

Recent Advances of Art Therapy with Clinical Benefits

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Abstract

Authors and collaborators have continued research of Integrative Medicine (IM) and managed the medical association of Integrative Medicine Japan (IMJ) for long. Among the activity of IMJ, art therapy has attracted attention for its effect by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). Art therapy includes various types of therapies of narrative, drawing, music, masking tape, etc. and provide beneficial influence to patients with anxiety, depression and higher stressful situation. For art therapy, strength has higher satisfaction with better feeling and low cost. The weakness has incomplete evaluation method or its result. Thus, further development of art therapy is expected.

Keywords: Art therapy; Music therapy; Masking tape; American Art Therapy Association (AATA); Integrative Medicine Japan (IMJ)

Commentary Article

In the current medical situation across the world, Western Medicine (WM) and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) have been prevalent. These categories are summarized as Integrative Medicine (IM). Authors and collaborators have continued IM for years, and managed the Shikoku division of Integrative Medicine Japan (IMJ) for long [1,2]. We have been involved in music therapy, art therapy and various activities for the elderly people, and published annual bulletin until now [3,4].

Art therapy has been developed by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), which would hold the main role for teaching and progressing art therapy internationally [5]. Art therapy would be one type of therapy which integrates our mental health and human social services by using creative active art-making associated with various experience and psychological theory. It can be involved in some artistic measures for treating psychological disorders and enhancing mental and physical health. It often utilizes creative art processes, art medica, images and provide client or patients with some responses or unexpected treatment changes. Such beneficial clinical developments are involved in the individual's personality, ability, concerns, interests and conflict. The purpose of the art therapy would be the improvement of well-

being of the client/patient. It is sure that it can give further function improvement for the people.

From ancient era, people have relied on so-called arts for self-expression, interpersonal communication and several healing for long. For evaluated as the mother of art therapy, Margaret Naumburg set up Walden school in New York in 1915 [6]. She believed that children are allowed to play freely and such circumstance can give them healthy development. She wrote some books for art therapy, where creative works can be found as one form of expression in combination of former memory, emotion and communication. Her work led other researchers to begin exploring the field, developing the concept of art therapy. Successively, the concept of art therapy has started as a formal program in 1940s. The technical term of art therapy was originated by Adrian Hill in 1942, who was a British artist and was involved in drawing and painting associated with the improvement of his tuberculosis.

As the concept in art therapy, many therapists have used writing art therapy to help patient/client verbalize their feeling for written sentences [7]. It can express various exercises to clarify the mutual dialogue among therapists, clients and related person. It contributes improving their physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual for better well-being. When it is involved in the description of some reports, they can use narrative, storytelling, poetry, and mutual

dialogues. From behavioral science point of view, it can be one approach method that can reduce stressful matter, figure out current problems, work with painful body and soul, and solve the integrated problems among treatment, feeling and behavior. In this type of art therapy, a patient/client can express freely any matters that comes into the mind.

For the techniques of art therapy, various kinds of measures have been present. They are conducted by the trained therapists in the regions of psychology, counseling, psychiatry, drawing, painting, poem and so on [8]. They included non-verbal measures and also verbal measures, which are relate to the perspectives on daily life, status for a few years, and long lives associated for QOL and ADL until older ages. The following items are used in the counseling and psychologic treatment. They are 1) description by the word in the language: narratives of previous history, experiences of working place and home, 2) drawing or painting by pencil, pen or brush: previous experience, trauma, sight-seeing and images from TV program, 3) expression for future imagination: words and/or images for love, life success, purpose in life, devotion of working, family, education, counseling, medical practice, religion, etc.

Art therapy has proven several evidence to benefit people with life situation, various obstacles and experience, and tough mental and physical health challenges [9]. Most common problems are anxiety and stressful matters. Such art therapy can be applied to calm people with anxiety and higher stressful situation. Art therapists can always use a variety of art measures in order to reduce mild to severe degree of anxiety or threatening problems for helping them verbalize their detail concerns, leading to comfortable stable status. When the client has depression to some degree, art therapy can be applied for explaining and soothing their feeling with therapeutic way.

Music therapy has been well-known for everyone, and it is accepted widely because everyone likes music associated with requiring less cost. It is defined as the therapeutic approach using naturally mood-soothing and -activating for each client [10]. It has two types of private session and group session. The methodology includes listening, singing, playing the instruments, making music, discussing music, writing song and composing music, and so on. Such kinds of music involvement would be effective for people with anxiety or depression. Actually, music and exercise therapy session can support clients/patients with Alzheimer disease (AZ), Parkinson's disease (PD), injuries and other conditions. In the case of pregnant woman, the presence of music may be helpful during labor.

The strength and weakness of art therapy are considered [11]. For beneficial points, various types of art therapies can provide certain satisfaction to patients/clients. For music therapy and aromatherapy, almost all clients evaluate valid method, because each participant feels better with rather low cost. On the other hand,

some weak points are observed. The evaluation for the efficacy is not easy due to the absence of adequate evaluation method. Session would be continued for several times, until the apparent successful results. Some measures require high cost. Therapists always feel poor job growth situation.

As recent topic, the authors group would like to introduce novel type of art therapy, which is masking tape art [12,13]. Making various art works by masking tape would be pleasant because each applicant can make his own works according to his natural mind [14]. It is not difficult like painting with high technique. Everyone can cut the masking tape by scissors or fingers, and easily put them on the paper on the table. Recently, masking art has been developed to hospital art, which is often found in the entrance hall of several hospitals. It can relax many people visiting the hospital.

In summary, recent topics about art therapy have been described. Authors have managed the activity of IMJ, and been involved in music therapy, masking tape therapy and others. We hope that this article will become useful reference in the CAM and IM region.

Conflicts of Interest

Author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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