Creative Arts Interventions for Improved Epilepsy Patient Quality of Life: Progress Report of a trial during the pandemic

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Creative Arts Pilot Study

- Study of arts interventions with Epilepsy and Headache patients
- Participants completed 1 intervention during their inpatient admission
- Examined quality of life questionnaires before and after
- Compared seizure frequency, EEG recordings, medication use, etc

Main finding: This type of study is feasible!
Current Study - Creative Arts II Study

- Randomized study of one of three longitudinal arts interventions with Epilepsy patients
- Participants complete 1 intervention during their inpatient admission, plus 4 follow-ups remotely*
- Outcomes to be examined:
  - quality of life questionnaires before and after first intervention, and at end of participation
  - Comparisons of seizure frequency, EEG recordings, medication use, etc
  - Coding artwork for themes

*Interventions initially in-person for visit 1 and remotely for visits 2-5, but all done remotely due to pandemic social distancing restrictions.
Primary Objective
To assess the effect of the creative arts intervention on QOL in patients with epilepsy as measured by a distress scale and epilepsy-specific quality of life measurements.

Secondary Objectives
1. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on epilepsy patients’ EEG recorded during the intervention.
2. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on the affective state of epilepsy patients using validated screening tools for anxiety and depression.
3. To determine the effect of a creative arts intervention on seizure frequency in epilepsy.
4. To identify themes generated by participant responses to a common creative writing and visual art prompt using qualitative analysis methodology.
Creative Writing

Activity 1 – Personal Metaphors
Choose a personal metaphor from each of the following categories: plant, animal, water, soil, weather, building, part of building or room, stone, heat, musical instrument, kind of artwork, container, tool, toy, etc. Choose three or four metaphors that feel most like themselves and write in the voice of each object with as much detail as possible.

Activity 2 – Mini autobiography
Write to a set of prompts such as: What comes easy to you? What is hard? If you had a store, what would you sell? If a movie was made about your life, what are three scenes that would be essential?

Activity 3 – A Favorite Place
Creative writer will lead patient through a guided fantasy about a real or imagined place that the patient associates with a deep sense of well-being. Prompts will include all five senses. Patient will then free write about the details, followed by creating a poem or prose description about the special place.

Activity 4 – Freewriting, Looping and Journaling
Patient will write nonstop for three minutes on whatever comes to mind, then select words or phrases they find most interesting and, using those as a prompt, again write for three minutes nonstop. This will be repeated several times until patient has a good flow in writing about
I am a miro painting scattered all over no one knows exactly how I am put together and the reasons why they think it is one thing and it is actually another.

I am the weeping willow. The weeping willow people look at and admire. I bloom for a certain time, but I fall apart as the seasons change. The short time in the weeping willow’s blooming is due to short-time happiness, however I know that it is only a temporary happiness. The weeping willow loses their shape. People don’t look at them as beautiful anymore. They dismiss the weeping willow and the weeping willow is just another weed to them. The weeping willow considers him or herself as just another tree. And many times the weeping willow will just dry up and get hit by lightning and die.

I am a gazelle. I am the animal you will never catch. I will run away from my feelings and from any animals that will try to hurt me. I am the fastest animal. I will find cover from any predators that are around me. I am an animal that is always aware of my surroundings and ready to run. I am the animal that is never comfortable in myself. I am guarded, knowing that I am always watched and ready to be attacked.

I am the hammer, the hammer that will beat up thyself until I can’t take it anymore and then beat up everyone else around me until they start beating me up. This hammer was created by something that is more powerful than me. And something that I created and I can take that power away but I am afraid to let the hammer go because I feel unworthy and believe I am deserving of the hammer. Without the hammer beating me, I don’t know how to live.

I am the glass house. I am very transparent. People see right through me. I try very hard to put on the façade to make people think I am strong, a person who can do good things and show strength and be that woman of grace, with the house with the white picket fence, married, with 4.5 children. I have failed and have none of that. And just like the glass house people see right through that and only laugh.

I am a façade and a joke. I am a glass house on stilts. I am higher up and protected. I can see you and you can see me. However, being a glass house I can see you coming. You will never hurt me. Again, you will never hurt me. I am a glass house on stilts on a cliff overlooking the ocean. I can escape because I am higher than you. On the cliff I am higher than you and no one can get me. Where did this come from? I am terrified of heights. I am closer to God. The ocean is restoring to me.
Subject 6 Artwork – Activity 1
**Visual Art**

**Activity 1 – Personal Metaphors**
Choose a personal metaphor from each of the following categories: plant, animal, water, soil, weather, building, part of building or room, stone, heat, musical instrument, kind of artwork, container, tool, or toy. Create a work of art that combines visual expressions of selected personal metaphors.

**Activity 2 – Mini autobiography**
Fill in images in a cartoon-style booklet that uses prompts such as: What comes easy to you? What is hard? If you had a store, what would you sell? If a movie was made about your life, what are 3 scenes that would be essential?

**Activity 3 – A Favorite Place**
Visual artist will lead patient through a guided fantasy about a real or imagined place that the patient associates with a deep sense of well-being. Prompts will include all five senses. Patient will sketch some of the details, then create a drawing or painting or structure of the special place.

**Activity 4 - Scribble drawing, doodling and sketching, sculpting**
Draw loops and/or doodle for three minutes, then select images or patterns they find interesting to develop into a drawing. Offer patient a sketchbook and encourage drawing or other art-making outside of sessions if interested.

**Activity 5 – Patient-Directed Expression**
Patient will choose a theme and art approach based on interest and experiences. If patient has difficulty coming up with something, VA will suggest creating images that express their experiences.
Subject 5 Artwork – Activity 4 and 2

I see a man trapped in a winning body, looking in the mirror is unacceptably trying to avoid it when possible. Helping others comes easy to me. I am a great listener and very empathetic. I am good at reading people and knowing who is genuine and who is fake.

Looking at myself and honestly, tax cut an inventory is hard for me but is telling the difference between what is reality and what is just my mind playing tricks on me.

If I had a Store, I would sell...
Subject 6 Artwork – Activity 2b
Subject 44 – “A Favorite Place” exercise 3

Natures sweet gift bubbles away as we patiently await its first liquid golden sip
In the sugarhouse we are all gathered around loosely telling tales of the past
The old wooden floor which has barren so many different feet creaks and moans
The sun begins to set so that the moon can begin to make its voyage upwards
Merry laughter fills the air and darkness finally falls
Lights come on as vehicles roar to life and this day has come to its end
Subject 1 – exercise 4 “Infinite line”
Study progress and Pandemic impact

1. Research completely halted for 3 months
2. EMU admissions held, then partially curtailed since March 2020.
3. Eligible patients: 113 far lower than anticipated
4. Missed opportunities for enrollments due to workplace changes

Enrolled: 47
Completed (so far): 19
Declined participation: 34

Enrollment Ends 2/1/21

Subject 9 “A Favorite Place”
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