



Complementary Therapies

ART THERAPY

Module Code
BMHP5001

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of complementary therapies

Complementary therapies are used in regular cancer treatment. It helps patients to recover from heavy medicines, medical treatments, by presenting it with physical, mental, and spiritual support. Doctors try to focus on the patients with complimentary therapy which helps the patients to get familiar with the indications of cancer or issues caused by the ongoing treatments. Complementary therapy works in various ways of treatments which includes herbal therapies, art and music sessions, physical exercises and psychological sessions. Art therapy helps people reduce anxiety, stress, which helps the patients to explore their complex thoughts by communicating with real people.

1.2 Current systems utilised to regulate the treatments

During complementary therapy, especially with art therapy, the patient has to give permission to the appointed therapist to go with the baseline assessment with ESAS & STAI-S measure points. Patients have to give information like diagnosis, basic art interests by which the process can go on in sessions (Goodtherapy, 2021). In an hour long art session a patient has to participate physically or verbally with various art and craft materials with targets to achieve which helps them to improve their mental health due to their ongoing medication to cure cancer. The attendants make sure the patient gets successful sessions improving their emotional state by achieving their pre-set goals which makes them believe that they are recovering from the cancer. The session ends with open ended questions which helps the therapist to access more information about the patients. There are several sessions of art and craft to cure cancer patients with complimentary therapy.

2. The history, uses, efficacy and contraindications of Art therapy

2.1 History

Health care systems have used art therapy for a very long period of time. Art has been used as a way of communication via group sessions, self-revelation, and the diagnosing process of mental health. For many years art and culture have been used as a self-expressing process to communicate with people which cannot be said

verbally. Medical practitioners have been using this art therapy since the mid 20th century. People are choosing art therapy as a profession in Europe and the United States in a very independent way in recent times. The word 'Art therapy' was first used by Adrian Hill, a British artist in 1942 (Goodtherapy, 2016). He found the healthy benefits of using art as a recovery system while recovering from tuberculosis. As there were no written formats of how to use art as a therapy, people in the past used various forms of arts as their recovery process with the guidance of mental health professionals.

2.2 Uses

Purpose of Art therapy

Art therapy helps the patient to get out from the depressed state of mind. It is used as a way that participants solve their mental issues while performing the art therapy sessions (Cancercouncil 2020). It is the process which helps the participants to improve their mental condition. The pre-set targets make the patients feel that they are recovering day by day through their session goals

On the way of recovering from cancer, it is the mental condition which needs to improve before the body. Successful art therapy sessions build improvement in the patient's state of mind. The reason for this is the improved mental health states that the body is improving from the death threats of cancer.

Principles of art therapy

Clinical surveys show that art therapy sessions help people to recover from issues like fatigue, distressed mental state.

As this is an effective way to cure the patients from cancer the therapists do follow ethical principles while doing the session with cancer patients. Art therapists need to respect the client's **decision making rights** on the ongoing sessions (Goodtherapy 2021).. When the client is unable to give **consent** or information for the therapy sessions the therapist needs to collect that from respective family members of the patients. The therapist needs to explain to the cancer patient all the little details of art therapy sessions. The therapist should clearly elaborate the **role of the practitioner and the participant** in the art therapy sessions.

2.3 Contraindications of Art therapy

Art therapy is a successful way to treat cancer but there are some people who do not comply with the art therapy sessions (Goodtherapy, 2021). However, many people think that they are not comfortable opening up to strangers with art therapy sessions. They think that they are not so good in arts to perform in those sessions. On the other hand it is proved that one does not need to be good in arts to participate in those sessions. It is the process that matters. Patients also think that these sessions could add extra expense to the total cost of the recovery process as cancer recovery is not so affordable.

3. An evaluation of the statutory self-regulation system and the voluntary self-regulation system

3.1 Evaluation of the statutory self-regulation system

Emotional regulation of Art therapy

In the process of evaluation a therapist measures all the basic needed information by measuring mood regulation scale (Fancourt *et al.* 2019). It consists of diversions, discharge of mental conditions. Therapist measures it by making the participant listen to a variety of songs which indicates the mood changes while listening to those songs. Various songs hit differently in art therapy sessions. The patients have to state the effect of listening to those particular songs. Therapists need to maintain a record of those reactions which will help them in later sessions of art therapy.

The measure scale of **Emotional Regulation System** indicates some factors like distraction, reflection, ruminations. These measurements help the therapist to carry on the process of art session therapy of those cancer patients. Those measures help the therapist to find the perfect song for improving the mental state of the patients which will eventually help the patient to recover (Fancourt *et al.* 2019). The measurements follow a theory based analysis process. Those scales factors on 18 items scales which includes 7 item factors of **avoidance strategies**, 6 item factors of **approach strategies** and 5 item factors of **self-development strategies**. Further it gets classified in three ways for better ERS scale and the three classifications are **approach, avoidance, and self-development**.

Creative regulation of Art therapy

There is a vast study that states that there are benefits of joining in various creative activities like making art and crafts, drawing, singing, dancing. Artistic creative activities help people change their emotions rapidly. These creative activities also help the patients to recover from their distressed mental state (Fancourt *et al.* 2019). Studies show those regular sessions of creative activity helps patients to improve their mental health immediately or long process. Creative activity is the most effective way to uplift the patient's mood. Therapists classify emotional improvement in four stages.

Those four stages are **goal, tactic, strategy, and mechanism** (Fancourt *et al.* 2019). Goal indicates what the cancer patient hopes before engaging in this art therapy. Tactics is the process by which the patient wants to achieve his goal during these sessions. Strategy indicates the patient's mental condition while being in the sessions, which eventually distracts the patients from anxiety and lastly the mechanism indicates all the process which the patient is complying while participating in these art therapy sessions (Fancourt *et al.* 2019). Various studies show that it is an effective way to regulate mood or improve the mental health of cancer patients. There is an increasing amount of use of this creative regulation as therapy as it is proving itself as an effective way to treat cancer.

3.2 Voluntary self-regulation system

Mental health is one of the most ignored aspects among human beings that one needs to prioritize to take care of the most. In order to take care of one's own mental health, the person must try to reduce their level of stress either by the help of meditation or by seeking help from an art therapist, where they need to volunteer themselves to the procedure the artist prescribes. Usually, people with cancer try to blame themselves for the cause and the sufferings they are causing to their kiths and kins (Radl *et al.* 2018). The patients suffering from such trauma must find some ways to relax their hyper-stressed state of mind either by meditating or by taking the help of some professional artists who might help them out to cope up with those stressful situations.

The artist needs to have sound knowledge in what they are practicing so as to gain the trust of their patients. Gaining trust can in turn help them volunteer to speak whatever is going on in their mind. This in turn can help the patients themselves to

free their minds from whatever burden they are carrying. Freeing themselves can help them relax and might help them to recover from their adverse health conditions (Grabowecky, 2019). In addition, the artist must make them indulge in some physical activities that might help them to come out of the never-ending stressful life as long as they are involved in that work. Moreover, they must also try to involve themselves in all those activities that they find interest in or enjoy doing. Hence, the patients suffering from cancer must act strong and try to do the needful to reduce the mental stress they are going through as that it would benefit them in the long run.

4. Ethical considerations

One of the most undervalued techniques to deal with post-traumatic stress, accidents, or any sort of stress that deals with life and death type situations are Art Therapy (Hansen, 2018). As it deals with all those sensitive hidden feelings, the patients must be dealt very carefully with their emotions. To do so, the artist must follow some of the most basic ethical principles. Speaking elaborately, firstly, the artist must ensure good health of the patient by keeping a regular check on their daily activities. Secondly, if the artist maintains confidentiality, the patient would show enough trust to share their dark thoughts that are continuously flashing in their mind. Thirdly, must provide enough freedom to their clients to make them choose between right and wrong that gives them enough room to act as per their wish. Fourthly, must try neither to harm the patients nor allow them to harm themselves in any self-inflicting harmful thoughts. Fifthly, maintain honesty such that the sufferer feels cozy enough to sense the feeling of the artist being trustworthy. And lastly, show respect to their decisions and at the same time must show total concern for the well-being of the patient. These are not all but are some of the basic moral ethics that could help the patients to deal with and overcome their situation (Mohamad *et al.* 2019).

5. Recommendations

Regardless of any age, race, color, creed, religion, citizenship, status, etc, art therapy was found to be significantly helpful in improving the stress among cancer patients. However, that is not enough. Although art therapy is considered one of the most successful ways to cope up with mental stress disorders, it remains very much under-

penetrated in the modern world. If we are to create a profound impact, we need to make it more accessible to the world and let people know that there exist a procedure that could help them in such situations. In order to reach out to the majority of the people, the government and the NGOs must join hands in promoting and providing correct knowledge about it on a large scale by advertising through TV, radios, newspapers, magazines, or by distributing pamphlets (Miller, 2020). The government must also set up some free counseling camps at the village level where media access is limited to date. Along with those, the government must also promote pursuing higher studies in the field of clinical psychology in their respective countries and allocate some funds in setting up some research centers or researching in this field (King, 2018). The schools, colleges, and universities too can host some seminars related to these fields to make a larger impact on the younger generation that could, in turn, help the information spread faster to the common people.

Today, most of the cancer patients are still very skeptical about the success of this procedure and rather prefer to abstain from such therapies due to certain misconceptions they hold. Now, it becomes the responsibility of the cancer sufferer's family members to not abandon them in this crisis and rather be by their side (Sornborger *et al.* 2017). If they are incapable of taking good care of them, they must reach the art therapy counsellor who excels in procedures (Redmond *et al.* 2019). If the patient wants to overcome this stressful situation, he could crosscheck the credentials by asking some of the necessary questions such as his qualification, his experience, success rate, and so on. These are not any ordinary questions that the patients ask, in fact, the answers to these questions give a measure of trustworthiness to the therapist. Trust is a thing that a person seeks in everybody and so does the patient. Some countries like the USA and UK adopted a special procedure of merging the art therapy with the art museum and to a great surprise, it proved very helpful in improving the overall health conditions of the patients (Redmond *et al.* 2019). This interesting method can also be adopted by other countries and they might try to experiment with such type of merging of various art and cultural institutions especially for those patients who love art, culture, and music. Those who are not into art and culture might find their respective ways of indulging in activities of their choice. Hence, after looking for some qualities and ethics in the therapist, the patient gains the necessary confidence to show some trust and unburden their head.

6. Conclusion

After doing some extensive research in the field of art therapy, it can be concluded that art therapy can be very promising in treating a vast majority of cancer patients. A lot of research has been done in the field of oncology, its relation to art therapy, some of them proved successful, and some due to lack of proper data couldn't be concluded. Ignoring all those inconclusive research works, one could easily infer that given sufficient amounts of relevant data, art therapy could prove to be very successful in treating a cancer patient if implemented in a proper manner. The health professionals believe that a larger chunk of patients is still needed to be made aware of this beautiful therapy. Little effort from our side and a bit of help from governmental organizations can ensure a boost in a healthy spread of the information to all the needy patients. Apart from that, it is also seen that the people who are involved more in some sort of physical tasks live more freely, some like to paint, some to play, some pursue their own unfulfilled dreams. These acts altogether help them to cherish their lives fully slowly turning them into mindful, blissful, and a happy healthy person.

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