

# Healing Through Creativity : The Impact of Expressive Art Therapy on Stress, Anxiety, and Depression Among Gen Z

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**Abstract:** Researcher working on support group for patients caregiver and recently working with psychiatric rehabilitation centre ,in Pune city.In rehabilitation centre opd base various young population comes with their problems.Gen z is population who born in the era 1996 to 2012.This generation raised with using social media and expert in handling social issues, emotional problems. To open them and to find out their exact problems counsellor use expressive art therapy.In expressive art therapy includes visual art,mandal art,doodle art and drawing on emotional topics.Though that gen z can express their feeling and share their anxiety ,stress reasons.In other hands they can use this therapy release their stress.This is secondary source of data review paper.Here puts suggestions and benefits of expressive art therapy.

**Keywords:** Expressive arttherapy ,stress and anxiety, counselling,psychiatric rehabilitation centre, Gen z.

## INTRODUCTION

Research basically focus on college going students. In other scientific language considered as Gen Z. Gen Z is defined as people born between 1995 and 2012,characterized as the first “digital native “generation which raised totally raised with internet access and smartphones.It is known aa progressive ,diverse and tech-savvy,they prioritize mental health, financial stability and environmental stability. Gen Z faces a unique convergence of challenges in the current era, primarily characterized by a mental health crisis fueled by social media comparison and constant digital saturation. They are also struggling with severe economic pressure, including high inflation, rising housing costs, and lower starting salaries, alongside significant anxiety regarding climate change and global instability. There are several key problemes faced by Gen Z, which are 1.Gen Z reports the lowest mental health levels of any generation, with high rates of anxiety, depression, and stress, often linked to "fake dopamine" from social media validation and information over1.2. They face substantial financial hurdles, including rising housing prices, lower starting salaries relative to inflation compared to past generations, and concerns about the ability to build wealth.3.Digital Overload & Loss of

Focus: Living in a highly technologized world has reduced attention spans, resulting in cognitive fatigue and decreased productivity.4Gen Z are facing workplace challenge and that enters a rapidly shifting workforce, facing pressure to adapt to AI and automation, alongside needing to navigate remote work isolation.5.gen Z facing social isolation ,Despite being highly connected digitally, many experience, high levels of loneliness and disconnection from physical-world interactions.6.Gen z have Societal Issues & Safety that Concerns regarding gun violence, racial equity, and a perceived lack of social safety nets contribute to their stress. In college going age they have pressure of marks ,ranks, career stability ,finanacial management and emotional issues as per their age.In such cases if colleges can apply art therapy session and counselling session to students then they can manage their stress ,anxiety and can pull down themselves from their problems.

Expressive art therapy provides a unique avenue for Gen Z to build resilience and gain insight into their emotional well-being while navigating the complexities of modern life. There are so many types of expressive art therapies, which are Non-Verbal Emotional communication. Gen Z faces high levels of anxiety and depression, and expressive art therapy helps process feelings that are difficult to put into words. It allows individuals to explore emotions through visual arts, movement, music, and writing, which can be less intimidating than verbal counseling.

Through expressive art therapy some challenges are occurred among Gen Z,

- **Safe Space and Control:** It provides a safe, structured space where individuals can control the therapeutic process. It is especially effective for adolescents who may be oppositional or distrustful of authority figures, offering a non-threatening alternative.
- **Externalization of Problems:** By creating art, Gen Z can externalize internal stress and anxiety, making it easier to identify and tackle problems. This method helps to separate the individual from the problem.
- **Identity Formation and Self-Esteem:** Art therapy assists in resolving identity crises and enhancing emotional competence, which are critical for adolescents and young adults.
- **Addressing Digital Age Stress:** Expressive arts allow for a break from constant digital stimulation, offering a way to manage stress through active participation rather than passive consumption.

There are variety of expressive art therapy like,

- **Visual Arts:** Drawing, painting, and sculpting, which can be used to externalize anxiety and create tangible expressions of inner turmoil.
- **Writing and Journaling:** Expressive journaling or poetry can help clarify thoughts and feelings, often practiced alongside other techniques.
- **Dance/Movement:** Used to connect with the body and release pent-up emotions.
- **Digital Mediums:** Some therapists incorporate digital art, photos, or videos, which resonate with a digitally native generation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This paper on secondary source of data. Researcher is working on psychiatric rehabilitation centre as a counsellor so trying to putting her experience. Researcher always taking various art and craft activities for patients. daily counsel to young college going students to handle their stress anxiety and depression. She gave them task and their output is amazing. Here reviewed article on expressive art therapy and their positive impact among Gen Z.

### Literature review:

AU Anggawijayanto, Erydani, Works in Journal of Educational, Health & Community Psychology (JEHCP), 2024, Vol 13, Issue 3, Improving the Generation Z's Self-Esteem and Decreasing their Mental Issues by Creative Expression Art Therapy.

### Publiesher put their words on

This research focuses on adolescents with mental health issues such as stress and anxiety. Stress is described as general daily pressure that affects daily behavior, while anxiety is defined as excessive worry about future events. Both stress and anxiety are closely associated with low self-esteem, which refers to an individual's perception and evaluation of their ability to face and solve problems. Various interventions can enhance self-esteem, with art therapy being particularly effective for adolescents. In this study, the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) was used to measure self-esteem, and the DASS-21 was used to assess stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms.

DeepikaUpadhye ,ReetikaRawal , Published: April 19, 2024,International Journal Of Indian Psychology, “A Review Paper on Expressive Art Therapy and Its Implication on Mental Health”.

This review paper told about to delves into the profound realm of art therapy and its potential impact on the mental health of individuals, it explores how expressive art therapy and profound implication that it has on the mental health. It thoroughly examines the existing literature to extract the findings from different studies in order to provide a greater understanding of the therapeutic effects of expressive art when used as an intervention. The review includes various of expressive art like dance, visual art, etc. and investigating how it helps in self-exploration, emotional catharsis, stress management etc thereby contribute to psychological well-being.

### **Implementation Expressive art therapies Settings for Gen Z**

#### **1.University Wellness Centers:**

Integrating art therapy workshops alongside traditional counselling can be implement in universities and junior colleges to refresh them.This art therapy can recognizing it as a less intimidating entry point for students. They can come together by different approach.

**2.Virtual Communities:** In busy schedule online workshop can plan for students.By using Discord, Reddit (r/ArtTherapy), or Instagram to run group sessions allows for remote participation and community-driven healing, reducing feelings of isolation.Various types of fridge magnet workshop and mandal art workshop can organise for students.

#### **3.Mental Health Art :**

Now a days social media using for sharing recovery journeys through illustration to normalize seeking help and breaking stigma. In this universities students can participate through field work and internship. They can create awareness material for NGO work on mental health fitness

#### **4.School-Based "Art-as-Preventive" Programs:**

Implementing art therapy to proactively manage stress and anxiety before it becomes severe, fostering self-care habits. In school level also can implement art as preventive programme. They can conduct awareness rally,healthcheck upcamps,and screening activity.

## **Benefits of Expressive art therapies for Gen Z :**

### **1. Non-Verbal Emotional Outlet:**

Expressive arts allow Gen Z to "speak" about traumatic experiences without having to verbalize them, which can be overwhelming.

### **2. Reduced Stigma:**

Art therapy is perceived as a creative hobby or self-care rather than "medical treatment," increasing engagement among Gen Z as a traditional therapy.

### **3. Improved Self-Esteem:**

This is boosting therapy for gen z. In this gives completing artistic projects in a supportive group setting boosts self-worth and provides a sense of accomplishment.

### **4. Processing Social Media Pressures:**

It provides a space to explore identities outside the curated, digital persona.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

- **Digital Art & Tech-Based Creation:**

In that Utilizing apps, Procreate, digital collages, and collaborative online murals caters to a generation raised in an always-online world, allowing for a "digital clinic" approach. Parivartan trust implemented MYCA app.

- **Anxiety Sketches & Doodling:** In that various junior college and senior college can conduct workshop on doodle art, clay art, mandala art to refresh the children. Simple, repetitive drawing acts as a grounding mechanism to interrupt anxious overthinking, grounding the mind in the present moment.
- **Zine-Making and Visual Journaling:** Creating zines allows Gen Z to merge activism with therapy, exploring personal identity and social justice issues while processing anxiety.
- **Mandala Coloring and Drawing:** Intricate, repeating patterns help lower cortisol levels (the stress hormone) and promote a meditative state.

- **Clay/Tactile Sculpting:** Working with clay provides a sensory experience that helps release bottled-up anger or frustration, aiding with depressive symptoms and body connection.

#### **References:**

1. AU Anggawijayanto, Erydani , Works in Journal of Educational, Health & Community Psychology (JEHCP), 2024, Vol 13, Issue 3, Improving the Generation Z's Self-Esteem and Decreasing their Mental Issues by Creative Expression Art Therapy.
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