FROM VULNERABILITY
TO EMPOWERMENT
ART THERAPY FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

TAKE pART!

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

This booklet aims to serve as useful guidelines on art therapy for the empowerment of young women and it is addressed to educators and youth workers. It is structured in three parts:

1.Art therapy with gender perspective, explaining main considerations needed to be taken into account to include gender perspective in art therapy.
2. Definition of several techniques of art therapy and practical instructions on how to organise art therapy workshops.
3.Ethical, legal and best practice issues to consider when conducting art therapy with vulnerable women

Art therapy, a term introduced in the mid-20th century, is a way of communicating thoughts and feelings nonverbally; it is based on the idea that the creative art making process promotes healing and personal enrichment. Like other forms of psychotherapy and counselling, it is used to encourage personal growth and increase self-understanding whilst assisting in emotional reparation. It has been employed in a wide variety of settings with children, adults, families and groups. As a process, it helps individuals of all ages create meaning and achieve insight, find relief from overwhelming emotions and trauma, resolve conflicts and enrich daily life. All individuals have the capacity to express themselves creatively, and Art Therapy firmly supports the belief that the product is less important than the therapeutic process involved.

The general understanding and usefulness of Art Therapy has been increasing ever since its inception. Since formal Art Therapy training was not available, pioneers in this field were trained in other professions and mentored by psychiatrists, analysts, and mental health professionals in general. Historically, Art Therapy has resisted an association with science and favoured an art-based philosophy and practice. However, scientific findings about how images influence emotion, thoughts, general wellbeing and how the brain and body react to the experience of drawing, painting, and other art activities are clarifying why Art Therapy may be effective with a variety of populations. As science learns more about the connection between emotions and health, stress and disease, the brain and the immune system, Art Therapy is discovering new frontiers for the use of imagery and art expression as a treatment.

Art therapy and women's empowerment

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and determine their choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence social change towards a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally. In this context of education, training, awareness-raising and the building of self-confidence while expanding choices and options, Art Therapy can be the perfect match to guide vulnerable women in expressing feelings and building interpersonal skills through creative outlets.

The relationship between emotions and creativity can be explored by various means of artistic expression for therapeutic purposes, through Art Therapy it is possible to assist vulnerable women in looking lovingly at their stories and give a new meaning to their lives while attenuating suffering in a process of self-knowledge; increasing their self-esteem, cope better with symptoms, stress and traumatic experiences, and develop cognitive and emotional resources. By reassessing part of their history, the subject assigns a new meaning and changes responses to vulnerabilities. The need to humanise and enhance women's healthcare involves the recognition of rights and sharing between different types of knowledge. Group art therapy practices provide a space to share doubts and guidelines, enhancing their capacity to make appropriate decisions based on their current life stage and circumstances, while fostering their overall wellbeing.

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ART THERAPY FROM THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE
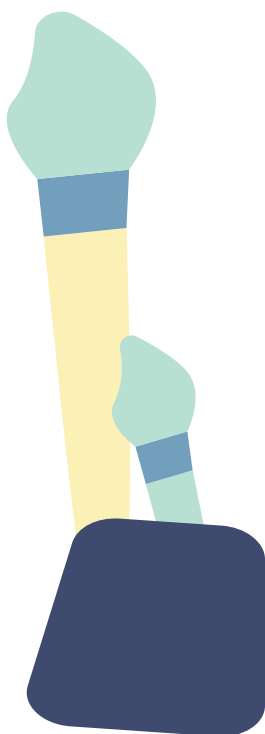
Gender stereotypes and restrictions in artistic creation and artistic therapy are important issues that influence individuals. According to Buscatto, M. & Monjaret, A. (2016), "the influence of gender on artistic practices is "natural", based on the construction of "feminine" and "masculine" practices and ensuring a priori legitimization of a heteronormative gendered order."

In the domain of art, gender stereotypes have played a crucial role in shaping systemic inequalities. Historically, societal norms have perpetuated the belief that certain artistic pursuits are inherently associated with either femininity or masculinity. This biassed perception has had profound consequences, particularly for women, who were systematically excluded from the art scene until the 19th century. Indeed, until the 1870s women faced obstacles that denied them access to artistic professions and training. Artistic academies and institutions were often exclusive, reinforcing the notion that certain creative pursuits were deemed unsuitable or inappropriate for women. Denied the opportunity to receive proper education and recognition for their talents, aspiring female artists were relegated to the periphery of the art world. These restrictions have left lasting scars, creating a persistent gender gap in the highest artistic spheres. The limited opportunities available to women in the past have contributed to a lack of representation in leading artistic positions, both professionally and economically. Despite changes in social attitudes, the consequences of this historical exclusion persist, influencing the recognition, valorization and promotion of female artists.

Buscatto, M. (2014), explains that empirical studies conducted in the artistic field reveal clear patterns in artistic choices based on gender. Women, as professionals and amateurs, are often oriented towards practices considered "feminine," while men tend to opt for practices considered "masculine,". This gender differentiation is not confined to the professional sphere, but also finds its way into personal artistic choices. According to research findings, individuals are encouraged from an early age to adopt practices associated with their sex, making transgression of gender norms not only difficult to imagine, but also socially costly. "A boy who chooses classical dance, a girl who wants to dance hip-hop, a boy who wants to sing or play the flute are all potentially excluded from the practice of their choice by the danger of being stigmatised; they are actually quite unlikely to even think of taking up the practice in a social world where gender roles, registers, and areas of activity are so clearly identified."

These gender differentiations are not confined to the professional sphere but also embed themselves in personal artistic choices, starting at an early age. Society conditions individuals to adopt practices associated with their assigned gender, making the transgression of gender norms not only difficult to imagine but also socially costly. This is particularly pertinent in the context of art therapy, where the influence of gender stereotypes can shape the therapeutic process.

For instance, girls may be subtly encouraged towards softer, emotionally expressive mediums, while boys may feel nudged towards forms reflecting technical mastery or assertiveness.

These early influences can create a lasting impact, affecting personal artistic inclinations and choices in the context of art and therapy. The pressure to conform to established gender norms may limit the full exploration of creative potential, hindering the therapeutic benefits that can arise from unrestricted artistic expression. In this manual on art therapy, we delve into the intricate interplay between gender stereotypes, personal artistic choices, and the therapeutic process, aiming to foster a more inclusive and liberating approach to artistic expression within the realm of therapy.

The consequences of this dynamic resonate in statistics revealing the underrepresentation of women in the highest artistic, professional, and economic spheres. Works and artistic practices perceived as "feminine" undergo persistent undervaluation, contributing to an inequitable artistic hierarchy.

However, challenges extend beyond gender-based artistic choices. Artists "who identify as women or as gender diverse are much more likely to suffer from harassment, abuse, bullying and a general lack of safety in cultural and creative workplaces, including in the digital environment." This underscores a systemic issue, where gender-related discrimination persists as a significant obstacle for artists' professional and personal well-being. In this manual, we'll explore strategies for fostering a more inclusive and respectful environment for all artists, irrespective of their gender identity.

These challenges are exacerbated by legislative and normative constraints in some parts of the world, as illustrated by the 2017 presidential decree in Burundi prohibiting women from playing the drum, a practice recognized as an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage. This shows how societal and patriarchal norms can be institutionalised, restricting women's access to cultural and artistic life.

In conclusion, it is imperative to challenge gender stereotypes and reform norms to create inclusive artistic and therapeutic environments. Raising awareness of gender stereotypes and promoting artistic diversity are essential to enable everyone to explore their creative potential free from gender constraints. By overcoming these barriers, we can truly aspire to an equitable artistic field, reflecting the rich and diverse talents of all individuals, regardless of gender. It is therefore crucial to integrate elements of education on gender stereotypes into arts programs and art therapy training. Raising awareness can help break down barriers and encourage a more nuanced understanding of creativity, regardless of gender.

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(2016). Jouer et déjouer le genre en arts. Ethnologie française, 46, 13-20. https://doi.org/10.3917/ethn.161.0013

https://www.artshelp.com/gender-disparity-art-world/

Buscatto, M. (2014). Artistic practices as gendered practices: Ways and reasons. In Artistic practices (pp. 44-55). Routledge.

Freemuse. (2021). Gender justice and the right to artistic freedom of expression, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Freemuse_2.pdf

Creating a safe environment is necessary to deliver a good workshop with groups of vulnerable people, especially if they are women victims of violence. They need to perceive the space they are in as safe and comfortable, because in many cases they can experience a very low level of trust. It's essential to take into consideration the number of people in the group: a small group makes it possible to closely follow the people involved and the difficulties that may arise at the moment of creation. Indeed, in an art-therapy group the communication network is complex, because the three poles composed of the patient, therapist and the created objects multiply and intersect with the three communicative dimensions, i.e. the expressive, the symbolic and the interactive one.

Once the group has been formed, the first step is to make a series of inner-group agreements in order to build and consolidate mutual trust. In this sense, some agreements are fundamental:

- It is important to specify that all which is said within the walls of the training space will stay there unless permission to share it with someone outside the training space is explicitly and directly requested;
- Personal stories belong to whomever shares them, so no one is allowed to share a story without explicit permission from the source;
- Everyone is important and everyone's perspective counts equally, in fact everyone is respected and involved equally.

The task of the art therapist in constructing the setting, but also in conducting the workshops, is to encourage and support the expression of each participant's particular experiences. It can happen that women might be slightly afraid, intimidated by the idea to use creativity methods for speaking about their personal stories, so the facilitator has to choose easily usable objects the women are familiar with. Furthermore, it is important for the therapist to stimulate the patient to creative expression, freeing him or her from aesthetic preoccupations but emphasising the analogical values and bringing out the inner and emotional aspect inherent in it. In this perspective, the thoughts, emotions, reflections and memories that emerge during the work are important, in an environment that must allow the patient to allow "the power of art to create order out of chaos and finally give pleasure", as Edith Kramer was fond of repeating.

We have seen above how important it is for the therapist to be able to create a space that the user can perceive as safe. With this in mind, it is crucial for the therapist to pay attention to the issue of gender and, in particular, the effects of homophobia in therapy, the needs of people from the LGBTQ+ community and, of course, gender stereotypes.

Homophobia in therapist and client, and LGBTQ+ issues

Until about seventy years ago, therapeutic intervention on non-heterosexual people had the main goal of achieving a 'conversion' to heterosexuality. The therapist used to investigate the user's childhood in search of a trauma that could be the cause of homosexuality.It was not until 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders (DSM II), putting an end to the prejudices sanctioned by mental health professionals and finally admitting that gays and lesbians are no more pathological than heterosexuals. But while homosexuality was being de-pathologized, therapists were given no guidance on how to think about or work with their gay and lesbian clients.

Homosexuality is certainly more accepted today than it was 30 years ago. However, there are still stereotypes and prejudices about homosexuality in the population and these can somehow become entrenched in both therapists and homosexuals themselves. Gays and lesbians, indeed, may feel that therapists cannot understand their feelings, emotions and thoughts. Without an understanding of the extent to which we have all internalised the belief that homosexuality is a perversion, character flaw or moral defect, even the therapist with the best of intentions will echo the negative messages with which gay and lesbian clients have already been bombarded, often making the situation worse. Issues of shame, secrecy and fear of disclosure are inevitably part of the workload that most gay and lesbian clients bring to therapy. Therapists who are unfamiliar with this emotional constellation and the way it changes during the coming-out process may give clients the wrong advice.

Therapists can clarify their own feelings and attitudes about homosexuality by visualising a spectrum of attitudes, with most straight clinicians falling somewhere between the two extremes. At one end, a faulty assumption is that, whatever the presenting complaint, homosexuality is the fundamental problem. At the other extreme, a therapist might believe that homosexual preference makes absolutely no difference at all, so why make a big deal about it? Gay and lesbian, through their own coming-out processes, have usually been forced to confront their internalised fears and stereotypes. Straight therapists need to do the same kind of self-examination to make sure their homophobia doesn't intrude into their clinical work." Once therapists have begun to examine their own fears, they are less likely to succumb to homophobia in sessions

Art therapy and pregnancy

During pregnancy it can be helpful to carve out a personal moment to relax and explore one's emotions. Making art is an activity that induces calm, slows the breathing, and promotes a meditative state. The feel-good hormones (endorphins) released in this process promote placental circulation, aiding foetal growth.It is an activity particularly suitable for anxious, hypertensive pregnant women with placental circulation deficits, or to fill periods of inactivity from work or forced rest, but it is recommended for all women.

The therapist can start with the simplest technique, that of doodling: the women are invited to draw lines at random, and then look for images inside, to be filled in with colour. In a second step, one can look for a personal meaning and emotion, which correspond to the drawing. If they are not found, it does not matter: what matters is the process and not the result.

DRAW LINES AT RANDOM
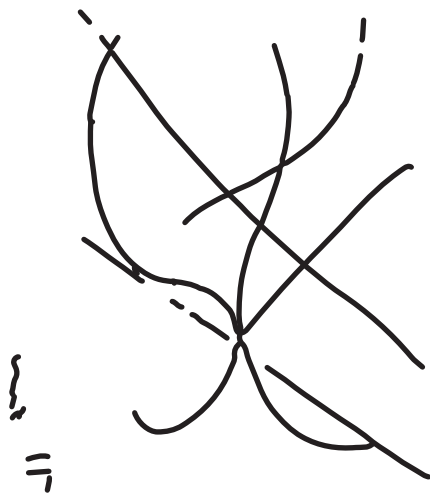
FIND AN IMAGE INSIDE THE LINES
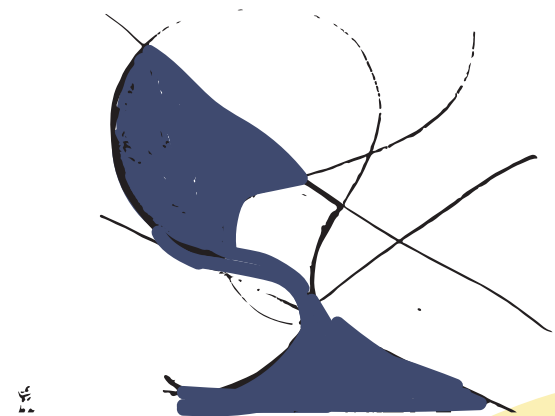
COLOR THE IMAGE AND REFLECT ABOUT FEELING & EMOTIONS

Another technique is the creation of mandalas, circular drawings within which one can create geometric areas or other types of images to colour. This is an art form that originates from Tibetan culture: mandalas are drawings made from sand by Buddhist monks, marvellous in their complexity, which are destroyed when completed.It can also be nice to keep a diary, such as a notebook, where drawings are stored, sorted by date. Seeing the evolution of shapes and colours over time can help recognise a path of emotions and personal meanings.
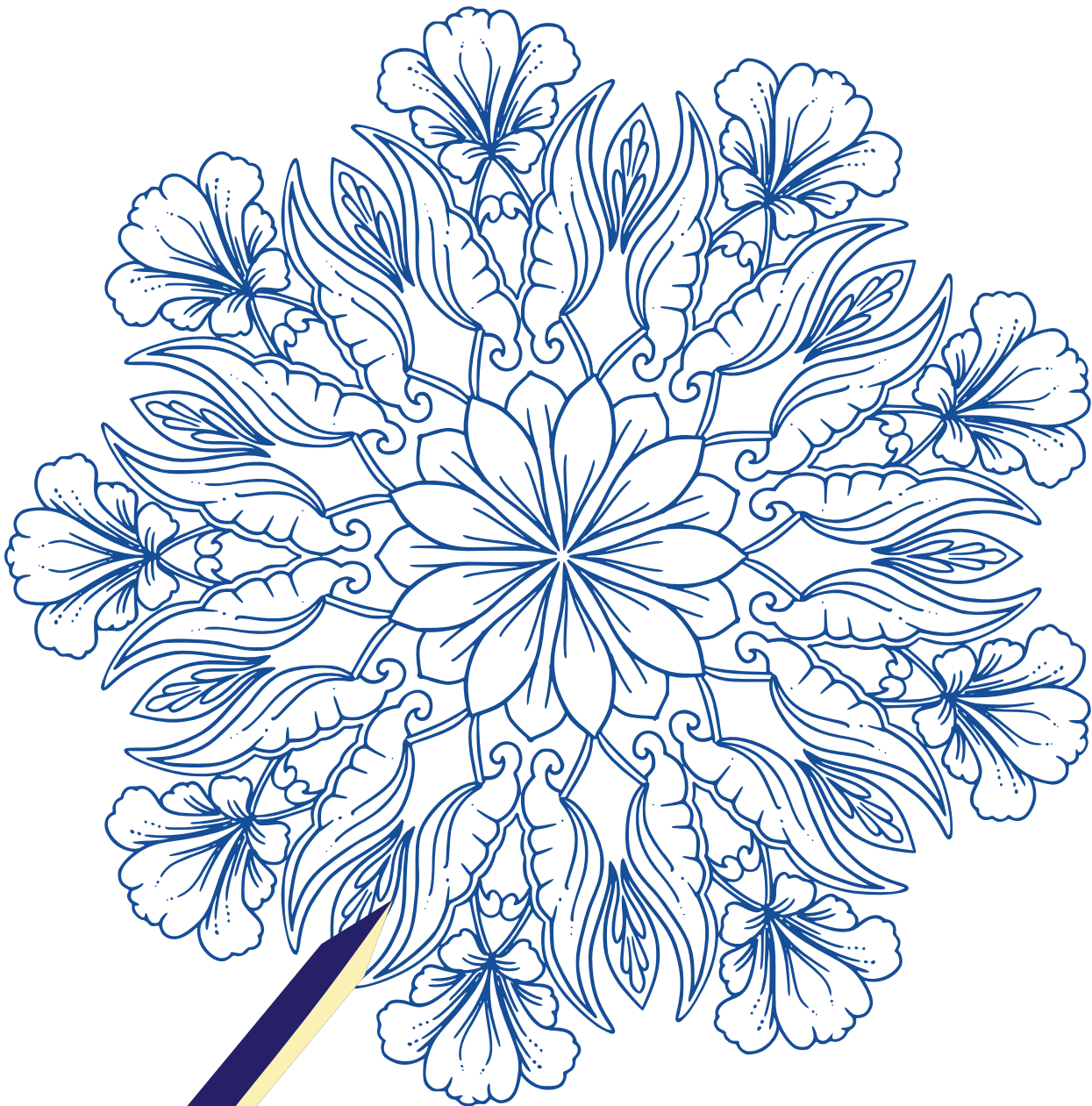
EXAMPLE OF MANDALA

Categorisation is a fundamental feature in our way of thinking: we group apples and cherries together as fruits, fruits and vegetables together as plants and so on. We do this automatically, without a conscious effort. Whenever we do it, we sacrifice some information for the sake of simplicity: we minimise differences within members of the same category and increase the perception of differences between members of different categories. Categorization hides nuances, reduces individual differences behind the image (schema) we have of the category.

None really disputes categorisation of this type: whether cucumbers or avocados are fruits or vegetables does not feel like a critical question to most of us. The problem however is that the same cognitive processes are applied to humans. We categorise each other according to nationality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity etc. And when that happens, this seemingly neutral and inoffensive thought process can make the difference between what life chances and obstacles people will meet, and how easily some will succeed or fail. Categorisation implies a "depersonalisation" (not the same as dehumanisation): "people are no longer represented as unique individuals but rather as embodiments of the relevant prototype" mobilising a set of stereotypical features. (Hogg 2003: 464)

Let's start by having a look at what type of categories we apply to humans and where they come from. Are they objective, natural, "out there" just waiting for us to discover them, or do humans make them up? Consider this: many of our categories only make sense in specific cultures, geographic areas, and what they refer to varies substantially through time. The word "race" in the English language for instance was used in the 16th century to refer to groups of people with a kinship connection. In the 17th century European enlightenment philosophers and naturalists started to use it to refer to phenotypes and physical traits – an innovation not independent of colonisation and the enslavement of people in Africa[1]. We can also zoom on the meanings and definitions of "Black": while slavery was in place in the USA, in many states 1/16 African heritage was enough to define someone as Black. Today, a person with half-African and half-European heritage is still more often viewed as black rather than white (Fiske 408)[2]. What is true for race – that diversity is difficult to simplify into two or even more discrete categories – is true for most other categories. They are not a reflection of some natural, objective truth, they are the consequence of social perception and human decision. Decision here does not refer to individual conscious acts, rather to social norms and conventions that regulate relationships between social groups, or social order.

WE LIVE BY CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES IMPLY HIERARCHY AND HIERARCHIES IMPLY OPPRESSION

In his "Theory of Justice" (1999) John Rawls proposes an interesting thought experiment to check to what extent a society is socially just, i.e., not favouring any group over another: if we had the choice, would we be equally happy to be born into any identity group or social milieu? If the answer is negative, we can be pretty sure that there is some group-based stratification system that favours some groups over others in terms of access to rights, symbolic and material resources. Pratto and Sidanius, authors of the theory of social dominance observe a "basic human predisposition to form and maintain hierarchical and group-based systems of social organisation". Their claim is none less than group-based stratification is a universal feature of human cultures, "beneath major and sometimes profound differences between different human societies, there is also a grammar of social power shared by all societies" (1999). So, we create groups and as soon as we create them, we also imagine a ranking system putting some groups above others. But on what basis?

According to Pratto and Sidanius there are only two dimensions of group-based hierarchies that are spread across all human societies: age and gender. These are observed even in small nomadic hunter-gatherer communities. Despite a great variety in the extent and form of this hierarchisation, there seems to be a reliable pattern: the adults dominate the young and males dominate females in all known societies. Pratto and Sidanius argue that there is a third type of stratification, which is an arbitrarily set system, and which can use any socially constructed group as criteria for division: race, religion, clan, tribe, lineage, linguistic / ethnic group, or social class. This third type appears only whenever an economic surplus is produced by the community: this allows some males to specialise in the "arts of coercion" such as armies, police, bureaucracy (1999:35). This tendency does not only refer to modern capitalism, or a small portion of societies governed by exceptionally evil or greedyv elites. The authors' conclusion is explicit: "the apparently perfect correlation between the production of sustainable economic surplus and the emergence of arbitrary-set social hierarchy appears to imply that systems of arbitrary-set hierarchies will emerge whenever the proper economic conditions allow" (1999:36).

So, any new category can be raised to the level where it becomes a main source of division and oppression, though probably ethnicity, race and religion are heading the shortlist of reasons why groups were victims of aggressions, pogroms, or genocide in human history. Usually there are no objective foundations for the discriminations that are unleashed on the targeted groups, instead stereotypes and prejudices act as "legitimising myths" to justify them.

You may think that pogroms and genocides are things of the past and that today certainly we have learnt to restrain racist, sexist and other similar ideologies. When in doubt, it's worth going back to the thought experiment Rawls proposes from time to time. The effect of group-based hierarchies may be more subtle, more insidious, but it is still there, and for a more objective angle you can check statistical indicators comparing different social groups on life expectancy, average income, wealth etc. This web of inequalities and discriminations is often referred to as "oppression" a concept that grasps the duplicity of the objective phenomenon[3] and the subjective experience it triggers, that of being under pressure, having one's expectation of freedom or recognition broken.

Oppressions intersect

Each of us have multiple social categories, and each of these categories have their respective social ranking in a given social context. For instance, today, in most European cities rich outranks poor, urban outranks rural, male outranks female, but gender conform outranks gender non conform, native speaker outranks second language speaker, higher education outranks lower education and so on, with a potentially infinite list. Our set of multiple social categories create a special constellation of ranks, privileges and oppressions for each of us. But this special constellation is not an arithmetical sum-up of the social statuses of the different categories. Some combinations create brand new forms of oppression. This phenomenon was brought to light by feminist activists[4] noticing the special combination of sexism and racism affecting Black women.

Today we refer to this as "intersectionality"

"Intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking."

The message of the concept is not at all an invitation to measure up whose oppression is "bigger" or deserves more attention. Such a "competition" would not be very productive. Rather it is an invitation to awareness of the interconnectedness of the seemingly separate dynamics, not just between racism and sexism, but also classism, heteronormativity, ableism and so on. A young white French Catholic woman may face very different oppressions than a young black French Muslim woman. In fact, some of the oppressions of the latter may be reinforced by French women's equality movements, for instance connected to the support of some groups on the ban of the Islamic veil which is a profoundly meaningful cultural practice to many contemporary (feminist) French Muslim women. Intersectionality is also a warning against minimising different needs within a seemingly uniform category – for instance that of "women". It is not by accident that the need for intersectional considerations arose in the women's equality movement. Not disputing the many achievements of more than a century of "feminism" (its European / Northern manifestation) the movement has been criticised for their non-reflected ethnocentrism: they seemed to be speaking for and on behalf of all women, but were ignoring the specificities of the needs of women living in other continents, from other social class, race, ethnicity, religion etc.

The third wave of feminism taking form in the 1990's discovers that there is no such thing as a "woman" out of economical, geopolitical, social, cultural context, there is just too much diversity, in terms of challenges (patriarchy and also xenophobia, racism etc) priorities (finding paths to empowerment that are less individualistic and give importance to the community) cultural values (eg: combining women's rights with the recognition of cultural rights) and even the very definition of "woman" (Do we include in the definition of "women" trans persons, who may have been born without female biological characteristics, but identify as women ?. Today (2023) this shift is far from being fully accepted, scandals are not uncommon between feminists labelled as TERF (trans-exclusionary feminists) and trans-inclusive positions.)

The mere fact that we have "women only" workshops should not give us the illusion that we have homogeneous groups where there are no hierarchies and inequalities present. A workshop whose ambition involves empowerment owes it to its participants to be aware of possible oppressions they may face in their lives and offer pathways, strategies towards overcoming these oppressions.
Below you find our recommendations on incorporating some steps that should help you move towards this direction.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO
BEFORE YOUR WORKSHOP**

Get to know your participants, without forcing, learn about the social categories and identities of participants and their expectations to tackle these. Instead of a questionnaire asking them to declare their categories you can ask what social issues they feel concerned about and would be interested in tackling in the workshop

Consider to what extent the diversity of the facilitators's team reflects the diversity of the participants. Ideally the facilitator's team's composition should reflect that of participants. This may be important from two different angles. Symbolically a diverse trainer team sends a powerful message of a positive valuable diversity. But there are also important practical concerns: facilitators from minority groups have access to warm knowledge (informed by lived experience) on how the theme of the training may be impacted by discrimination, conferring legitimacy and authenticity that members of majority will lack, even if they have substantial cold knowledge. Should you need to involve colleagues or freelancers for specific sessions, you may consider this as an opportunity to diversify your team.

Investigate how different social categories, identities and oppressions could be relevant for what you'd like to address in your workshop. TIP: go through the diversity wheel exploring how one or the other category could be relevant, what risk you may need to anticipate. Eg: incorporating creative writing as an art form requires that all participants have a good level of the language you use. If you incorporate dance and movement elements, how will you make them accessible to participants with different mobilities? The ULEX project prepared a facilitators' toolkit with some general starting tips. You can use the kit to help your reflection and also to adopt concrete tips[5].

REPLACE "COLOUR-BLIND" WITH "WELCOMING DIVERSITY"

There was a time when assuming that differences do not matter was considered as an effective strategy to fight inequality. If we do not see and name colour (or any other difference for that matter) surely we'll ensure that no one else will see people of colour (or bearing any other difference) as lesser or secondary. Such colour-blind positions were based on the illusion that not talking about differences may prevent them from having an impact on group dynamics. We now know that was an illusion, and even a somewhat hypocritical one, like those sentences: "I never really saw you as a black person" or "I don't consider you disabled".

Such statements may sound patronising and false, as if there was something wrong, deserving to be hidden in those categories and identities. A more honest approach would focus on welcoming diversity, acknowledging its presence and even appreciating the richness it may bring through the diversity of experiences and angles. TIP: there are different ways to "welcome diversity" as a ritual around the beginning of the work process. This is more than just a mere formality, it is really an invitation to give space, visibility and recognition for all diversities that could be present in the group. Make your own way, building on inspiration from others[6].

CREATE TOGETHER YOUR SAFETY CHARTER TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR DIVERSITY & FOLLOW IT UP!

Once you have welcomed diversity you can also invite the group to create together the process that will protect this diversity and commit to it. This is a moment when together you can agree on what cooperation model you'd like to follow: whether you chose to create a "safe space" or a "brave space" or a "creative and transformative space" it must be clear to all participants so they understand to what they need to consent, how they will react when they feel hurt, or they feel they may hurt someone. Will there be call outs? What happens if there are tensions? It may be a good strategy to start by expressing participants' needs and then together agree on what norms and actions will help the group to follow those needs. It is important that these "rules" are easy to understand, and they are followed through the process. Though everyone commits to it, the facilitator has a key responsibility in ensuring that this agreement is not lost[7].

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[1] https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/historical-foundations-race

[2] The fact that the categories such as Black are arbitrary social constructions, does not imply that they are meaningless for the people they refer to. Some categories become social identities, giving us a subjective sense of meaning, value and identification.

[3] For a formal definition : « [Oppression] occurs when a particular social group is unjustly subordinated, and where that subordination is not necessarily deliberate but instead results from a complex network of social restrictions, ranging from laws and institutions to implicit biases and stereotypes. In such cases, there may be no deliberate attempt to subordinate the relevant group, but the group is nonetheless unjustly subordinated by this network of social constraints » (Taylor 2016)

[4] Legal race scholar Kimberle Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in 1989 but the "Black Feminist Statement" of the Combahee River Collective (Black lesbian socialist feminist organisation) 1977 may be most cited as first reference to the idea it refers to.

[5] https://ulexproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/anti-oppression-toolkit-v4.pdf

[6]https://ulexproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/PSR_MANUAL_RESOURCES/Diversity-Welcome.pdf, https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/diversity-welcome

[7]https://intimacyacrosscultures.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SAFETY-RULES-NEEDS-EXPECTATIONS.pdf

Disability is part of being human. Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life. An estimated 1.3 billion people (about 16% of the global population) currently experience significant disability. Although there isn't a harmonised definition of disability in Europe, since many different countries have their own definitions, there are a few concepts and generally agreed ideas that are shared and present in the sentiment when discussing disabilities.

In 1980, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) in which disability is understood as a person's ability, or lack thereof, to perform the social, economic and civil roles required of everybody in their daily lives. This means that the environment creates disability, although it does originate from impairment. So disability, in a way, is a mismatch between a person and their surroundings.

Inaccessible environments create barriers that often hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Progress on improving social participation can be made by addressing these barriers and facilitating people with disabilities in their day to day lives.It is important to notice that the prevalence of disability is higher among the female, older, or less educated population.

Women and girls with disabilities often are invisible and marginalised in society, and are subject to multiple types of discrimination; with an increased risk of having their human rights and fundamental freedoms disregarded. For example, after submitting evidence to a recent inquiry by the UK Parliament concerning violence against women and girls, Disabled Survivors Unite, a UK disability rights NGO, pointed out that women with disabilities were more than twice as likely to experience violence and abuse compared to women without disabilities in the UK.In addition to these types of gender-based violence, other rights are often neglected, such as the withdrawal of necessary support to live independently, freedom of communication and mobility, removal of accessibility devices and features, as well as the refusal by caregivers to assist with daily activities, such as bathing, dressing, eating and menstrual management.

Frequently, the right to physical integrity of women with disabilities, in particular with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, is violated as a result of substituted decision-making, where an appointed guardian or a judge is empowered to take life altering decisions, supposedly in the "best interests" of the woman and against her will and preferences.Furthermore, the exclusion of women with disabilities from decision-making spaces has for a long time impoverished our societies. Masking the root causes of the discrimination they face, allowing the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, both concerning gender and disability, and ultimately leading to innumerable human rights violations.

Accessibility is about giving equal access to everyone. Without being able to access the facilities and services found in the community, persons with disabilities will never be fully included.

In most societies there are innumerable obstacles and barriers that hinder persons with disabilities. These include such things as stairs, lack of information in accessible formats such as Braille and sign language, and community services provided in a form which persons with disabilities are not able to understand.It is important to note that an accessible physical environment benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities.

ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE Take pART! PROJECT

Ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities in art therapy workshops is important to create an inclusive and welcoming environment. Here are some steps and considerations to help you make your art therapy workshops more accessible:

Awareness and Training: Ensure that all staff and facilitators are trained in disability awareness and sensitivity, so they can better understand and assist participants with disabilities.

Accessible Venue: Choose a venue that is wheelchair accessible and has accessible parking, restrooms, and entrances. Ensure that there are ramps, elevators, or other means for people with mobility challenges to access the workshop area.

Communication: Use clear and simple language when providing instructions or explanations. Provide written materials or visual aids to supplement verbal communication. Consider providing sign language interpreters or assistive listening devices for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Physical Accommodations: Have adjustable tables and chairs to accommodate different body sizes and mobility needs. Provide space for participants to move around comfortably. Make sure art supplies are within reach for participants with limited mobility.

Sensory Considerations: Be mindful of sensory sensitivities. Some participants may have sensory processing issues, so provide a quiet space or sensory-friendly materials if needed. Use natural lighting to create a soothing environment, and avoid fluorescent lighting if it can be a trigger for sensory issues.

Assistive Technology: Ensure that the venue is equipped with assistive technology, such as screen readers or voice recognition software, if needed.

Flexible Scheduling: Consider offering workshops at different times of the day or week to accommodate participants with various schedules or energy levels.
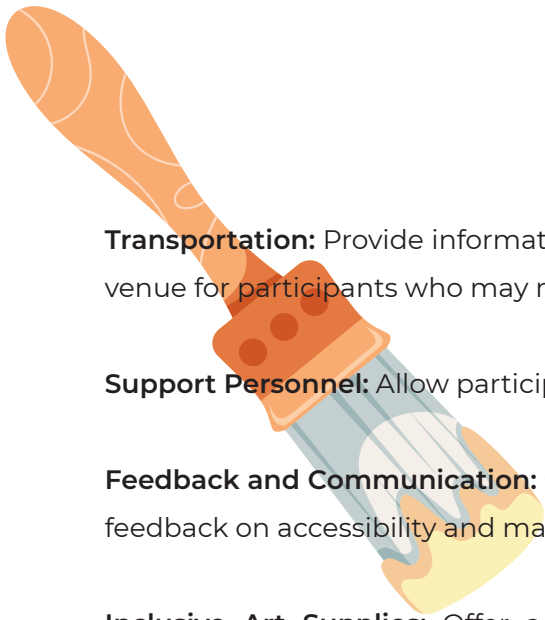
Transportation: Provide information about accessible transportation options to and from the workshop venue for participants who may need them.

Support Personnel: Allow participants to bring support personnel or service animals if needed.

Feedback and Communication: Create an open and welcoming atmosphere for participants to provide feedback on accessibility and make necessary adjustments accordingly.

Inclusive Art Supplies: Offer a variety of art supplies that are suitable for different abilities and preferences. For example, provide large grips for paintbrushes for participants with limited dexterity.

Individualised Approaches: Be flexible and adaptable in your approach to accommodate the unique needs of each participant. Some individuals may require personalised support.

Promote Inclusivity: Use inclusive language and imagery in your promotional materials to signal that your workshop is open to people of all abilities.

Legal Compliance: Familiarise yourself with local laws and regulations regarding accessibility and disability accommodations, and ensure that your workshop complies with them.

By taking these steps, you can create an art therapy workshop that is welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities, allowing them to benefit from the therapeutic and creative aspects of the experience. Remember that inclusivity should be an ongoing commitment, and feedback from participants is valuable in making continuous improvements.

https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/603981/EPRS_IDA(2017)603981_EN.pdf

https://disabledsurvivorsunite.org.uk/index.php/our-evidence-to-the-violence-against-women-and-girls-inquiry/

https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/addressing-the-invisibility-of-women-and-girls-with-disabilities

https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/disacc.htm

ART THERAPY
TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

WHAT IS DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY?

Documentary photography is a visual storytelling technique that involves taking candid and unposed images of real-life situations, events, and people. It aims to document and present a truthful representation of the world, often focusing on social, cultural, political, or historical aspects. This form of photography relies on the photographer's ability to observe, frame, and compose scenes in a way that conveys a narrative or message.

The history of documentary photography dates back to the late 19th century, when photographers began using the camera to capture and document real-life events and situations. Documentary photography has since evolved into an important tool for social change, as photographers use their images to highlight important issues and create awareness.

Perspectives, emotions, and personal stories can be expressed through documentary photography. By utilising this medium, individuals can chronicle their surroundings and experiences, offering insights into their own lives, thoughts, feelings, and values. The photographer's choices regarding subject matter, composition, lighting, and timing all contribute to shaping the narrative they wish to share.

EXAMPLE OF DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY

Finding safe place through photography

OBJECTIVE

This exercise is designed to help participants explore their feelings of comfort and discomfort in their environment through photography and self-expression. By documenting and reflecting on these aspects, participants can gain insights into their emotional responses and promote self-awareness

MATERIALS

Cameras or smartphones with camera functionality.
Notebooks or digital devices for caption writing.

Introduction
(Facilitator's Role):

Begin the workshop by explaining the purpose of the exercise. Emphasise that the goal is not to put participants in uncomfortable situations but rather to explore and reflect on the emotions associated with different places. Remind participants to prioritise their safety at all times while taking photos.

Setting the Scene:

Encourage participants to think about places where they often spend time. It can be outside (city or village) or inside (home, work place, etc)
Explain that they will be taking photos of places where they feel comfortable and safe, as well as places that evoke anxiety and discomfort.

Photography Session:

Divide participants into small groups or pairs, or let them work individually, based on the workshop's dynamics.
Instruct participants to explore and take images of:

Comfortable and Safe Places: Encourage participants to document locations that make them feel secure, at ease, and comfortable.

Anxious and Uncomfortable Places: Encourage participants to capture images of places that trigger feelings of unease, discomfort, or potential danger.

Some questions that can guide your photo-taking are:

How do I feel safe in a particular place?
What does discomfort look like in my daily explorations?
What are ideal situations I can find in a particular place?
What makes me anxious about a particular place?
Photograph your place of strength and your place of discomfort.

Caption Writing:

After the photography session, gather the participants and provide them with time to reflect on the images. Instruct participants to write captions for each photo they took. The captions should describe why they perceive each place as comfortable or uncomfortable.

Encourage participants to be honest and open in their reflections, using this as an opportunity for self-expression.

Photo techniques, caption writing and ethics materials link

Sharing and Reflection:

Create a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their photos and captions.
Participants can take turns presenting their photos and discussing the emotions and thoughts associated with each place.

Facilitate a group discussion by asking open-ended questions about common themes, differences, and surprises participants observed in their own and others' experiences.

Questions to participants:

Describe your picture.
What is happening in your picture?
Why did you take a photo of this?
What does this photo tell about your life?

Group Discussion:

Facilitate a discussion about the collective insights gained from the exercise.

Encourage participants to consider how these insights might impact their daily lives and interactions with their environment.

Discuss strategies for managing uncomfortable feelings and enhancing the sense of comfort and safety in their surroundings.

Conclusion:

Summarise the key takeaways from the exercise.

Emphasise the importance of self-awareness and understanding one's emotional responses.
Provide resources for further exploration of art therapy techniques and emotional well-being.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MOVEMENT, THEATRE AND CLOWNING WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN AT RISK OF MARGINALISATION BY ELAN INTERCULTUREL

The word "therapy" is usually understood as "treatment to help a person get better from the effects of a disease or injury"[1] In the Take part! project our mission is to offer support to women at the risk of marginalisation and discrimination. These aren't injuries or diseases of the individual, but rather of societies. Discrimination can indeed induce trauma (though not necessarily and not for everyone), and in this case therapy may make sense even in this classical narrow interpretation. But if we wish to bring about long term changes, we cannot simply treat the consequences of marginalisation and discrimination. Treatment of the symptom without the underlying cause, could not be good enough. For us, an efficient therapy in this context should be at its core "empowerment". What would this mean? We follow Rowlands[2], to derive our concept of "empowerment" with an opening up of power to all four levels: not only power over, but also power within, power with, power to. Let's explore these a bit more. Power over is often the first association that comes to mind when we think of power. In this sense power is the ability of some to limit, determine the actions, resources, freedoms of another. To work on power over does not mean that we encourage people to gain power over others, we're not interested in a reversal which simply changes the roles but keeps the dynamics. Here the work consists in learning to identify when oppression happens, question its evidence and legitimacy, understand its dynamics and stop complying with it.

Power within Rowlands is "the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self- acceptance and self-respect which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals." Power within can imply becoming aware of and valorising our own resources, such as all the skills we demonstrated in overcoming a difficulty. All the skills, experiences, knowledge that we possess that we can potentially draw on.

Power with: "a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackled problems together"(Rowlands 1997) We can understand "power with" as the strength in realising that problems may not be individual, even less consequences of our own individual actions. Others may face similar problems and challenges, and the sources may well be rooted outside of our own actions, such as structural injustices."Power with" implies finding strength in mutualisation, solidarity, and community.Power to refer to readiness to act, to the strength of turning intentions into action, to make a change.

Proper empowerment encompasses these four meanings. And to make it happen efficiently, it needs to work on three levels: on a personal level, on a relational level and on a collective level. There is a form of theatre that is well suited for such a work. What type of theatre could that be?

[1] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/therapy

[2] https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/questioning-empowerment-working-with-women-in-honduras-121185/

WHAT TYPE OF THEATRE?

If therapy has a narrow understanding, theatre can have an even narrower one, roughly implying going to a special place where there is a stage and rows of seats, so we see a group of comedians put on scene a play someone had written. Theatre obviously has a larger understanding.

"…in its most essential sense, theatre is the capacity possessed by human beings – and not by animals – to observe themselves in action. Humans are capable of seeing themselves in the act of seeing, of thinking their emotions, of being moved by their thoughts."(Boal 2002:11)

"The theatrical language is the most essential human language. Everything that actors do on stage, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions – just as we all do in our daily lives. The only difference is that actors are conscious that they are using the language of theatre, and are thus better able to turn it to their advantage, whereas the woman and man in the street do not know that they are speaking theatre (Boal 2002:15)

The citations above come from Augusto Boal, creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal developed a form of interactive theatre in the 1970's in Brazil, as a form of resistance and social change: a means for members of marginalised and discriminated groups to gain awareness of the oppressions they face and find strategies to oppose these oppressions, to arrive at social change. Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed has many forms (Newspaper Theatre, Forum Theatre, Legislative Theatre to name just a few) and a wide range of techniques. Forum Theatre may be the most known of all these forms, implying a process where participants end up putting on scene situations of oppressions, where the "spectators" are invited to intervene, change with the protagonists to explore different ways of interaction and resistance. We do believe such a process would very much be relevant for women at the risk of marginalisation. However, in the context of the "Take Power" art therapy workshops, in our search for a "therapeutic empowerment" process, we'll merely borrow some elements of Boal's repertoire. Our focus here will be how to facilitate being present "in our bodies", in relationships, facing others and how to access and communicate ideas through the bodies, for instance understanding the concept of power.
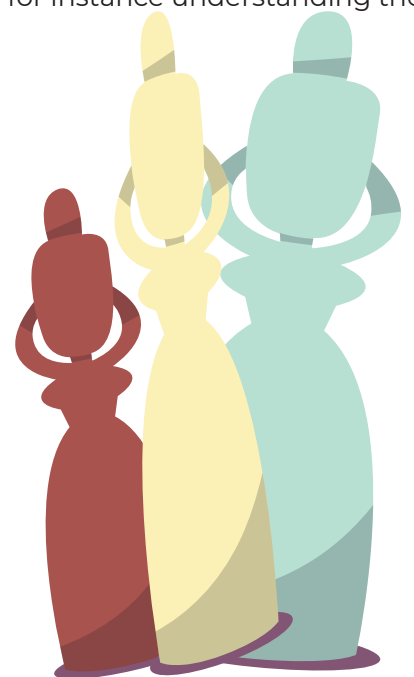
1. WELCOMING, ARRIVAL

"Our sense of agency, how much we feel in control is defined by our relationship with our bodies and its rhythms, our waking and sleeping and how we eat, sit and walk define the contours of our days. In order to find our voice we have to be in our bodies, able to breath, fully able to access our inner sensations. This is the opposite of dissociation of being out of body and making yourself disappear. It's also the opposite of depression, lying slumped in front of a screen that provides passive entertainment. Acting is an experience of using your body to take your place in life."
(Van Der Kolk 2008)

Theatre practitioner David Diamond observes that it is often at the end of the process that participants are in the state where the facilitator imagined them at the beginning (Diamond 2008). This may be particularly true concerning workshops where the basic method is not one that participants may have encountered regularly in their day-to-day life. Work based on theatre or movement for instance is not familiar to most Europeans, whose world - and learning experiences - tend to focus on verbal interactions, the body being merely the tool transporting the brain from one location to another. Yet again, sometimes it is the preconception of the facilitators that makes movement and theatre seem inaccessible.

A certain dissociation from the body, discomfort in exposing the body often accompanies trauma, and facilitators are concerned to propose activities that may be too difficult. For all these concerns it is very useful to pay attention to the arrival of participants to the process. We can boost this process with pre-workshop contact, with the arrangement of space including a coffee corner, and also with introductory, ice-breaking and group-building activities. For name-learning and icebreaking activities you can combine plenary and duo or trio-based activities (smaller groups are easier for participants who are anxious to speak in plenary). Keep these activities easy and simple: if you give too complex instructions people will concentrate on these as opposed to the names they are supposed to learn.

2. "DE-MECANISATION"

Boal recommended starting his processes with a so-called "de-mechanisation" considered as a necessary step before engaging with any creative process. Here is why:

"Every human activity, from the very simplest – walking, for instance – is an extremely complicated operation, which is possible only because the senses are capable of selection; even though they pick up all sensations, they present them to the consciousness according to a definite hierarchy, and this filtering process is repeated over and over again in our lives.

This process of selection and structuration results in mechanisation because when confronted with similar circumstances the senses always select in the same way.
"by always carrying out the same movements, each person mechanises their body to execute these movements as efficiently as possible, thus denying themselves the possibility of original action every time the opportunity arises. The worker becomes an extension of the machine. Wrinkles appear because the repetition of particular muscle constructions eventually leaves its mark on the face." (Boal 2002:30)

De-mechanisation is then useful, even essential for any person wishing to engage in theatrical activities. In addition, with participants who have possibly survived difficult situations and trauma, an additional aspect comes into play: de-mechanise a specific relationship with the environment built on fear and mistrust. If the experience of trauma isolates us from the external environment, our task is to try to offer means to break from the habit of reactions of distrust and disengagement. We propose to do this in two steps: connection with the space through movement and connection with other people.

De-mechanisation can also be the possibility to explore other ways of moving and of behaving. It can work as a metaphor for women who have experienced trauma, that there is not only one path to follow and it can work as an invitation to explore, feel and test a new fit for each of them. The de-mechanisation invites us to stop « acting » in an automatic mode and to have a new embodied experience. If we behave differently, do we think or feel different

Engaging with space: walks

"We mechanise all of our daily movements. Our own individual way of walking is perhaps the most mechanised of such movements, and yet it alters according to place. Even though we have our own individual gait, particular to each of us, always the same (i.e. mechanised), we adapt this way of walking to the place which find ourselves in. The Paris Métro, for example, with its long corridors, makes us accelerate our step; certain streets, on the other hand, or certain pavements, oblige us to walk slowly. I don't walk the same way in London as I do in Paris, or in Rio or New York, as I do in Ouagadougou.Changing our way of walking forces us to activate certain little-used muscle structures, and makes us more conscious of the possibilities of our bodies. Here are some changes worth exploring, in the form of exercises. " (Boal 2002:70)

The "walk" activities can have a double objective. First, they invite participants to take possession of the space in which they are. By walking all around it, checking every corner, every direction our body is situated, by mapping physically the contours of the space we gain a bit of safety and a sensation of control. Second, the simplest form of movement and its declinations help invite everyone in motion, in a way that does not require thinking, planning, imagining choreographies. There is a huge gap between immobility and motion, and walks are often the simplest device to get us through this gap.

Engaging with each other: the duos

 The duos are the simplest and smallest imaginable form of relationships. We are in front of another, but only one. The duo activities are all based on the basic ingredient of social relations: reciprocity. Reciprocity means we offer our attention to the other and they offer theirs to us, we recognise them, and they recognise us. Maybe it is the easiest to measure the importance of this mechanism through the moments when it is broken: what happens when we say hello to someone who does not respond to us, when we offer a handshake that is simply ignored. Such moments are usually accompanied by embarrassment and feelings of rejection. In contrast, reciprocity gives us the confirmation that we are worthy partners, we are seen, and we can have an impact on somebody.

The simplest physical simulation of the mechanism of reciprocity are the mirror games: one person replicates the gestures, movements, rhythms of the other. Social psychologists label this phenomenon of mirroring as "interpersonal coordination"[1] "chameleon effect"[2] or "convergence"[3]. Whatever the key word or metaphor, the usual observation is that people tend to enjoy when their gestures and movements are gently replicated (that is not in a too obvious or artificial way). For some, this is a reminder of the fact that even in the era of individualism, we are much less separated from each other than we believe, that we are deeply and essentially relational beings.

The duo's activities have as objective to bring people back to this relational background motif, even if they may have forgotten it, for fear or need of self-defence. For some people this activity might be challenging as « being seen » can also make us feel vulnerable as we cannot hide and be anonymous in front of a human mirror. This activity can also be a playful way to engage trust in others

3. IMAGE THEATRE

Dealing with images we should not try to 'understand' the meaning of each image, to apprehend its precise meaning, but to feel those images, to let our memories and imaginations wander: the meaning of an image is the image itself. Image is a language. All images also are surfaces and, as such, they reflect what is projected on it. As objects reflect the light that strikes them, so images in an organised ensemble reflect the emotions of the observer, her ideas, memories, imagination, desires. The whole method of Theatre of the Oppressed, and particularly the series of the Image Theatre, is based on the multiple mirror of the gaze of others – a number of people looking at the same image, and offering their feelings, what is evoked for them, what their imaginations throw up around that image. This multiple reflection will reveal to the person who made the image its hidden aspects. It is up to the protagonist (the builder of the image) to understand and feel whatever she wants to or is able to take from this process. (Boal 2002:175)

Image theatre invites us to play with the potential of our bodies to represent ideas, words, objects. What is particularly interesting is that sometimes (maybe often?) by going through the body we may have different answers than if we ask the mind. Asking a group of people for instance to create an image of a "woman" may be much more interesting than inquiring about their definition of "what's a woman". Image theatre does not only consist in producing images with our bodies but also reading the images that the others have produced. Image theatre can be applied to any particular subject. In our Take Part! sessions we are most interested in associations related to gender and power. There are of course some risks: participants may produce stereotypical answers that other participants - or themselves - may judge or feel ashamed of. What is important is to take this as an exploration of what there is, not what there should be or what we would like it to be.Image theatre can be based on individual images (when each participant makes an image with their body) or collective (when participants create together the image of a concept, let's say "family").

4. COLLECTIVE PERFORMANCE, ENGAGING WITH THE GROUP, COLLABORATION THROUGH CO-CREATION

A performance is more complex than an image: it has a beginning, an end, and meaningful time between the two points. A performance can be silent, can use voice or even words. In a collective performance individual images, movements, sequences, or ideas are shared with the group, or possibly small groups consisting of only a couple of participants. Just sharing already has impacts: participants reveal something of their world to others, who welcome it and validate it. We feel seen, possibly recognised. This mutualisation has a key importance for developing a sense of "power with", but also of validating and reinforcing the "power within". So, the process of making the performance can be connected to our "powers'. But so can the subject. Here is our chance for instance to invite participants to explore different concepts or mechanisms related to gender and power. We can decide together the "title" or "theme" of each group: this way we offer them a creative constraint that often liberates and makes the task more difficult. For instance we could invite a group to make a performance on "power within". We can also offer participants freedom to choose their theme (eg: any connection of gender and power).

Performing in front of others can be scary. An audience possesses indeed the power to evaluate, judge and potentially to reject. However, it is the same performance that makes the artists feel "alive" "to go beyond themselves, to sense emotions that make them exist". The performance – as a compact whole – can give an important momentum to guide the collaboration process. Even if in the end the performance is not presented to an external audience, but is an "auto-performance" just for the group.

6. FROM THEATRE TO CLOWN

"Clowns' capacity for play, licence to disrupt, and facility with the liminal are all connected to their ability to engage with possibilities in a limitless way. In the world of everyday life, we often find ourselves stuck in the trap of the either-or. Either we are here or we are there. Either we can make it or we can't. Either we are or we aren't. Part of what makes clowning such an elastic art form is that clowns find ways of using ritual and play to escape that either-or trap. So, for a clown, there is no logical issue in being both here and there, different and the same. Clowns are therefore simultaneously united by and diversified through our engagement with a both-and way of thinking and being." (Lane, Mancini 2020:6)

At the heart of all improvisation in the performing arts there is the question of presence, i.e. being present in the present tense. But it is possibly the clown that is the most direct in this exploration, undressing any other concern to go for mere presence. The "one minute on stage" activity is a good illustration of this feature. The clown is invited to stand in front of the audience and do nothing. Doing nothing implies dropping all masks, not playing a particular role. This is quite bizarre, as we often use our role or tasks in a specific encounter as the best proxy for presence, maybe as a justification of our presence. We don't have any of those as a clown. The one thing clowns are encouraged to do (in fact, required to) is to keep contact with their audience. So on one hand we have the expressed imperative to be in connection with others but without a mask, a task, a role. This is one of the many ambiguities in the clown, connected to the clown's association to the concept of "liminality": a phase in a rite of passage when we had already left our community and not yet returned to it after the transformation. Such "liminal" positions may not be totally unfamiliar for people at risk of marginalisation. Inviting them to experience a similar situation may seem pushing it a bit too far.

However, the clown is also bestowed with the power of turning things upside down, claiming and reversing "failure" and "mistake", making fun of dominant beliefs and norms. We believe the clown can transform even the lack of presence into presence, as one participant said: whatever the clowns were doing on stage, even if they thought they were acting out of pure embarrassment not knowing what to do suddenly was precious[4]. As Boal reminds us "We all are theatre, even if we don't make theatre" (Boal 2002:17) and maybe doing a bit of theatre helps us be better at it when we're not doing it.

The clown facing the audience is an invitation to connect on an emotional level. The public will bring the emotion projected on the clown and he/she does not have to respond just stand by it. Sometimes we can have laughter, sometimes sadness or any other emotions that are now authorised to come to the surface. Recognising and experiencing emotions and letting them out can be liberating and can make part of our healing process.

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[1] See Comejo et al

[2] See Chartrand and Bargh

[3] "Convergence" is a concept from the communication accommodation theory formulated by Giles and Ogay.

[4] Comment in a pilot session in 2023 October

EXAMPLES OF MOVEMENT AND THEATRE WORKSHOP

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY

Engaging with each other through movement and theatre

OBJECTIVE

The activity has several objectives on different aspects of the workshop:
In terms of group dynamics: the aim is to help participants get in touch with each other, get to know each other differently than through verbal introductions.

In terms of safety and trust: the aim is to help participants arrive to and take possession of the training space by exploring all directions, corners etc. The pair activities also aim at building up trust in duos that later on can be extended to bigger groups.

In terms of the training process: the "mechanisation" games help participants to warm up to more complex embodied activities by inviting them to move beyond the usual "mechanised" ways of walking, moving, connecting

Therapeutic objectives: to give a sense of being seen and experience having an impact on others in very simple actions (eg having one's own gestures and movements reflected by a mirror)

MATERIALS

A space big enough to allow movement (count with 50 m2 for 15 participants)
A playlist composed of a diverse musical landscape that is not too intense but able to support participants in their actions

PREPARATION

Prepare the room by putting chairs tables on the side (our outside) to allow free movement

Connect your phone or music source to the loudspeakers

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1.INTRO

To start, tell participants that you will propose a sequence of non-verbal activities. Usually, they do not imply difficulty, but if for any reason they feel uncomfortable they can stop and sit. Ask them if anyone has physical problems that you or the others should be aware of (a bad knee etc.) Ask them not to analyse the different instructions or their own behaviour, merely register any emotion or interpretation that can emerge, without dealing with it further. You can go through the following instructions, allowing more time where participants seem to have fun. Put a gentle but somewhat rhythmic music on.

2.WALKS

"Start walking in the room, exploring all corners, all areas of the room, go where you haven't been before. Invite your attention to the present moment, instead of what you've done before or will do after. Feel the weight of your feet on the floor. Feel how something is pulling you up. Register your breath: is it deep, is it superficial? No need to change, just become aware. If you sense any tension in your body, breathe into it, and release it. Make any stretching movement you feel like.

Exploring different speeds: now let's take 30 as the speed of your regular walking. Can you now walk with speed 50? 70? Now 30 again. Now 10. Now minus 10 (at this point participants may be puzzled, if you are doing the walks with them you can walk backwards and offer a pattern to follow or just let them find their solution).
Now let these instructions go.

Exploring different directions: keep moving backwards, then change it back again forward. What does it feel like? Which one is easier? Keep moving to the right sideways. Then keep moving to the left. Is one side easier than another?

Empty vs full: now look out for empty spaces in the room and go there. Watch your feet and always move towards the empty space. Keep this for a while and then switch: now go where there is no empty space. At this point participants may concentrate in the centre of the room very close to each-other. If they stop, invite them to keep moving. Now let these instructions go, but keep walking.

3.WALKS & CONTACT

"One stops all stop: When one person stops, we should all stop, when one person gets going we all move. After a while you can adjust the instructions as follows: when someone starts to walk again, we all walk the same way they do.

Sun and ice cube: While walking, and without telling them or letting them know, chose a person from the group. This person will be the sun. Now choose another person, again without telling them or letting them know. Now position yourself always between them so that the sun cannot melt the ice cube"

Eye contact: Keep walking, when you get into eye contact with someone, stand for three seconds, then keep moving.

4.DUOS

Leading with the forearm. Next time you have eye contact with someone, this person will be your pair. One of you should be the leader, the other the follower. You should be connected through your forearms, the forearms connected through the sides (not one on top of the other). If the follower is brave they can close their eyes. Explore different directions, different rhythms, heights etc. You should also be aware of how your cooperation changes if you change the quality of the contact. After 1,5 minutes offer a change of roles. Then invite participants to find an ending and to say goodbye to their partner. If you have time, repeat the activity with new pairs so that participants can compare the different experiences.

Leading with a sound: Find a new partner. One of you will lead, the other will follow, but this time it will happen through a sound. Each leader should invent a sound (something that uses their voice) that the follower can follow with eyes closed. When the follower does not hear the sound, they should not move. The leader can stop emitting the sound and move further away, and then call the follower from far away.

If closing the eyes completely is very complicated for someone, they can alternate between opening and closing. After approximately 1,5 minutes, invite for a change in roles.

5.MIRRORS

The proper mirror: "Please start walking again, and find a new partner, someone who you haven't worked with. The person with the longer hair is going to be a mirror and the other a subject. The mirror has to reflect everything the subject does. The aim is not to make a competition and do something that the mirror cannot follow. Explore different types of movements. After about 1,5 minutes, invite for a change of roles: mirror becomes subject, subject becomes mirror. Then invite the pairs to thank each other and teach each other free. In a next round, with a different partner we invite participants to do the same basic task, but try out different distances: go as close to each other as it is still comfortable. Go as far from each other as possible, so that we can still feel we're a couple".

Silly mirror: With a new partner again you'll be subject and mirror, but this time the mirror will do the exact opposite of what the subject is doing. "Opposite"' is up to you, whatever you feel is complementary, really different from what your subject is doing.
After about 1,5 minutes, invite for a change of roles: mirror becomes subject, subject becomes mirror. Then invite the pairs to thank each other and teach each other free.

6.DYNAMIC MIRROR

Dynamic mirror: with yet another partner, in this third step, you can alternate between proper and silly mirror, what's more you can also stop (do nothing in response to something your partner does) and you can also change mirror and subject roles.

7.THE JOURNEY

The journey: Find a new partner, someone with whom you haven't worked yet. You'll each play both roles, so now decide who is the traveller in the 1st round. The person who is the traveller can close their eyes (if it's too uncomfortable they can open their eyes from time to time). The other person will take the traveller on an imaginary journey (it can be to the next building, a trip you liked or you would like, or to another planet, you're totally free). You can take your traveller by touching them, walking with them, making them move and making sounds for them. Before you check if there is any sensitivity you should be aware of. Give about 2 minutes, then change roles.
The pairs may need some verbal exchange after this activity, give them 2 minutes to do so.

HITNS FOR FACILITATION

It helps you as a facilitator to do the walks with your partners so you feel their rhythm.
For the duo activities it may help your participants if you show the activities before asking them to follow your instructions.

REFERENCES

Several versions of the walks, the leading with the sound, the journey and the mirror game are adapted from Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non Actors (on 14 nov 2023 available here: https://www.deepfun.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Games-for-actors-and-non-actors...Augusto-Boal.pdf)
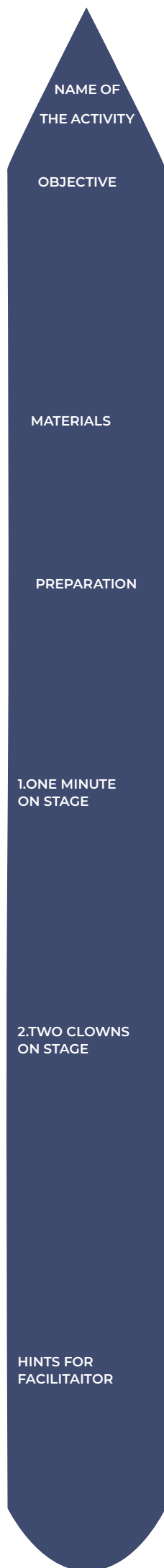
Clown sequence

The activity wishes to explore what it is to be « present » in front of others: how do we feel when others are observing us, and we are standing in front of them without a context or something specific to perform. In this sense the activity invites us to get in touch with emptiness that is only mitigated by the clown disguise that adds a layer of lightness and playfulness, hence helping us out of an excess of vulnerability. Being in front of others without a role or a script focuses the attention of the audience (and the clown) on the basics of physical presence.

We also invite participants to become aware of and to explore what are our reactions and strategies to handle such a situation. The activity can also offer an occasion to explore our relationship to the absurd and have fun together.

To dress up as a clown: red noses for each participant, wigs, scarfs, hats, raincoats, any accessory that can help participants become someone else.
To prepare the room: curtain (or sheets that we can use as curtains), something to hang it on.Clock or phone to time the one minute.

Before the activity prepare the room as follows:
Separate a space for the audience and one for the stage. Create also a "backstage", a small space hidden by curtains, where you can place the accessories for the clowns.

DESCRIPTION

Give a short introduction to clowning and briefly introduce the activity: participants are invited one by one to come backstage and put on a red nose and two accessories of their choice. When they are done, they can come to the stage and stand in front of the audience for a full minute. The instruction has to be very clear: they do not need to, more precisely should not do anything in particular, just to be there, in front of their audience and have eye contact with them. The clown should not try to entertain the audience and the audience should not try to talk to the clown.

If the groups is relatively small (up to 10) you can start by asking participants to count loud from 1 to 10: this will be their number to get on stage. Only do this if you feel confident everyone will be ok with trying out the experience.

In this second phase we invite two clowns to be on stage at the same time. First, we give them some time to just be there, but then we start to stimulate some kind of interaction between the two. Any script is possible, here are some options:

The clowns discover that they are not alone on stage, there is another clown.

One of the clowns is the "clown of the year", which one? The clown gets the prize, the other one is jealous.

The clown is invited to have tea with King Charles. The other clown is King Charles.

The clowns discover each other. One of them falls in love desperately with the other. The other does not.

Clowns commit a murder and want to get rid of the corpse before their mum gets home.
Leave the duo improvising with the instruction, if you feel they finished the sequence give them a new instruction or ask them to find a closure and say goodbye.

In step 1: It may be quite difficult to keep to the instruction of "doing nothing". The facilitator can help them by calling out to them "do less".
The "one minute on stage" activity can have quite a big impact on people (the ones on stage). Crying can happen, usually after the activity, and in some rare occasions participants can be quite scared. If you observe a participant is very far out of their comfort zone, release them from the activity even sooner than one minute.

In step 2: clowns may be so busy with each other that they may lose sight of their audience. The facilitator can help them get back in contact with the audience by calling out "look at your audience", "connect to your audience" etc.

Image Theatre

The activity has several objectives on different aspects of the workshop:

Tackle different concepts – such as power, happiness, love etc. in an embodied way through movement and playing

Invite participants to use their bodies to express ideas

A space big enough to allow movement (count with 50 m2 for 15 participants)

Prepare the room by putting chairs tables on the side (our outside) to allow free movement Reflect on key concepts you would like to tackle in your workshop, so that you can invite your participants to work around these concepts.

DESCRIPTION

1-2-3:
Find a partner. Find space for your couple so you have enough space. Stand facing each-other. Count from 1 to 3 in alternating rhythm, taking turns." When you see participants have caught the rhythm: "now change number 1 with a specific sound and gesture that from now on you're going to repeat instead of 1". When participants have practised enough you ask them to change number 2 and then number 3 also. If you wish, for number 3 you can invite them to choose a movement / sound that is somehow connected to the subject matter you work with. For instance connected to a stereotype about masculinity, femininity. In the end, invite the couples to position themselves in a circle shape so that each couple sees the other couples and present their "rhythm machine" to the others one after the other. This exercise has been created by "Augusto Boal" as a means to "demechanise" ourselves from our daily routines.

Find a partner. One of you is going to be a sculptor and the other clay, that will eventually become a sculpture. The sculptor can form the clay in three different ways:

By touching and moving parts of their body
By moving parts of the body through imaginary strings like a marionette
By showing an example to copy

Now I'd like to invite the sculptors to create their chef d'oeuvre. The sculpture they've always wanted to create but never did. Or what comes to their mind right now. When they are done, they should leave their sculpture and move to the side of the room.
Once all sculptors moved away, invite participants to visit this fantastic exhibition of sculptures. No need for interaction, just let them sense whether there are sculptures that evoke emotions, thoughts, and impressions. Then set the sculptures free and ask for a change of roles. When the second exhibition is happening, animate the sculptures: ask them to make a repetitive movement and add a repetitive sound. Something that feels right for them, in line with what they perceive from their sculpture.

We've already done a small rhythm machine, now we'll do a bigger one. This time we'll start with a place. Maybe "airport". When the first person has an image, they can go on stage and make the image, adding a repetitive sound and movement. As soon as someone can connect to this image, you can go and complete it, adding your image with your repetitive sound and movement. As many participants can join as they wish, the others contemplate the rhythm machine. You can create maybe 3 different machines of different types. For instance: family, passionate love.

Invite participants to stand in a circle. Now we'll be our own sculptures. I'll give you words and will ask you to turn towards the outer part of the circle. Make an image with your body that reflects this word for you. The first word could be "father" for instance.   When you have it, turn back to the centre of the circle. Keep the image, while you can also have a look at the images of the others. There will be a diversity of representations of "father" and none of them will be better than the other.
When each participant is done and stands in their image facing in, ask them to move closer with images that seem to resemble their own image. This way several group sculptures will be created. You can move from one group to another, while you deal with one group, the others can let their image go. Invite participants to propose titles to the images that are proposed. It is important that this is not a guessing game in which we try to identify the original intention of the people making the image. The image is now ours, and we are free to see in it what we see fit. When there is doubt you can animate the image group with a repetitive sound and gesture. When you went through all image groups, invite participants to go back to the circle and repeat the activity with another concept. For our purpose we propose to work with concepts related to gender and empowerment. This could be: father, daughter, woman, power.For the last item, "power" we recommend analysing the image groups with the four aspects of "power": power over, power with, power within, power to.

The "Drawing and Guided Imagination" workshop aims to create a safe, welcoming and non-judgmental space where participants' complex bodily and affective experiences can be explored. The tools used during the activity are mainly non-verbal and projective, expressive techniques with artistic mediation such as Specular Progressive Therapeutic Drawing, symbolic representation, relaxation, guided imagination. The symbol and the group itself become, in fact, the tools through which one can achieve a deeper awareness of oneself and one's resources.

EXAMPLES FOR DRWAING AND GUIDED IMAGINATION WORKSHOPS

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY	Drawing and guided imagination
OBJECTIVE	To create a safe, welcoming, and non-judgmental space where participants' complex bodily and affective experiences can be explored±
MATERIALS	wax colours, papers, carpets, cushions

1.INTRO

The therapist will welcome participants by briefly explaining the theme of the workshop and how it will be conducted.

2.SETTING DEFINITION

The space, boundary and framework of the group and of the experience itself that is to be lived together is delineated here.

A first symbolic gesture, a shared ritual opens and concretely represents the invitation to confidentiality and custody of all the contents that may emerge from that moment within the group's boundaries, of which each participant undertakes to keep secret.

3.RELAXATION & GUIDED IMAGINATION

The therapist invites the participants to move freely in the space, for a few minutes, observing the place and each other, meeting glances and movements, then choosing where to sit and lie down.
You can let yourself go, with your eyes closed, listening only to your breath and the therapist's voice. The focus is on the body.

4.DRAWING

Participants will be invited to draw freely, choosing from the materials provided, experimenting with them, in the silence of words, fostering contact with their own symbolic universe (and as is usually the case with that of others).

5.RESTITUTION

The group will be invited to stand in a circle and share their images, reflecting freely and without any form of judgement on the content that emerges.Associations between their own symbols and those of others will be stimulated, creating, where possible, a large drawing composed of everyone's contributions.

6.THE GIFT

Participants will be invited to symbolically "donate" to the group or some participants a gesture, a word, a meaningful image in response to what they feel they have received.

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY

The shells of our insecurity

OBJECTIVE

Empowering young women through Dance Therapy and Art Therapy.

Work on self-perception and self-esteem.
Promote interrelation between peers.
Discover new tools to face various situations in life.

MATERIALS

Cardboard, newspaper, painter's tape, paints, brushes. Speakers

FIRST BLOCK PHYSICAL PART OF THE ACTIVITY

1.WELCOME

A few minutes will be left for the group to settle into the space.

2.INTRODUCTIO, RELAXATION & AWARENESS

Relaxation to improve body awareness in the present moment: We place ourselves in the room comfortably (preferably sitting) and we will begin by breathing in through the nose for 4 times (marked by the activity instructor), later we will hold the breath for another 4 times and, finally, we will release the air through the mouth for 4 times. We will rest for a few seconds and begin the dynamic again. We will do it a few times, with the aim of connecting with the present moment. While we carry out these breaths, we will have our eyes closed and we will do mindfulness exercises, where we will become aware of our position, tensions in our body, temperature that our body feels, sounds of space, textures, etc.

3.MAKING CONTACT WITH THE SPACE

Subsequently, we will become aware of the space where we are. To do this, all the members of the group are going to inspect everything around them in detail: what is on the walls, what objects are there, what colours you can see. Being a group activity, we can also give ourselves a space to know which people are accompanying us in it.

4.WE CONNECT OUR BODY WITH THE SPACE

After getting to know the space, we are going to give our body the opportunity to express itself freely in it. We will begin by moving as slowly as possible, which will allow us to better understand our body and our movement possibilities, in addition to awakening our body and its energy. It is important to move in all directions, going part by part. When we have managed to mobilise all our parts, we will proceed to allow our body to move as it pleases, being able to make movements with various parts of the body, faster or slower, depending on how we feel in the space, travelling through it in its entirety or staying in a space. same place.

5.BODY OF THE SESSIO SPACE AND WHAT ATTACKS US

We will proceed to propose that they should occupy the least possible space on the ground, making themselves small. Later, we will do the opposite, we will make ourselves big and try to occupy as much space as possible. After this, we will ask people to get up and start walking, occupying the maximum space that their body allows (with their arms extended, or with their legs open or moving from side to side) and they should avoid as much as possible. the clash with the rest of his companions. They will be told that the rest of the people in the class are the things that attack them in their lives, and they must name them when they come across them. When they bump into them, they must interact with them (interaction between 2 people in the room), embrace those things that attack them.

6 DANGER ATTACK US

When we have travelled through space and have come across all the things that attack us (people who are members of the group), we will move on to propose the next activity. We will ask everyone to stand in two rows, facing each other, except for one person, who will be positioned at one of the ends, between the two rows. You should close your eyes and walk as if it were a tightrope. At the same time that the person is passing between the two lines, the rest of the companions must "attack" him (small pushes, slightly pulling his arms, etc.) as they do the things that he has previously defined as attackers in his life. All members will walk this tightrope, one by one.

7.CONFRONTATION

After all of them have felt attacked by these dangers, we will ask people to allow their bodies to react to it. We will ask people to stand separately in space and, letting their body flow, begin to verbalise with their bodies the sensations that these dangers generate. As time goes by, we will ask you to get in pairs or groups and face those fears face to face.

8.CLOSING OF THE FIRS PART & REFLECTION

After having completed the first block of the session, we will reflect on what we previously felt.
Has it been easy for you to connect with what attacks you?
Have you been able to identify it?
What parts of your body do you feel you should protect the most? Why?
What parts of your body do you feel most confident with?

REST

There will be a break between parts.

SECOND BLOCK: PLASTIC PART OF THE ACTIVITY

DESCRIPTION

OUR OWN ARMOR

With the help of the materials we have in the room we are going to create an armour. A shell that will protect us from our fears and makes us able to relate to others. This structure will not be the same for everyone. Each person will have to find the appropriate shape for their armour.

RELATING IN OTHER WAYS

Once again we will move through space making it ours again. How does our armour react? Does it move to our tune or on the contrary does it go freely?

After a first moment of recognition, we will once again relate to those dangers that attack us and are present in the form of our companions. Do we relate to them the same way we did without our armour?

SHARING & FEEDBACK

We will share what we have experienced. Each person will have space to explain to the extent they want what their armour is specifically for and how they experienced the interaction with it.
A joint reflection will be made, how could we extrapolate this help that the armour provides us to our daily life? What tools could we use to help us in our daily lives in the same way that the armour helped us?

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Ramón Guillén Balmes with his work "The prostheses of desire"

The plastic arts can be used to facilitate expression. They can be useful where words fail. Arts appeal to the senses, and therefore to emotions and feelings. To produce a work of art, artists call on images and representations, so they use their imagination based on what they know, their experience and their knowledge.

THE ART OF COLLAGE

Collage and assemblage have been around for centuries. As early as the 16th century, this technique can be found in the compositions of Milanese artist Arcimboldo (1527-1593), and later in the art of marquetry. From 1910, the Cubist movement helped the plastic arts to evolve and put this technique at the forefront of current aesthetic trends. These techniques were also used in works by Picasso and Braque. The Surrealist movement reused this technique as a means of accessing a new sensibility, an appeal to the powers of unconscious life, imagination and dreams. Breton, Dali and Prévert, among others, adopted glue and scissors.

These techniques highlight the involvement of motor skills, sensoriality and sensitivity in the creative process. Used for a long time in art therapy, collages are both artistic creations and can be wonderful vehicles for expressing our states of mind. Collages can take many forms, encouraging self-expression and helping us through difficult times.

This activity, which involves creating a work of art by combining separate elements of all kinds, is accessible to almost everyone, as it requires very little technical skill and can be done without any particular effort. What's more, only a few materials are needed. These include newspapers, magazines, cards, photos, fabrics and other materials, a support, glue, scissors, etc. You can also recycle objects and paper, or use natural elements, etc.

MODELLING

A number of studies and research have demonstrated the therapeutic benefits of modelling on various patients. It's a technique practised since prehistoric times on malleable materials such as earth or clay. It allows participants to project their state of mind and their feelings into a material that can be transformed through different movements and manipulations such as kneading, rolling, flattening, kneading, making impressions, etc. This activity is interesting because it involves the use of touch, which is a primary mode of communication and expression. It is therefore linked to past memories and feelings that have been encoded through touch and movement. Modelling can therefore be interesting and useful for people who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally. Moreover, modelling involves movements of the body and therefore makes possible a non-verbal communication for the creator, through which his or her mental world, emotional life and primary relationships with objects can be expressed. Both techniques are interesting and easy to implement in the form of group workshops for example as well as in individual sessions. They have been carried out in medical-psychological centres, day hospitals, and sometimes in therapeutic, educational and pedagogical institutes and medical-educational institutes

	Collage
NAME OF THE ACTIVITY	
OBJECTIVE	The aim of this workshop is to stimulate creativity and encourage self-expression. The collages can take many forms, let you express your feelings without using words, encourage self-expression and can also help us through difficult times: the images that attract us carry our expectations, our fears, our beliefs.
MATERIALS	Glue, magazines, photos, newspapers, fabric scraps and other materials of your choice, scissors, tape, pens
1.INTRO	After welcoming participants, explain the theme of the workshop.
2.EXPLANATIONS	Explain that participants are going to make a collage representing what they like. Note: Regarding your participants you can change the question
3.CHOICE OF SUPPORT	Explain to participants that they must start by choosing the medium/support on which they want to make their collage. If you only want to offer large sheets of paper as support, this step doesn't apply to you. But it's possible to use several types of support to make a collage: paper, cardboard, board... It's a good idea to give the choice between several supports of different shapes and colours. Technically, the support must be adapted to the elements to be glued, and cardboard should be used when the weight and volume of the elements exceed those of simple paper.
4.CHOICE OF THE ELEMENTS AND COLLAGE	Before making them see the material you can make them guess by touching, hearing, smelling it. Blindfold them and give them a material (e.g. a photograph), using senses other than sight, to try and guess. Participants begin to choose the elements they will use for their collage. Explain that they should take the time to leaf through magazines and newspapers and choose the images and texts that catch their eye. Tell them that they can cut and tear the elements. You can provide them with all kinds of elements, e.g. stickers, fabrics, natural elements such as tree leaves, etc... Participants can then start assembling and glueing these elements. Make it clear that they can arrange the elements as they wish, Overlapping or not, adding drawings, text with felt-tip pens or paint, and so on. There are no rules.
5.EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND EXERCISE	Explain that they will now have to make a second collage, this time representing what they don't like. Tell them that they can either choose a new support or make this second collage behind the first (i.e. on the other side of the support). Note : Regarding your participants you can change the question but still has to be connected to the first
6.CREARION OF THE SECOND COLLAGE	As in the first part of the activity, they'll have to choose elements, assemble them and then glue them.
NOTES	Before or After or between the 1 and 2 exercise, introduce the participant to some artistic techniques of collage [See theory]
CONCLUSION	The group will be invited to share their images, reflecting freely and without any form of judgement on the content that emerges.

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY	**Modelling**

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this workshop is to enable you to express your emotions without using words, but by mobilising other senses such as touch and sight. Working with clay also allows you to disconnect from your everyday problems and relax.

MATERIALS

Clay/modelling clay

1.INTRO

After welcoming participants, introduce yourself and explain the theme of the workshop (modelling).

2.DISCOVERING AND EXPLORIN OF THE MATERIAL

First, let participants handle the clay freely. The aim of this stage is to give them time to familiarise themselves with the material, to realise that it's a malleable material that can be handled in many ways. It can be kneaded, flattened, kneaded and so on. On the other hand, it's a messy material which, at first glance, can disgust.

Explain that they can mix the soil with essential oils to mobilise their senses (touch, sight and smell). Before using the essential soils you can make them guess and link the smell to happy memories.

3.INSTRUCTION AND CREATION OF THE OBJECT

The participants will now move on to the realisation and creation step.
Explain that the aim of this workshop is to create a totem, lucky charm or object representing something they feel good about, something that gives them a sense of well-being, security, or strength. Their creation can also symbolise values, dreams, or goals. The aim is to design and sculpt whatever they wish to express.

Specify that the workshop is not about artistic skills. The creative process takes precedence over the aesthetic result.

CONCLUSION OF THE WORKSHOP

Without judgement, everyone is invited, if they wish, to reflect on their production and present it to the other participants. You can ask them how they feel or felt during the workshop and if they had any difficulties, and if so, which ones.

Puppets are a versatile tool used in various forms of Arts Therapies, especially in Drama Therapy and Play Therapy. They are effective with diverse groups, including children, teenagers, and adults. They come in different forms. Regardless of where the puppet comes from, they can be given a personality, a story, and a voice if desired.

We can use the puppet to convey social stories, fairy tales, or personal narratives. Through this, we can explore issues, challenges, and behaviours. The puppet can be a key therapeutic tool as it functions as a means of projecting the self. Its construction depicts dominant physical blocks and imbalances, as in a mirror. Through play and animation, unconscious elements of the person's character emerge. The puppet has the ability to directly connect the person with the childlike part of him or her. Especially when it is made by the person himself, as through a very simple technique that does not frighten, he uses his/her imagination, his/her creativity and consequently expresses his/her feelings. Puppets provide a safe distance from uncomfortable feelings, memories, and fears. Furthermore, the puppet acts as a medium, which can be an excellent tool in cases where the person may feel anxiety, guilt or have a trauma that does not allow them to talk about it directly. The therapeutic purpose is to give form to the most dynamic characteristics of the participants and thus enhance awareness and empowerment.

Puppets can help with: • Imagination • Problem Solving Skills • Emotions • Language • Confidence • Self-esteem • Non-verbal communication

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY	Discovering my hero! The construction and animation of theatrical puppets as a tool for mental empowerment.
OBJECTIVE	Project emotions and feelings through puppet's voice help with imagination, emotion, problem solving skills
MATERIALS	Sticky notes, scissors, glue, balloons, markers, paper tape, water bottle caps, coloured cotton or any other cheap material.

|	
1.EXPECTATIONS	Write a word about your expectations using sticky notes. We will use this word again as a review at the end of the workshop.
2.WHAT IS A HERO?	Divide into pairs and discuss what the word hero means to you. Share the results of the discussion with the whole group.
3.MAKE YOUR PUPPET	Participants can make any of the following puppets they wish: Body puppets (puppets that are worn or painted on the palms or fingers), finger puppets, glove puppets that are designed to cover the palm, puppet dolls or any form of puppet participants create through their imagination.
4.GIVE YOUR PUPPET A CHARACHTER (animation)	After giving the puppet form, they shape its character and give it life. Participants give human characteristics to their puppet and treat it like a human being, acting as an animated companion. This empowerment brings identification. Empowerment is not something mechanical, but something natural and flowing, so it is not enough to just move the puppet around the space. Participants create the story of the puppet and convey it through the process of animation. They name it, communicate with it , shape its character and observe how it chooses to move through space and communicate with those around it.
5.INTRODUCE YOUR PUPPET	We create a circle and the participant is asked to introduce her puppet to the other participants and describe how she/he feels with her and how she/he experienced the process. The rest of the group can give feedback.
6.CREATING A PERFORMANCE	Create a performance. We give the participants the freedom to invent their performance in 5 minutes. By giving them the instruction to choose only the title of the performance and the venue we enhance spontaneity and the willingness to play. (20' performance) What is the character/type of the performance? It is at the discretion of the participants to choose what character and what kind of performance they will do.
7.CREATIVE WRITING ON THE HERO'S POWER	We invite participants to write a text about the power of their own hero reflecting on the workshop process. And it is the closing of their process.

ETHICS , LEGAL
AND BEST PRACTICE
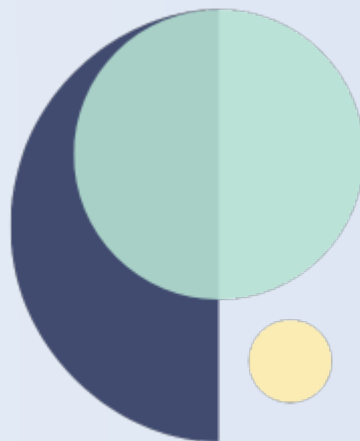
Ethics, legal compliance and best practices are essential in art therapy for several critical reasons, each playing a crucial role in ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and integrity of the therapeutic process. By adhering to these principles, art therapists can create an inclusive and transformative therapeutic space where clients can explore, heal, and grow through the power of art.

Confidentiality: Art therapists must maintain strict confidentiality regarding their clients' artwork and the content of their therapeutic sessions. This includes protecting the identity of the clients and ensuring that their artwork is not shared without explicit consent.

Confidentiality in art therapy is not an absolute concept. The following principles guide the handling of confidentiality:

Art therapists have a professional duty of care towards their clients, and this duty takes precedence over confidentiality. If there are concerns about the safeguarding and well-being of clients, confidentiality may need to be breached.

While information shared by clients in conversations or through artistic expression should be treated respectfully and professionally, it is important to note that confidentiality is held within the treatment team rather than solely by the art therapist. This aspect should be clearly communicated to clients.
There may be situations where disclosure or sharing of information becomes necessary. This may occur if the client requests it or if the law requires disclosure in circumstances where non-disclosure could threaten the safety of the client, the therapist, those responsible for the client's care, or the general public. In such cases, disclosure should be made in a manner that best protects the client's interests.

The above principles apply in various contexts, including within multidisciplinary teams, according to employer's terms and conditions, in line with multi-agency good practice for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, within private practice, and within the client-therapist relationship. These principles guide the art therapist's decision-making process regarding confidentiality in different professional settings.

Informed Consent: Obtaining informed consent from clients is essential before initiating art therapy. This involves providing clients with a clear understanding of the therapy process, potential benefits, risks, and limitations, allowing them to make an informed decision about their participation. Full informed consent is essential for the success of the therapy.

Prior to commencing therapy, art therapists should obtain informed consent from clients. This consent should be documented in the client's clinical notes. The information about the treatment should be provided in both verbal and written form. If a client has difficulty understanding the language or procedures, the art therapist should arrange appropriate support, such as a qualified interpreter or signer, to assist the client. The information provided to clients should include a clear description of the art therapy intervention. Additionally, clients should be informed about the potential benefits they may experience through art therapy. It is also important to disclose any potential risks associated with the therapy, such as the possibility of experiencing temporary worsening of symptoms at the beginning or initial increase in disruptive behaviour or emotions for children.

Art therapists must consider various factors that may influence the effectiveness of therapeutic practice and the reporting of its results. These factors include but are not limited to culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, education, and disability. It is essential for art therapists to be mindful of these factors and ensure that the therapeutic practice is adapted and respectful of individual differences and needs.

Competence: Art therapists should possess the necessary training, education, and experience to provide effective and ethical art therapy services. They must recognize and work within their professional limitations, referring clients to appropriate specialists when necessary.

Cultural Sensitivity: Art therapists must respect and consider their clients' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values during the therapeutic process. Cultural competence is essential to ensure that therapeutic interventions are appropriate and respectful.

Boundaries and Dual Relationships: Art therapists should avoid entering into dual relationships with their clients, as this could compromise objectivity and boundaries. Dual relationships can include social, familial, or financial connections that may influence the therapeutic relationship negatively.

Clients' Artworks: Art therapists consider client artwork as confidential information and the property of the client. In certain practice settings, client artwork may be included in the clinical record, retained by the therapist or agency for a reasonable amount of time according to state regulations and clinical practice. The release of client artwork is based on therapeutic objectives and benefits. Clients are informed if copies or digital images of their artwork are kept in their file. In cases of termination, the original artwork may be released to relatives based on specified consent, the client's wishes, or legal requirements. Written informed consent is obtained from clients or legal guardians to retain client artwork for educational, research, or assessment purposes. Public use, reproduction, or disclosure of client artwork, including sessions and dialogue, requires written consent from clients. Consent is also obtained before photographing artwork or recording art therapy sessions. Written consent is obtained for the use of client artwork in teaching, writing, and public presentations, ensuring client anonymity. Client artwork may be disclosed to third parties, interdisciplinary teams, and supervisors with client consent. Art therapists explain the storage and retention duration of client artwork during art therapy services.

Exhibiting artwork created in art therapy provides an opportunity for clients to show their artwork to the general public or those in their agencies who would not normally see their artwork. Art therapists affirm that the artwork belongs to the clients, and an exhibition of client artwork has the potential to inform the public and empower the clients, while decreasing stigma and preconceptions. In preparation for an exhibition of client artwork, art therapists and clients or legal guardians (if applicable) weigh the benefits of exhibiting against the potential unintended consequences for the clients.

Finally, when considering the exhibition of artwork created in therapy, art therapists address several important questions, such as:

Why exhibit? Art therapists explore the client's motivations, reasons, and potential benefits and drawbacks of exhibiting their artwork. They engage in discussions to understand the client's intentions and desired outcomes.

Which art to exhibit? Art therapists seek clarification on which specific artworks the client wishes to include in the exhibition. They discuss the titles and descriptions of the artwork, ensuring that the client's preferences and intentions are respected.

Is there a conflict of interest? Art therapists openly discuss any potential conflicts that may arise between the therapeutic goals of the artwork and any monetary or notoriety incentives associated with the exhibition. They ensure that the client's best interests are prioritised throughout the process.

How does the client wish to be identified? Clients are given the opportunity to clearly state their preference for how they want to be identified in the exhibition. This may include options such as using their full name, first name only, initials, or remaining anonymous. Additionally, clients can specify the level of identifying information (such as age, gender, diagnosis) they are comfortable disclosing.

Will the artwork be for sale, and who will benefit from the proceeds? Clients are informed about the possibility of selling their artwork and provided with information on how any profits from sales will be distributed. Transparency regarding the financial aspects of the exhibition is essential.

Where will the exhibit take place? Art therapists help clients understand the potential audience and context of the exhibition. This enables clients to make informed decisions about their participation, considering factors such as the venue, audience demographics, and the nature of the event.

By addressing these questions, art therapists ensure that clients have a clear understanding of the exhibition process and are actively involved in decision-making regarding the presentation and dissemination of their artwork.

Licensure and Certification: Art therapists must adhere to the licensure and certification requirements in their respective jurisdictions. This may vary from region to region, so staying up-to-date with local laws and regulations is crucial. The need for educators to have licence when using art therapy techniques depends on the specific context and the scope of their practice. Generally, using art therapy techniques in an educational setting, such as in schools or community centres, may not require a specific art therapy licence. However, there are several important considerations to keep in mind:

Professional Scope: If educators are incorporating art therapy techniques as part of their regular teaching methods to support students' emotional expression and well-being, they may not need a separate art therapy licence. In such cases, art therapy techniques may be used as a supplementary tool to enhance learning and emotional development.

Credentials and Training: While a separate art therapy licence may not be required, educators using art therapy techniques should have appropriate training and knowledge in art therapy principles and practices. They should understand the ethical considerations and boundaries related to using therapeutic methods in an educational setting.

Collaboration with Professionals: If educators want to offer more comprehensive art therapy services or address specific therapeutic needs of students, it is essential to collaborate with licensed art therapists or mental health professionals. This ensures that students receive proper therapeutic support, and any potential psychological issues are appropriately addressed.

Legal and Organisational Policies: Educators should be aware of the legal and organisational policies governing their educational institution. Some institutions may have specific guidelines or requirements regarding the use of therapeutic techniques, and educators should adhere to these policies accordingly.

State and Local Regulations: The need for a licence may vary depending on the state or country in which the educational institution is located. It is important for educators to research the specific regulations and requirements in their region.

Art Therapy Associations: In some cases, educators may choose to obtain certification or membership with art therapy associations or organisations as a way to demonstrate their commitment to ethical practice and ongoing professional development.

Child Protection: When working with minors, art therapists have a legal obligation to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities as mandated by child protection laws.

Consent for Minors: Art therapists should obtain consent from both the minor and their legal guardians when providing therapy to individuals under the age of consent. Art therapists should always involve parents/ legal guardians and carers in the planning and review meetings for children or young people undergoing therapy. This involvement helps support the therapeutic process for the child or young person. While maintaining client confidentiality, they should avoid disclosing information to parents or legal guardians that may negatively impact the treatment or place the client at further risk. However, communication with parents and legal guardians is still important. If art therapists believe a young person is in danger, they must take appropriate action and follow child safeguarding policies as mandated by law.

Copyright and Ownership: Art therapists must ensure they have the necessary rights or permissions to use specific art materials or techniques, and they should clarify the ownership and copyright of any artwork created during therapy.

To ensure a rewarding and transformative art therapy experience, the following best practices should be implemented:

Supervision and Consultation: Engaging in regular supervision and seeking professional consultation is essential for art therapists. Supervision provides a space for reflection, guidance, and support, ultimately enhancing the quality of care provided to clients.

Assessment and Therapy Planning: Art therapists should conduct thorough assessments to understand clients' needs and tailor treatment plans accordingly. Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of interventions is vital to ensure progress and make appropriate adjustments.

Continuing Education: Keeping up with the latest research, trends, and best practices in art therapy is crucial for maintaining competency and providing high-quality care to clients.

Client Empowerment: Art therapists should aim to empower clients to explore and express themselves creatively, fostering self-awareness and self-confidence through the art-making process. Therapists should involve clients in decision-making processes related to exhibiting their artwork. This includes seeking their input, discussing the options and potential outcomes, and allowing clients to have a say in how their artwork is presented to the public. By empowering clients in this way, therapists can enhance their sense of autonomy, self-esteem, and ownership of their artistic expression.

Ethical Dilemma Resolution: Art therapists should be prepared to address ethical dilemmas that may arise during the therapeutic process. Having a clear understanding of ethical guidelines and seeking consultation when necessary can aid in making informed decisions.

Opportunities: They should provide clients with opportunities to see themselves as artists and encourage their active participation in society as artists. This can involve promoting creative self-expression, fostering a sense of artistic identity, and encouraging clients to engage with the broader artistic community.

Safeguards: Therapists must take measures to protect clients from manipulation, exploitation, or shame. They should create a safe and supportive environment where clients feel respected, valued, and free from any form of harm or unethical practices. Ethical boundaries and professional guidelines should be upheld to maintain the well-being of clients.

Art Therapy: A therapeutic approach that utilises creative art-making processes to communicate thoughts and feelings nonverbally, promoting healing, personal enrichment, and self-understanding.

Empowerment: The process of enhancing individuals' capacity to make choices, access opportunities and resources, control their lives, and influence social change towards a more just order.

Gender Perspective: Considerations and awareness regarding the influence of gender in art therapy, emphasising inclusivity and understanding the unique needs of women.

Gender Sensitive: The ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities, and consider them in the design and implementation of strategies and actions.

Ethical, Legal, and Best Practice Issues: Considerations and guidelines for conducting art therapy with vulnerable women, ensuring ethical standards, legal compliance, and adherence to best practices.

Creative Expression: The act of using art as a means to express oneself, emphasising the process over the final product in art therapy.

Personal Growth: The continuous development and improvement of an individual's emotional, psychological, and interpersonal well-being.

Vulnerable Women: Individuals facing challenges or susceptibilities, often in need of support, guidance, and therapeutic interventions.

Self-Knowledge: The process of gaining insight into one's own emotions, experiences, and history, often facilitated through therapeutic practices like art therapy.

Interpersonal Skills: The ability to communicate and interact effectively with others, a focus in art therapy for building relationships and fostering social connections.

Cognitive and Emotional Resources: The mental and emotional tools individuals develop through art therapy to cope with stress, traumatic experiences, and enhance overall well-being.

Group Art Therapy: Therapeutic sessions conducted in a group setting, providing a space for shared experiences, doubts, and guidelines, enhancing decision-making capacity and overall well-being.

Underrepresentation: The limited presence of women artists at higher levels of the artistic, professional, and economic hierarchy.

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorisations, such as gender, race, and class, which can result in unique forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

Safe Environment: A secure and comfortable space that fosters a sense of safety and trust among participants.

Trust: A fundamental element in group dynamics, especially important for individuals with a low level of trust due to past experiences.

Confidentiality: The principle that information shared within the workshop space remains private unless explicit permission is granted to share it outside the group.

Facilitator: The person guiding the workshop, responsible for creating a conducive environment and encouraging participant expression.

Art Therapist: A professional trained to use art as a therapeutic tool, guiding individuals in expressing emotions and experiences.

Setting Construction: The process of creating a physical and emotional space conducive to therapeutic art expression.
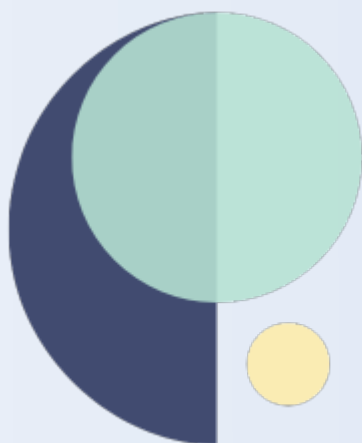
Take pART! is a project that brings together art, psychology, and activism to give vulnerable women and youth a voice to shine a light on social issues with a gender sensitive approach.

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