The New Opportunities Handbook:

Literature review on gender issues, art therapy & Artistic workshops

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

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The New Opportunities Opportunities Handbook: Literature review on gender issues, art therapy & Artistic workshops

In the face of global financial and health crises, the specter of gender-based violence looms large, refusing to recede despite the strides made by the feminist movement. While significant progress has been achieved in recognizing women as equals in society and acknowledging their rights, a crisis persists in this arena. In the Western world, many women have attained a commendable level of independence and choice, with a minority even rising to elite status—a feat once deemed improbable, especially for those outside the Western sphere. Yet, injustices and inequalities persist, with women continuing to endure unacceptable behaviors.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports a disturbing escalation in violence against women, attributing it to various factors. The repercussions of such violence are grave, encompassing a range of physical, mental, and emotional traumas. From suicide and injuries to unintended pregnancies leading to abortions and sexually transmitted infections, the fallout is extensive and profound. Psychological effects such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders compound the toll, alongside other health issues like chronic pain syndromes and headaches. Moreover, victims often find themselves engaging in risky sexual behaviors or turning to substance abuse as maladaptive coping mechanisms.

In this landscape, the urgent need for concerted action to combat gender-based violence cannot be overstated. It is imperative that societies worldwide redouble their efforts to safeguard the rights and well-being of all individuals, irrespective of gender. Only through collective resolve and unwavering commitment can we hope to stem the tide of violence and build a future where every person can thrive in safety and dignity.

The New Opportunities Handbook is a testament to the progress of women and their increasing recognition in society, drawing from literary insights into their journey towards freedom. Within its pages, it confronts the inequalities that persist in women's daily lives, offering a wealth of good practices aimed at bolstering their rights and access to the labor market. Through real-world case studies, the Handbook illuminates the challenges of sexist behavior in the workplace, urging for systemic change to dismantle barriers to women's advancement. In essence, it stands as a vital resource, amplifying the voices of women and advocating for a more inclusive and equitable future.

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1.1 Aims & Objectives

The New Opportunities Handbook aims to illuminate the progress of women's rights and confront issues of sexism, while amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals. It prioritizes raising awareness of gender issues and women's rights history, emphasizing the importance of art as a tool for expression and healing, particularly for survivors of female violence. By promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence, the project aligns with the values of Erasmus+ while providing a safe space for participants to share their stories through art. Through workshops and personal narratives, the Handbook seeks to increase visibility and awareness of gender-based violence and Erasmus+ initiatives, culminating in a comprehensive handbook that empowers female survivors of violence.

1.2 Target Group

In alignment with the overarching mission of the New Opportunities project to foster awareness about gender equality, the New Opportunities Handbook is meticulously tailored to engage with a diverse array of stakeholders. An adequate collection of good practices, in fact, can benefit both people of the society and professionals/organizations dealing with these topics. The primary target groups encompass:

- **Professionals and trainers:** Those leading workshops and participating in focus groups stand to benefit from the Handbook's comprehensive collection of best practices, which provide valuable artistic resources to enhance adult education initiatives.
- **Female survivors of violence:** Positioned as both learners and participants in the workshops, these individuals have the opportunity to express themselves creatively, experience healing, and embark on a journey of personal growth. The supportive environment, coupled with peer camaraderie, fosters mental well-being and empowerment.
- **General public and online community:** Through strategic social media promotion, the Handbook extends its reach to a broader audience, amplifying its transformative message of gender equality and empowerment. By fostering dialogue and raising awareness, the Handbook aims to galvanize societal change and promote inclusivity for all individuals.

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1.3 Expected Results

The main project result expected consists of one Handbook with the data extracted by the literature review, the case studies and the good practices, available in three languages. Besides the tangible results underlined in the following paragraphs, that will form the New Opportunities Handbook as major project result, the expected impact of the activity consists of many intangible results, such as:

- Increasement of awareness of the communities around the issue of sexism against females
- Higher voice of females that survived of violence
- Increased empowerment of females all over Europe
- Promotion of gender-equality aspects to a wider audience
- Enhancement of Erasmus+ promoted values concerning this specific topic

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2. National Literature Review

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2.1 The situation in Greece

Organization: IASIS NGO

1) What are the key theories and frameworks underlying art therapy for female victims of violence?

Art therapy has emerged as a significant therapeutic approach for addressing the psychological and emotional aftermath of violence, particularly for female victims. In Greece, where efforts to provide comprehensive support to women affected by violence include psychosocial interventions, art therapy plays a crucial role. This discussion delves into the key theories and frameworks underlying art therapy for female victims of violence, focusing on its implementation within the Greek context. Theoretical Foundations of Art Therapy Art therapy is predicated on the notion that creative expression can foster healing and mental well-being. It integrates psychotherapeutic techniques with the creative process to improve mental health and emotional well-being. The theoretical underpinnings of art therapy include psychoanalytic theories, humanistic psychology, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, each contributing to understanding how art therapy can support recovery from trauma.

Psychoanalytic Theories: These theories suggest that art therapy allows individuals to project and work through unconscious conflicts and traumas through creative expression. This process facilitates insight and resolution, making it particularly effective for victims of violence who may struggle with verbalizing their experiences. Humanistic Psychology: Emphasizing self-exploration and personal growth, humanistic psychology underlies art therapy by promoting self-awareness and self-esteem through creative expression. It supports the idea that through art, individuals can express their emotions and experiences in a safe and validating environment, fostering healing and self-acceptance.

Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches: These approaches focus on altering dysfunctional emotions, behaviors, and thoughts through a goal-oriented, systematic procedure. In art therapy, cognitive-behavioral principles are applied to help victims of violence identify and challenge negative thoughts and beliefs stemming from their trauma, using art as a medium for expression and cognitive restructuring.

Frameworks for Art Therapy in Greece, art therapy for female victims of violence is structured around several key frameworks, reflecting a holistic approach to recovery and empowerment: Trauma-Informed Care: This framework recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for survivors and helps rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. Art therapy within this framework allows women to explore their trauma narratives in a non-verbal manner, facilitating healing without re-traumatization.

Empowerment Model: Central to the empowerment model is the belief in the inherent strength and ability of individuals to overcome adversity. In the context of art therapy,

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this model supports women in rediscovering their strengths and capacities, using creative expression as a means to assert control over their life narratives and make positive changes. Group Art Therapy: Group settings provide a supportive community where survivors can share experiences and healing strategies. It fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support, crucial for recovery. The collective creative process in group art therapy helps normalize survivors' feelings, promoting empathy, and reducing isolation. Cultural Sensitivity: Given Greece's diverse cultural landscape, incorporating cultural sensitivity into art therapy practices is essential. This involves acknowledging and respecting the cultural backgrounds and values of the women, ensuring that the therapeutic approaches are inclusive and responsive to their specific needs. Implementation in Greece, art therapy initiatives for female victims of violence are often integrated into broader support services provided by shelters, NGOs, and social service agencies.

These programs aim to offer a holistic support system that includes legal assistance, psychological counseling, and social reintegration services, with art therapy being a core component of the therapeutic intervention. Reports and research from Greece highlight the effectiveness of art therapy in providing psychosocial support to women victims of violence. Programs often focus on building resilience, fostering a sense of community among survivors, and facilitating personal growth and healing through creative expression. The emphasis on non-verbal communication through art allows women to express complex emotions and experiences that may be difficult to articulate verbally, providing a powerful avenue for healing and empowerment.

In conclusion, the utilization of art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece is grounded in a holistic approach that draws from psychoanalytic, humanistic, and cognitive-behavioral theories. This therapeutic framework is intricately woven with principles of trauma-informed care, empowerment, group therapy, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that the needs of survivors are met with sensitivity and respect. By providing a safe and inclusive space for women to express themselves through art, the therapy facilitates a journey of healing and empowerment. As the practice of art therapy continues to evolve and gain prominence in Greece, it stands as a crucial pillar of support for female survivors of violence, offering a profound pathway to recovery and resilience.

2) What are the documented benefits and outcomes of art therapy for female victims of violence?

Art therapy has been increasingly recognized for its therapeutic benefits, particularly for female victims of violence. This creative form of therapy offers a non-verbal mode of expression and healing, allowing individuals to navigate their trauma in a supportive, empowering environment.

Emotional Release and Healing: Art therapy facilitates emotional catharsis, providing a safe outlet for the expression of complex and often suppressed emotions related to trauma. Through the process of creating art, women can externalize their feelings, which can be a crucial step in the healing process.

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Improved Self-Esteem and Identity: Engaging in artistic creation allows victims to rebuild their sense of self-worth and identity, which is often eroded by experiences of violence. Art therapy sessions help women to rediscover their strengths and capabilities, fostering a positive self-image.

Development of Coping Strategies: Through art therapy, women learn New ways to cope with stress, anxiety, and the aftereffects of trauma. The creative process itself can serve as a coping mechanism, offering a respite from intrusive thoughts and providing a means to manage emotions constructively.

Enhanced Communication Skills: Art therapy can help improve communication skills, especially for those who find it difficult to verbalize their trauma. The visual language of art provides an alternative means of expression, enabling women to convey their experiences and emotions more effectively.

Increased Social Support: Group art therapy sessions foster a sense of community and belonging among participants. Sharing the creative space and process can lead to shared understanding and empathy, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting social support.

Cognitive and Behavioral Changes: Art therapy contributes to cognitive and behavioral changes by helping participants to reframe negative thoughts and beliefs. Engaging in creative activities promotes mental flexibility, encouraging a shift in perspective and contributing to more adaptive behaviors. The documented benefits and outcomes of art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece reflect both the psychological and social aspects of recovery. In Greece, art therapy for female victims of violence has been integrated into broader support services, offering a holistic approach to recovery. The outcomes observed include:

Reduction in Symptoms of Trauma: Many participants report a decrease in symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including flashbacks, anxiety, and depression.

Empowerment and Autonomy: Art therapy sessions empower women by giving them control over their creative expression. This empowerment extends to other areas of life, as participants gain confidence in their decision-making and personal autonomy.

Social Reintegration: The supportive environment of art therapy programs helps women to rebuild trust and engage more fully in social relationships. This social reintegration is crucial for long-term recovery and well-being.

Art therapy offers significant benefits and positive outcomes for female victims of violence in Greece, addressing both the immediate and long-term effects of trauma. By facilitating emotional expression, enhancing self-esteem, developing coping strategies, and fostering social support, art therapy contributes to the holistic healing and empowerment of women. As this therapeutic approach continues to gain recognition, it remains a crucial component of comprehensive support services for survivors of violence, offering a path towards healing, resilience, and reNew Opportunitiesal.

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3) What types of art therapy techniques and tools are commonly employed in interventions for female victims of violence?

In Greece, art therapy has been increasingly recognized for its therapeutic value, particularly in interventions designed for female victims of violence. This therapeutic form employs a variety of techniques and tools to facilitate expression, healing, and psychological recovery. Drawing from the resources provided, we can identify several core techniques and tools commonly used in these interventions.

1. Visual Arts Practices: The foundation of art therapy lies in the visual arts, including drawing, painting, sculpting, and collage. These practices offer individuals a way to express feelings and experiences that might be too difficult to articulate verbally. The tactile nature of these activities, such as the feel of clay in one's hands or the stroke of a brush on canvas, can also provide a grounding experience, helping individuals to connect with the present moment and their physical senses.

2. Expressive Modalities: Beyond traditional art-making, expressive modalities such as photography, digital art, and mixed media are also utilized. These approaches allow for a broader exploration of personal narratives and can be particularly empowering for survivors, enabling them to document their experiences and perspectives in a tangible form. The versatility of expressive modalities ensures that art therapy can be tailored to the unique preferences and needs of each individual.

3. Projective Art Therapy Tools: Some interventions incorporate projective tools, such as the "PROJECTA" tool mentioned in the research. These tools are designed to facilitate the exploration of personal and traumatic experiences through art, providing a structured yet flexible framework for expression. This can include specific prompts or themes related to experiences of violence, cultural identity, or personal strengths, offering a guided approach to art-making that helps focus and deepen the therapeutic process.

4. Arts-Based Groups: Group settings are a significant component of art therapy interventions for female victims of violence. These groups provide a safe and supportive space where participants can share their art and stories, fostering a sense of community and collective healing. The group dynamic encourages mutual support and understanding, allowing individuals to feel less isolated in their experiences. Furthermore, witnessing the artistic expressions of others can inspire and motivate participants in their own creative and healing journey.

5. Integrating Art with Other Therapeutic Approaches: Art therapy in Greece is often integrated with other therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), narrative therapy, or family therapy. This integrative approach ensures that the therapeutic needs of individuals are met holistically, combining the expressive and healing power of art with the structured support of other psychological interventions. This combination can enhance the efficacy of therapy, providing a comprehensive framework for recovery. Art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece utilizes a diverse array of techniques and tools, each contributing to the overarching goal of healing and recovery. The emphasis on visual and expressive arts, combined with the supportive environment of group sessions and the integration of various therapeutic approaches, creates a multifaceted intervention strategy. These techniques not only facilitate emotional expression and processing but also foster a sense of empowerment, community, and resilience among survivors. As art therapy continues to evolve, its role in supporting female victims of violence remains an essential and transformative component of therapeutic intervention.

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2.2 The situation in Bulgaria

Organization: Can you Association

1) What are the key theories and frameworks underlying art t herapy for female victims of violence?

In Bulgaria, the development of art therapy and therapy for female victims of violence is evolving within a context shaped by various therapeutic approaches, including psychotherapy. Psychotherapy, with its roots in the pioneering work of figures like Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, laid the groundwork for understanding the intricacies of the human mind and behavior. This foundational understanding has informed modern therapeutic practices, including art therapy, which integrates creative expression with psychological insight to promote healing and well-being. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is particularly useful for female victims of violence due to its effectiveness in addressing the psychological impact of trauma and promoting empowerment and resilience. The origin of CBT can be traced back to the 1960s when psychologists and psychiatrists working in South Africa, England, and the United States began to study the use of psychotherapeutic interventions based on principles of learning theory. They observed that individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors significantly influence their emotions and mental well-being. For female victims of violence, CBT provides a structured framework to challenge negative thought patterns and beliefs that may have developed as a result of experiencing trauma. It helps them identify and reframe distorted thinking associated with feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness, which are common responses to abuse. Through cognitive restructuring and behavioral interventions, survivors can learn healthier ways of coping with triggers and managing stress. Furthermore, CBT empowers survivors by focusing on their strengths and abilities rather than viewing them solely as victims. It helps them develop practical skills to navigate challenging situations, set achievable goals, and assert boundaries in relationships. By enhancing self-efficacy and promoting a sense of agency, CBT supports survivors in reclaiming their lives and moving forward on the path to healing and recovery. Overall, CBT's emphasis on addressing cognitive distortions, modifying maladaptive behaviors, and promoting empowerment aligns well with the needs of female victims of violence, making it a valuable therapeutic approach in helping them overcome the psychological impact of trauma and rebuild their lives. The inception of cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy (CBT) in Bulgaria dates back to 1998 when the pioneering efforts of English educators, Paul Salkovskis and Hermine Graham, culminated in the inaugural seminar on this therapeutic modality. This lead to the establishment of the Bulgarian Association for Cognitive-Behavioral Psychotherapy (BACBP) in May of the same year. Presently, boasting a membership roster of 69 dedicated professionals (as per www.bacbp.org), the association stands as a beacon of progress in the field. In a significant milestone, Sofia played host to the Southeast European Regional Conference on CBT in May 1999, coinciding with the First Annual Conference of BACBP. The event, characterized by a profound emphasis on training, witnessed the delivery of nine workshops by distinguished educators from the United Kingdom and Denmark. These workshops served as catalysts for knowledge exchange and skill enhancement, laying the groundwork for the advancement of CBT practices in Bulgaria. Since its inception, BACBP has been steadfast in its commitment to fostering excellence in CBT through collaborative endeavors with the University of Oxford. Over the years, the association has diligently strived to offer a minimum of two

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comprehensive training events annually, indicative of its unwavering dedication to professional development and capacity building. Furthermore, BACBP's affiliation with the European Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies under scores its commitment to upholding international standards of excellence and best practices in the field. Notably, BACBP stands as the sole accrediting body in Bulgaria for cognitive-behavioral therapists and consultants, a testament to its role as a cornerstone of professional accreditation and recognition within the country. Its robust post graduate specialization program, encompassing diploma programs in" Cognitive-Behavioral Counseling" and "Cognitive-Behavioral Psychotherapy," stands as a testament to its holistic approach to training and education in the realm of psychotherapeutic practices. Through these initiatives, BACBP continues to shape the landscape of cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy in Bulgaria, paving the way for enhanced mental health services and improved outcomes for individuals seeking therapeutic intervention. Following the establishment of CBT, art therapy has emerged as a progressive intervention within the country's mental health landscape. At the core of art therapy philosophy in Bulgaria lies the principle of empowerment, which acknowledges the innate resilience and inner strength of survivors. Through the medium of creative expression and dialogue, individuals are encouraged to reclaim ownership of their narratives and foster a sense of agency in their journey towards healing. One exemplary instance of art therapy in Bulgaria is the practice of psychodrama. Psychodrama has evolved significantly, with roots tracing back to the involvement of several young Bulgarian psychotherapists who engaged with the International Association for Group Psychotherapy (IAGP) conference in Zagreb. Subsequently, they succeeded in persuading Joran Jogbery and Gabriele Weizmann-Brun from Bern, Switzerland, to initiate psychodrama training sessions in Sofia. This pioneering endeavor commenced six months post-conference, in April 1989, with a cohort of 10 Bulgarians (referred to as Sofia I), predominantly comprising individuals who participated in the aforementioned Friday collegium. This training initiative extended until September 1994, producing the country's first cohort of psychotherapists trained to international standards. Presently, psychodrama serves as a versatile therapeutic approach employed in both individual and group settings. It epitomizes an experiential form of therapy, leveraging play as a transformative tool. Psychodrama emphasizes the differentiation between cognitive reflection and emotional engagement, prioritizing the latter to uncover the underlying roots of psychological challenges. By actively engaging in therapeutic enactments, individuals enhance their creativity and spontaneity, fostering profound shifts in their emotional well-being. The application of psychodrama extends beyond aiding female victims of violence, encompassing therapeutic interventions for children as well. Numerous opportunities and organizations leverage psychodrama as a potent means of psychological support and healing for individuals across diverse demographic groups.

2) What are the documented benefits and outcomes of art therapy for female victims of violence?

In Bulgaria, at this moment, the benefits and outcomes of art therapy for female survivors of violence are neither well-researched nor well-documented. The information that we have included in this review is based on analysis of data and information provided by NGOs, shelters, and counseling centers that support and empower survivors and are often the first institutions that help women survivors of domestic violence to start the process of social rehabilitation and integration.

According to their data, art therapy practices are a stage of the healing process once the victims exit the situations of violence and are often being used in the long term as a strategy to deal with the

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consequences of violence. Before introducing such practices, there are stages such as the survivors's decision to seek help, the stage of crisis, remembering what happened, and overcoming silence (Korablina et al., 2001). Art therapy is often used in the next stage, which focuses on removing the blame for what happened, establishing contact with the "wounded child" and expressing anger toward abuser - techniques the such as dance-movement therapy or or role play are often used.

Among the goals and outcomes of specialized therapeutic or psychological support provided to the survivors of domestic violence, one aspect of which is and can be art therapy session, are:

- Helping the process of social rehabilitation and integration by providing a safe space for expression and healing.
- Reducing the impact of traumatic experiences on adult life by providing a therapeutic outlet for processing emotions and developing coping mechanisms.
- Facilitating healthy coping with traumatic experiences and promoting the development of mental resilience, empowering survivors to overcome challenges and move forward.
- Providing a platform for survivors to share their stories and advocate for change.
- Female victims of violence can communicate their experiences and foster a deeper understanding of the impact of violence on individuals and society, through artistic expression.
- Creating a safe space for female victims of violence to explore their emotions, express themselves creatively, and receive support from trained therapists and peers.
- Minimizing the impact of violence experienced by providing a nurturing environment for healing and growth.
- Facilitating personal change and enhancing self-esteem, self-image, and self-confidence.
- Encouraging survivors to take responsibility for their own lives, learn from their experiences, and develop a better understanding of the dynamics of violence.
- Building interpersonal skills, conflict management abilities, emotional intelligence, and assertiveness empowering survivors to navigate their relationships and environment effectively.
- Helping survivors gain clear knowledge of their personality and needs, leading to personal satisfaction, comfort, and well-being.
- Promoting understanding, awareness, and handling of personal interests and values, allowing survivors to identify and pursue fulfilling life goals.

In conclusion, despite having little to none research and specific data on the impact of art therapy, on it's own, on women survivors of domestic violence, front line specialists from crisis centers and NGOs share that its benefits include social rehabilitation, reduction of traumatic impact, awareness raising, provision of a safe space, empowerment, psychological support, and capacity building. By addressing the unique needs of survivors and promoting healing and empowerment through creative expression, art therapy plays a crucial role in supporting the recovery and well-being of female victims of violence.

3) What types of art therapy techniques and tools are commonly employed in interventions for female victims of violence?

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Art therapy techniques and tools are frequently used in interventions for female victims of violence as part of broader social, psychological, and legal support services provided by NGOs, crisis centers, and shelters. These services include psychological support, counseling, social and health services, and legal advice. Art therapy, play therapy, and story therapy are also commonly used in psycho-social rehabilitation for children who have experienced violence.

Organizations offer free or paid psychological and psychotherapeutic help to victims of violence. However, the state and municipalities do not allocate sufficient resources to prevent and combat violence against women and children or to support and protect victims. The current allocation of funds is minimal. However, survivors often require financial resources, medical care, and legal assistance, which are not provided by the state. Psychosocial support and therapy are also often not available free of charge, which poses a significant issue for survivors. Crisis centers do provide these services for free, but there is a limited number of survivors that can be admitted and taken care of.

Art therapy is also offered as a paid activity by professionals and clinics in the context of psychosocial support. However, it is not always part of the services provided by shelters and crisis centers. This lack of availability may discourage some survivors from seeking this particular technique for coping with their trauma.

Art therapy techniques and tools commonly employed in interventions for female victims of violence encompass a range of approaches aimed at addressing trauma, promoting healing, and fostering empowerment.

Techniques such as play therapy, story therapy, and expressive arts, plays a crucial role in facilitating healing and self-expression. Through creative activities such as painting, crafting, and storytelling, women can process trauma, express emotions, and reclaim narratives, thereby promoting emotional healing and empowerment. Art therapy is often accompanying other types of psychological and psychotherapeutic help such as counseling and self-help groups.

Psychological counseling, either individually or through support groups, provides a safe space for women to discuss their experiences of violence, navigate psychological damage, and overcome traumatization. It serves as an initial step towards recovery, enabling victims to develop New skills, perspectives, and roles in their lives, thereby fostering empowerment and resilience.

Self-help groups are another vital aspect of art therapy interventions, offering women support and solidarity as they navigate the aftermath of violence. These groups provide a safe environment for sharing experiences, emotions, and information, reducing feelings of loneliness and fostering empathy and non-judgment among members.

One good example of an environment, providing comprehensive support that recognizes and activates victims' internal resources, facilitates healing and empowerment, and promotes positive personal change is in the Bulgarian town of Pernik where there is a 24-hour crisis center for women and children victims of domestic violence. It is run by the P.U.L.S. Foundation, established in 1999s, when the topic of female victims of violence was still taboo and the rights of women and children - abstract discourses.

In 2008, the P.U.L.S. Foundation opened a Crisis center for the accommodation of victims of violence.

The main goal of the "CRISIS CENTER for victims of violence or victims of trafficking" service is to reduce violence in the family, as well as improve care for children, adolescents and mothers living in/or victims of violence by providing easily accessible services in the community as an alternative to the institutional approach to these cases. On the other hand, it aims to provide a protected space for

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the victims in the period until the crisis is resolved, resocialization and reintegration of women and children victims of domestic violence or victims of trafficking. The complex services also include therapy, and one aspect of the therapeutic process are creative activities and classes. People make crystal tapestries, Christmas wreaths and toys, paint pictures, plant tomatoes, bake cookies and cook all sorts of things.

4) How does cultural sensitivity and diversity factor into the practice of art therapy for female victims of violence?

In the mental health landscape of Bulgaria, it is important to take into account cultural sensitivity and diversity when practicing art interventions for female victims of violence. While Bulgaria is making progress in many areas of development, attitudes towards mental health are evolving at a slower pace. Taking that into consideration, it is important to acknowledge that cultural biases, lack of support and resources, and societal perceptions of careers in the realm of creativity and counseling can have an impact on the societal environment.

Additionally, mental health issues have historically received less attention due to the country's emphasis on fostering economic stability. It is understandable that many individuals prioritize providing financial resources for their families, which can sometimes leave emotional wellness concerns on the periphery. Recent shifts, spurred by heightened awareness of domestic violence cases and legislative changes, have brought the psychological health and needs of female victims of violence into sharper focus. There is a growing recognition of the importance of inclusive and quality mental health support, resources and care.

Various stakeholders, including NGOs, such as EMPROVE, NITO EDNA POVECHE, the Association of Psychologists of Bulgaria, advocacy groups and many more, are actively engaged in efforts to drive positive change in the national customs. There is a noticeable trend towards recognizing and assisting emotional wellness concerns, with various initiatives currently in progress. Additionally, there are endeavors being made to address cultural taboos and advocate for the inclusion of creative interventions as a valuable aspect of psychological treatment.

The Association of Psychologists in the Republic of Bulgaria has highlighted the challenges posed by the absence of regulation in the field of psychology, particularly in the provision of effective psychological services such as art therapy to the wilder population. The lack of proper regulation is leading to inconsistencies in standards of practice and treatment protocols, which could has effect on the quality of care provided to vulnerable individuals.

Furthermore, a reference made as an example by Prof. Sonya Karabelova to Germany's health insurance coverage for psychological consultations underscores the potential benefits of regulating the profession in Bulgaria. Legal recognition and reimbursement by health insurance could significantly enhance access to much needed therapy services,

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including many creative interventions, thereby improving the overall quality of care and support available to female victims of violence.

Moreover, societal attitudes towards mental health in Bulgaria, as revealed by the survey conducted by "Gallup International" Association and the "KOJA – Platform for Mental Health" Foundation, further highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity and diversity in psychological practices. With half of the respondents acknowledging societal avoidance of individuals with mental health problems, the data underscores the urgent need for systemic changes in the wellness sector and shifts in national customs towards mentally vulnerable groups of people.

As for national perspective and attitude towards art and culture, the statistics on cultural and leisure activities as provided by the NSI (National Statistics Institute of Republic of Bulgaria) participation rates in the country highlight disparities influenced by demographic and socio-economic factors. While participation rates vary, higher education, employment, and urban residence are associated with higher engagement, indicating potential barriers to access for certain groups. These findings underscore the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and promoting inclusive participation opportunities for all segments of society, including female victims of violence.

In light of these challenges, several implications emerge:

1. There is a need for prioritization of regulatory reform in the psychology profession to establish standards of practice and ensure quality care for individuals seeking mental health support.

2. Efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination surrounding emotional well-being should be intensified through public education campaigns, community initiatives, law changes and regulations, as well as policy interventions.

3. With only 7.3% of the population participating in cultural activities, the importance of art and culture should be emphasized more.

In conclusion, despite the challenges, a certain progress should be taken into consideration and supported, with ongoing initiatives aimed at fostering positive change. Communities are increasingly embracing free activities centered around creative endeavors, signaling a shift towards a more engaged and active society. As these efforts continue to gain traction, there is optimism for further advancements in Bulgaria's societal landscape, with a greater emphasis on holistic well-being and support for those affected by violence and mental health challenges as New Opportunities regulations and laws get accepted by the government. Addressing regulatory gaps in psychology, combating societal stigma towards mental health through accessible creative means, providing inclusive practices towards people from different backgrounds and promoting cultural sensitivity and diversity in therapy practices are essential steps towards fostering a supportive environment where female victims of violence can access quality care and support without fear of discrimination and prejudice. In the cultural context in Bulgaria, those things are evolving as we speak with more people recognizing their importance and fighting for a change.

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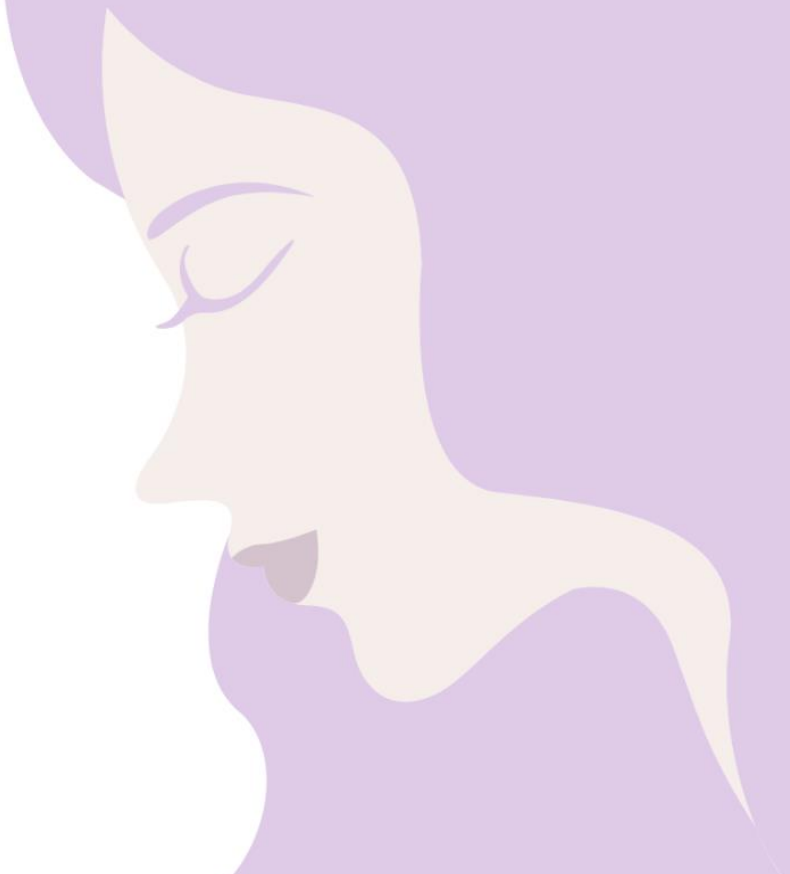
1. Good Practices Collection



NEW OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Organization: IASIS NGO

Country: Greece

Good Practice 1: "Heart & Art" program

The "Heart & Art" program, as detailed in the information available, is a therapeutic initiative that incorporates a range of creative approaches including painting, clay, collage, dance, and theater. It consists of nine workshops designed to focus on various artistic mediums to facilitate expression and healing. The program is structured to use art as a means to support individuals in expressing themselves and working through their emotions or experiences in a therapeutic setting. While the specific details about its implementation in Greece are not directly mentioned in the provided results, the description indicates a versatile and inclusive approach to art therapy. This program exemplifies the therapeutic use of art to foster healing and personal growth, aligning with broader trends in art therapy worldwide. Given its diverse range of creative outlets, "Heart & Art" could potentially cater to a wide audience, including those affected by trauma, seeking emotional healing, or simply interested in exploring their creativity in a supportive environment.

Needs assessment (What are the needs this practice is respon ding?)

The "Heart & Art" program is a multifaceted initiative that responds to several critical needs within therapeutic and personal development contexts. Firstly, it offers a pathway for emotional healing by providing a platform for individuals to engage in creative activities, facilitating the processing of complex emotions resulting from trauma, stress, or mental health challenges. Secondly, the program serves as a means of self-expression, allowing participants to convey thoughts and feelings that may be challenging to articulate verbally. Thirdly, it fosters personal growth and development by enabling participants to explore their interests, acquire New skills, and cultivate a sense of accomplishment and self-worth through various art forms. Additionally, "Heart & Art" promotes social connection by creating a supportive community environment where individuals can reduce feelings of isolation and establish meaningful connections with others who share similar experiences or interests. Furthermore, the program introduces effective coping strategies by leveraging art as a constructive tool for managing stress, anxiety, and other emotional difficulties in everyday life. Finally, for those undergoing formal therapy, "Heart & Art" complements traditional therapeutic approaches by incorporating a creative dimension into the healing process, thereby enhancing the

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efficacy of psychotherapy. In sum, "Heart & Art" demonstrates the transformative potential of art therapy in fostering healing, self-discovery, and resilience, thereby contributing significantly to individuals' mental health and overall well-being.

Main goals

The "Heart & Art" program sets out with clear goals that harmonize with its mission to address critical needs in therapeutic and personal development spheres. These objectives encompass promoting emotional healing by providing a nurturing environment for participants to process and overcome trauma, stress, and mental health challenges through creative expression. Additionally, the program facilitates self-expression, enhancing participants' communication of complex emotions. It also encourages personal growth by enabling exploration of interests and skills through engagement with diverse art forms. By fostering social connections and community through shared creative activities, "Heart & Art" reduces isolation and cultivates a sense of belonging. Moreover, it equips individuals with art-based coping strategies to manage daily stressors, thus enhancing resilience and overall well-being. Finally, by complementing formal therapy with a creative dimension, the program aims to augment therapeutic outcomes and reinforce the healing potential of art in promoting mental health and resilience.

Target Group (Who are the beneficiaries of the practice?)

The beneficiaries of the "Heart & Art" program encompass a broad spectrum of individuals who stand to gain from its therapeutic and developmental offerings, specifically:

- Individuals Experiencing Trauma: Those who have gone through traumatic events and are looking for ways to process their experiences and recover emotionally.
- People with Stress and Mental Health Challenges: Individuals dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues who need supportive methods to manage and alleviate their conditions.
- Anyone Seeking Personal Growth: Individuals interested in exploring their personal interests, developing New Opportunities skills, and enhancing their self-worth through creative expression.
- Members of the Community Seeking Connection: People feeling isolated or disconnected from others who wish to build social connections and find a sense of belonging through shared creative activities.
- Those in Need of Coping Strategies: Individuals looking for effective ways to cope with daily stressors and emotional challenges, who can benefit from the therapeutic aspects of art.

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- Participants in Formal Therapy: People already undergoing psychotherapy or counseling who could benefit from an additional, creative dimension to their healing process, enhancing the effectiveness of their treatment.

  Overall, the "Heart & Art" program serves anyone looking to use creative expression as a means of healing, self-discovery, and building resilience, contributing to their mental health and overall well-being.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

The specific details about the age and educational background of participants in the "Heart & Art" program are not directly provided in the information available. However, based on the nature and goals of the program, it can be inferred that the "Heart & Art" program is designed to be inclusive, potentially catering to a wide range of ages and educational backgrounds. Art therapy practices, such as those employed by "Heart & Art," often aim to be accessible and beneficial to:

1. **Children and Adolescents**: Young participants who are dealing with stress, trauma, or emotional challenges may find an expressive outlet through art, which can aid in their development and coping strategies.

2. **Adults**: Individuals across adulthood, including those seeking personal growth or ways to manage stress and mental health challenges, can benefit from the therapeutic aspects of creative expression, regardless of their educational background.

3. **Elderly**: Older adults may find art therapy helpful in enhancing their quality of life, dealing with life transitions, or coping with issues such as isolation.

4. **Educational Backgrounds**: The program likely welcomes participants from diverse educational backgrounds, focusing on the therapeutic and developmental benefits of art rather than on specific educational prerequisites.

Art therapy programs are typically designed to be inclusive, focusing on the therapeutic benefits of creative expression rather than on the participants' age or educational attainment. This makes such programs widely applicable and beneficial to a broad audience looking for healing and personal development through art.

Achieved results (What are the expected results of the practic e?)

The "Heart & Art" program anticipates a series of profound outcomes, aligned with its expansive goals and diverse participant base. Initially, participants can anticipate a marked improvement in their emotional well-being as they engage in therapeutic art

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practices to express and navigate their emotions, leading to a notable reduction in levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Concurrently, the program aims to bolster self-expression and communication skills, empowering individuals to effectively articulate intricate thoughts and emotions through creative mediums. This emphasis on personal expression extends further into the realm of personal growth, as engagement with various art forms within the program fosters skill acquisition and cultivates a heightened sense of self-worth and achievement.

Furthermore, the "Heart & Art" program strives to foster a sense of communal support and connection, providing participants with a space for shared creative endeavors that diminishes feelings of isolation and nurtures a strong sense of community and belonging. Additionally, the program equips participants with enhanced coping mechanisms by introducing art as a therapeutic tool, enabling them to navigate daily stressors and emotional challenges with greater resilience and adaptability.

Finally, for individuals undergoing formal therapy, the integration of art into their healing journey serves to complement and enrich traditional therapeutic approaches, offering a holistic approach to mental health care. In essence, the "Heart & Art" program embodies the transformative potential of art therapy in promoting mental health, personal development, and social well-being.

Impact on the participants (In what ways will this practice ben efit the participants?)

The "Heart & Art" program offers participants a multifaceted approach to therapeutic art, with anticipated benefits spanning various aspects of well-being. Firstly, individuals engaging in the program can expect to find mental and emotional relief as they utilize art as a medium for expression, providing a safe space to navigate and alleviate distress associated with stress, anxiety, and depression. Secondly, the program fosters enhanced communication and self-expression, offering a platform for individuals to creatively convey their innermost thoughts and emotions, particularly beneficial for those who struggle with verbal expression. This avenue for self-discovery and expression leads to a sense of personal empowerment and skill enhancement, as participants uncover New talents and interests, bolstering their self-worth and confidence through artistic exploration.

Moreover, the communal nature of the "Heart & Art" program cultivates social connectivity and community building, forging meaningful connections among participants and reducing feelings of isolation by fostering a sense of belonging. Additionally, participants develop coping mechanisms through art, acquiring valuable tools to navigate daily stressors and emotional challenges, thereby enhancing their overall resilience and mental well-being. Finally, for individuals already undergoing traditional therapeutic support, the integration of creative expression within the program complements and enriches their healing journey, offering a holistic approach to psychological well-being.

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Overall, the "Heart & Art" program embodies a comprehensive approach to art therapy, aiming to promote holistic mental health and well-being by facilitating emotional healing, personal growth, and enhanced life satisfaction.

Relevance (How is this practice relevant to the context?)

The "Heart & Art" program holds particular significance within the context of art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece, offering a comprehensive approach to **healing** and **empowerment** tailored to their specific needs. Firstly, the program addresses the deep emotional trauma often experienced by these individuals, providing a **supportive environment** where they can process and heal through expressive art therapy, fostering **emotional well-being** and **resilience** in the face of adversity.

Secondly, the program empowers survivors by facilitating **self-expression** and **communication** through art, offering a non-verbal avenue for reclaiming their voices and articulating their inner experiences, which may have been silenced by violence. This emphasis on self-expression not only aids in emotional healing but also serves as a means of empowerment and agency for participants.

Thirdly, the "Heart & Art" program fosters **personal growth** and **identity reconstruction** for survivors, many of whom may struggle with self-esteem and identity issues post-trauma. Through engagement with artistic activities and skill development, participants can rebuild their sense of **self-worth** and identity, achieving personal milestones and reclaiming ownership over their narratives.

Challenges (What are the challenges encountered in applying the good practice? How have they been addressed?)

Implementing the "Heart & Art" program, especially within the context of providing support to female victims of violence in Greece, likely encounters several challenges. Based on the broader challenges often faced by similar therapeutic and support programs, here are some potential obstacles and ways they have been addressed:

1. **Accessibility and Outreach**: Ensuring that women in need are aware of and can access the program can be challenging, especially in rural or isolated areas. This has been addressed by partnering with local community centers, shelters, and healthcare providers to facilitate referrals and by using social media and local media to raise awareness.

2. **Cultural and Language Barriers**: Greece's diverse population, including migrants and refugees, means that language and cultural sensitivity is crucial. The program may address this by employing multilingual staff and culturally adaptive therapeutic approaches, as well as providing cultural sensitivity training for therapists.

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3. **Funding and Resources**: Securing sustainable funding to maintain and expand the program can be difficult. This challenge has been addressed through grant applications, partnerships with NGOs and philanthropic organizations, and community fundraising efforts.

4. **Stigma and Social Perception**: The stigma associated with mental health and victim support services can deter participants. To combat this, the program may engage in community education efforts, share success stories (with consent), and work with local influencers or community leaders to change perceptions.

5. **Training and Quality of Care**: Ensuring that art therapists and staff are adequately trained to deal with the specific needs of violence survivors is critical. The program likely invests in continuous professional development, specialized training in trauma-informed care, and supervision to maintain high standards of care.

6. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**: Measuring the effectiveness of the program and making necessary adjustments poses a challenge. Implementing regular feedback mechanisms, conducting outcome evaluations, and adapting the program based on research and participant feedback are ways to ensure continuous improvement.

By addressing these challenges with thoughtful strategies and community collaboration, the "Heart & Art" program aims to provide effective, accessible, and culturally sensitive support to female victims of violence in Greece, contributing to their healing and empowerment.

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Good Practice 2: Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) - Music Therapy

In Greece, a notable example of music therapy's effectiveness in supporting female victims of violence is highlighted by the work done through various therapeutic programs that integrate music therapy as a core component of their treatment plans. These programs, often facilitated by specialized therapists, employ music therapy to create a healing environment where survivors can explore their feelings, express themselves creatively, and work through trauma in a supportive and safe setting.

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The University of Rochester Medical Center describes music therapy as involving listening to music, making music, singing, and discussing music alongside guided imagery with music. This multifaceted approach allows participants to engage with music in a way that resonates with their personal healing journey, helping them to process emotions, reduce stress, and promote psychological healing.

By engaging in music therapy, female victims of violence in Greece are offered a unique therapeutic outlet that supports their recovery from trauma. The activities within music therapy—whether creating music, listening to it, or discussing musical experiences—serve as powerful tools for emotional expression and processing, thereby aiding in their overall healing process. This practice underscores the critical role of integrating arts-based therapies into comprehensive support frameworks for victims of violence, emphasizing the transformative power of music and creativity in trauma recovery and emotional wellbeing. In Greece, therapeutic methods in music therapy for female victims of domestic violence include a variety of activities aimed at facilitating emotional and psychological healing. These methods typically involve:

1) **Listening to Music**: Helps individuals relax and provides emotional support by offering a form of escape and a way to process feelings non-verbally.
2) **Making Music**: Engaging in the creation of music allows for personal expression and exploration of emotions, fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.
3) **Singing**: Offers a therapeutic outlet for expressing emotions, can enhance mood, and serves as a means to work through traumatic experiences.
4) **Discussing Music**: Encourages reflection on the lyrics and melodies that resonate with the individual's experiences, promoting insight and understanding of their emotions and thoughts.
5) **Guided Imagery with Music**: Combines music with visualization techniques to help individuals explore their inner thoughts and feelings, promoting relaxation and stress relief.

These activities are part of a broader therapeutic approach that integrates psychotherapeutic techniques with the creative process, improving well-being and supporting mental health recovery. Music therapy provides a non-verbal avenue for expression and processing of traumatic experiences, making it an effective intervention for ameliorating mood and facilitating healing among female survivors of intimate partner violence in Greece.

Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) is a therapeutic method that integrates music and visualization to facilitate psychological and emotional healing. This practice can be particularly beneficial in several ways:

1) **Promotes Deep Relaxation**: GIM helps individuals achieve a state of deep relaxation by using music to guide them through a series of visualizations. This process can significantly reduce stress and anxiety levels, providing a sense of calm and peace.
2) **Enhances Emotional Processing**: By combining music with imagery, GIM offers a unique pathway for individuals to access and process complex emotions. This can be especially helpful for those who have experienced trauma or are dealing with emotional blockages, as it allows for a safe exploration of feelings and experiences.

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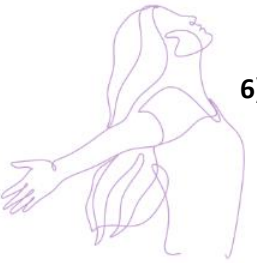
3) **Supports Mental Health Recovery**: GIM has been shown to support mental health recovery by helping individuals work through psychological issues and improving their overall well-being. It can be an effective complement to more traditional forms of psychotherapy.
4) **Facilitates Insight and Self-Discovery**: The immersive experience of GIM can lead to profound insights and enhanced self-awareness. Participants often report gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and their life experiences through the imagery and emotions evoked by the music.
5) **Improves Coping Mechanisms**: By engaging with their inner thoughts and feelings in a controlled environment, individuals can develop healthier coping mechanisms. The skills learned through GIM can be applied in everyday life, helping individuals manage stress and emotional challenges more effectively.
6) **Strengthened Mind-Body Connection**: GIM fosters a stronger connection between the mind and body by aligning emotional and physical states through music and imagery. This holistic approach can contribute to improved overall health and a greater sense of harmony within oneself.



In summary, Guided Imagery with Music is a versatile therapeutic tool that can offer significant benefits in terms of relaxation, emotional healing, mental health support, insight, and personal growth. It is a gentle yet powerful practice that can help individuals navigate their healing journey with greater ease and awareness.

Needs assessment

Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) responds to several critical needs of female victims of domestic violence in Greece, addressing both immediate and long-term aspects of their recovery and healing process:

- **Trauma Recovery**: Many female victims of domestic violence carry the burden of trauma. GIM aids in the process of trauma recovery by offering a safe space for emotional expression and processing, which is vital for healing from traumatic experiences.
- **Stress and Anxiety Reduction**: Victims often suffer from heightened levels of stress and anxiety due to their experiences. GIM promotes deep relaxation and stress relief, helping to alleviate these symptoms and providing a sense of peace.
- **Emotional Processing and Regulation**: The integration of music and imagery allows victims to explore and express complex emotions in a non-verbal way. This is particularly beneficial for those who may find it difficult to articulate their feelings verbally, assisting in emotional regulation and processing.
- **Mental Health Support**: Domestic violence can have a profound impact on mental health. GIM supports mental health recovery by helping individuals work through psychological issues, improving overall well-being and serving as a complement to traditional psychotherapy.
- **Personal Insight and Self-Discovery**: Through the immersive experience of GIM, victims can gain insights into their personal experiences and emotions. This self-discovery

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process is crucial for rebuilding a sense of identity and self-worth that may have been eroded by abusive relationships.

- **Development of Coping Strategies**: GIM helps individuals develop effective coping mechanisms for managing stress and emotional challenges. These skills are essential for survivors as they navigate the challenges of recovery and work towards rebuilding their lives.
- **Strengthening the Mind-Body Connection**: Domestic violence affects both the mind and body. GIM fosters a harmonious connection between emotional and physical states, contributing to overall health and a greater sense of internal harmony.

In summary, GIM addresses the multifaceted needs of female victims of domestic violence in Greece by facilitating healing from trauma, reducing stress and anxiety, supporting emotional processing and mental health recovery, and promoting personal growth and resilience. This holistic approach is aligned with the complex nature of recovery from domestic violence, offering a therapeutic pathway that is both gentle and empowering.

Main goals

In supporting female victims of domestic violence, particularly in Greece, Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) employs a multifaceted approach aimed at addressing both psychological and physiological aspects of healing and recovery. These goals encompass trauma recovery by providing a safe space for emotional expression and processing, stress and anxiety reduction through deep relaxation techniques, and facilitating emotional processing and regulation in a supportive, non-verbal manner. Furthermore, GIM serves as mental health support, complementing traditional psychotherapy by assisting victims in addressing psychological issues and fostering personal insight and self-discovery crucial for rebuilding identity and self-worth post-trauma.

Moreover, GIM aims to equip individuals with effective coping mechanisms for managing stress and emotional challenges, while also strengthening the mind-body connection to

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promote overall health and well-being. By aligning closely with the needs of female victims of domestic violence, GIM offers a gentle yet powerful pathway for healing, empowerment, and personal growth, addressing the complex and layered impact of domestic violence on both psyche and body.

Target Group

Within the context of supporting female victims of domestic violence in Greece, Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) provides a versatile therapeutic intervention with diverse beneficiaries. Primary among them are women who have endured abuse, finding in GIM a pathway toward healing from trauma, alleviating stress and anxiety, and regaining a sense of agency and calm in their lives. Additionally, survivors of various traumas, including sexual assault and childhood abuse, benefit from GIM's supportive environment for processing and healing from their past experiences.

Furthermore, individuals experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety, whether stemming from past abuse or other life challenges, discover relief through GIM's deep relaxation techniques and emotional processing methods. Those seeking mental health support alongside traditional psychotherapy find GIM complementary, offering alternative avenues for addressing psychological issues and fostering personal growth. Moreover, individuals on a journey of self-discovery and personal insight benefit from GIM's facilitation of profound insights and enhanced self-awareness, while those seeking coping strategies for managing stress and emotional challenges find valuable skills in GIM sessions. Overall, GIM's inclusive approach extends its benefits beyond female victims of domestic violence, embracing anyone seeking healing, stress relief, emotional regulation, and a strengthened mind-body connection.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

The Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) practice is designed to be broadly inclusive, accommodating a wide range of individuals across different ages and educational backgrounds.

Age Groups

The majority of GIM participants are **adults**, including both younger adults and older adults. For female victims of domestic violence, the practice is particularly geared towards adults who have experienced trauma, stress, and anxiety from domestic situations.

Some programs might adapt GIM for adolescents, especially those who have experienced trauma or who are dealing with high levels of stress and anxiety. The

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approach would be tailored to be age-appropriate and relevant to their developmental stage.

Also GIM can be beneficial for the elderly, particularly in addressing issues like trauma recovery, stress reduction, and the promotion of mental health and well-being in later life.

Educational Backgrounds

GIM does not discriminate based on educational background. Participants can come from a wide range of educational levels—from those with minimal formal education to those with advanced degrees. The practice focuses on emotional and psychological healing rather than cognitive or academic ability.

The therapeutic goals and methods are communicated in a manner that is accessible and understandable to participants, regardless of their educational background.

GIM therapists are trained to adapt their approach to fit the needs and comprehension levels of their clients, ensuring that the practice is beneficial and accessible to all participants.

It’s important to note that the inclusive nature of GIM means that it seeks to support and heal individuals from all walks of life, recognizing the universal potential for music and imagery to facilitate emotional and psychological healing.

The women of cooperatives are adults, without a specific political, religious, or educational background. They 're usually residents of the province, who deal or want to take care of the land and the raw materials.

Achieved results

The outcomes of Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) practice for supporting female victims of domestic violence encompass a spectrum of healing and personal development. Psychologically, GIM aids in healing by improving mental health, reducing PTSD symptoms, depression, and anxiety, while enhancing cognitive processing of traumatic events. Emotionally, participants experience better regulation and expression of complex feelings, leading to emotional relief and deeper understanding of their responses. Moreover, GIM significantly reduces stress and anxiety levels through relaxation techniques, promoting calmness and effective stress management.

Furthermore, GIM fosters self-awareness and insight, crucial for rebuilding identity and self-worth post-abuse, while also equipping participants with coping strategies for managing stress and emotional challenges. This leads to an overall enhancement in quality of life, including improved relationships and greater emotional resilience, as participants develop a stronger mind-body connection essential for holistic well-being.

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Ultimately, GIM empowers individuals, fostering a sense of agency, autonomy, and personal growth, enabling them to move forward positively from experiences of domestic violence.

Impact on the participants

Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) offers diverse benefits, especially to female victims of domestic violence, fostering holistic healing. It provides a safe emotional outlet and reduces stress and anxiety levels significantly. Participants experience improved mental health, enhanced self-understanding, and develop effective coping skills. Moreover, GIM promotes empowerment and autonomy, while strengthening the mind-body connection for comprehensive recovery and improved quality of life.

Relevance

Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) is a powerful tool for supporting female victims of domestic violence, offering a range of therapeutic benefits tailored to their needs. Firstly, GIM addresses trauma directly, providing a gentle yet profound pathway to healing psychological and emotional wounds. Additionally, it creates a safe environment where survivors can freely express and process their suppressed emotions, crucial for initiating the healing process. Moreover, GIM's relaxation techniques play a vital role in reducing the heightened stress and anxiety commonly experienced by survivors, restoring a sense of calm and stability to their lives.

Furthermore, GIM contributes to significant improvements in mental health by addressing conditions such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Through introspection facilitated by GIM, survivors gain insights into their emotional states and behaviors, fostering personal growth and increased self-awareness. This understanding is crucial for rebuilding their sense of identity and self-worth post-trauma. Additionally, GIM empowers survivors by helping them develop coping strategies and regain a sense of control over their lives, enabling them to make positive life changes and move forward from their experiences.

Moreover, GIM reinforces the connection between mind and body, promoting healing on all levels and supporting a more comprehensive recovery. In group settings, GIM can also foster a sense of community and connection among survivors, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting shared healing experiences. In the context of Greece's significant issue with domestic violence, GIM offers a culturally sensitive and accessible approach to support female victims, complementing existing support services and treatments. Overall, GIM stands as a valuable tool in the broader efforts to support, heal, and empower female victims of domestic violence, contributing to their journey towards recovery and resilience.

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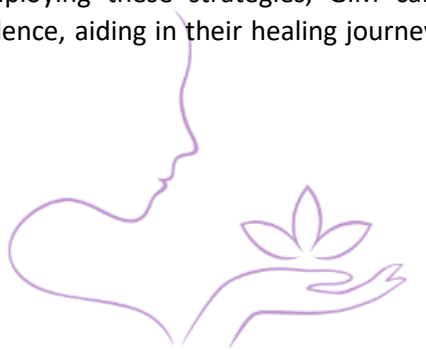
Challenges

Implementing Guided Imagery with Music (GIM) for female victims of domestic violence presents challenges addressable with targeted strategies. One challenge is ensuring accessibility and awareness, tackled through community outreach and online platforms. Cultural and language barriers are overcome by training therapists in cultural competence and offering multilingual services. Establishing trust and safety involves creating a confidential environment with participant control. Addressing varied trauma responses requires personalized approaches, while leveraging technology enables accessibility despite physical constraints. By employing these strategies, GIM can effectively support female victims of domestic violence, aiding in their healing journey while remaining adaptive and accessible.



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Good Practice 3: Creative Journal Arts Therapy

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Creative Journal Arts Therapy: Incorporating activities like journaling with visual arts to help survivors articulate feelings and experiences, fostering emotional healing. To understand how Creative Journal Arts Therapy can be applied specifically within the context of Greece, it's important to consider the unique cultural, social, and therapeutic environments in which these practices would be implemented. While the search results did not provide specific instances of Creative Journal Arts Therapy in Greece, the principles behind this approach are universally applicable and can offer insights into its potential application in the Greek context.

Creative Journal Arts Therapy focuses on using journaling combined with visual arts (such as drawing, painting, and sculpting) as a therapeutic tool. This approach allows individuals to express themselves non-verbally through art while also reflecting on their thoughts and feelings in writing. This dual process can help individuals process trauma, explore emotions, and foster a deeper understanding of their experiences.

In Greece, where there is a rich history of both literary and visual arts, incorporating Creative Journal Arts Therapy into programs for female victims of violence could leverage these cultural assets to support healing. Activities might include creating personal journals adorned with traditional Greek motifs or landscapes, using local materials for sculpture, or drawing inspiration from Greek mythology and history for painting projects. Such integration of culturally significant elements can enhance the therapeutic impact by connecting individuals with their heritage and community.

For implementation, partnerships with local art therapists, community centers, and women's shelters could provide the necessary support structure. Additionally, training programs for therapists in the specifics of Creative Journal Arts Therapy, tailored to address the needs of survivors of violence, would be crucial to ensure the approach is as effective as possible.

Needs assessment

Creative Journal Arts Therapy, especially when adapted for the Greek context, responds to a range of deep-seated needs among survivors of violence. These needs include:

Emotional Expression and Healing: Many survivors struggle with articulating their experiences and emotions verbally due to trauma. Creative Journal Arts Therapy offers an alternative, non-verbal mode of expression through art and writing, helping individuals process and articulate their feelings and experiences.

Trauma Processing: The act of creating art and journaling facilitates the processing of traumatic memories in a safe and controlled environment. This can be particularly empowering for individuals who have experienced violence, enabling them to revisit and reframe their experiences at their own pace.

Cultural Connection and Identity: For survivors in Greece, integrating elements of Greek culture, such as mythology, landscapes, and traditional motifs, into therapy sessions can foster a sense of connection to their heritage and community. This cultural relevance can

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enhance the therapeutic process by making it more engaging and meaningful for participants.

Social and Emotional Skills Development: Engaging in Creative Journal Arts Therapy can also contribute to the development of social and emotional skills, such as empathy, self-regulation, and communication. These skills are essential for survivors rebuilding their lives after experiencing violence.

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: In a diverse society like Greece, which has seen significant migration and refugee movements, recognizing and respecting cultural differences is crucial. Creative Journal Arts Therapy can be adapted to meet the specific cultural and individual needs of survivors, acknowledging the importance of cultural awareness in the healing process.

By addressing these needs, Creative Journal Arts Therapy offers a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to support survivors of violence in Greece. The therapy aims not only to alleviate immediate psychological distress but also to contribute to long-term healing and empowerment, rebuilding a sense of self and community connection in the process.

Main goals

The main goals of Creative Journal Arts Therapy, especially when applied to survivors of violence, focus on several key objectives designed to promote healing, self-expression, and emotional recovery.

Firstly, this approach aims to improve Emotional Expression. By utilizing visual arts as a medium for communication, individuals are encouraged to articulate feelings and experiences that may be difficult to express verbally.

Secondly, Creative Journal Arts Therapy facilitates Emotional Healing by providing a safe and creative outlet for expression. This aids in the process of emotional healing from trauma, allowing individuals to explore and address their inner struggles.

Moreover, the practice enhances Self-Reflection and Awareness. Through journaling combined with art, individuals engage in deep self-reflection, gaining insights into their emotional states and thought processes.

Additionally, Creative Journal Arts Therapy aims at building Coping Skills. Engaging in creative activities fosters the development of coping mechanisms for dealing with stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges.

Furthermore, it promotes Cultural and Personal Identity. Incorporating local cultural elements, especially in contexts like Greece, connects individuals to their heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and identity, thus enhancing the therapeutic effect.

These goals are aligned with the broader objectives of art therapy, which include reducing distress, improving psychological resilience, and enhancing overall well-being. Implementing Creative Journal Arts Therapy in a culturally sensitive manner, particularly

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in diverse settings, underscores the importance of understanding and respecting the unique cultural backgrounds of participants.

Target Group

The beneficiaries of therapeutic practices like Creative Journal Arts Therapy encompass diverse groups, each deriving unique advantages:

1. **Individual Participants:** Direct recipients experience healing and expression. Survivors of violence or trauma gain voice and coping strategies, fostering emotional regulation and self-awareness.
2. **Healthcare Professionals:** Therapists expand their toolkit, achieving better outcomes and professional fulfillment by aiding clients' progress.
3. **Communities:** Indirectly benefit as individuals contribute positively. Reduced societal impacts of trauma, like lower healthcare costs and enhanced social cohesion, are collective gains.
4. **Families and Social Networks:** Immediate circles benefit from improved emotional health, fostering harmonious and supportive relationships.

These beneficiaries highlight the multifaceted value of therapeutic practices, crucial not only for individual healing but also for enhancing the broader social fabric.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

The provided search results do not specify the age and educational background of participants involved in Creative Journal Arts Therapy directly. However, based on the context of the therapy aimed at survivors of domestic violence and its application in various settings, it's reasonable to infer that:

- **Age**: Participants could range from young adults to older individuals, depending on the specific program's target demographic. Creative Journal Arts Therapy is adaptable and can be tailored to suit survivors of domestic violence of various ages.
- **Educational Background**: The educational background of participants is likely diverse. Creative Journal Arts Therapy, being a form of therapeutic intervention, does not require participants to have a specific educational background. The practice is designed to be accessible and beneficial to individuals regardless of their educational level.

The universal applicability of Creative Journal Arts Therapy means that it can be adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of participants, emphasizing its potential for inclusivity and flexibility within therapeutic settings in Greece or elsewhere.

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Achieved Results

Creative Journal Arts Therapy combines journaling and visual arts to offer therapeutic benefits, particularly for trauma survivors and those with emotional difficulties. Expected outcomes include enhanced emotional regulation, improved communication skills, reduced stress and depression symptoms, and support for healthy aging. Ongoing research continues to validate its effectiveness, making it a versatile approach for addressing diverse emotional needs.

Impact of the participants

Creative Journal Arts Therapy, especially beneficial for trauma survivors and those seeking emotional healing, offers multiple benefits. Participants can expect enhanced emotional regulation through creative expression, leading to improved communication skills. Additionally, engagement in therapy increases self-awareness and understanding of emotional health. Participation in a therapeutic community provides access to the latest practices and empowers individuals in their healing journey. In culturally diverse settings like Greece, integration of cultural elements enhances participants' sense of belonging and connection. Ultimately, Creative Journal Arts Therapy supports individual healing while fostering community cohesion, making it a powerful tool for emotional and psychological recovery.

Relevance

Creative Journal Arts Therapy is highly relevant in various contexts, particularly for individuals experiencing trauma, depression, anxiety, or those in need of emotional healing. The practice's relevance is underscored by its successful application in diverse settings:

Trauma Treatment in Refugee Camps: Its use in a refugee camp in Greece highlights the therapy's adaptability and effectiveness in providing psychological relief and fostering community connections among displaced populations facing complex traumas.

Reducing Traumatic Stress Symptoms: The therapy's efficacy in reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety among war-affected Syrian refugee children demonstrates its potential as a powerful tool for emotional recovery in conflict-impacted populations.

Therapeutic Tool Design for Trauma: The development and validation of art-based therapeutic tools, like PROJECTA, to address trauma, further indicate the practice's utility in creating tailored approaches for individuals undergoing traumatic experiences.

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Integration with Arts in Health: The bridging of creative arts therapies and arts in health reflects the growing recognition of this practice within healthcare policies, guidelines, and professional education, indicating its broader applicability and the progress in its institutional acceptance.

Creative Journal Arts Therapy's relevance is established through its proven capacity to aid individuals in coping with and overcoming the effects of trauma, its flexibility in addressing the needs of diverse populations, and its contribution to the field of therapeutic practices and mental health support.

Challenges

Implementing good practices often encounters common challenges. These include a lack of time, requiring task prioritization and efficient time management. Adoption of New technology poses another hurdle, necessitating adequate training and support for users. Productivity and performance improvement may be hindered by limited resources, addressed by tailoring practices and leveraging local strengths. Uncertainty about outcomes and stakeholder engagement are additional barriers, overcome through transparency, stakeholder involvement, and utilizing organizational strengths. Ethical considerations, such as plagiarism, demand emphasis on ethics, clear guidelines, and compliance measures. Effective solutions entail strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, ethical conduct, and adaptability.

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Good Practice 4: Utilizing Painting and Sculpture

Engaging in painting and sculpture offers a powerful avenue for female victims of violence in Greece to express themselves and navigate their recovery process. Art serves as a unique and expressive language that conveys thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and emotions, facilitating a form of healing and personal growth. Specifically, for women who have experienced gender-based violence, creating art allows for the externalization of inner experiences and the development of a personal visual language. This process not only aids in expressing complex emotions and experiences but also contributes to challenging societal norms and inspiring change within the community.

Research highlights the importance of trauma recovery programs that incorporate artistic expression as a tool for healing. These programs provide safe spaces for women to explore their creativity while processing their experiences. The act of creating art can evoke empathy, challenge societal norms, and inspire change, serving not just as a personal healing journey but also as a powerful statement against violence. This aligns with findings that suggest the need for comprehensive support systems for victims, indicating that incorporating art into recovery programs could address some of the existing shortcomings in victim support in Greece.

By fostering an environment where women can express themselves through painting and sculpture, Greece could enhance its support for victims of gender-based violence, providing a holistic approach to recovery that embraces the therapeutic power of art.

Needs assessments

The practice of engaging in painting and sculpture to aid in the recovery process for female victims of violence in Greece responds to several critical needs:

Emotional Expression: Art provides a safe and creative outlet for expressing complex emotions, which might be difficult to articulate verbally. It helps individuals process trauma at their own pace.

Empowerment and Agency: Creating art allows victims to regain a sense of control and agency over their lives, countering feelings of powerlessness stemming from their experiences of violence.

Healing and Therapeutic Benefits: The act of creating can be inherently therapeutic, offering a meditative and absorbing process that helps distract from traumatic memories and reduce anxiety.

Social Awareness and Advocacy: Art created by victims can also serve as a powerful tool for raising awareness about violence against women, challenging societal norms, and advocating for change.

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Community and Support: Participating in art programs can foster a sense of community among survivors, providing them with a supportive network of individuals who share similar experiences.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of directly relevant search results, this response is constructed based on general knowledge of art therapy and its benefits for trauma survivors. For more detailed information on specific programs in Greece, further research would be needed.

Main Goals

The main goals of practice, as suggested by search results, revolve around enhancing performance, achieving professional development, fostering community collaboration, and aligning with strategic goals. Purposeful practice aims to improve performance by maintaining focus, positivity, and efficient time allocation. Professional development goals stem from reflections on prior evaluations, aiming for continuous improvement and excellence. Specific outcomes, like winning championships, underscore practice's role in achieving targeted results systematically. Differentiating between goals and practices underscores the importance of integrating practices into daily life for personal growth. Strategic alignment involves ongoing evaluation to ensure practices align with overarching visions. Community collaboration within a Community of Practice emphasizes sharing techniques, supporting one another, and collective effort toward common goals.

Target Group

The beneficiaries of practice, as inferred from the provided search results, encompass a wide range of individuals and groups, each benefitting in unique ways from various forms of practice:

1. **Individuals Seeking Health Improvement**: People who take an active role in managing their health, referred to as 'agents' rather than 'patients,' benefit from general practice by using reasoning, planning, and decision-making to influence their health outcomes.
2. **Artists and Performers**: Practice allows singers and instrumentalists to refine all aspects of their performance, including form, melody, phrasing, timing, and improvising, thus enhancing their skills and confidence.
3. **Patients in Medical Settings**: Patients benefit from practices that assess and reduce the use of low-value services (LVS), which are characterized by examining the characteristics of beneficiaries, physicians, and practice sites.

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4. **Recipients of Estate or Legal Arrangements**: In the context of estate law, a beneficiary is someone designated to receive a gift or benefit, such as in the case of a primary or contingent beneficiary.
5. **Individuals Pursuing Personal Growth**: The practice of any skill or discipline provides focus and leads to tangible results, offering personal satisfaction and the feeling of achievement.
6. **Community and Society**: Beyond individual benefits, practice within legal, medical, and other professional ethics serves the broader community and society by upholding standards that ensure fairness, justice, and wellbeing.

Achieved Results

The provided search results do not specifically detail the age and educational background of participants in art-based trauma recovery programs for female victims of violence in Greece. Given the nature of such programs, participants can vary widely in both age and educational background. These programs are generally designed to be inclusive, offering support and a therapeutic outlet to all women who have experienced gender-based violence, regardless of their age or educational level.

Art therapy and creative expression as a form of healing do not typically have strict prerequisites regarding a participant's age or education. The focus is on the therapeutic process and the personal journey of healing, rather than on the participants' academic qualifications or age. The aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment where women can express their feelings, experiences, and thoughts through the medium of art, facilitating healing and empowerment.

Given the inclusive nature of these programs, they are likely to welcome participants of various ages, from young adults to older individuals, and with educational backgrounds ranging from basic education to higher academic degrees. The key criterion for participation is not age or education but having experienced gender-based violence and the desire to engage in the healing process through artistic expression.

Impact of the participants

Engaging in painting and sculpture as a form of therapy and expression for female victims of violence in Greece is expected to benefit participants in several profound ways:

Emotional Healing: This practice provides a therapeutic outlet for expressing complex emotions and traumas that may be difficult to articulate verbally. It helps in processing and overcoming negative experiences.

Empowerment: Through the creation of personal art, participants can regain a sense of control and empowerment, countering feelings of helplessness and vulnerability associated with their experiences of violence.

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Community and Support: Participating in art therapy sessions creates a sense of community among victims, offering mutual support and understanding. This can alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Awareness and Advocacy: Art created by survivors can be a powerful tool for raising awareness about gender-based violence, challenging societal norms, and advocating for change.

Skill Development: Beyond the therapeutic benefits, participants can also develop New skills in painting and sculpture, which can be a source of personal accomplishment and even lead to New hobbies or career paths.

Improved Mental Health: Regular engagement in artistic activities has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, leading to overall improvements in mental health and well-being.

These benefits highlight how art can serve as a powerful medium for healing, self-expression, and social change, offering a holistic approach to recovery and empowerment for female victims of violence in Greece.

Relevance

Engaging in painting and sculpture for therapy and expression holds significant relevance in supporting female victims of violence in Greece. Art serves as a powerful tool in challenging cultural norms and societal attitudes that perpetuate gender-based violence. Moreover, it addresses limitations in existing support services by providing a personalized and expressive avenue for healing. Through art exhibitions and community projects, survivors can share their stories, fostering solidarity and awareness within the community. This practice also promotes personal growth and development, offering survivors a constructive outlet to build confidence and explore New Opportunities paths. Importantly, art therapy's adaptability ensures inclusivity for diverse groups within the survivor community. Overall, by addressing these areas, engaging in art as therapy offers both healing and empowerment to survivors while contributing to broader societal change.

Challenges

While the search results don't outline specific challenges of applying art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece, they offer insights into general challenges and strategies for addressing them in similar contexts. Potential challenges include ensuring participant understanding and consent, maintaining ethical standards, providing direct benefits, and measuring outcomes. Strategies for addressing these challenges involve clear communication and consent processes, following ethical principles, integrating educational components, and employing research methods for assessment. These approaches emphasize the importance of ethical, respectful, and beneficial therapeutic practices to support participants throughout their recovery journey.

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Good Practice 5: Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT)

Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) in Greece for female victims of violence is an innovative and compassionate initiative designed to support healing and empowerment through the medium of dance and movement. This therapeutic approach leverages body movement as a powerful form of non-verbal communication, enabling participants to express complex emotions and experiences that may be difficult to articulate through words alone.

The initiative typically encompasses:

Therapeutic Dance Sessions: Structured sessions where participants engage in dance and movement activities led by certified dance/movement therapists. These sessions are tailored to meet the specific emotional and physical needs of the participants, fostering a safe space for expression and exploration.

Non-Verbal Expression: Recognizing the power of body language and movement as tools for communication, DMT allows victims to process and express their feelings and trauma without the pressure of verbal articulation, facilitating a unique path to emotional release and healing.

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Physical and Emotional Healing: By combining physical activity with emotional expression, DMT supports both physical health and emotional well-being, aiding in the reduction of stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms often associated with experiences of violence.

Empowerment and Body Positivity: DMT sessions aim to rebuild participants' relationship with their bodies, often compromised in cases of violence. Through dance, women can reclaim their bodies, fostering a sense of empowerment, self-esteem, and body positivity.

Community and Support: Group sessions not only provide a therapeutic outlet but also create a community of support among participants, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering mutual understanding and empathy.

Integration with Other Therapies: While DMT can be a standalone therapy, it is often integrated with other forms of psychological support and therapy to provide a holistic approach to healing, addressing both the mental and physical aspects of recovery.

This initiative in Greece is part of a broader commitment to supporting female victims of violence through innovative and compassionate therapeutic practices. By focusing on dance and movement, the program offers a unique and powerful avenue for healing, self-expression, and empowerment.

Needs assessment

Art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece addresses critical needs arising from trauma. It enables emotional expression through non-verbal means, facilitating the processing of complex feelings without the risk of re-traumatization. Additionally, it aids in reclaiming identity and agency, helping survivors rebuild self-esteem and autonomy after violence. Participation in art activities fosters healthy trauma processing, marking a crucial step towards survivorship. Moreover, art-based research contributes to broader awareness and understanding of gender-based violence experiences. Importantly, integrating art therapy within the cultural context ensures relevance and respect for victims' backgrounds, incorporating local traditions and sensitivities. By addressing these needs, art therapy supports Greek female victims of violence in their journey towards healing and empowerment, offering a compassionate and effective path to recovery.

Main Goals

The primary objectives of art therapy for female victims of violence in Greece encompass several key areas. Firstly, it aims to facilitate the healing of emotional trauma through diverse artistic mediums, including music therapy, painting, and body art. Secondly, it seeks to establish safe spaces where women can freely express themselves, share experiences, and find solace in a supportive community of peers. Thirdly, the practice empowers women to reclaim their sense of identity and autonomy, fostering resilience

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beyond their experiences of violence. Additionally, it endeavors to innovate therapeutic approaches tailored to survivors' needs for a comprehensive recovery addressing psychological and emotional well-being. Furthermore, extending art therapy to include children affected by domestic violence serves to support their emotional development and provide a therapeutic outlet. Lastly, the practice contributes to raising awareness of violence against women in Greece and advocating for more effective support systems for victims. These goals collectively underscore the overarching mission of art therapy in Greece: promoting recovery, empowerment, and the cultivation of a supportive community for female victims of violence.

Target Group

Art therapy practices in Greece, specifically designed for female victims of violence, benefit a diverse range of individuals. These include survivors of domestic violence, who find therapeutic healing through artistic expression. Additionally, female refugees and asylum seekers, often subjected to gender-based violence during their journeys or in host countries, discover a safe space for expression in art therapy programs. Women who have endured the traumas of conflict and war also utilize art therapy to process experiences and pursue healing. Furthermore, children from violent homes benefit from art therapy, using creative outlets to express emotions and foster healing. These programs aim to create empowering environments where participants freely express themselves, reclaim identities, and find community support. Through creative expression, art therapy aids in trauma processing, self-reclamation, and resilience-building against adversity.

Profile of the participants: age, education

The information provided in the search results does not specifically detail the age or educational background of participants in digital art therapy practices. However, based on the context of digital art therapy as a modern approach designed to be accessible and appealing, it can be inferred that:

Age Range: The practice is versatile and could potentially appeal to a wide age range, from younger individuals, who are generally more familiar and comfortable with digital platforms and tools, to older adults interested in exploring New methods of expression. It is particularly noted for its appeal to younger victims or those interested in technology, indicating that it could include adolescents, young adults, and even children, depending on the program's design and accessibility.

Educational Background: There is no specific mention of the educational background required for participants in digital art therapy sessions. The nature of art therapy, emphasizing self-expression and healing over technical skill or academic achievement, suggests that participants of all educational backgrounds can benefit. The focus is on the therapeutic process rather than educational attainment, making it inclusive to individuals regardless of their formal education level.

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Digital art therapy is designed to be inclusive, accommodating individuals with diverse backgrounds and varying levels of familiarity with technology, focusing on therapeutic expression rather than technical expertise.

Achieved results

Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) for female victims of violence in Greece is anticipated to yield several positive outcomes. Participants are expected to experience improved emotional well-being, enhanced self-expression, and physical healing through movement activities. DMT also promotes empowerment, body positivity, and a sense of community among participants. Integrated with other therapies, it offers a comprehensive healing experience addressing both mental and physical aspects. Over time, DMT aims to foster long-term healing and empowerment, equipping participants with tools for their healing journey beyond therapy sessions. These expected results highlight DMT's potential as an effective and holistic approach to supporting survivors of violence in Greece.

Impact of the participants

Dance and movement therapy offer numerous benefits for female victims of violence in Greece. Firstly, it facilitates emotional healing by providing a therapeutic outlet for expressing and processing complex emotions. Secondly, through physical movement, participants can enhance their physical well-being, including circulation and flexibility. Additionally, by reclaiming their bodies through dance, participants experience empowerment, rebuilding self-esteem and body positivity. Moreover, group sessions foster a supportive community where participants connect with others, reducing isolation and fostering mutual support. Furthermore, DMT allows non-verbal expression, enabling participants to communicate and process feelings without verbal articulation pressure. Lastly, integrating DMT with other therapies provides a comprehensive approach to healing, addressing both mental and physical aspects of recovery. These benefits underscore how dance/movement therapy supports participants in their healing journey, promoting emotional, physical, and social well-being.

Relevance

Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) offers tailored support for female victims of violence in Greece through culturally resonant practices, stigma-free avenues, and holistic healing approaches. Leveraging Greece's cultural heritage of dance, DMT provides a meaningful therapeutic outlet. It also circumvents stigma by focusing on bodily expression, making it socially acceptable. DMT addresses survivors' complex needs by promoting emotional, physical, and social well-being. Additionally, it fosters empowerment and community while accommodating those who struggle with verbal expression. Its compatibility with other therapies ensures comprehensive treatment plans. In Greece, where art is integral

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to healing, DMT emerges as a culturally relevant approach, effectively supporting female victims of violence in their recovery journey.

Challenges

While the search results lack specific details on challenges in applying good practice and their resolution, we can infer a general approach to identifying and addressing obstacles based on common issues across various fields:

Identification of Short and Long Term Policy Measures: Recognizing the need for policy adjustments requires thorough analysis to ensure effective implementation and sustainability.

Measuring Outcomes and Effectiveness: Determining effectiveness involves setting clear objectives, employing qualified professionals, and rigorously evaluating outcomes.

Skill Acquisition and Mastery: Overcoming challenges in mastering New Opportunities skills requires persistence, effective strategy, and sometimes guidance from experts.

Preparatory Requirements: Challenges in meeting preparatory requirements, like in education, may involve accessibility and readiness of participants.

Expectation Management: Managing expectations involves establishing clear, achievable goals and effective communication with stakeholders.

Limitations of Practice: Acknowledging practice limitations helps set realistic goals and foster effective learning or improvement processes. Common strategies for addressing these challenges include setting clear objectives, thorough planning, effective communication, and continual evaluation and adaptation of practices based on outcomes and feedback.

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3.2 Organization: Can You

Country: Bulgaria

Good Practice 1: Psychodrama

Psychodrama as a therapeutic method has many options for supporting people suffering from abuse - in emotional support and sharing groups as well as therapy groups. The method includes many elements of art therapy in their work - making and crafting things with their hands for example. Other techniques that psychodrama uses are somewhat borrowed from theatre. Life situations and personal experiences are put on stage where the roles are taken by the group members. There is no pre-determined script, anything can be played out - the situation as it happened, as it could have happened, the future, the distant past, our dreams and imaginations. It is believed that reenacting situations on stage has greater therapeutic value than mere discussion because it helps one to immerse oneself in them better, to get to know oneself and others better, to see oneself from the side, and to come to New ideas.

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As a principle, psychodrama therapy can offer two types of group practices:

- Therapeutic group
- Self-help and emotional support group

The framework and conditions for participation vary, as do the goals they set.

These groups usually become a "safety container" or "safe space" for participants, which is of utmost importance for survivors of abuse. It is a safe space, which is of utmost importance as security with people that have suffered from abuse is generally missing. Therefore, the group could be very useful for gaining independence and showing good bonding patterns, and non-toxicity.

Needs assessment

- Addressing the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by female victims of violence.
- Providing a therapeutic outlet to express and process complex emotions related to the impact of gender-based violence.
- Creating a safe space for healing and personal growth through artistic methods.
- Offering a platform to raise awareness about the prevalence of gender-based violence and its lasting effects.

Main goals

Connecting in a healthy way with others, building secure relationships, positive feedback and ultimately building independence and adequate self-esteem. Fostering independence and overcoming learned helplessness. Facilitating healing and improving the mental health of female victims through artistic expression. Connecting in a healthy way with others. Building secure relationships.

Target group

- Female victims of violence seeking therapeutic support and healing through artistic methods.
- Survivors of gender-based violence looking for a safe and empowering space to express themselves.
- Individuals affected by the enduring impact of violence on personal and professional aspects of life.

Achieved results

- Improved mental health and emotional well-being for female victims.
- Increased awareness about the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence.
- Empowerment of participants, leading to a sense of inclusion, acceptance, and non-judgment.

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- Participants finding a safe place and rhythm of calm.
- Increased self-reflection.
- Opportunities for participants to discuss and experiment with different attitudes and behaviors in a non-judgmental and supportive environment.

Impact on the participants

- finding a safe place and a rhythm of calm
- self-reflection
- empowering
- independence
- increasing self-esteem
- opportunity to discuss and experiment different attitudes, ways of behaving in a non-judgmental and supportive environment

Relevance

The practice is relevant in providing a therapeutic method for supporting people suffering from abuse, offering emotional support and sharing groups.
It weaves elements of art therapy into its approach, utilizing techniques borrowed from theatre to reenact life situations and inner experiences.

Challenges

Challenges may include creating a safe and trusting environment, especially for survivors of abuse. Addressing these challenges involves establishing clear guidelines, providing proper training for facilitators, and emphasizing the importance of a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere. Closing therapeutic groups after the third session helps maintain a secure and consistent environment, while emotional support groups may remain open, recognizing the different needs of participants.

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Good Practice 2: Narrative therapy

Narrative therapy is a conversational treatment approach that empowers individuals to construct New Opportunities stories about their lives, focusing on their desires, motivations, and beliefs. It involves collaborative work between the therapist and the individual to deconstruct negative narratives and create alternative, empowering ones.

Needs assessment

Addressing contradictory and dysfunctional narratives individuals may hold about themselves, especially related to issues such as gender stereotypes, and cultural stereotypes. Deconstructing negative power relations and externalizing problematic narratives to empower individuals and develop positive representations oriented towards alternative narratives.

Main goals

Connecting in a healthy way with others, building secure relationships, positive feedback and ultimately building independence and adequate selfesteem. Fostering independence and overcoming learned helplessness. Facilitating heali ng and improving the mental health of female victims through artistic expressio n. Connecting in a healthy way with others. Building secure relationships.

Target Group

The target group for narrative therapy encompasses individuals seeking to address conflicts, feelings of overwhelm, and a sense of powerlessness within their lives. These individuals often grapple with negative narratives that shape their experiences and hinder their personal growth. Through narrative therapy, they aim to construct more compassionate and empowering stories, reclaiming agency over their lives and transforming their perspectives. This therapeutic approach offers a supportive space for individuals to navigate their struggles, rewrite their narratives, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

There are no requirements other than being an adult (18+). However, there is a rule to close groups on the third time if they are therapeutic, if they are for emotional support it is not necessary.

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Achieved results

Narrative therapy yields significant outcomes for female victims, fostering improved mental health, heightened awareness of gender-based violence, and empowerment. Participants find solace and self-reflection in a safe environment, while also exploring diverse attitudes and behaviors non-judgmentally.

Impact on the participants

- Improved mental health and emotional well-being for female victims.
- Increased awareness about the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence.
- Empowerment of participants, leading to a sense of inclusion,
- acceptance, and nonjudgment.
- Participants finding a safe place and rhythm of calm. Increased self-reflection.
- Opportunities for participants to discuss and experiment with different attitudes and behaviors in a non-judgmental and supportive environment.

Impact of the participants

Participants are expected to experience a shift in perspective, moving from feelings of overwhelm and powerlessness to a sense of empowerment and control over their narratives. They may develop increased self-esteem and confidence as they construct more compassionate stories about themselves and their experiences. The practice may lead to improved coping strategies and relationships as participants focus on their strengths and resources.

Relevance

The practice is relevant in providing a therapeutic method for supporting people suffering from abuse, offering emotional support and sharing groups. It weaves elements of art therapy into its approach, utilizing techniques borrowed from theatre to reenact life situations and inner experiences.

Challenges

- Challenges may include helping individuals externalize and reframe deeply ingrained negative narratives about themselves and their experiences.

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- Therapists may address these challenges by creating a safe and supportive environment, using language that resonates with the individual, and providing guidance and encouragement throughout the process.
- Collaborative approaches that involve the therapist and the individual working together can help overcome challenges and facilitate meaningful change.

Sources

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Good Practice 3: Group Cognitive behavioral therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) addresses emotional challenges by focusing on current issues and strategies for the future. Widely practiced, including in Bulgaria, group therapy provides support for exploring behavior and emotions, often challenging in individual therapy. Cognitive group therapy targets negative thought patterns over 10 to 20 sessions, with active participation from therapists and clients to reshape behaviors. Clients engage actively, discussing and analyzing issues, reshaping thoughts and beliefs. CBT commonly involves tailored homework assignments and real-life application of learned principles through behavioral experiments. Psychotherapy groups at the Psychological Help Centre "Change" accommodate a maximum of 8 participants for an optimal therapeutic environment.

Needs assessment

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), particularly in group settings, effectively meets the multifaceted needs of individuals struggling with emotional challenges. Widely used as one of the most effective tools for supporting women, survivors of violence, It successfully tackles:

- Depression
- Fears, Phobias and Panic Disorders - Panic Disorders
- OCD - Compulsive Thoughts and Rituals

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- Addictions
- Anxiety Disorders

CBT facilitates skill development and real-life application of learned strategies. Through group therapy sessions individuals not only gain practical tools for managing their difficulties but also find a sense of belonging and understanding among peers. This approach empowers individuals to take an active role in their healing journey and supports lasting change.

Main goals

Cognitive therapy, particularly when applied to women survivors of violence, seeks to empower clients by enhancing their self-awareness and emotional intelligence. It helps them distinguish between healthy and unhealthy emotions, while also addressing distorted perceptions that contribute to emotional distress. By focusing on current challenges and providing specific techniques, it enables survivors to challenge negative thoughts and develop self-control. Additionally, cognitive therapy aims to prevent future emotional distress by guiding clients in modifying core beliefs rooted in their experiences of violence.

Target Group

In selecting participants for the group, various factors are considered, including their mental and physical health conditions. Women survivors of violence may have diverse experiences and challenges, yet they share a common struggle with complex and often illness-related life problems. The group setting offers them a chance to explore their appearance, behavior, and emotions, as well as to navigate their interactions with the outside world—a task that can be particularly daunting in individual therapy. Typically, the group consists of eight members, ensuring a supportive and conducive environment for healing and growth.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

The age and educational background of participants can vary widely. Participants may range from young adults to seniors, and their educational backgrounds can span from individuals with minimal formal education to those with advanced degrees. The diversity in age and educational background reflects the broad applicability of CBT and its effectiveness in addressing emotional challenges across different demographic groups.

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Achieved results

The expected results of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in group settings for women survivors of violence encompass a range of positive outcomes. Participants are anticipated to develop heightened self-awareness and emotional intelligence, discerning between healthy and unhealthy feelings. They'll acquire practical coping skills to manage emotional distress, leading to a reduction in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Additionally, group therapy provides social support and connection, alleviating feelings of isolation and empowering survivors. Through active participation, individuals cultivate resilience, enabling them to navigate challenges with greater agency.

Impact on the participants

This practice of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in group settings offers participants numerous benefits. It enhances self-awareness and provides practical coping skills to manage emotional challenges effectively. Group therapy fosters a supportive environment, reducing feelings of isolation and providing validation and empathy. Through active participation, individuals feel empowered and develop long-term resilience.

Relevance

This practice in group settings is highly relevant to the context of supporting women survivors of violence. It addresses the unique emotional challenges faced by survivors and provides them with practical tools and strategies to cope with their experiences. Group therapy offers a supportive environment where participants can connect with others who have similar experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. CBT promotes empowerment and resilience, enabling survivors to take control of their healing journey and move forward with strength.

Challenges

The challenges encountered in applying cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in a group setting revolve around the fact that group dynamics may not suit everyone, particularly those who struggle in social settings. For individuals with a history of abuse or trust issues, underlying personality disorders, social anxiety, social phobias, or concerns about privacy, group therapy may not be the most suitable option. These challenges have been addressed by recognizing the need for individualized treatment approaches. In instances where group CBT may not be appropriate, individual CBT sessions are recommended.

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This ensures that individuals receive tailored support that aligns with their specific needs and comfort levels.

Sources

https://www.choosingtherapy.com/cbt-group-therapy/

https://washingtoncenterforcognitivetherapy.com/treatment-models/cognitive-therapy/goals-of-cognitive-therapy/

https://psihologia.org/групова-психотерапия/

Good Practice 4: Immersive movement performance

Initiative - Immersive movement performance "White Sheet" by Global Vision Circle in partnership with Empower Association and Theatre of the Senses Sofia. The "White Sheet" project includes different stages and activities for using art as a therapeutic method and tool for self-exploration, empowerment, creative expression and self-care, in which women artists and women survivors of domestic violence participate together. This is a New kind of multi-genre performance, a contemporary ritual, an immersive experience about inner strength and inner limitations, about forgiveness, about tenderness, about acceptance, about celebration and about the inspiration to start anew. The aim of the initiative is that through a series of creative trainings, using the methods of sensory, dance, documentary theater, creative writing, kinesiology and stillness practices, women survivors of domestic violence will have the opportunity to draw inspiration, strength and practices for calming. During the performances, the audience actively participates by meeting and interacting with the artists individually and personally, with an invitation to enter the unknown, to immerse in the pure and white, to step into the quiet and empty space of full potential where women can rewrite their past and forge New Opportunities relationships with themselves and each other.

As a final product a "Guide to connecting with yourself" was created which combines the power of art with the experiences of women who have experienced abuse, contains simple, short but effective practices for unleashing hidden power and connecting with yourself. It is an online guide with practical tools from the art world that serve to change perspectives and encourage creativity in our everyday lives. The guidebook focuses on the idea, built with the help of female survivors of violence, that before making connections with others, it is important to connect with ourselves.

Needs assessment

The initiative targets women who have experienced domestic violence. It responds to the needs of women to:

- To reconnect with themselves after a difficult period.

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- To empower them, through self-empowerment practices, to reach out to themselves.
- To help them calm down through art.
- To build healthy relationships with themselves and others.
- To discover methods to balance the nervous system
- To reach self-exploration and through creative methods express their essence, their heart and their needs.
- To achieve self-care

Main goals

The main goal is that through artistic methods and working with mentors and artists, women victims of violence can achieve self-knowledge, strength, peace of mind, self-improvement, self-care, realize their value and be able to creative expression.

Target Group

Women survivors of domestic violence who have the need to come back to themselves and find New ways to connect with themselves and self-empower, achieving care and love.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

There are no age restrictions, and anyone can participate as long as they fall into the target group. It is assumed that women must be 18+, but this is not a mandatory rule.

No particular educational background was specified as being needed by the women participating in the event. However, the mandatory presence of mentors and actors to interact with the audience is required, which would require some education in the given field.

Achieved results

As a final product of the project, a guide - "Guide to connecting with yourself" was created. It includes practices for stilling and hearing the inner voice, practices for connecting and activating the senses, grounding practices, practices for self-improvement through dance, inspiration interviews, practices for activating the voice and expressing through sounds, practices for becoming aware of the body's polarities, and techniques for balancing the central nervous system.

Impact on the participants

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The practice helps women survivors of domestic violence to connect with themselves, get to know themselves and achieve inner peace and expression through creative trainings, using the methods of sensory, dance, documentary theater, creative writing, kinesiology and stillness practices.

Relevance

The practice focuses on women survivors of domestic violence and how through the methods of art and its power, it can help to overcome trauma and connect with oneself, after a period of ignoring one's own needs.

Challenges

Challenges may include:

- Engaging the audience to actively participate in the artistic methods during the performance.

- Achieving an environment of peace and trust, especially when working with women survivors of domestic violence.

To overcome these difficulties, sessions involve specialist mentors to work with the target group and actors to engage the audience to actively participate and motivate them through art.

Sources

https://emproveproject.com/patevoditel/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR2tR9_snvDXj9GnbB8CysS5icAneQwm_M18k456Dk2OhzIFirZ0xiZQDAw_aem_AS3tnOeZtgFX5MGKHoDa2O_s1CVs5MOIwnycTioUghlkOHouznygFt5yCfmunzLE3-bFY1pNADhKI0AUuOTRDSbj

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https://www.facebook.com/events/3558609944454143/3561868684128269/

Good Practice 5: Storytelling through Art & Painting

"Awakening Between the Lines" is an art exhibition in which women survivors of violence tell their stories and their strong characters are portrayed by artists in the form of paintings. The initiative is by the "Empower" Association and aims to use art as a therapeutic tool to help women who have been through violence and to reveal their strength as an inspiration to others. The organizers also include a micro narrative writing competition for these women to express themselves, their struggles and the beauty of growing up, some of which are included in the exhibition. A professional creative writing course, supported by the British Embassy in Bulgaria, with British authors Dr. Will Buckingham and Dr. Hannah Stevens has also been held. In it, women had the opportunity to learn a New Opportunities skill and pour their soul out in writing in a delicate and beautiful way. In this way, art has been used as an unrivalled therapeutic and socially engaging tool - both for its creators and its appreciators. As a result, a set of cards was made, from the flash fiction genre, containing the paintings and inspiring stories of the women, encouraging the rediscovery of oneself, getting to know others and being a symbol of strength. Awakening is their main theme. The set also comes with several ideas for interacting with the cards in the form of creative and therapeutic games. These are designed to unleash the imagination, offer food for thought and self-reflection, and bring participants closer together.

Needs assessment

The practice meets the needs of women survivors of violence to:

- express themselves through art.
- learn how to do it.
- share their stories through the help of paintings and creative writing, as this is often an impossible task for them, through normal communication.
- connect with others who have faced the same struggle.
- use art as a therapeutic tool to reveal their inner strength.

Main Goals

The main goal of the practice is to use art, in the form of painting and creative writing, for self-expression, showing inner strength and self-discovery, for women survivors of

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domestic violence. Through the therapeutic power of art, to show them that they have the space to express themselves and their stories, and thus inspire others

Target Group

The main target group are women who have experienced domestic violence, helping them to know themselves, to express and build themselves. But it is also for other people, whether they are survivors of physical or mental abuse. The exhibition is open and has been open to anyone interested in art. Additionally, the cards created as a result, serve to inspire others and there are methods included for interacting with the cards and using them as a therapeutic tool to encourage imagination, food for thought and self-reflection, and bonding. These cards are for sale and can be purchased by anyone who has an interest in the subject, wishes to see the art created or would like to experiment with New therapeutic methods.

Profile of the participants (age, education)

There is no specific age for participants and no need for any specific education. Women are required to have experienced or are experiencing physical or psychological abuse to be able to participate in the art making process, as the practice is directed at them.

Achieved Results

The outcome achieved from the practice is to build a model in which art can be used as a therapeutic tool for expression, self-awareness and self-building for women survivors of violence. As an additional outcome, a deck of cards containing the artistic products was created and distributed to help others.

Impact of the participants

The effect on the target group is big, as it gives them a field for expression, for exploration, for self-construction and self-reflection on the experience, using art as a therapeutic method. The power of art is embodied as healing and through the products created, women can see their growth and strength, thus inspiring others.

Relevance

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The practice is relevant to the project as it uses artistic methods to help women survivors of violence make sense of what has happened, build themselves up and show their strength and inner beauty. It combines both the techniques of painting and those of creative writing, enabling a wider range of women to get involved and therefore have the opportunity, using the therapeutic powers of art, to express themselves.

Challenges

Challenges practice may face:

- Difficulties in expression, using art. In order to overcome these difficulties, the practice brings in specialists such as popular Bulgarian illustrators, multidisciplinary artists, street artists and writers to guide women and help them through the expression stage.

- Difficulties related to achieving a sharing environment - Empower Association are professionals in working with women survivors of violence and therefore know how to create an environment that is as relaxed and enjoyable as possible for their artistic expression.

Sources

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https://impressio.dir.bg/atelie/pisane-sreshtu-domashno-nasilie

4. Summary

The New Opportunities Handbook is an educational tool, summarizing the historical background and the national legislation regarding human rights and gender-based discrimination in Greece and Bulgaria. The presentation of Good Practices of both countries contributes to the holistic analysis of gender-based issues and New opportunities for female adults victims of violence through art.

The New Opportunities Handbook was implemented in the framework of the Erasmus Project “New Opportunities: New opportunities for adult female victims of violence through art**“**

More information about the project in the official Facebook page:

The project was created in order to enhance a sense of inclusion, acceptance and non-judgement and improve access to high-quality learning contents and is a partnership between:

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IASIS NGO in Greece: IASIS NGO has been providing support to anyone in need for 15 years and is an organization active in the field of Social Inclusion, Mental Health and De-institutionalization, which actively participates in the psychiatric reform promoted by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the European Union. The organization's main objective is to provide psychosocial support and education to people who either belong into the range of or are at risk of exclusion and to adult professionals in the humanitarian field. The organization has also developed a strong network across Europe, through which there have been designed and implemented dozens of Research & Educational Programs in the context of European and national frameworks.

https://www.facebook.com/iasis.ngo/

https://www.iasismed.eu/?lang=en

Can You Association in Bulgaria: The association uses the non-formal education as a powerful tool for social change. It combines different techniques and methods to support individuals to go out of their comfort zone and to become more self-aware and confident. The organization supports individuals, including many women, to find their career path and have developed career guidance program with coaching techniques

https://www.facebook.com/CanYouAssociation

https://canyou.info/

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