



The arts in health, schools and the community

Prof Vicky Karkou, Director of the Research Centre for Arts and Wellbeing, Edge Hill University

Aims

- To introduce the example of the Arts for the Blues
- To provide relevant evidence in different contexts
- To suggest ideas for experiential knowledge





Arts for the Blues

A new creative group psychotherapy for depression

- Prof Vicky Karkou
- Dr Joanna Omylinska-Thurston
- Dr Scott Thurston

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ARTS FOR THE BLUES

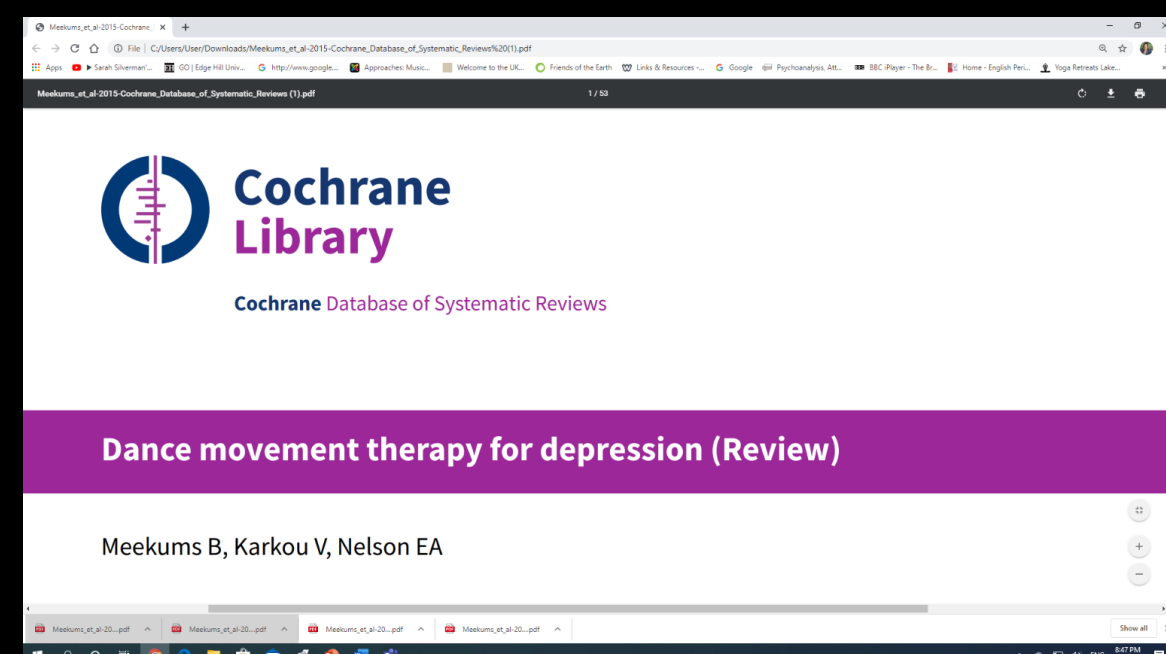
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Dance movement psychotherapy for depression: systematic reviews

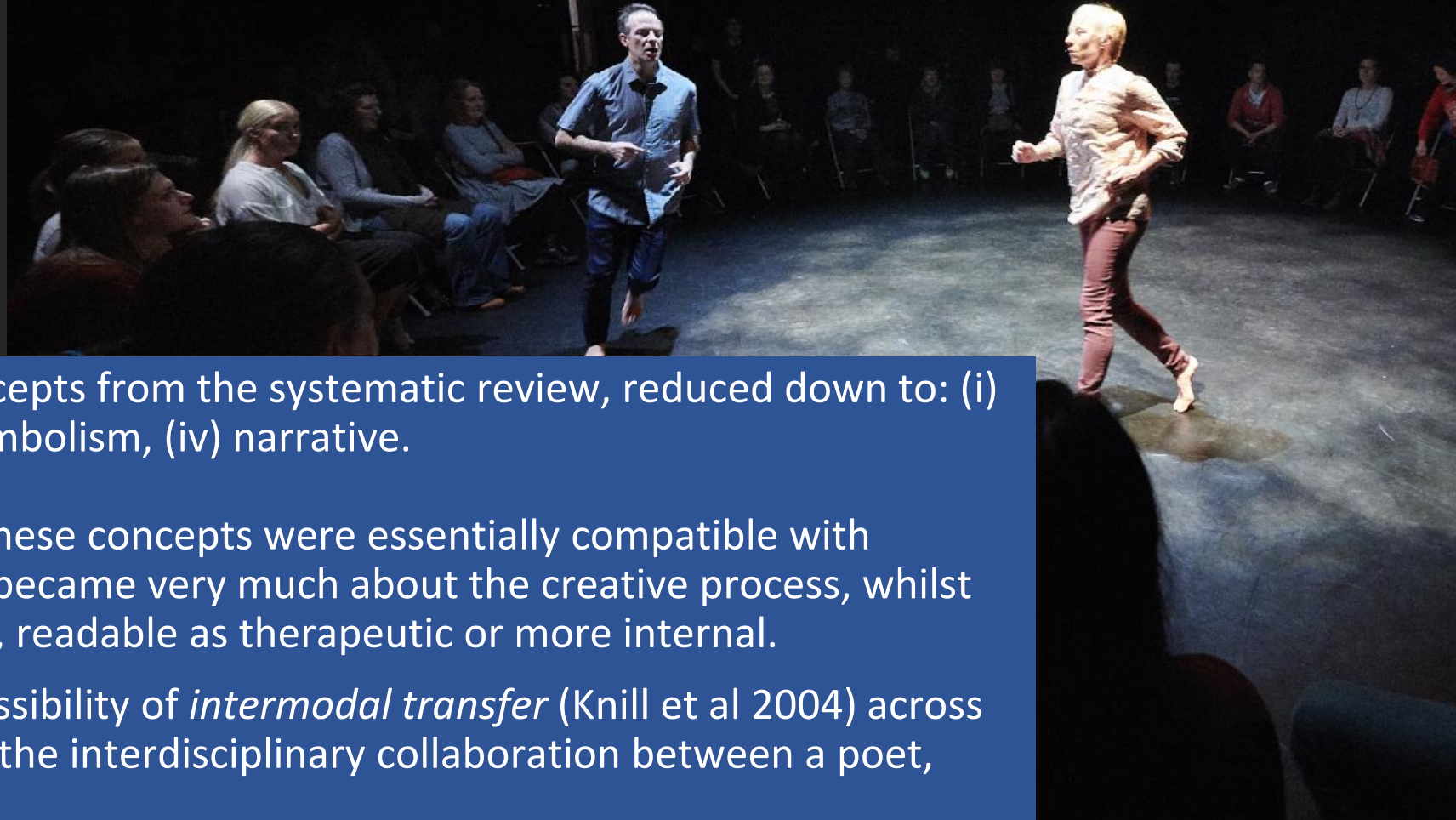


Dancing the Blues: performance

Research Investment Fund (RIF), Edge Hill University

Development of performance: 'Getting Out of Your Own Way'

choreography Julia Griffin, soundscape Steve Davismoon, poetry Scott Thurston



- Working with the four key concepts from the systematic review, reduced down to: (i) vitality, (ii) relationship, (iii) symbolism, (iv) narrative.
- We recognised as artists that these concepts were essentially compatible with creative practice, so the piece became very much about the creative process, whilst also dramatising a relationship, readable as therapeutic or more internal.
- The piece also explored the possibility of *intermodal transfer* (Knill et al 2004) across different arts forms, reflecting the interdisciplinary collaboration between a poet, dancer and composer.

<https://youtu.be/QBQQlugioLc>

(Thurston et al, in preparation)

Arts for the Blues - development of creative intervention - rationale

- Talking therapies not always useful – 49.9% drop out of IAPT (NHS Digital, 2022)
- Clients ask for arts psychotherapies (Millard et al, 2021)
- Limited access to arts psychotherapies within NHS
- IAPT: primarily CBT approaches
- Need for evidence-based approaches to creative and arts psychotherapies





Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews

Music therapy for depression (Review)

Aalbers S, Fusar-Poli L, Freeman RE, Spreen M, Ket JCF, Vink AC, Maratos A, Crawford M, Chen XJ, Gold C



Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews

Dance movement therapy for depression (Review)

Meekums B, Karkou V, Nelson EA



Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice

Volume 41, November 2020, 101246

Effectiveness of mindfulness-based art therapy for symptoms of anxiety, depression, and fatigue: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Pamela Newland^{a,*,} B. Ann Bettencourt^b

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctcp.2020.101246>

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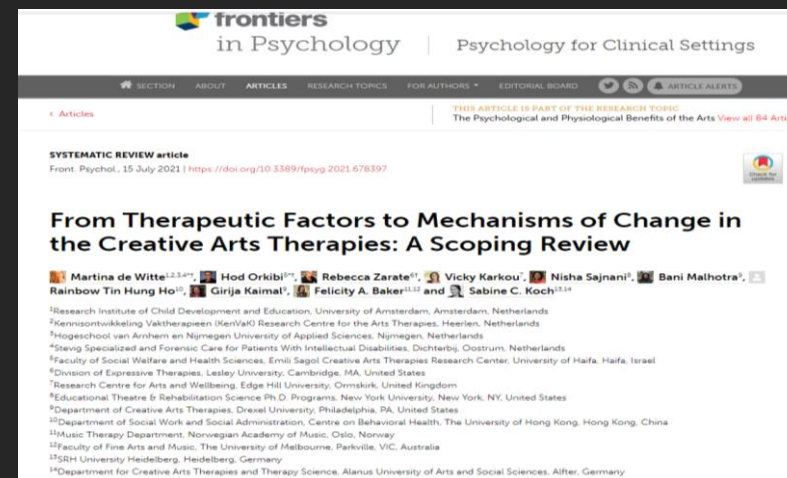
Highlights

- The effect size for MBAT interventions was significant, revealing a medium effect; for the control conditions, the effect size was negligible.
- MBAT had benefits for relieving symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression, fatigue) and for enhancing physical functioning and quality of life.
- The use of MBAT has the potential to relieve symptoms and improve functioning, among patients with a variety of chronic medical conditions.



Systematic reviews in music, dance, art, drama therapy for depression

Adults



Therapeutic factors and mechanisms of change in arts therapies

Children

Systematic reviews in arts therapies

Taylor & Francis Online

Home > All Journals > International Journal of Art Therapy > List of Issues > Volume 24, Issue 3 > The effectiveness and contribution of art therapy work with children in 2018 - what progress has been made so far? A systematic review

International Journal of Art Therapy > Formerly Inscape Volume 24, 2019 - Issue 3: Art Therapy with Children

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Articles

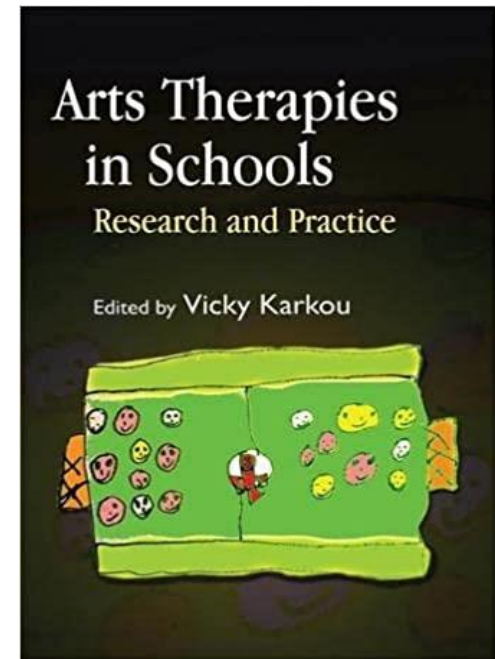
The effectiveness and contribution of art therapy work with children in 2018 - what progress has been made so far? A systematic review

Liat Cohen-Yatziv & Dafna Regev

Pages 100-112 | Received 11 Aug 2018, Accepted 22 Jan 2019, Published online: 08 Apr 2019

Download citation <https://doi.org/10.1080/17454832.2019.1574845> Check for updates

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British Journal of Music Therapy

BAMT BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC THERAPY

Journal indexing and metrics

Available access | Research article | First published online June 1, 2009

Music Therapy with Children and Adolescents in Mainstream Schools: A Systematic Review

Catherine Carr and Tony Wigram [View all authors and affiliations](#)

Volume 23, Issue 1 | <https://doi.org/10.1177/135945750902300102>

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Wellcome Trust scoping review on engagement with the arts for anxiety and depression for young people

Engagement with the arts

Focus: Prevention and treatment of anxiety and depression

Arts-based interventions involve using an art medium or discipline to improve a process or situation. They can be delivered in a range of settings and can involve various types of art activities, such as composing music, dancing, painting, acting, and journaling.

Evidence indicates that arts involvement can result in significant improvements in communication, social skills, and interpersonal relationships. By encouraging social participation and allowing individuals to give voice to their experiences, arts-based interventions can help those with anxiety and depression. While there is evidence for the effectiveness of arts-based interventions, detailed synthesis of evidence in youth is lacking.

Authors

Kamala Easwaran, Lakshmi Narasimhan, Anusha Murali, Deepika Easwaran, Tasneem Raja & Yog Varun Japee

Preprint

Easwaran K, Narasimhan L, Murali A, Easwaran D, Raja T & Japee YV. Why art matters for youth mental health: A youth led participatory insight analysis. *PsyArXiv*, 2021. Preprint available at: <https://psyarxiv.com/npd76/>

Elsevier

Children and Youth Services Review

Volume 112, May 2020, 104928

A systematic review of child-focused outcomes and assessments of arts therapies delivered in primary mainstream schools

Zoe Moola & Supriya Aithal, Vicky Karkou, Joanne Powell

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Abstract

This article identifies existing research and clinical activity utilising music therapy with mainstream children, as well as a potential need for music therapy with this client group. A systematic review was undertaken of music therapy literature relating to work with children in mainstream schools: 60 papers were identified, 12 of which were outcome studies. Statistical and government data provide a background to the current status and needs of children in the UK.

The emotional and social wellbeing needs of children have been identified as a priority to be addressed by the UK government. However, further research, service-planning and reorganisation is required. There is evidence that music therapy is used with children in mainstream schools both in the UK and abroad. Current literature suggests that music therapy is an effective intervention. The review demonstrates that further research is required if music therapy is to be considered an effective intervention to address the needs of mainstream schoolchildren.

Highlights

- Most primary outcomes were evaluated by adults instead of children.
- Evidence of long-lasting effects is still unclear.
- There is a need for the delivery of theoretically grounded arts therapies.
- Future research should use outcome measures that have been validated by children.
- Embedding qualitative and arts-based methods in experimental studies would be beneficial.

Arts for the Blues: development

Experimentations in the studio (Thurston et al in preparation)

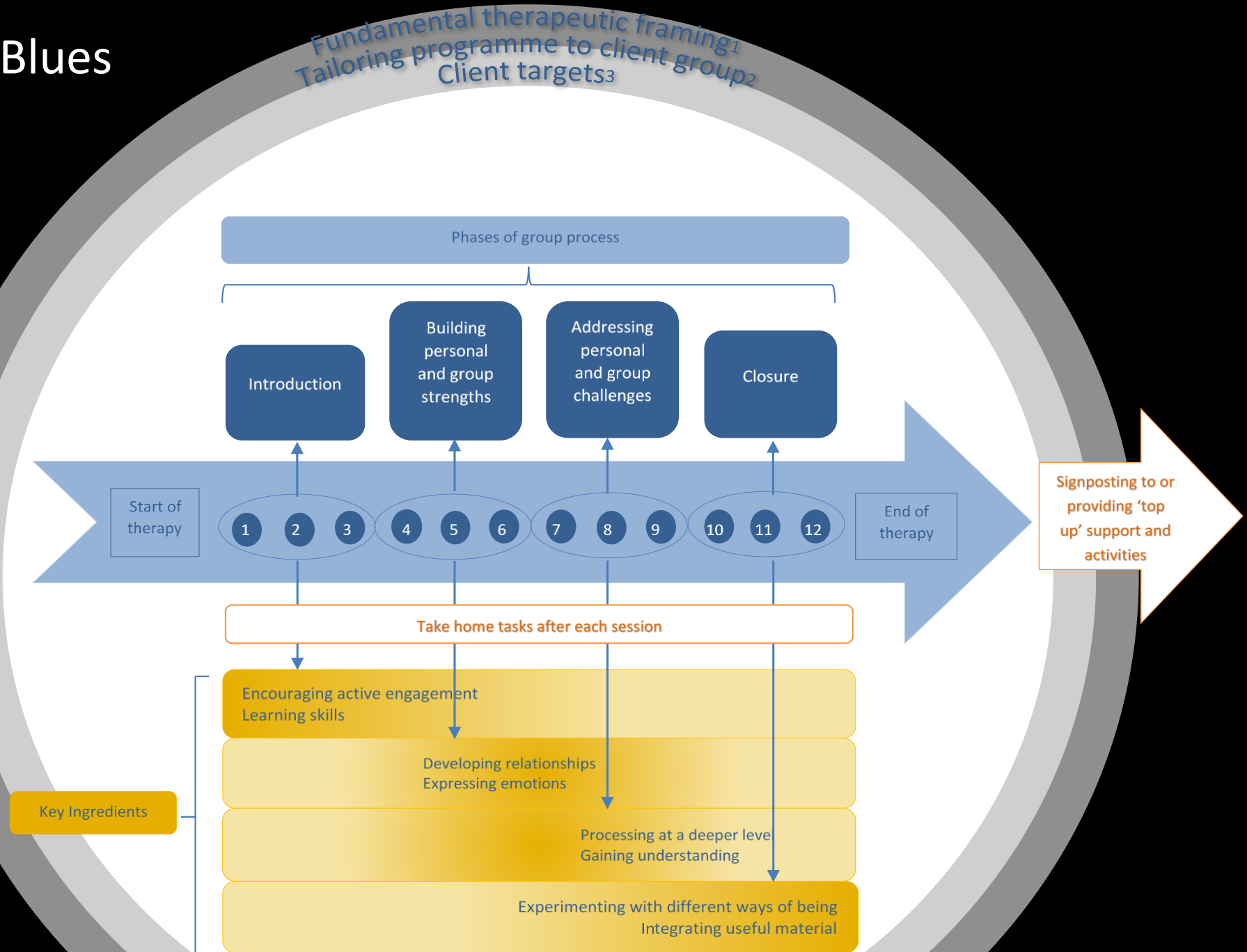
Thematic synthesis of 76 papers on client- and therapist-reported helpful factors and outcome studies (Parsons et al, 2019)

Workshops with the public (Haslam et al 2019) and with patients and staff in Improving Access to Psychological Treatment (IAPT) services in the NHS (Karkou et al, 2022)

Contributions and feedback during training of over 100 psychotherapists

Funding from Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group, Edge Hill University, University of Salford

The Arts for the Blues Model



The Arts for the Blues ingredients



Introduction

- Encourage active engagement
- Learning skills

E.g. physical warm up, visual warm up, body scan, mindful movement, breathing exercises, artistic techniques and practices



Building strengths

- Developing relationships
- Expressing emotions

E.g. mirroring, witnessing, changing leadership, group drawing, symbolic movement communication, spontaneous mark-making, automatic writing, moving in response to the felt sense



Addressing challenges

- Processing at a deeper level
- Gaining understanding

E.g. active imagination, movement metaphor, reflecting on own work, receiving feedback



Closure

- Experimenting with different ways of being
- Integrating useful material

E.g. improvising, role playing, creating movement/visual/poetic summaries of therapy journey, engaging in regular arts making

Karkou, Omylinska-Thurston, Thurston et al (2020) Arts for the Blues project:

<https://artsfortheblues.com/?s=videos>

The evidence so far...

Settings

- Four in-person workshops for the public – Edge Hill University
- In-person workshops for staff and service users -- IAPT service, Greater Manchester NHS Foundation Trust
- Online delivery of full intervention (12 sessions -- MIND (Mental Health Charity)
- In-person delivery with children and young people -- 6 mainstream schools and 2 special schools in the North West



Research methods

Quantitative methods

- GAD-7, PHQ-9, PANAS, WHO -5 Wellbeing Index
- + 12 session: Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), weekly session rating scale, <https://edgehill.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/example-digital-forms>

• Qualitative methods

- Creative data i.e. movement, drawings, poems, journals etc
- Workshops: focus groups/open ended questions on evaluation forms
- 12 sessions: individual interviews pre & post

Online considerations: video recordings, balance between connecting with others and privacy, protection of data, digital arts, digital technologies (VR&AR)

Qualitative results

- 7 participants (3 female, 4 male)
- Diagnosis or symptoms of depression
- Use of digital material
- Funding from UKCP to film client testimonies to promote to their members
- Very positive feedback from participants



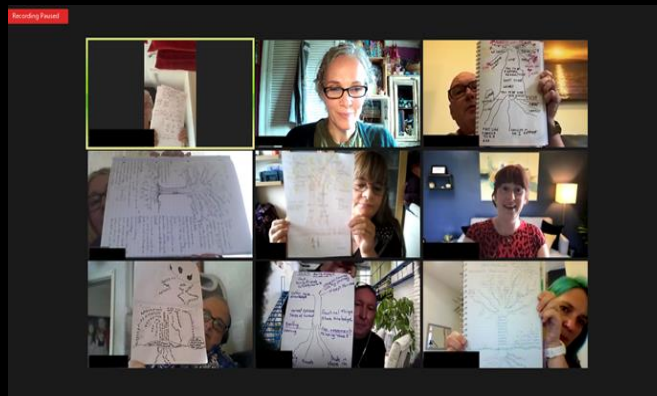
MIND - 12
sessions
intervention –
qualitative

(Omylinska-
Thurston et al, in prep)

**"It was very enlightening
today with the exercises we
did"**

**"Playing and being able to
forget current anxieties"**

**"Hope this course helps others in
the future like it's helping me. I
would happily do something like
this again in the future."**



**"I just feel
understood"**

Quantitative results

- 11 people were recruited; 4 did not begin the group
- 7 completed the group; 1 did not complete measures post intervention
- Intention to treat for WHO5, GAD7, PHQ9, BDI II; averages calculated for missing data
- Descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	WHO-5 pre	WHO-5 post	GAD-7 pre	GAD-7 post	PHQ-9 pre	PHQ-9 post	BDI II pre	BDI II post
M	7.67	13.83	13.17	6.17	15.67	9.00	25.17	14.83
SD	3.56	5.71	4.02	2.86	6.41	8.44	11.48	15.38
z score	-.62		-2.41		-2.58		-2.14	
p (2-tailed)	.533		.016*		.010*		0.33*	

MIND - 12
sessions
intervention –
quantitative
data

(Omylinska-
Thurston et al, in prep)



Pilot trial with 56 children with emotional/behavioural difficulties

Improvements sustained for 12 months after the intervention:

- Quality of Life – self reported (HRQOL)
- Wellbeing and life functioning – self reported (CORS)
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties – assess by teachers (SDQ)
- Duration of sleep (fitbits)

Moula et al 2021

Pilot trial with 26 children with autism

Improvements in:

- Social communication (SCQ)
- Emotional and behavioural wellbeing (SDQ)

Aithal et al 2021

Arts for the Blues:

Towards integrating the use of the arts in healthcare and cultural settings to tackle depression and improve wellbeing in the North-West of England



Principle Investigator:

- Prof Vicky Karkou, Professor of Arts and Wellbeing, Edge Hill University

Co-Investigators:

- Prof Scott Thurston, Professor of Poetry and Innovative Creative Practice, University of Salford
- Dr Joanna Omylinska-Thurston, Lecturer in Counselling, University of Salford
- Prof Axel Kaehne, Professor in Health & Social Care, Medical School, Unit for Evaluation & Policy Analysis, Edge Hill University
- Dr Mark Pearson, Reader in Implementation Science, Hull York Medical School, University of Hull



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Stakeholders events

Stakeholders

NHS Leads in Integrated Care Systems

National Academy for Social Prescribing, Thriving Communities Leads

Health and culture networks

Public health and arts heritage partnerships in local councils

NHS Trusts

Cultural and community organisations

Lived experience group



Training of frontline staff



Number of people reached

During the life of the current funding:

- Stakeholders' events x 2: 43 leads in arts, health, community and local authority positions
- Training events x 2: 75 artists and therapists
- Training events online: reached 107 more people

Before the current funding:

- Training events x 10 times: over 200 practitioners
- Service users: 89 adults and children

Total: Over 500 people nationally and internationally

Other related projects

- Arts council – immersive performance of therapeutic journey
- Impact funding – collection of data from services in the North West of England
- Research investment fund – digital interventions for adults and children
- Wellcome Trust, Research investment fund and Health Education England – wellbeing of helping professions, clinical staff and doctors in training





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20 and 21 June 2023

Book:

<https://edgehill.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/rcaw-launch>

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Some relevant publications

Background work:

- ❖ Karkou, V, Aithal S., Zubala, A, Meekums, B (2019). Effectiveness of Dance Movement Therapy in the Treatment of Adults with Depression: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analyses, *Frontiers in Psychology*. 10, 936. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00936>
- ❖ Meekums B, Karkou V and Nelson A (2015). Dance movement therapy for depression. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD009895. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009895.pub2

Development of model:

- ❖ Parsons, A, Omylinska-Thurston, J, Karkou, V, Harlow J, Haslam S, Hobson, J Nair K, Dubrow-Marshall L, Thurston, S. Griffin, J (2019). Arts for the Blues – A New Creative Psychological Therapy for Depression. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 48(1) 5-20 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2019.1633459>
- ❖ Haslam, S., Parsons, A., Omylinska-Thurston, J., Nair, K., Harlow, J., Lewis, J., ... & Karkou, V. (2019). Arts for the Blues—a new creative psychological therapy for depression: a pilot workshop report. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 139(3), 137-146 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913919826599>
- ❖ Thurston, S., Griffin, J., Karkou, V., Omylinska-Thurston, J. (2022) Getting out of your own way: an interdisciplinary collaboration between artists and therapists. *Journal of Applied Arts and Health*.
- ❖ Karkou, V., Omylinska-Thurston, J., Parsons, A.S., Lewis, J., Dubrow-Marshall, L., Thurston, S. (2022). Bringing creative psychotherapies to primary NHS Mental Health Services in the UK: A feasibility study on patient and staff experiences of arts for the blues workshops delivered at Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12544>
- ❖ Omylinska-Thurston, J, Karkou, V, Parson A, Dudley-Swarbrick I, Haslam S, Lewis J Nair K, Dubrow-Marshall L, Thurston, S. (2020) Arts for the Blues: The development of a new evidence-based creative group psychotherapy for depression. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12373>

Work with children:

- ❖ Moula, Z., Powell, J., & Karkou, V. (2022). Qualitative and Arts-Based Evidence from Children Participating in a Pilot Randomised Controlled Study of School-Based Arts Therapies. *Children*, 9(6), 890. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9060890>
- ❖ Moula Z, Powell J and Karkou V (2021) An Investigation of the Effectiveness of Arts Therapies Interventions on Measures of Quality of Life and Wellbeing: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Study in Primary Schools, *Frontiers in Psychology* <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.586134/full>
- ❖ Moula, Z., Powell, J., Brocklehurst, S., & Karkou, V. (2022). Feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of school-based dance movement psychotherapy for children with emotional and behavioral difficulties. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883334>
- ❖ Aithal, S., Karkou, V. V., Makris, S., Karaminis, T., & Powell, J. (2021). A dance movement psychotherapy intervention for the wellbeing of children with autism spectrum disorders: a pilot intervention study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 2672. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.588418>



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Arts for the Blues project
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