

Needs Analysis Of Expressive Art Therapy Counselling Module On Mental Health, Resilience, And Attitudes Towards Seeking Counselling Among Teacher Education Institute

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Abstract

Expressive arts therapy is an approach that combines various artistic modalities such as painting, sketching, sculpture, dance, movement, music, drama, poetry, or prose with the creative process. The aim of this study is to identify the needs of the Expressive Arts Therapy counseling module. This study uses interview methods and a short survey of three experts. The qualitative method uses an interview protocol prepared by the researcher. At the same time, the research questions were developed with five statements. The interview data was analyzed using a thematic approach, while the survey data was analyzed using a descriptive method. The results of the study show that there are three themes: There is no structured and specific module used by counselors, especially in relation to mental health problems. Counselors use the modules based on the cases they receive and the skills they have. The three experts agree on a theoretical consensus, and a creative approach will encourage the involvement of trainee teachers in counseling. Counselling application Expressive arts therapy can be one of the interventions to reduce mental health problems, resilience, and the attitude to seek counseling. Further research proposals should focus on module development design and overall implementation through experimental studies.

Keywords: Expressive arts therapy, mental health, resilience, and attitudes towards seeking counselling, teacher education students

Introduction

Expressive arts therapy is a specially developed approach that combines various artistic modalities such as painting, sketching, sculpture, dance, movement, music, drama, poetry, or prose with a creative process to address psychological problems (Siegel et al., 2016). Expressive arts therapy can be seen as a method of self-discovery through any creative effort arising from emotion. The process of removing layers of inhibition through creative connection can be seen as a spiral of activity. Meanwhile, Rogers et al. (2012). Expressive Art Therapy is a creative activity that uses various modalities such as music, dance, painting photographs, collage, writing, and crafting and aims to encourage individuals to communicate, express feelings, and understand themselves in a relaxed atmosphere to promote individual or group healing and growth. Expressive art therapy is also known as "action therapy," as the process requires physical actions by the client to release thoughts and feelings. In addition, the counselor or therapist explores the client's issues through the artwork created by the client (Werner & Smith, 1982).

Literature Overview

Expressive Arts Therapy uses various modalities such as music, dance, movement, drama, poetry, creative writing, and play in the context of psychotherapy, rehabilitation counseling, and health care (Malchiodi, 2005). Expressive arts therapy is used with various groups of people, such as grieving children, adult clients struggling with emotional disorders, and family members in distress. As a result, he found that expressive art therapy can help people communicate thoughts and feelings, see things from a different perspective, and make positive changes towards health and well-being. There are several recent studies on expressive art therapy conducted in Malaysia. The studies were conducted by Johan et al. (2022), Tengku Besar et al. (2021), Musa & Chethiyar (2020), Jaladin et al. (2020), and Ferner & Mohamad (2019) which you can see in Table 1.

Table 1:
Studies on Expressive Art Therapy

Year of Publication	Research method	Sample study	Theme		
			Emotion	Behavior	Social support
2022	True experiment	Delinquent youth	/		
2021	Qualitative	Institute of Teacher Education students	/		
2020	Qualitative	teenagers		/	
2020	Mixed method	Single mother	/		
2019	Qualitative	Single mother			/

The study by Johan et al. (2022) is a purely experimental study to investigate the effects of the Expressive Art Therapy module on depression and anxiety in delinquent youth. The results

of the study show that this module can control the anger of late-pubertal teenagers and improve the teenagers' self-concept. The study by Tengku Besar et al. (2021) examines the experiences of students at the Teacher Education Institute in first-year adaptation. The researcher used storytelling techniques to identify the themes that occur in the adjustment process. The combination of expressive art therapy helps counselors quickly and indirectly identify students' main issues; interventions for students can be given more precisely. Next is a study by Musa and Chethiyar (2020) that looks at the problems of teenagers who become pregnant and have children out of wedlock. The Expressive Arts Therapy approach to counseling helps counselors better understand the psychological crisis of the phenomenon of pregnancy symptoms, birth, and disposal of babies. This shows that art therapy can encourage teenagers to express hidden feelings without fear or shame, consciously or unconsciously. Meanwhile, Jaladin et al. (2020) also conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of creative group counseling in improving psychological well-being and self-compassion and reducing stress, anxiety, and depression in single mothers. Thirty-six single mothers from women's shelters in Selangor, under the supervision of the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS), participated in this study. The researcher used two psychological tests and administered them before and after the study, namely the Self-Compassion Scale and the DASS, to determine the effectiveness of creative arts in group counseling. This is an experimental study with a control group and a creative group. The Expressive Arts Therapy activities performed are drawing, writing, painting, and singing, while the control group performs general activities and exercises. The total number of sessions conducted is seven over three days and two nights. The researcher also obtained data through interviews with three single mothers about their perceptions and experiences after the counseling session. Analysis of the results of the study shows a difference between the time before and after creative group counseling and the level of self-compassion, depression, stress, and anxiety. Clients of all ages can use Expressive Arts Therapy, which combines movement, painting, sketching, sculpting, music, writing, sound, and improvisation, as a way to express emotions, develop self-awareness, and discover hidden feelings in a safe environment (schools, outpatient clinics, daycare centers, other treatment centers, hospitals, and non-clinical settings).

Based on the five studies listed in the table above, there are some gaps that need to be filled by future researchers. Four of the above studies focus on compassion, depression, stress, and anxiety. The level of self-compassion increases, while depression, stress, and anxiety decrease. The creative group counseling had a positive impact on single mothers and increased their self-compassion. They also need to realize that everyone always makes mistakes and can change in a positive direction.

In addition, Ferner & Mohamad (2019) conducted an art therapy study with a group of divorced single mothers in Terengganu. The study participants are single mothers who are divorced and have custody of the children. The study was conducted for six days, while the art therapy group lasted for three days. The art therapy group included interviews with single mothers conducted before, during, and after the program to gain a reflection on the participants' experiences. Each session lasts two hours and combines individual art production and group sharing. The results of the study show increased self-esteem, confidence, and optimism, as well as dealing with feelings of loneliness, feeling valued, and generating positive emotions. The role of the therapist can be highlighted through expressive arts therapy, which is person-centered, empathetic, open, honest, harmonious, and compassionate. Expressive arts therapy is a way of self-expression and a way of letting go of

one's feelings. It is not intended to analyze or solve problems or strive for perfection (Vaartio-Rajalin et al., 2021). Teenagers who have emotional problems and two other single mothers at the same time, only one study targets prospective teachers at Institute of Teacher Education. However, the study by Tengku Besar et al. (2021) focuses on student adjustment and uses qualitative methods. Expressive arts therapy has been shown to be valuable and practical for various conditions related to mental health (Zuo et al., 2022). In addition, expressive arts therapy is one of the artistic ways to address the desire for resilient interventions that focus on process and structure-oriented goals (Li & Peng, 2022). This can be explained by empirical research showing that resilience can be strengthened, supporting the process-context model of strength, or that resilience is understood as a process rather than a fixed attribute (Rutter, 2010). Furthermore, expressive arts therapy is rooted in a social action model that promotes collaboration, community development, and the creation of social change based on social action theory (Siegel et al., 2016). This shows that expressive arts therapy helps clients be more open and actively and indirectly supports the client or group to build a better network with others. Therefore, expressive arts therapy in groups can enable clients to deepen their personal psychosocial skills and increase their self-confidence to network well with others (Gabel & Robb, 2017).

Research Methodology

This study uses two methods, interviews, and questionnaires. Experts directly involved with trainee teachers at Institute of Teacher Education were interviewed and given a questionnaire with an agreement scale on the necessity of setting up the guidance module. The selection of the sample was purposive, in that the respondents were chosen from a homogeneous group and were able to provide diverse information.

Study participants

The analysis of this needs study involves three experts with characteristics such as experience as counselors at Institute of Teacher Education, conducting group and individual counseling, programs with students, etc. In addition, the researcher provides a consent form to become an expert. Table 2 refers to the background of the selected experts:

Table 2:
Expert background

Experts	Expert background
1	Head of Psychology and Counseling Unit Institute of Teacher Education Malay Language Campus Master of Professional Counseling UM
2	Administrative counselor at Institute of Teacher Education Malay Language Campus Master of Counseling USM
3	Student Counsellor and academic lecturer at Institute of Teacher Education Sultan Mizan Campus, Terengganu Master of Counseling UPM.

Instrument

The researcher prepared a set of interview questionnaires and an expert agreement scale. Therefore, interview questions and an expert consent scale questionnaire were prepared to

better understand the significance of developing an expressive arts therapy consultation module. Table 3 shows the content of the interview set and the expert consent scale questionnaire:

Table 3:
Content of interviews and questionnaires

Section	Subject
A	Introduction
B	Transitional question
C	Research question 1
D	Expert agreement scale questionnaire

Data Analysis

The researcher has used thematic analysis to generate themes as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six phases are: the first phase, where the researcher has to familiarize himself with the data; the second phase involves the transcript, which has to be read again and again to ensure that the researcher is familiar with the data; the third phase, where the researcher has to generate themes from the code; and the fourth phase, where he has to check the initial articles formed so that there is no overlap. In the fifth phase, the researcher has to define, prioritize, and name the topic and create a thematic map. Finally, in the sixth phase, a report is produced. The report must include evidence and detailed examples to support the article and fulfill the research objective. The researcher used a manual method as there were only three experts involved. The following article written by the researcher has four themes, namely mental health, resilience, attitude towards seeking counseling, and creative techniques, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4:
Themes

Themes	Expert		
	1	2	3
Mental health	/	/	/
Resilient			/
Attitude to seek counseling	/	/	/
Creative techniques	/	/	/

Findings

The results of the study show that no structured and specific module is used by the counselors that primarily addresses mental health problems. Expert 1 stated that the module was based on his experience or shared practice with other counselors. Expert 2 also noted that the module used was based on the client's problem and the counselor's skills. Expert 3 agreed that the theory and creative approach encourage Institute of Teacher Education students' involvement in seeking counseling services and also enhance counselors' knowledge and skills in dealing with various problems on the Institute of Teacher Education campus. This theme can be seen in the following table:

Table 5: Module

Module	Expert		
	1	2	3
Own experience	/		
Client problem		/	
Creative theory and approach			/

The results of the questionnaire presented by the researcher to the three experts gave the impression that the experts agreed that an expressive arts therapy module is needed as a guide for dealing with mental health problems among Institute of Teacher Education students and can improve the quality of counseling services. In addition, the experts agreed that the combination of theory and creative techniques will create a positive perception to avoid the stigma of Institute of Teacher Education students seeking professional help. Innovative approaches such as expressive arts therapy can provide relief, help Institute of Teacher Education students to know themselves well through artistic activities, and build self-resilience to overcome challenges. At the same time, the systematic combination of theories helps the module to be more efficient, easier to understand, and can lead to intellectual competence more quickly. As a result, counselors at Educator's Institution can perform their tasks more efficiently and achieve a better impact. Therefore, this finding supports the need to develop an Expressive Arts Therapy counseling module on mental health, resilience, and attitudes towards seeking counseling from students at Institute of Teacher Education. The results can be seen in the table below:

Table 6:

Expert agreement scale

Question	Expert		
	1	2	3
1	/	/	/
2	/	/	/
3	/	/	/
4	/	/	/
5	/	/	/

Discussions

The results of the study show that the development of a counseling module for expressive arts therapy is of crucial importance for the students of the Institute of Teacher Education. This is because the three experts agree that it is important to have systematic modules and enable counselors to use a variety of creative techniques and theories to meet the needs of today's students. In addition, this can increase the quality of counseling services and reduce the stigma of students accessing these services in the future. Creative techniques also provide a safe space, increase client confidence, and encourage students to seek professional help. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies that found that expressive arts therapy helps counselors identify students' main problems quickly and indirectly so that interventions can be delivered more accurately (Tengku Besar et al., 2021). In addition, the development of the Expressive Art Therapy counseling module is also more systematic by combining theory and creative therapy. It is more flexible for counselors who conduct group or individual counseling. However, the researcher found that there are many studies conducted on single mothers and teenagers in schools, such as the studies by Jaladin et al. (2020) and Musa & Chethiyar (2020), which focus on improving psychological well-being and self-compassion, as well as exploring the inner conflict of pregnant teenagers out of wedlock. This shows that the Expressive Arts Therapy approach to counseling helps counselors better understand psychological crises, while creative groups can improve psychological well-being and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

Conclusion

A needs assessment is crucial to identifying the information needed to develop the expressive arts therapy counseling module. Based on library research and fieldwork, the needs analysis phase can help the researcher identify the variables that are consistent with the present problems. Moreover, it will help the researcher to design a specific content outline that is comprehensive, continuous, holistic, and more systematic for the group of student teachers in the adolescent and adult age groups. Therefore, the counseling module, Expressive Art Therapy, will be an intervention to reduce mental health problems and increase resilience and attitude towards counseling services. The development of this counseling module will also provide an understanding of mental health, strengthen self-resilience, and build positive attitudes. This module can also help improve the diversity of reference sources for improving psychological and counseling services not only in teacher training institutes but also in IPT, whether public or private, and colleges that have the same age group.

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