What is the evidence base for the effectiveness of arts related interventions in treating mental health problems in people with ID.

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What is art therapy? (by BAAT – British Association of Art Therapy)

- a form of psychotherapy
- uses art media as its primary mode of expression and communication
- to address emotional issues which may be confusing and distressing.
- in a therapeutic environment with a trained therapist.
- therapist helps the patient to express themselves by creating something – such as a piece of music, a painting or a play - without using words.

- Different age group.

- Wide range of difficulties (emotional, behavioural or mental health problems), physical illness and learning disabilities or physical disability.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CydxvX8NP7w
Concept
influenced by psychoanalysis

Other theories such as attachment-based psychotherapy

broad range of client-centred approaches such as psycho-educational, mindfulness and mentalization-based treatments, compassion-focused and cognitive analytic therapies, and socially engaged practice.

It reflect the cultural and social diversity of the people who engage in it.
Technique & Delivery

- Groups or individually, depending on clients' needs.

- It is not a recreational activity or an art lesson.

- Clients do not need to have any previous experience or expertise in art.

- Helps the clients to think about what they create relates to the feelings and experiences.

- Come to terms with any difficult feelings, events or memories that may be causing you problems.
Technique & Delivery

- Helps them learn to deal with recover from mental health problems.

- After the session, they can discuss what they create with therapists – for example, talking about the thoughts and feelings that came up during the session.

- A wide range of settings, including hospitals, residential care and day centres. They can be done in a group or one-to-one.
For who

Can be helpful for any kind of mental health problem

Can be used as a main form of treatment, or in addition to other treatments, such as medication or a talking treatment.

Arts therapies can be particularly helpful if:

you feel distanced from your feelings

too upsetting to talk about painful experiences - difficult to benefit from talking therapies, such as counselling or psychotherapy.
Different form of art therapies

Music Therapy

Dance (Movement) Therapy

Particularly helpful with negative feelings about physical body, for instance: eating d/o, BDD, Somatisation, physical trauma, physical abuse, sexual abuse.

Antipsychotic SE
Different form of art therapies

**Drama Therapy**

use a range of different techniques. For example: making up short plays or sketches, role play, movement and rhythm

**Art therapy**

Art therapy uses painting, clay and other types of art
Help you feel more connected to the world around you.
Art Therapy and Learning Disabilities

Difficulty with spoken communication or social skills.
Difficulty with non-verbal communication which can lead them to feel isolated or misunderstood.
Particularly during times of negative feelings, change or distress, this can lead to many problems in getting across thoughts, opinions or preferences - lead to anxiety, frustration and behavioural problems.

Person's behavioural problems or mental health issues may be exacerbated.

This is why art therapy can prove very effective for some people with a learning disability. It works in a similar way to psychotherapy, in that it is used to explore state of mind, and offers ways to communicate and discover thoughts and feelings, whilst working towards solutions.

Alternate form of independent expression for those with multiple or severe learning disabilities. Art therapies are thought to be motivational, and may help boost learning whilst stimulating communication and interaction.
“When I couldn't talk without choking on my tears, the therapy gave me a voice and a way to express myself without having to talk”.

“Drama helps me keep in touch with all of the emotions that I haven't necessarily been able to feel or express”.

“I found the sessions really helpful and was able to explore difficult emotions without having to talk out loud straight away. I was given time to explore my thoughts in a supportive environment”.

“Using clay to sculpt my family was really revealing – I thought I knew what the problems were and whose fault it was, but my perspective changed. It helped me start understanding my family dynamics better and move on from being stuck in them”.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
http://www.baat.org/About-Art-Therapy/Art-Therapy-Videos/See-how-Art-Therapy-helped-her-express-herself

Case reports

1. In a group for young women with mild learning disabilities, one member made a house out of a cardboard box, furnished with found objects and recycled materials. Others followed this idea, and all ended up creating these ‘dolls houses’, a symbol of youth and escape, but something that then allowed us to talk about hopes and dreams for the future. A wish to be independent was a common theme, but as they were dependent on parents and carers, this was a huge challenge. The houses allowed the group to talk about the possibility of becoming more independent and issues around growing up.
Case reports

2. Pieces produced in art therapy can have a more immediate and obvious meaning. One woman in her 40s with moderate learning disabilities drew herself much smaller than the residential carers and friends in her pictures. This stemmed from abuse in her upbringing, showing how vulnerable she felt. Over time, she was able to think about her relationships and the representations of herself became bigger, sometimes the same size as others.
Systematic review and economic modelling of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of art therapy among people with non-psychotic mental health disorders

15 RCTs were included in the review (n=777)

- Study population – adults, children with depression, cancer, HIV / AIDS, sickle cell ds, PTST, dementia, asthma.

- Meta-analysis was not possible because of heterogeneity of clinical profiles and outcomes measures.

- Targeted mental health symptoms – depression, anxiety, mood, trauma, distress, quality of life, coping, cognition and self-esteem.
- Narrative synthesis reports that art therapy was associated with significant positive changes in mental health symptoms relative to control group in 10 out of 15 studies examined.

- 4 studies reported improvement from baseline but no significant difference between groups.

- 1 study reported that outcomes were more favourable in the control group.

- Art therapy was reported to be an acceptable treatment and was associated with a number of benefits. A small numbers of patients reported varying reasons for not wanting to take part and therefore art therapy may not be preferred treatment option for everyone.

- Art therapy appears to be cost-effective versus wait-list, but confirmatory studies are needed to confirm this finding, as well as evidence to inform future cost-effective analyses of art therapy versus other treatments.
Art therapy for schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like illnesses, Cochrane Schizophrenia Group, Rachel Ruddy, David Milnes, Volume 13, Issue 2, pages 77–89, June 2000
Background

- Many people with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like illnesses continue to experience symptoms in spite of medication. In addition to medication, creative therapies, such as art therapy, may be helpful. Art therapy allows exploration of the patient's inner world in a non-threatening way through a therapeutic relationship and the use of art materials.

Objectives

- To review the effects of art therapy as an adjunctive treatment for schizophrenia compared with standard care and other psychosocial interventions.
- all randomised controlled trials that compared art therapy with standard care or other psychosocial interventions for schizophrenia.

- only found two randomised controlled trials that studied the use of art therapy for people with schizophrenia. Both studies did not include enough participants to make the results meaningful and we were unable to draw clear conclusions regarding the benefits or harms of art therapy from these studies. More research is needed to determine the value of art therapy in this population.
Effectiveness of a music therapy programme in the enhancement of the social skills of children with moderate intellectual disability.

32 children (age range = 5–10 years) from four ID centres participated. At each centre, four children were randomly selected to participate in the music therapy programme, while four children were assigned to a non-music control group programme.

One staff member was trained in each group procedure at each centre, and requested to run 30-min group sessions twice weekly over an 8-week intervention period.
Five social skills were targeted for intervention: turn-taking, imitation, vocalization, initiation and eye contact.

Measures of effectiveness involved comparison of pre- and post-intervention scores on five target skills using a brief social skills test specifically designed for the study.

The results reflect significant improvements in the five target social skills across both conditions following the 8-week intervention. However, this difference was found to be independent of the music/non-music intervention.
The effects of music therapy on profoundly mentally handicapped adults.

The study compared the efficacy of music therapy and play activities in achieving these objectives.

The therapy was directed at achieving specific objectives for individuals.

4 subjects out of the 12 included in the therapy groups were studied intensively. All subjects received both treatments in a reversal design with 20 weekly sessions of each treatment.

Videotapes of the treatment sessions were analysed using a time-sampling method to record the occurrence of behaviour indicating the achievement of the individual treatment objectives.
The observations of staff behaviour showed that, overall, there was less individual attention given during music therapy than in play sessions, that there was a much greater role differentiation among the staff present in the music therapy groups and that individual clients in the groups received markedly unequal amounts of staff attention.

For all four subjects studied in detail, some differences in behaviour were shown between the treatments and most, but not all, of these differences indicated greater effectiveness of music therapy.
Staff behaviour in the treatment sessions was also observed to investigate the role of staff attention in mediating the treatment effects.

For one subject showing higher performance in play sessions than in music therapy, this could be attributed to a higher level of staff attention for this subject. The differences in favour of music therapy could not be accounted for in this way.

It is concluded that music therapy is a useful treatment approach with profoundly handicapped people.
CBT is the most widely recommended psychological therapy for most mental health problems. However, NICE has identified that the arts therapies may have specific benefits for people with psychosis and schizophrenia and, therefore, recommends art therapy to be considered for these patients, above counselling and supportive psychological therapy.

Art therapy is currently being used in the NHS for many non-psychotic mental disorders particularly for those who are reluctant to communicate or inability to communicate. For example, arts therapies are included in the autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) Strategic Plan for Wales as an accessible and appropriate form of psychotherapy for those with ASD.
But the evidence base for the use and acceptability of art therapy in non-psychotic mental disorders has yet to be formally evaluated.

The range of mental health difficulties dealt with by art therapists who responded includes complex trauma and abuse, learning disabilities, alcohol and substance use, forensic mental health, criminal justice, elderly people and palliative care.

There are clinical guidelines by art therapists for working with elderly people, working with children, adolescents and families, and working with people with a diagnosis of personality disorder, indicating movement in the profession towards more specific systematic practice and research. But, here are currently no national guidelines in the UK specifically for the use of art therapy for non-psychotic mental disorders.
There is no definitive criterion for who is routinely referred for art therapy, and at what point in their care pathway.

There is currently no standard outcome measure for defining ‘successful’ treatment through art therapy in clinical practice.

Art therapy is not delivered for any one specific health condition or symptom. It is used in a variety of patient populations.

Art therapy may often be used in service users with complex clinical presentations who may or may not have responded to several other treatments in mental health services. It is frequently delivered as part of a wider package of treatment and sometimes as a last resort when other treatments have failed.
Thank You