EXPRESS YOURSELF
Art, Music, and Trauma in Children
PRESENTERS

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It is the purpose of this workshop to develop an understanding of what is child emotional well-being and how to best achieve emotional health through art and music especially for those having suffered trauma.

This workshop has the following three learning objectives:
Learning Objectives

- **Learning Objective #1**: Participants will be able to identify what music and art therapy is, who can provide such therapeutic modalities, and who benefits from its use.

- **Learning Objective #2**: Participants will be able to understand the difference between a therapeutic setting that provides art and music therapy and the inclusion of art and music therapy techniques in non-therapeutic settings for the benefit of trauma victims.

- **Learning Objective #3**: Participants will understand what emotional well-being is and how art and music therapy techniques help achieve well-being in trauma victims and especially children.
CREATIVITY TAKES COURAGE

-Henri Matisse
INTRODUCTION

- According to the American Psychological Association (APA), Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event such as an accident, rape or natural disaster.
- The word trauma generally implies that the initial event was so horrific that it logically led to trauma...possibly even the need for the trauma department of a hospital. But trauma, the emotional aftermath of an event, need not be the result of what most people consider catastrophic. It can also be the result of a car accident, loss of a parent (due to death, divorce, abandonment, or incarceration), abuse, bullying, or real or perceived instability in living conditions such as a move or homelessness.
- Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea.
While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives and may display a range of these symptoms long term.

Psychologists can help these individuals find constructive ways of managing their emotions. (APA.org)

Traumatic events in a child’s life can cause brain development delays, behavioral problems, and future relationship issues. While prevention is the best strategy to reduce the initial trauma from occurring, various treatment options are available to help children recuperate from some of these ordeals.
**Why Music and Art Therapy?**

- Children do not develop complex communication skills until late adolescence making expression complicated under normal circumstances much less under the effects of trauma.

- The nature of art and music therapy is one that naturally develops without the need for verbal communication, allowing the trauma victim to fully express their feelings regardless of their developmental stage.

- The purpose of this workshop is to help better define trauma and art therapies for both therapists and lay people alike in an effort to increase its benefits and availability to children in therapeutic and non-therapeutic settings.
Music and Art Therapy

What is music and art therapy?

- Music therapy consists of listening to music, moving to music, making music, singing, or any combination of these activities. Music can have a soothing effect on emotionally disturbed children. This can also encourage children to discuss their thoughts and feelings (Gold, Voracek & Wigram, 2004). Another way that music therapy can help is by creating a fun activity in which children can socialize with one another or with other adults. This can create a sense of community that can help emotionally disturbed children with their social skills, peer interactions, and aggression.

- Art Therapy includes writing, drawing, coloring, working with toys such as play dough, costumes, and dolls as well as role play in the form of acting/theatrical play (the writing and acting out of plays). For children who are still developing their language skills, drawing, coloring, and playing with toys can help them express their feelings through imagery and imaginative play while older children can greatly benefit from these as well, they also can benefit from using literary expression to release deep feelings of shame, fear, and guilt.
Who can provide such therapeutic modalities?

- Although there is specific training for art and music therapy, aspects of its benefits can be incorporated into non-therapeutic agencies such as educational settings, foster care, and traditional homes that are in need of assistance. Such techniques can include the fostering of art and music appreciation, encouraging participation in art and music activities, and adding art and music components/creative components to existing school work.

Who benefits from its use?

- All trauma victims benefit from the use of creative therapy techniques, but numerous studies have shown that art therapies (including music therapy) are very effective in helping trauma victims heal, especially children. There is also an increasing number of applications for such therapies with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and Alzheimer’s disease.
CREATIVE WRITING

CREATIVE WRITING CONTINUED

Creative writing is a form of written expression that does not seek to inform or use factual evidence in prose (essay) form. Instead it is a variety of free formed thoughts on paper that include poetry, prose (narrative, fiction, autobiography), drama, and visual art using words to create images. It can also include journaling and spoken word performance art.

Older children benefit most from this modality as it allows them to express the unspeakable.
Every child is an artist.

-Pablo Picasso
Dramatic play
Dramatic play includes the use of toys, dolls, costumes, manipulative play such as play-doo, and theater arts including acting, role-playing, improvisation, and performance art.

All age groups benefit from this modality in different forms at different developmental stages. All children benefit from the ability to reenact an event with a more empowered position in the re-telling of events.
DRAWING/PAINTING

(Growingourbaby.com, 2015)
What is Art Therapy expressed through drawing?

- One of the more commonly used forms of art therapy are painting or drawing. This is done with any type of writing or painting utensil, including but not limited to pencils, pens, acrylic paint, chalk, or watercolors. This type of therapy is often used to help a patient develop positive associations with emotional health. When properly used, this therapy can help to increase self-esteem, self-awareness, and positive behavioral traits (Art Therapy, 2015).
What are the benefits?

- Some more in-depth issues that can be addressed through art therapy include anxiety, depression, addiction, and trauma. Properly trained art therapists can understand the healing effects of the creative process, and can couple these to clinical techniques to alleviate symptoms (Art Therapy, 2015).

- Psychosocial rehabilitation specialists can use the dispositional personality theories to help children suffering from emotional disturbances overcome maladaptive behaviors. Maladaptive behaviors are a set of disruptive or inappropriate behaviors that a child exhibits (Maladaptive Behavior, 2010). The child displays the inappropriate behavior because of his or her perception of herself or himself and his or her emotional reactions to his or her perceptions as well as the stress of the situation (Maladaptive Behavior, 2010). Maladaptive behaviors care solvable with the use of the dispositional personality theories by explaining why the children are likely to behave in specific situations as well as express the same behavior to the situations over time (Feist & Feist, 2009).

- Must be administered by a professionally trained art therapist (Master’s degree) There are specific analytical tools to be used when interpreting art, and treatment methods to correspond with these. An art therapist must have a master’s degree in art therapy which includes an extensive practicum.
Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

Victor Hugo
MUSIC

(The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), 2015)
Music therapy consists of listening to music, moving to music, making music, singing, or any combination of these activities. Music therapy was first introduced in the early 1940’s after doctors and psychologists realized the benefits of music during both World Wars and Vietnam (American Music Therapy Association, 2015). Doctors first noticed that listening to or playing music helped soldiers cope with pain, depression, and fatigue. As time went on, traveling music groups were sent to camp sites to help soldiers during the healing process, and as emotional, mental, and physical well-being improved, clinicians asked for a proper training of musicians to provide more structured care to groups and individual (American Music Therapy Association, 2015).

Although any type of musical involvement can be beneficial for a multitude of symptoms, not all is considered therapy. Only certified music therapists can properly administer music therapy, as it is much more involved than just singing, playing an instrument, or listening to music. Music therapists have gone through extensive training including a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree and are credentialed through an approved music therapy program (AMTA, 2015). Music therapists analyze the patient for physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs, and build a therapy plan around these, with measurable outcomes. The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) recognizes all efforts to incorporate music into healing settings, however, has very strict guidelines on proper music therapy techniques.
What is the difference between therapeutic and non-therapeutic settings that provide art and music therapy for the benefit of trauma victims?

- A therapeutic setting requires the therapist to be certified in art therapy and be administering the art therapy techniques within the realm and expectations of therapy (private practice, group therapy, hospital setting).

- A non-therapeutic setting involves the use of art, music, or creative writing and theater with the intention of encouraging self expression and positive esteem building without the intention or inclusion of therapeutic conversations or interpretations.
Example:

- A teacher can include creative activities in a classroom with the intention of assisting her students with positive esteem building and positive behavior modification for the purpose of classroom management. The same techniques could be incorporated as in a therapy session, however, the child would not then be asked to discuss their feelings and causes of those feeling after completing the activity.
EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

What is emotional well-being?

- According to the United States Surgeon General, “Mental and emotional well-being is essential to overall health. Positive mental health allows people to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. Early childhood experiences have lasting, measurable consequences later in life; therefore, fostering emotional well-being from the earliest stages of life helps build a foundation for overall health and well-being.”

- Emotional well-being is the ability to feel your feelings but behave well anyway... in other words feel whatever you feel at the moment, process them, and then act don’t react.
Benefits of Music and Art Therapy to Victims of Trauma

- Trauma is the heightened emotional experience attached to a significant event. As we saw earlier this can include violent life threatening events or events that simply rock the foundation of a child’s existence such as moving to another state or divorce.

- Children lack the advanced communication skills and emotional maturity to process their feelings with spoken words such as adults might use in traditional talk therapy.

- The ability to channel feelings through universal modes of communication that do not require language skills such as music and art allows children, as well as those who have limited language abilities due to injury or disease, to process emotions.
CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

- Definition of Abuse:
  - A willful act of harm in any manner including physical, mental or sexual (Welfare Information Gateway in Florida, 2012).

- Definition of Neglect:
  - Deprivation of food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

- Child abandonment is a separate concern

*Emotional abuse and neglect are often not seen as significant enough to damage a child and warrant DCF intervention, especially with limited funds, personnel, etc. However, recent studies have shown the effects of bullying (intense emotional abuse). Bullying can occur anywhere and by anyone not just peers.*
EMPOWERING CHILDREN

- Educating Children on identifying abuse, neglect, and abandonment
- Providing safe havens for children to speak out against their offenders
- Intervention and prevention of children becoming offenders after victimization

Although therapists are the logical administrators of these techniques, teachers, advocates, social workers, parents, etc. can assist with empowering children through music and art activities.
EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

- Providing children with education on child empowerment through models can help to persuade children to speak out against their offenders. Portwood (2009) gives an example of a model towards education of physical abuse:

  - Key concepts typically incorporated into child empowerment program models include the following: (a) children can control access to their own bodies; (b) there are different types of touches (e.g., good vs. bad); (c) children can and should tell others about touching; and (d) supportive adults are available for children to tell about problems with touching. (p. 67)

- According to Portwood (2009), statistics show that maltreatment is prevalent within families, “positing that children who experience or witness violence are more likely to become violent themselves” (p. 72). Giving children the tools they need to seek help with escaping child abuse is another step towards ending the abuse. Empowering children to speak up for themselves allows them to grow up to be more confident, outspoken adults, who may go on to form the altruistic behavior of helping others who have gone through the same traumatic experiences.

- There are those children who cannot seek help when they are being mistreated, either because they are too young, or because they are not physically able to. Another aspect playing into capabilities to speak out is the social exchange theory. Many children are afraid to speak out as they believe the consequences would be malice towards them, and not the offender. A child will have to face an inner war of having to decide whether or not to expose a parent or loved one whom they trust, but is abusing them. Children have to make a choice to either live with the abuse and fear, but protecting the offender, or to find someone who will believe them when they expose the offender, and provide help in order to escape the abuse.
EMPOWERMENT CONTINUED

- It is important to understand that a person’s individuality is affected by his or her environment. Personality plays a role in affecting situational behavior, which is “Those influences on a person’s behavior in a given situation that are external factors of the situation, rather than internal traits of character or personality” (Situational factors, 1992, p. 1). Each theory on the development of individual personality has a different view of how a person’s behavior changes, according to the situation he or she is in.

- Child abuse needs to end. One way to reach this goal is through educating adults and children as to what constitutes as abuse. Studies have shown that many people only think of physical or sexual mistreatment towards children when they define child abuse. However, there are many forms of abuse, and although the abuse happens to children, newborns through adolescents, the experience can follow a person into adulthood.

- According to the social exchange theory all human relationships are formed by analyzing the benefits of the relationship to determine if it is worth the effort of maintenance. Most people would automatically assume that any relationship with a child would be worth their time and their sense of altruistic behavior would motivate them to treat the child kindly. When thinking of the behavior between a parent and a child, a thought of selfless caring on the parent’s part of the relationship comes to mind. Most people would assume that parents would do anything to keep their child safe, as altruism dictates. However there are those who are ignorant. The next step towards ending child abuse is to empower its victims.
There are multiple ways of learning and expressing learned information:

Howard Gardner was the first to present the theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner analyzes intelligence as “an ability or set of abilities that is used to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting” (Kowalski & Western, 2009, (5th ed., p. 265). Gardner concluded that there are eight main areas of intelligence: “musical, bodily/kinesthetic (such as the control over the body and movement that distinguishes great athletes and dancers), spatial (the use of mental maps) as well as linguistic or verbal (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). The remaining intelligences are logical/mathematical (math, science, patterns, sequences), naturalist (interests in nature and ecosystems), intrapersonal (self-understanding), and interpersonal (social skills)” (Kowalski & Western, 2009, (5th ed., p. 266). According to these eight intelligences, it is possible for a person to be a great public speaker; however, he or she could be horrible at answering questions from the audience, as this would require logical skills.

As schools become more aware of the significance of fostering individual learning styles and natural intelligence children will be organically empowered as well.
CONCLUSION

- Trauma is an emotional response to an external event.
- Physical and psychological reactions can be short or long-term.
- Psychologists can provide constructive outlets to express feelings.
- Music and Art therapy are beneficial in therapeutic and non-therapeutic settings.
- Settings can include schools, foster care, and professional offices.
REFERENCES


RESOURCES

- Using the Mind-Body Connection to Treat Trauma: The Polyvagal Theory
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lpu4hKG8w

- Why Art Therapy - Carrie Wicks
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJCxRgBUy

- Trauma, Loss, And Art Therapy

- Helping children with 6 open ended questions

- Art Therapy for Addiction Recovery
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/16255186777596374/

- Art Therapy Group
  - http://emerlyearts.blogspot.com/2014/05/art-therapy-group-mypast-future.html

- Art Therapy Fundamentals
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/14249677568700533/

- Dual Self Portraits
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/42509765230288684/

- Unraveling
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39497982979743866/

- The impact of Childhood Trauma
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39497982979743866/

- Trauma Art Narrative Therapy
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39497982979743869/
**Hands-On-Activity**

("10+ Art Therapy Ideas," n.d.)

**Self Portrait and/or Biography**

("Think self portrait with bio. combining art and journal therapy in a beautiful way. | Artistic inspirations | Pinterest," n.d.)
Please feel free to ask us any questions you may have!
Thank you for taking part in our seminar!