

The effect of an Art Lantern Creation Group on people with schizophrenia

Li, Yi-Feng¹

Department of psychiatry, Chimei Hospital Center, Tainan city, Taiwan¹

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to investigate the potential effects of participating in an art lantern creation group on people with schizophrenia.

Art therapy encompasses the use of artistic creation and engages patients in visual imagery through a safe space and various art materials. It facilitates self-expression, communication, and personal growth, while also offering benefits such as emotional harmony and the development of social skills. In recent years, the recovery model has gained emphasis in the field of mental health, which focuses on the rebirth and revitalization of individuals, enabling them to reacquaint themselves with their identities and develop new meanings in life. This study explores the process and benefits of individuals with mental illness participating in a group engaged in art lantern-making, using lanterns symbolizing rebirth and hope, rooted in traditional Taiwanese culture, as the creative medium for expression and exploration of recovery.

Methods

Twenty individuals with schizophrenia (12 males and 8 females) participated in the activities for two hours once a week from September 2021 to October 2021. Each session comprised three parts: (1) Introduction to art history and painting skills practice, (2) art lantern creation, and (3) Feedback and sharing. All artworks were displayed at Puji Temple in January 2022. The occupational therapist documented observation reports, while the participants themselves completed activity satisfaction and emotional scales after each session. Additionally, the participants were assessed using the Stage Recovery Scale (SRS) before and after the activities.

Results

No participants dropped out during the activities, and their average age was 40.45 years (ranging from 27 to 59 years). The average duration of illness was 15.55 years (ranging from 1 to 28 years). Regarding activity satisfaction, the average score was 4.86, with ratings above 4.75 for the overall atmosphere, smoothness of activities, satisfaction with staff, rehabilitation benefits, and overall satisfaction. Using a visual analogue scale to measure emotional stability, the average score decreased from 3.15 to 2.3, indicating a trend towards greater emotional stability. In terms of the Stage Recovery Scale, the mean score increased from 90.7 in the pre-test to 93.7 in the post-test, suggesting progress from stage 2 (struggling with disability) to stage 3 (living with disability).

After analyzing the observation records, we found several possible factors for the participants' performance. First, activity space, medication side-effects, and pressure were had the potential impact on performance. Second, acquiring painting skills resulted in improved mastery and a reduction in psychological stress for patients. Third, we observed an increase in self-awareness, greater motivation, entering a state of flow, and the development of interpersonal communication skills during the creative process. Finally, participants experienced enhanced self-confidence and a greater sense of competence.

Conclusion

Engaging in group-based practice of painting skills and art lantern creation has the potential to positively impact the recovery of individuals with schizophrenia. Our study indicated potential improvements in attention, social interaction, self-competence, and willingness to engage in activities. To further validate these findings, future studies should increase the sample size and incorporate a control group.

key words: schizophrenia \ recovery

