counselling is to help clients who are unable to participate in traditional talk therapy or when the usual talk therapy

becomes ineffective on the client. Once a person creates a piece of art for instance, they can discuss their choices with the therapist/counsellor. Discussing their creation with the therapist can help in processing how they feel.

One review on the effectiveness of creative therapy found out that this technique have helped patients undergoing medical treatment for cancer, improve their quality of life and alleviated a variety of psychological symptoms including adults who are experiencing trauma, creative therapy was found to significantly reduce trauma symptoms and decreased levels of depression (Regev & Cohen-Yatziv (2018). Also, another study carried out by (Ching-Teng, Ya-Ping & Yu-Chia (2018) found that creative therapy reduced depression and increased self-esteem in older adults living in nursing homes. Furthermore, Puig, Minilee, Goodwin, Peter & Sherrarded (2006) have carried out a work on the efficacy of creative therapies to enhance emotional expression, spirituality, and psychological well-being of newly diagnosed Stage I and Stage II breast cancer patients. Thirty-nine women with Stage I and Stage II breast cancer were randomly assigned to an experimental group who received individual creative therapy interventions or a control group of delayed treatment. A series of analyses of covariance were used to analyze the results, the result indicated that participation in the creative arts therapy intervention enhanced psychological well-being by decreasing negative emotional states and enhancing positive ones of the experimental group subjects.

There are different types of creative art therapies which can be used in helping to alleviate the clients' unwarranted situations. Legg (2020), Lobell (2018) and Amabile & Pratt (2016), and Stuckey and Nobel (2010) stated the following as the commonly approaches to creative art therapy counsellors may make use of in helping their clients: writing, sand play, clay, movement therapy, psychodrama, role play, books, journaling, film and music therapy. Furthermore, Sternberg (2011) opines that therapists, in order to help their clients, may equally make use of art based exercises such as dance, drawing, poetry, drama, and painting to help treat certain conditions. One study found out that adding drama, dance, music, and movement activities to therapy sessions for people with dementia has resulted to noticeable improvements in communication, engagement, and pleasure (Stuckey and Nobel, 2010).

However, creative art therapy seems to work on certain groups of clients and conditions. The appropriate clients include children, teenagers, and persons who are unable to speak due to stroke or dementia, or those people who are dealing with clinical issues that are hidden within the subconscious and beyond the reach of language. Creative counselling may also, occur when the focus is on trauma or abuse that may have occurred before the client was able to speak, or in families where there is a strict code against talking about feelings or negative things. Creative therapy also seems to be effective when exploring fears around medical issues, such as cancer or HIV. Researchers, Ching-Teng Ya-Ping and Yu-Chia (2018) advocate that creative counselling has been effective on managing stress, physical activity's incompatibility with depression, and humor's release of endorphins. Regev and Cohen-Yatziv (2018) opine that people with mild-to-moderate

Alzheimer’s disease do have improved memory and orientation by way of following music therapy sessions. Also, that listening to music such as classical music combined with jazz will have a positive effect on people with depression and anxiety too. According to American Art Therapy Association’s study published in 2016, people can use creative art therapy to improve cognitive and sensori-motor functions, improve self-esteem and self-awareness (Kaimal, Ray & Muniz 2016).

Moreover, people can use creative therapy to encourage complete insight into situations that are causing issues, resolving conflict or distress, improving the cognitive and sensorimotor functions, improving self-esteem and self-awareness, enhancing the social skills of people with behavioural health problems, and building on the emotional strength (Amabile and Pratt 2016 and <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/creative-therapies>).

Creative art therapies are useful to cancer patients, people with the blocked emotions or buried memories, people with schizophrenia, for those who are dying, living in nursing homes, or even facing other life-changing experiences, children with asthma, older adults with dementia, older adults receiving treatment for behavioral health issues, recovering from an addiction, do have a “dysfunctional” family, been to prison, been without a home, do have HIV or AIDS, deal with developmental disabilities, ones who have experienced trauma, have mental health conditions and people with mental health or behavioral conditions. Creative therapy can be useful to them by providing a distraction from their pain or any form of illness, giving a person a complete sense of personal achievement, have a better understanding towards themselves, providing complete relaxation or empowerment, and helping a person to build up a relationship- (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285885723_Creative_therapies_for_adults). Further, in 2018, researchers looked into studies about creative art therapy and how it can help people experiencing stress. They found out that in 81.1% of the studies they looked at, taking part in creative art therapy significantly reduced a person’s stress levels (Regev & Cohen-Yatziv 2018). The purpose of the study is to determine types of creative art therapies for counsellors and the conditions that can likely benefit from the therapies as perceived by Guidance counsellors.

Statement of the problem

Counselling therapy is meant for everybody both old and young. Therapy is a process through which a troubled person engages a counsellor for resolving either his unacceptable conducts, beliefs, feelings, family problems or what is happening in his body. Counsellors engage clients through talking (traditional talk therapy) and following their responds. Problem or blockage arises where as a result of a client’s condition, he cannot be able to pour out his feelings and explain what is going on in his life to the therapist. A counsellor cannot achieve much when confronted with such and as a result of this, the client will not be denied access to counselling. And part of creative art therapy is helping a client channel his emotions through artistic expression. In order to help this category of clients, counsellors can resort to making use of creative art therapy to help them engage these clients. Therefore,

this study determines types and conditions that can benefit from creative art therapy as perceived by Guidance Counsellors in Anambra State.

Method

Descriptive survey design is adopted by the researchers for this study. The population of the study consists of 264 Guidance Counsellors in Anambra state of Nigeria and the sample size for the study is 145 Counsellors drawn through random sampling technique with replacement. Types and conditions that can benefit from creative art therapies as perceived by counsellors questionnaire is used for data collection (TSACSTCBFCATAPBCSQ). The reliability co-efficient value of the instrument of 0.76 is established through the use of Split half method of estimation. On the sport method of administration of the instrument on the respondents is used by the researchers to ensure a hundred percent return of the questionnaire. Arithmetic weighted mean which criterion is 2.50 for any item considered as a factor while an item that is below this value is considered not being a factor and ranking are used for the data analysis.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of creative art therapies as perceived by guidance counsellors in Anambra State?
2. What are the conditions that will benefit from creative art therapies as perceived by guidance counsellors in Anambra State?

Results

Results are presented in tables according to the research questions.

Table 1: Types of creative art therapies as perceived by Guidance Counsellors

Item	MeanX	Ranking	Remark
Types of Creative art therapies are:			
Dance	3.29	1 st	Accepted
Writing	3.21	4 th	Accepted
Role play	3.22	3 rd	Accepted
Music	3.18	5 th	Accepted
Drawing	3.21	4 th	Accepted
Movement	3.13	7 th	Accepted
Drama	3.28	2 nd	Accepted
Painting	3.21	4 th	Accepted
Poetry	3.14	6 th	Accepted
Sand play	3.18	5 th	Accepted

From the above table, it is observed that guidance counsellors affirmed that the whole items in the table are the likely types of creative art therapies counsellors can make use of when confronted

with clients whose conditions could not allow them to express their feelings verbally during counselling. Their mean scores ranges from 3.29 to 3.13 respectively. This indicates that dance, drama, role play, writing, drawing, painting, music, sand play, poetry, and movement are types of creative therapies Guidance Counsellors can engage in counselling their clients who cannot be able to express themselves verbally. Moreover, in ranking, dance ranked first followed by drama 2nd, role play 3rd, writing, drawing, and painting 4th respectively, music and sand play ranked 5th each, poetry 6th and movement 7th position.

Table 2: the conditions that will benefit from creative art therapies as perceived by guidance counsellors in Anambra State.

Item	MeanX	Ranking	Remark
Conditions that can benefit from creative art therapies are people suffering from:			
Depression	3.37	1 st	Accepted
Anxiety	3.32	4 th	Accepted
Stress	3.34	2 nd	Accepted
Low self-esteem	3.22	8 th	Accepted
Adults with dementia	3.24	7 th	Accepted
Children with asthma	3.33	3 rd	Accepted
People with behavioural health-Conditions	3.25	6 th	Accepted
People with malaria fever	2.03	9 th	Not Accepted
People that have been to prison	3.31	5 th	Accepted

The table above indicated that depression, stress, children with asthma, anxiety, ex-prisoners, people with behavioural health conditions, dementia, and low self-esteem are some of the conditions accepted that can benefit from creative art therapies as perceived by guidance counsellors while the item bearing people with malaria fever is not accepted which indicates that they are not among the conditions that can benefit from the therapy. Their mean score ranges from 3.37 to 2.03 respectively. Also, in ranking, depression ranked 1st, stress 2nd, children with asthma 3rd, anxiety ranked 4th, people that have been to prison 5th position, people with behavioural health conditions 6th, adults with dementia 7th, and low self-esteem ranked 8th as conditions that can benefit from creative art therapies while people with malaria ranked 9th which is not accepted.

Discussion

From the study, it could be noted that in research question one, guidance counsellors indicated that dance, drama, role play, writing, drawing, painting, music, sand play, poetry, and movement with their respective rankings are types of creative therapies guidance counsellors can engage in counselling their clients who cannot be able to express themselves verbally. The findings supported the findings and observations of Legg (2020), Lobell (2018) and Amabile & Pratt (2016), and Craft (2005) who reported that some commonly creative art therapy counsellors can make use of in helping their clients include writing, sand play, movement therapy, role play, books, and music therapy. Also, the findings are in line with that of Patnaik (2021) which indicated that counsellors can utilize poetry, drama, and painting in reducing the problems of their clients.

Furthermore, the study reported that creative art therapy is beneficial for the people suffering from the following conditions: depression, stress, children with asthma, anxiety, ex-prisoners, people with behavioural health conditions, dementia, and low self-esteem. These findings of the study are in agreement with that of Ching-Teng, Ya-Ping, and Yu-Chia (2018), Regev and Cohen-Yatziv (2018).

Conclusion

This study is carried out on the types and conditions that can benefit from creative art therapy as perceived by Guidance counsellors. The study has identified dance, drama, role play, writing, drawing, painting, music, sand play, poetry, and movement as types of creative therapies Guidance Counsellors can engage in counselling their clients who cannot be able to express themselves verbally. It has also determined the following conditions that can benefit from the therapy: depression, stress, children with asthma, anxiety, ex-prisoners, and people with behavioural health conditions, dementia, and low self-esteem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend the following: That government will be organizing training, workshops, and seminars for counsellors in order to equip them with the necessary techniques needed in each.

Professional Counsellors will also disseminate information on the conditions that can benefit from the therapies.

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