

Propositions

Art therapy & Anxiety

Annemarie Madani-Abbing

- 1) There is increasing evidence for effectiveness of art therapy in reducing moderate to severe anxiety symptoms in women (*this thesis*).
- 2) Art therapy contributes to improved perceived emotion regulation and perceived daily executive functioning, both contributing to the reduction of anxiety symptom severity (*this thesis*).
- 3) Art therapy may lead to a reduced general arousal level, measured as improved resting HRV, which can be interpreted as a lower anxiety level (*this thesis*).
- 4) Individuals suffering from anxiety have poorer inhibition skills (executive functioning) compared to a healthy population and these skills seem not to be influenced by three months art therapy (*this thesis*).
- 5) Anthroposophic art therapy is supposed to address emotions and beliefs implicitly and may initiate a learning process, not primarily aiming for consciously influencing cognitions and self-regulation skills (*this thesis*).
- 6) Although case reports are low in the hierarchy of clinical evidence, they generate hypotheses on working mechanisms of art therapy for future studies and can be of great value for education (*this thesis*).
- 7) Practice-based research enables close co-creation between practice and science, making art therapists, students and researchers work together in systematically collecting data for research and, for instance, writing scientific case reports.
- 8) Research into art therapy is of great importance for clinical practice and is only possible with the involvement and commitment of therapists who are willing to open the black box of their therapies.
- 9) Active involvement of students in research may give the principal investigator a fresh perspective on the subject and can also increase students' awareness of the value of research and may thus contribute to a natural integration of research in their future clinical practices.

- 10) Although some projects have been initiated, such as *Music as Medicine* at the Erasmus MC, the enormous potential of visual art and music in health care is currently largely left unexploited.
- 11) *"Bringing children into contact with art and music at an early age is important for their development"*(Prof. Dr. Erik Scherder), for cognitive and social development, and should therefore have an important position in primary school education.
- 12) Vitality-enhancing programs for employees should not only involve healthy diets and physical exercise, but should also promote engaging in art and music activities and keeping an office dog (or cat).
- 13) *"If it does not help, it does not harm"* does not apply to any intervention if proper diagnostics is omitted, because this increases the risk of insufficient and inadequate care.
- 14) The duration of a PhD project is inversely proportional to the control over household and directly proportional to the increase in height of the pile of laundry to be folded, moderated by the amount of tasks to be carried out alongside the PhD research and the number of children in a household.
- 15) One should gratefully embrace failures and setbacks, because these moments enable development. As the painter Vincent van Gogh once wrote: *"Success can be the result of a whole series of failures."*