



Improving Holistic Wellness Across the Lifespan in the Community through Expressive Arts: From Research to Practice

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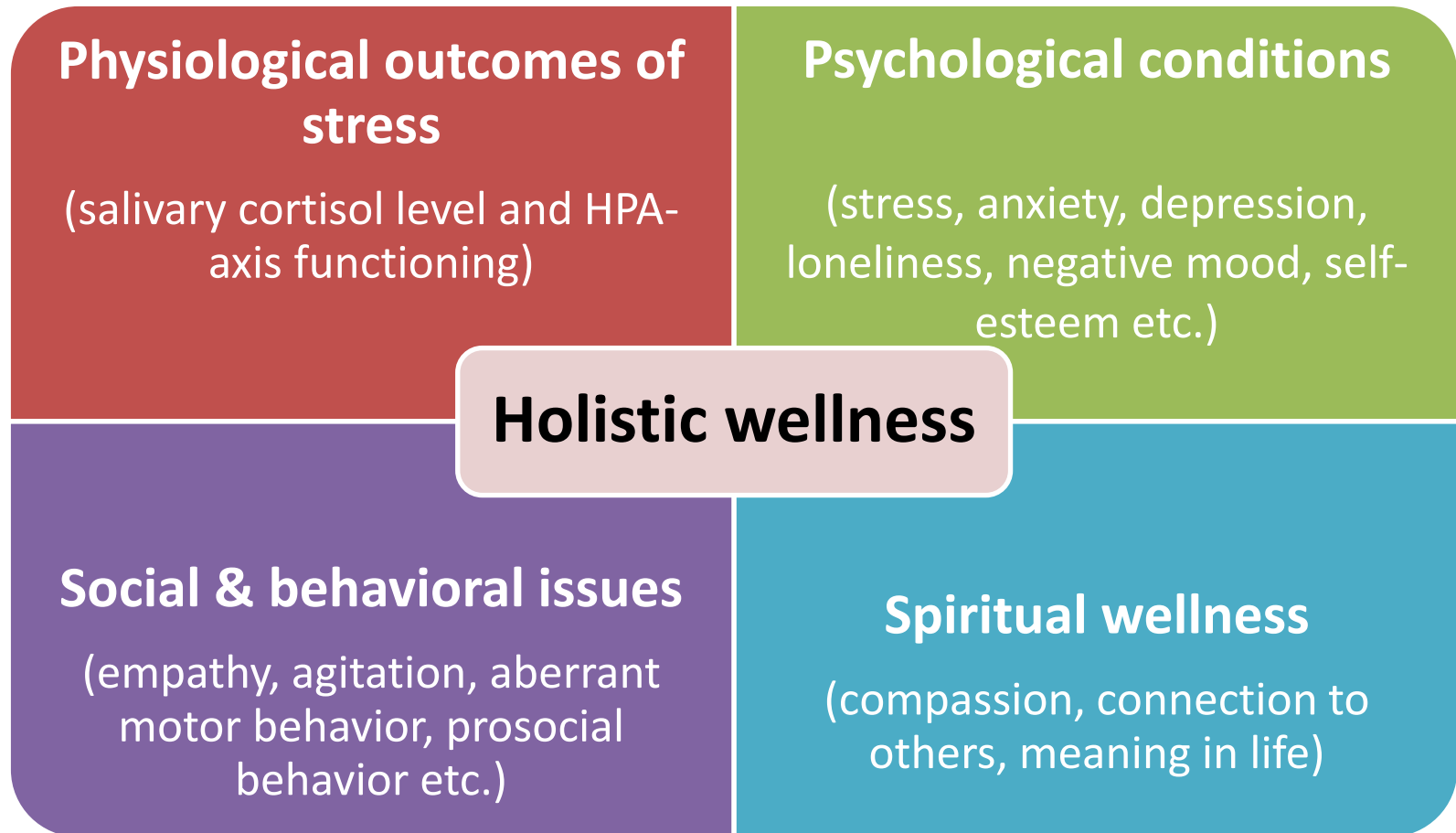
Summary of the Impact

- Artistic expression plays an integral part in how we make sense of our world, to understand and communicate with others. In recent years, the value of arts in recovery from illnesses, injuries, difficult emotions, and promoting wellbeing has been well-recognized internationally.
- We have pioneered the application of the **evidence-based Expressive Arts-based Intervention (EXABI) in wellness promotion, and prevention and management of clinical conditions** in HK. Our works is one of the international focuses in the field.
- The endeavour has shown promising health outcomes for individuals, healthcare providers, families, and the wider community, which in turn, help to promote the integration of the arts-based approach in mainstream professional and social services, **as well as the development of the profession locally and internationally.**

Underpinning Research

- In Hong Kong, the research on the use of arts in the healthcare system is in its infancy phase.
- The CBH research team, under the leadership of Prof. Rainbow Ho, has integrated the model, developed outcome measures, and initiated more than 20 rigorous research studies on the use of various creative art forms since 2017.

Research evidence indicated the potential of EXABI in improving the following aspects:

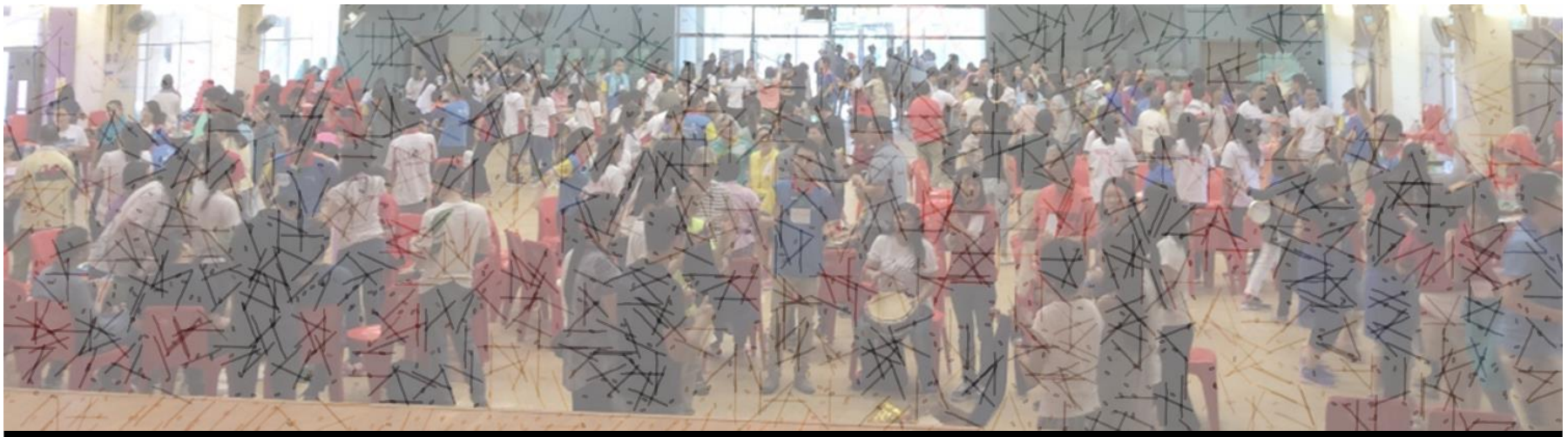


Grounded in the results of these scientific inquiries, expressive arts significantly transform

1. Healthcare service delivery,
2. Development of culturally sensitive, evidence-based practices

to the betterment of holistic wellness of the people of HK across the lifespan, especially in the domains of

- Children with special education needs (SEN)
- The mental health of adults and older adults
- People with chronic medical conditions



Children with SEN & Caregivers

- Our research showed that play and arts-making are an integral part of fostering children's wellbeing, especially those who live with SEN.
- In a community project, the embedded mixed-cohort, single-group experimental study of **213** primary school students with SEN indicated that children attending EXABI had reduced emotional difficulties, hyperactivity, and peer problems as perceived by both the parents and school teachers [**R1**].
- Similar results were also found in another project with a controlled study on a “play-oriented” EXABI (**134** parent-child dyads), indicating promising improvements in parents’ positive affect and children’s prosocial behaviours.



Adults and Older Adults At Risk

- EXABI also benefit the adults at risk of developing psychopathologies cope.
 - A randomized-controlled trial (RCT) on **106** outpatient adults with major depressive disorders indicated that clay art intervention reduced depressive symptoms while improved general mental health and holistic wellbeing [R2].
 - A RCT on **204** older adults with mild dementia showed that a dance movement intervention helped improving depressive symptoms, sense of loneliness, negative mood, and everyday stress response among elderly with mild dementia [R3].



People with Chronic Clinical Conditions

- Existing support services for chronic clinical conditions focus primarily on skills training, whereas the importance of cultivating resilience and growth is secondary. The use of arts-as-intervention steps beyond this restricted view of wellbeing.
- In addition to our previous work on cancer, research conducted by our team shows evidence to support the potential benefits of arts in managing psychosocial wellbeing in chronic conditions, such as dementia, HIV, and intellectual disability (ID).
 - A RCT of **73** elderly with moderate dementia showed that art-as-intervention might help manage behavioral and psychological symptoms, such as agitation, aberrant motor behavior, and dysphoria **[R4]**.
 - A mixed-methods study on people living with HIV showed that art-making facilitated existential meaning-making, improved quality of life, and cultivated positive affect **[R5]**.
 - A RCT of **109** Chinese adults with ID showed potential benefits of an arts-as-intervention program on fostering behavioral and emotional wellbeing **[R6]**.



References to the research

- R1.** Fong, J.C.Y., & Ho, R.T.H. (2021). Examining the effectiveness of an arts-based empowerment programme for primary school students with and without special educational needs, paper presented at Society of Behavioral Medicine Virtual Conference.
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Details of the impact

- The team has been supporting HK to develop a healthcare system that aligns with the vision of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the impacts of arts on health and wellbeing as an intersectoral action to
 - 1) improve wellbeing and health,
 - 2) reduce health vulnerabilities,
 - 3) strengthen public health through arts, and
 - 4) ensure healthcare services that are universal, equitable, sustainable and of high quality.
- Our team is also the pioneer in conducting scientific research in this area.

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Global Health and Travel April 2015

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Engagement

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Expressive Arts as Evidence-based Intervention

- The team has initiated different research projects to establish the arts-based intervention as an evidence-based practice in
 - psycho-oncology
 - prevention of depression
 - children with SEN
 - dementia care
 - stroke rehabilitation of young adults
 - parenting and family wellness
 - primary prevention of mood issues during the pandemic
- These collaborations have allowed the synergy of knowledge with **704** organizations in the public sector, which ultimately served **69,632** beneficiaries in 5 years.

- Since 2013, CBH has published **32 journal articles, 9 book chapters, over 200 conference proceedings, and have delivered 27 keynote speeches** on arts as intervention, especially for children and older adults.
- The knowledge accumulated contributes to establishing expressive arts as an evidence-based support practice in the future.



Expressive Arts as New Options for At-Risk Populations

Children with SEN

- Our collaboration with the Sovereign Arts Foundation (SAF) has provided professional training and supervisions to **40** schools and agencies within the community.
- The 3-year program has served **10,664** direct beneficiaries including students, parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals, and **17,743** indirect beneficiaries from the general public [S1].



Adults with clinical conditions

- Elderly with depression

Our ongoing collaboration with the Keswick Foundation has reached out to **250** elderly centres in Hong Kong and served **1,806** elderly with depressive symptoms, **798** healthcare professionals in the field, and **37,000** community members [S2]. Findings of research suggested that elderly adults who joined arts-based therapies were less depressed, more satisfied with their lives, and more positive towards their future.

- Adults with substance abuse

Furthermore, the team's initiative in using expressive arts for substance abuse rehabilitation has been awarded the Beat Drug Fund in 2019. At present, the multi-component project has served **1,831** individuals from the non-academic sector [S3].

- Stroke survivors

In addition, the team is currently collaborating with **15** agencies, including public hospitals, patient resources centres, patient self-help groups, and community centres to provide EXABI to young stroke survivors. This project has served **162** stroke survivors [S4].



Expressive Arts as Preventive Measure for Wellness Enhancement

- Community-wide campaign to promote compassion in the community to support individuals with mental illness [S5, S6]
- During the pandemic period in 2020, with the support of the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation, the team launched an ambassador training program, which aimed to encourage the use of arts to promote contemplative living and mental wellbeing in the general public [S7]; to date the program has served **192** beneficiaries within the community.



Building Professional Community and Enriching Learning Experiences

- To serve as a synergy of knowledge exchange, the team at CBH has actively involved in the training of healthcare professionals.
- Over the past 5 years, based upon evidence-based knowledge and our practice experiences in the area of use of arts in interventions, we have organized train-the-trainer projects, serving a total of **979** professionals and healthcare service providers.



Research, Teaching and Community Engagement

- Founded by Prof. Rainbow Ho, the Master of Expressive Arts Therapy program is the first of its kind in the region.
- Since 2013, we have also collaborated with **575** agencies, including overseas sites (e.g. Shanghai, Fuzhou, Macau, Rome, and New York), to provide practicum and employment opportunities to our students, reflecting the impact of the team's advocate to integrate expressive arts in healthcare services.
- Up to now, the program has graduated **112** students, and have paved the way to their professional registration at renowned professional bodies, including the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) and Association for Creative Arts Therapies in Australia, New Zealand and Asia (ANZACATA).
- Our graduates continue to inspire the community with their knowledge and practice skills. Some of them also participated in our community projects.



Impacting the Global Community in the Field through Research

- The research works conducted by Prof. Rainbow Ho and the team have received international attention.
- Prof. Ho has received international research awards and has been invited to join the international research group composed of scholars in the field from all over the world.
- She has also delivered keynotes and lectures in US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore, India (online), Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Mainland and Hong Kong on topics related to arts and wellbeing [S8, S9, S10].
- The efforts and initiative of the team in research, knowledge exchange, and active community engagement will help open up new frontiers for the community, healthcare service providers, and policymakers.



Invited Keynotes in Rwanda, Africa, 2019



Round table discussion in Arts Festival, 2021

Sources to corroborate the impact

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