

Paper presentation 8:

## The powerful experience. Emotion regulation and self-image in personality disorders in arts & psychomotor therapies

Suzanne Haeyen, The Netherlands

Introduction and objective: Arts & psychomotor therapies are experience-based and use tools like drama, dance, images, exercise, movement or music. Multidisciplinary treatment programs for people diagnosed with personality disorders often include these forms of therapies. Personality disorders are complex mental disorders and people with this diagnosis are often difficult to reach from an emotional perspective. But how are these therapies perceived, what are the effects and what are the working mechanisms? How are these therapies perceived by patients?

In this presentation I will introduce the use of arts & psychomotor therapies within this target group and point out core themes of art therapy: the powerful experience, emotion regulation and self-image regulation.

Methods: Multiple recent quantitative as well as qualitative studies will be presented and discussed.

Results: The available studies show promising results regarding effects of arts and psychomotor therapies. Patients perceive these therapies as a positive and effective way to improve the felt connection with their emotions, gain self-insight and improve personal behavior and social functioning.

Conclusion: Arts & psychomotor therapies may help people diagnosed with a personality disorder to gain access to their emotions, to be able to regulate their emotions and to develop a stable, more positive self-image. Although the evidence base is growing there is still a considerable need for more knowledge on this topic - theoretical, scientific and practical.

***Suzanne Haeyen** is professor of the 'Research Group Arts & psychomotor therapies in Health Care' at HAN University of Applied Sciences. She is coordinator of content of the Master programme. She is an art therapist and researcher at 'Scelta, expert centre for personality problems at mental health care institute 'GGNet, centre for mental health'. She has several publications about arts therapies in personality disorders and contributed to the multidisciplinary guidelines for personality disorder treatment and the standard of care for the same target group.*

Paper presentation 9:

## Art therapy with young Ukrainian refugees

### Trauma and language barrier

Anca Ghearasănescu, Romania

After the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, millions of Ukrainians had to leave their homes and find refuge. The young population is the most vulnerable category, being dependent on adult support and not having yet enough internal mature resources to overcome disruptive events.

Romania responded to their neighbors' crisis, offering prompt help ranging from emergency shelter to medical assistance and psychological support.

In this context, a 6-month art therapy program for Ukrainian refugee children and teenagers in Romania was implemented by The Red Pencil Europe with Hope and Homes for Children Romania as a local partner. The art therapy program was conducted by a Ukrainian art therapist, a Romanian art therapist and a French supervisor.

The overall objectives were to lower the distress level and encourage emotional resilience facing an uncertain future. Paola Luzzato's Trauma Treatment Through Art Therapy (TT-AT) protocol was implemented in working since the program started.

An important challenge in the group that I coordinated was the language barrier as the teenagers spoke only Ukrainian and Russian. And when there is a gap... a bridge is needed. The emotional bridge was created on three pillars: session themes, variety of (natural) art materials (as a new „vocabulary”) and the stance of „therapeutic witnessing” instead of an active approach to change things.

A sign of an emotional bridge between us appeared when some of the teenagers began to write the affirmations and words in their drawings not only in Ukrainian, but also in English and Romanian. When they wrote only in Romanian, they created “complicity”, secured the space (only them and me could understand the meaning) and they made steps towards me, as well. And I understood this as an unconscious invitation for individual sessions, where they could express themselves more freely.

**Anca Ghearasănescu** is a Phronetik Art Therapist and Jungian Psychotherapist based in Bucharest (Romania). She works in private practice with children, adolescents and adults and has clinical experience in a psychiatry hospital in Bucharest where she facilitated individual and group art therapy sessions.

She joined The Red Pencil Europe and Hope and Homes for Children Romania initiative for young Ukrainian refugees in October 2022 and conducted group and individual art therapy sessions for 6 months. In 2022 and 2023 she was a speaker at the Ukrainian Art Therapy Conference.

Anca believes in the power of art and creativity to foster the seeds of healing, especially with clients who face traumatic life events.

Paper presentation 10:

## Art psychotherapy as a seed of hope for socially withdrawn adolescents and young adults

Sanna Pikku-Pyhältö, Finland

Social withdrawal is a growing phenomenon throughout Europe and the world, especially in the aftermath of the corona pandemic—and all this uncertainty which prevails these days. The phenomenon has been recognized already in the 1990s in Japan, where it was named "hikikomori. Nowadays the social withdrawal among adolescents and young adults have been widely identified in other countries as well.

Despite the prevalence of withdrawal, art psychotherapy among socially withdrawn adolescents and young adults is still unexplored area in the research field: as far as I know, not a single study has been published. In my doctoral research I am hoping to fill in the gap – at least part of it.

The goal of my research is to discuss the phenomenon of social withdrawal and to find out what elements both socially withdrawn clients and art psychotherapists find particularly relevant in art psychotherapy process.

In addition I want to find out does art psychotherapy improve the functional ability of socially withdrawn clients and if so, how. Furthermore my goal is to develop an art psychotherapy intervention aimed at socially withdrawn people. Could art psychotherapy be the seed of hope that would help these young people to find their way out from home - and into the world?

At the first part of my research I will conduct interviews and a survey to art psychotherapists and clients about the most relevant elements of art psychotherapy with socially withdrawn clients.

At The Nordic Art Therapy Conference I will present preliminary thoughts about these interviews and survey. I will also invite the nordic community of art psychotherapists to discuss about the treatment of socially withdrawn people - is there some common factors that we all see as important?

***Sanna Pikku-Pyhältö is psychodynamic art psychotherapist and integrative art psychotherapy trainer, psychologist and teacher, who runs her own private art psychotherapy practice at Tampere, Finland. She also leads the Finnish Union of Art Psychotherapists and teaches art therapy at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences.***

Paper presentation 11:

## Avenues of hope. Art therapy grounded in neuroscience: evidence-based practice in healthcare settings

Sara Stayne & Sophia Pankenier, Sweden

Our report “Art therapy grounded in neuroscience: evidence-based practice in healthcare settings” shares contemporary research where art therapy and neuroscience meet alongside descriptions of evidence-based practice. The intended audience is colleagues in healthcare professions and leadership but also related organisations and interested members of the general public. The report was written with the support of the “Kompetenscentrum för Kultur och Hälsa” a part of the Cultural Administration that works to integrate cultural interventions and cultural knowledge into the region’s healthcare. Ultimately aiming to expand the reach of creative expressive therapies like art therapy through distributing up to date research about the power of art in healthcare.

The report begins by introducing art therapy to allied professions. This exposition is rooted in the Swedish National Association for Art Therapists definition.

The theoretical basis is presented as well as the therapeutic relationship’s role in supporting health and wellbeing through expanding and integrating cognitive, emotional and sensory motor processes.

The theoretical model Expressive Therapies Continuum [ETC] is used to further illuminate the specific potential of art therapy and the parallels with neuroscience. Recent and pending research is briefly highlighted in relation to the ETC model as well as mentioning other theoretical frameworks aligned with developments in neuroscience.

This report aims to share best practices as well as to answer the call for broader cost-effective treatments for health and wellbeing. By outlining correlates between neuroscience and art therapy in theory and practice, we aim to demonstrate the development and suitability of art therapy more broadly as well as for its specific potential to provide culturally inclusive, patient-centered care as well as an alternative for treatment-resistant disorders.

### **Sara Stayne & Sophia Pankenier**

*Both art therapists at Stockholm Child and Adolescent Mental Health Day unit within the Intensive Outpatient Sector. Sara Stayne is an authorized art therapist trained at the University of Hartfordshire, UK as well as a registered CBT psychotherapist and registered occupational therapist. She has a long career working with complex childhood psychiatry. Sophia Pankenier is an art therapist with a masters from the University of Umeå as well as a registered nurse and a bachelor’s degree in art and design. Prior to becoming an art therapist she worked extensively with vulnerable groups using creative arts.*