

HEALING ARTISTS THROUGH ART

Destroying the stigma of depression
in males and relieving societal
expectations with art therapy

Master of Fine Arts Thesis
Liberty University
Graphic Design



Disclaimer: This project includes information regarding depression and suicidal ideation and is intended to educate and inform it's readers. Some of the subject matter included within this project may be difficult to read about. The content provided should not be used for self-diagnosis. Those experiencing symptoms should consult with a qualified healthcare professional for accurate diagnoses and additional treatments.



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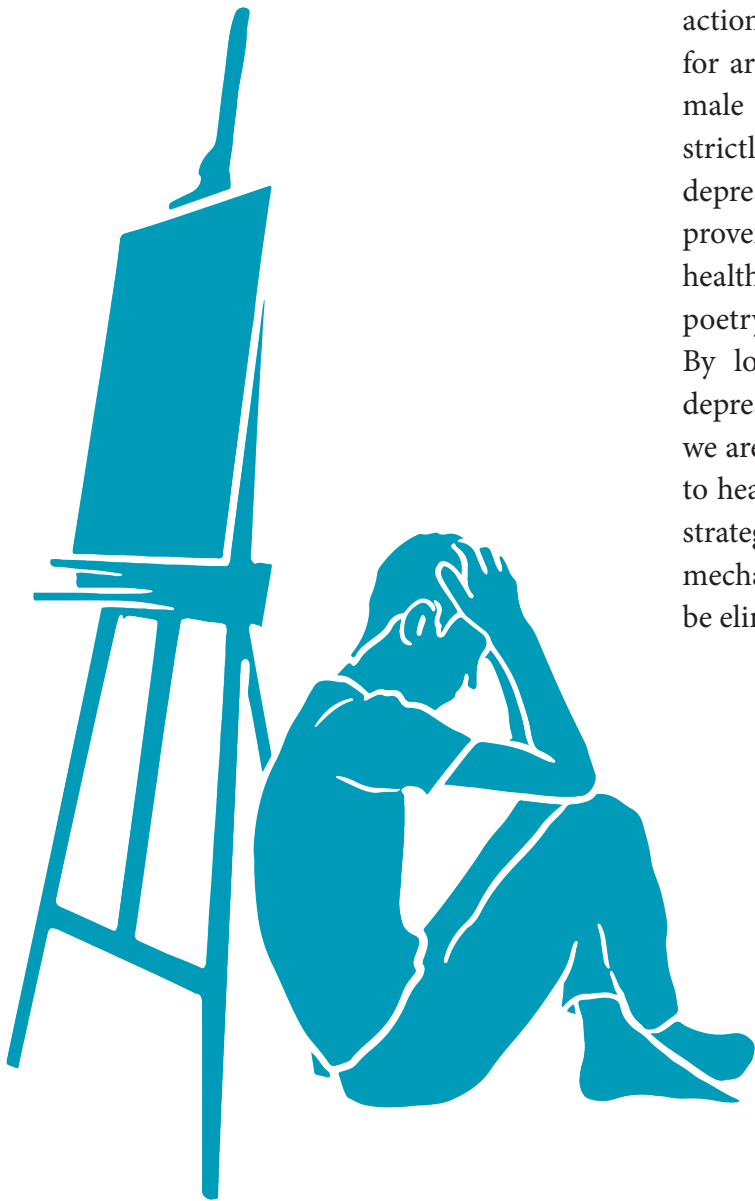
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Abstract

Men die by suicide nearly four times more than women, with higher rates among artists. There has been an increase in the rate of suicide over the years, primarily linked to depression and mounting societal expectations imposed upon men. The prevalence of social media and the awareness that comes with it indicates that the issue of suicide may never disappear unless action is taken. This paper examines the need for art therapy to counter depression among male artists. No longer do we need to rely strictly on medication and talk therapy to treat depression. Many art therapy techniques have proven quite beneficial in the healing of mental health, such as dramatherapy, music therapy, poetry, photography, painting, and sculpting. By looking into mental health issues like depression and the factors that contribute to it, we are able to use the strengths of art therapy to heal those struggling. By prioritizing these strategies and promoting constructive coping mechanisms, suicide among male artists can be eliminated for good.



Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Problem

The issue of male suicide, particularly among artists, requires a concentrated effort on combating depression and reducing the burden of societal expectations.

Objectives

This thesis will explore mental health and delve into beneficial art therapy techniques used to help men struggling to heal from their illness. By highlighting the effects of painting assignments, dramatherapy, and even music therapy on patients, I will discuss the importance of certain techniques that art therapists use in the field to help struggling patients.

The research will take a look into depression and suicidal ideation from different perspectives to give the audience a better understanding of the dangers of not treating mental illnesses.

Research Questions

- How serious is depression?
- What are the main contributing factors of depression?
- How is art therapy more beneficial than standard talk therapy?
- What does art therapy actually accomplish?

Knowledge Gap

Depression itself is an extremely complex topic, with psychologists still working to figure out how and when it can originate in people. Mental health has only recently been taken seriously by the public. There are many studies that need to be conducted to figure out how exactly to cure it, with therapy and medication sometimes being a temporary fix. The fact that everyone is unique and therapy techniques can work differently from person to person is certainly a challenge. Many studies focus on different mental health or personality disorders and the effects of art therapy on them, there are but a few sources that include males with depression or suicidal ideation and art therapy.

Significance

Although mental health issues have been around since the dawn of man, it wasn't until recently, with the rise of social media, that it has become a major focus in the eyes of the public. Social media, a place where self expression and social awareness are evolving constantly, is one of the main contributors to modern day mental health issues. We have become a group of people who are aware of everything at all times; social injustices, politics, wars, financial crises, it is enough to make anyone go mad. So it is only fitting that with the rise of social media, we have also found a rise in depression and suicidal ideation. Social issues around the world, paired with the already stress-filled lives that we all live, can cause even the strongest willed people to stumble every now and then. The artistic

escape that art therapy provides is used to heal those struggling with life. Male artists have one of the largest documented suicide rates among the professions, and it is this that warrants a look into the specific causes of depression.

Personal Connection

Back in 2019 there were numerous factors that led to my own experience with depression/suicidal ideation which in turn led to this projects creation. Having experienced a close death in the family, losing my job due to the Covid-19 shutdown, and a rough breakup all within two months time I found myself lost. I was depressed and was not sure where to turn or who I could talk to (I could not afford to see a therapist at the time, and I did not feel comfortable bothering my friends or family with my troubles, so I struggled alone attempting to find a solution for my mental health. After a few months, I turned to art to help ease the pain that I was experiencing. Whenever I was feeling particularly overwhelmed I would paint, draw, or sculpt my feelings out, turning my inner turmoil into a physical representation of them. It was this continuous practice that eventually turned into my own version of art therapy. It became something that I could do on my own, without bothering those around me. Along with the healing nature of the practice it also became a series of artworks that was both personal and expressive.

Chapter 2: Research

Research Rationale

This project's focus on suicide among male artists, will give insight, increase empathy, and raise awareness for those struggling with depression and societal expectations. Using art therapy to heal those struggling with suicidal ideation means a decrease in the suicide rate as well as bringing more artwork into this world.

Stakeholders

Individual

The initial intended audience is for men, specifically artists, that struggle with depression and suicidal ideation.

Local

The social circle around those afflicted with depression, generally consisting of friends and family, could also benefit from the research. This research may raise enough awareness so that more people look for the signs of suicide.

Global

This research may also benefit the global population, the prevention of mass casualties could positively impact economies all over the world.

Research Methods

Literature Review

The literature review offers an in depth and organized analysis of research covering the factors of suicidal ideation as well as the benefits of art therapy. It uses a collection of studies and data to gain insight into such broad topics.

Case Studies

Case studies often conduct a thorough investigation into a specific issue. This approach utilizes multiple sources of research into the subject being examined. Numerous case studies have been conducted over the benefits of art therapy on those experiencing depression and suicidal ideation.

Visual Analysis

Visual analysis allows for observation of current art therapy techniques and will provide information commonly used within the psychology industry.

Summary of Findings

The summary of findings consist of research from primary and secondary sources.

Literature Review

Introduction

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the world, in fact fewer people die from war and homicide combined each year. Men are impacted more than women by suicide every year due to several noticeable factors. Among those men, it seems that artists are affected more than average. One of the largest increases in suicide rates of males in the arts occurred between the years 2012-2015. The factors contributed to suicide are often complicated considering the different lives that we all live, however the most commonly reported ones consist of depression, societal pressure, and financial instability. By analyzing these main factors, it is possible that a solution can be sought to prevent the loss of these lives.

Depression is often defined as an illness characterized by regular bouts of sadness and even a loss of interest in activities that one normally enjoys, paired with an inability to carry out daily activities, for a minimum of at least two weeks.

Symptoms that some sufferers face could be feeling guilty or worthless, having consistently low energy, a lack of focus, an inconsistent sleep pattern, and reoccurring thoughts of

suicide or death. It is important to note that many who experience depression will not usually commit suicide due to motivation to the task or the emotional impact it could have on those around them. Just like suicide, there are many complicated factors that can contribute to this disorder. Depression is a very broad and complicated disorder; it takes many forms that keep the psychology community fairly busy.

Along with depression, societal pressure is another main factor that affects men's mental health and often leads to suicide. By examining these stressors, it can give insight into the challenges that men must face. Men are generally seen as the provider within their familial dynamic among many cultures, due to this, men focus more on the group than themselves. In fact, their entire identity slowly becomes about caring for everyone's health while neglecting their own. To feel valued in society men are urged to conform to certain masculine characteristics, such as being strong, courageous, independent, and often they need to be a protector. Men do not get time off from these characteristics and are often mocked or abused if they stray from this template. Due to this, many men suffer in silence with mental health until they either get help or commit suicide.

Financial stability, often seen as a male responsibility within society, is how one provides for a spouse and family, when that is at jeopardy it can make the provider lose his sense of self-worth. With rising costs of living all around the world, it can be a daunting task

to take care of oneself, let alone an entire family. The feelings of inadequacy caused by failing as a provider is enough to topple even the strongest of men. Mental health is serious and affects nearly everyone at some point in their lives. It is important to learn about different perspectives across the gender and cultural aisle to better the human race.

Therapy and medication is often the preferred method of treatment for depression. Psychotherapy is often used to gain insight into the patient's thoughts and feelings while providing solutions to better patterns of behavior. Antidepressants are used to help correct the imbalances in brain chemistry associated with depression to help in the recovery process. Even though these two are the most common, there have been many successes in the field of art therapy that could be applied to these patients with a longer lasting effect on their mental health.

Thesis:

Depression, societal pressures, and lack of financial stability contribute to higher-than-average suicide rates among male creatives.

Data

Suicide has become an increasingly serious problem over the years. It was reported that over 1.3 million adults in the United States in 2012 had attempted suicide during that year, with nearly 40,000 of those being successful in their attempts (Han, B. et al. 2016). While globally, 10 to 20 million people attempt suicide each year, with almost 1 million of

those being successful. It is necessary for the public to understand these statistics to raise awareness on suicidal ideation considering that 12.8% of the global population currently suffers from depression (Yin, Z. et al. 2022). It is even more important for people to be able to identify the signs and symptoms of depression to help with preventative measures for those in need. A study found that nearly 80% of suicide attempters had a temporal mental disorder, such as anxiety, depression, or interictal dysphoria. While certain mood disorders, such as bipolar disorder are associated with nearly 60% of suicides. Thus, making it that much more important to understand the disorders in those around us.

Even though the rate of suicide is quite tremendous in a broad sense, it varies quite a bit depending on the sociodemographic groups that people belong to. Studies found that there were large differences in data depending on the victim's age, gender, race/ethnicity, and even education. It is also noteworthy that the methods to which someone commits suicide is similar within their culture rather than what is most physically accessible to them. Due to the differences among the many cultures, there is no universally applicable method to prevent suicide. It is best to watch for warning signs and assist from there.

Not only does culture have an impact on the rate of suicide, but so does occupation. As stated previously, male artists have one of the highest rates of death by suicide. There has been a connection between creativity and suicidal risk throughout time. A study found

that professional artists had a 125% higher risk than non-artists, with the rate increasing to 270% when including for gender and sociodemographic variables (Hallaert, J. 2019). In fact, further documentation elaborates that 33 out of 100,000 deaths of artists were caused by suicide, nearly three times the national average. It is this large difference in statistics that warrants a look into the suicides of male artists.

Studies

Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the causes of depression, a significant factor associated with suicide. The primary goal is to generate public awareness and promote mental health education as a means to prevent loss of life. By examining various underlying factors contributing to depression, including feelings of hopelessness, chronic mental and physical illnesses, challenges with social integration, recurring substance abuse, and even perfectionism, it becomes possible to address male suicide specifically within the artistic community. In delving into these studies, a deeper understanding of the intricacies of depression emerges, enabling the identification of symptoms and offering potential opportunities to save the lives of individuals struggling with this disorder.

Hopelessness

Hopelessness is one of the symptoms of depression, it often stems from feeling alone, misunderstood, or helpless. When someone feels as if they are struggling with something

alone, or unable to communicate properly, they may self-isolate to attempt to work on their issue. The individual may separate themselves from friends, family, and religion. Hopelessness is incredibly important to watch out for due to the impact that a lack of a support system has on an individual's health.

A study was conducted over the correlation between hopelessness and depression in males. Nightmares, something everyone has throughout their lives at some point, can contribute to the feeling of hopelessness within an individual when it is consistently occurring. The constant stress that repeated nightmares have on both the individual's biological and psychological state is important to note. These nightmares are documented to correlate with both feelings of hopelessness and depression. It is difficult to determine if the nightmares are further influencing stress, which then in turn brings about more nightmares. Mental health is a tricky topic, with science learning more and more every day. The slippery slope that mental health can take going from something as simple as nightmares, to feelings of hopelessness, to eventual depression is a dangerous observation.

Depression and the Chronically Ill

A study over depression and suicide ideation in chronically ill young adults was created to save lives in those that struggle more than the average person. Chronically ill in this instance refers to those with physical and sometimes developmental limitations, they often affect

basic daily activities such as dressing or using the bathroom, some even stay confined to their homes for long periods of time. When one is stuck at home day in and day out, it can take a toll on the mental health of the individual. Not only do these patients suffer from their specific conditions, but they do not receive a change in scenery that is often taken for granted by other people. The ability to contact and visit a therapist whenever needed is also something that is often taken advantage of. When such severe issues disrupt such basic aspects of life, it is common for the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness to spawn. With these overwhelming feelings keeping someone company, it is no surprise that suicide feels like the only answer to their problems. Studies tackled this issue by contacting chronically ill patients and attempting to help heal their mental health using teleconference technology to reach those otherwise unable to come into an actual clinic. With the growing of technology, modern solutions are coming about to ease the pressure to the increasing mental health issues. The feelings of helplessness that the patients expressed were combatted by the feeling of comradery by their peers in the group session.

Social Integration

A study over social integration challenges, more specifically, the concept of having too many or too little friends was conducted to focus on the psychology behind a support group. The human species is a rather social one, in fact while developing through childhood and as an adolescent it is extremely

important to have a social support system around for growth. It is reported that suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among adolescents in the United States and the third leading cause among early adults. Those with a healthy and accepting support system from peers report fewer depressive symptoms than those without.

It is documented that adolescents who have no, or very few, friends are at a higher risk for depression as they grow older. Without social connections, feelings of exclusion and loneliness are created, which later develop into depressive disorders. Friends are needed to give a sense of belonging, reduce stress, and increase happiness. However, having too many friends is not always a good thing, it can lead to burn-out tending to so many relationships. This phenomena is often called Role Strain, and quite often leads to depression. The challenge with social relationships is in balancing the proper number of friends to remain socially healthy.

Addiction

The link between addiction and depression can be a cyclical one, in which one may influence the other. Many who struggle with depression often turn to addictive substances as a vice to self-medicate from their problems. Addiction often leads to a vicious cycle of dependency and worsening mental health. Along with depression, addiction can lead to mood imbalance, strained relationships, financial issues, and can lead to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and loneliness.

Not to mention that drug overdoses are a large number of suicidal statistics as well, simply due to the growing accessibility of addictive substances.

It is often difficult treating the combination of substance abuse and depression considering the dual relationship that depression and addiction have with one another. Professional help and a good social support system is often recommended when tackling these two together.

Perfectionism

One factor that inevitably leads to depression, it may also seem difficult to believe on the surface, is perfectionism. There are countless studies that link the two together, stemming from parental expectations, personal standards, and even peer criticism. When extensive pressure is placed upon a developing child or adolescent with little regard for personal growth, one can establish particular habits to combat the expectations placed upon them. There are worse things to be considered other than a perfectionist, in fact it sounds relatively positive. The reality behind it, however, is exhausting. Perfectionists are their own worst critic, constantly judging, constantly thinking anything they do is not quite good enough, it leads to a life of second guessing and deep internal turmoil. The constant battle inside oneself is more difficult than any held outside of the body.

Perfectionism often comes from the belief that someone's self-worth is based upon their

achievements, whether it be academic or personal, and often creates this need to prove oneself. It can be found mostly in those that experienced emotional trauma at a young age, such as withholding attention and affection during developmental stages.

Societal Pressure

Although depression is ultimately the largest factor of male suicide, there are also societal pressures that men face within their cultures. As previously mentioned, men function within a specific template in society. Men build, they provide, they protect. Women care, they nurture, they birth life; it has been this way since the beginning. The roles within the family dynamic rarely change, at least in the eyes of society. The role of provider can be a difficult one at times, especially in this materialistic world that has been created. Often, the provider equates their sense of self-worth to how well their family is taken care of. To provide for a family in this modern world, it takes a stressful amount of time and money. When financial instability becomes a stressor, it can affect many aspects of the family dynamic. Pressure from peers, significant others, or the individual themselves can place a lot of stress on the mental health of men, especially if they feel solely responsible for the failure.

Men often suffer with their issues in silence. The ability to discuss feelings and emotions is frowned upon in the male community, it has become an unwritten social rule over time. Men generally use distractions, repression,

and substance abuse to nullify the pressures of adult life. All of which can lead to depression and other mental health issues. These preventative measures do not make suicide prevention better, in fact the rate at which men kill themselves grows with the increasing complexity of the world. Bringing awareness to a growing problem is the initial step in overcoming it, men need to feel more comfortable expressing themselves so that lives can be spared.

Art Therapy

Even though there are many factors that lead to depression and possible suicide, art therapy has been proven to decrease depression symptoms, suicidal ideation, supports social recovery, and even improves self-esteem. As research has shown, people affected with depression have a much higher rate of suicide. Art therapy is commonly divided into four categories: dance movement therapy, dramatherapy, music therapy, and visual art therapy. It is not necessary for patients to have any technical skill to benefit from these therapies either. Often, people struggle vocalizing personal struggles, art therapy gives people that physical outlet to express their inner turmoil. Sometimes people benefit from the social aspect of it, or the introspective part, or just the expression aspect. Generally, there is something in art therapy for everyone.

There was a study conducted to show the benefit of art therapy on the needed recovery time after bouts of depression. To properly heal after a depressive episode, art therapy

is recommended to shrink the amount of time needed for rehabilitation. The study confirmed that art therapy, with all of its small decisions that require participative choices to be made (such as what material to use or what color to paint with), can slowly build one's self-confidence. The small steps slowly build on one another until the patient becomes comfortable with the power of their choices. The study found that women generally benefit more from art therapy than men, this could be due to any number of things ranging from disinterest in the types of therapies to gender associations with the arts.

Tactics used in visual art therapy:

- Painting emotions
- **Drawing self-portraits**
- Painting past, present, future.
- Collage thoughts and emotions
- Painting abstract concepts
- Sculpting friends and family

Results

Male suicide is a complicated issue. By analyzing data on depression and societal pressures placed on men one can gain perspective on the experiences that they face. With understanding the importance of art therapy and the benefits that can be applied to depression in its many facets, mental health can be improved in men to prevent suicidal ideation.

Hopelessness and Depression:

In the study on the link between hopelessness and depression, the study analyzed subjects by the frequency of nightmares. It resulted in the understanding that there is a link between nightmares and male depression. Though there is a link between consistent nightmares and hopelessness, and eventual suicidal risk, it isn't a significant figure. The rationalization



of this phenomenon is that those who experience the feelings of hopelessness believe that it won't go away which morphs into a change in overall mood, eventual depression, and sometimes suicide.

Depression and the Chronically Ill:

In the study of depression on the chronically ill, the idea was to focus on those who have dealt with such extreme health problems that they aren't able to physically receive assistance from therapists with mental health issues. The focus was more on how treatment can be issued, along with gaining perspective on a group of people rarely represented among mental health patients. This study resulted in overwhelming success by uniting those isolated individuals. With social integration being the positive factor of the study. Many dealing with depression and mental health issues prefer to tackle it on their own or one on one with a professional. However, those that are so accustomed to being alone crave the comradery that this study provided. The support and ability to share with peers made all the difference that teleconferencing offered.

Social Integration:

In the study focusing on social integration, and the link between one's social surroundings, an interesting discovery was made. It makes sense that someone with little to no friends may struggle with depression, mental health, and even suicide, especially considering how important social support is within society. Many studies have confirmed this in the past. It is theorized that one should not have too

many friends in their social group for the same reason. Role strain is the concept in which an individual experiences stress due to the expectations in one's social relationships. If someone has a plethora of friendships, it is difficult to maintain the obligations to everyone. The individual would drive themselves mad attempting such a feat. Further investigations are required to continue the research on this concept; however, it has real world applicability.

Perfectionism and Depression:

Perfectionism and depression share an interesting relationship with one another. It normally starts in adolescence and is often onset by parental expectations, social pressure, or self-criticism. Those with perfectionism are very critical, relating their achievements to their self-worth, which can lead to feelings of hopelessness. Depression often impairs motivation and energy, for those that struggle with perfectionism this can add incredible stress.

Studies confirmed the link between the many factors of perfectionism and depression. The factors that are often observed when dealing with perfectionism are: perfectionistic concerns, socially prescribed perfectionism, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, discrepancy, perfectionistic attitudes, perfectionistic strivings, self-oriented perfectionism, personal standards, parental perceptions, parental criticism, parental expectations.

Art Therapy and Depression:

Depression, in its complicated entirety has

been studied for many years, and the best way to treat it is generally with medication and therapy. That's not to say that it always works, but that is the best course of action for the time being. Many patients find issue with sitting one on one in the stereotypical psychologist setting to drudge up the underlying causes to their mental health. However, many experts agree that art therapy does an extraordinary job at reducing the stress and pressure of everyday life and letting someone freely express themselves in the form of art. Creating artwork stimulates creativity, senses, supports inner expression, and allows the patient to productively get their feelings out and into the physical environment. The balance between verbal and nonverbal expression is important when dealing with patients. Boundaries are extremely important as well to those that are in pain; and art therapy, regardless of the type, gives them that freedom.

There are many different projects that art therapy can use to assist the patient. Painting or drawing out one's emotions is a common tactic used, it has a similar effect on the mind as keeping a writing journal full of one's feelings. Another common practice with art therapy is to have a patient draw a portrait of themselves, this practice is to help the patient understand themselves better, or grow a deeper appreciation for themselves, or even to let the therapist understand how the patient sees themselves. Painting or drawing the patient's past, present, and future; this one helps give insight into the patient's life and thought processes over time, especially any constructive or destructive future plans.

There are countless projects that therapists use to gain understanding of their patient while also allowing them to express themselves in a manner that they may not have been able to yet.

Experts in art therapy express that the art themes within art therapy should allow for expression in relation to depression and the patient's personal history, otherwise it is too generic to help against this ever-expanding disorder. Artists use their own mediums to express themselves. They figured out a vice to help assist them with their life struggles, but sadly it isn't always enough. With guidance, structure, and understanding, artists can heal along with everyone else.

Art therapy offers many benefits to those individuals experiencing depression. Through creative expression, art therapy provides a safe place for individuals to explore and process their feelings in a supportive environment. Engaging in art-making activities can promote self-awareness, increase self-esteem, and give a sense of accomplishment, thereby enhancing mood and reducing depressive symptoms. The act of creating art also encourages mindfulness and relaxation, helping individuals to manage stress and develop coping strategies. Art therapy fosters a sense of connection and social support, as participants can engage in group settings and share their experiences, as is an important commodity when tackling depression and mental health issues. Overall, the combination of self-expression and therapeutic support makes art therapy a valuable tool in the

treatment and management of depression.

Knowledge Gap

The source linking hopelessness and depression declared that more research would need to be conducted to determine other variables that link the two. The original research was conducted through self-report questionnaires, which could allow the patients to minimize their symptoms. Clinical interviews and objective measures are suggested for further research in regard to this link.

The source that observed depression among the chronically ill reports that the small sample size of their patients could have tampered with the study. The group sessions could also have limited the patient's willingness to share, skewing the data a bit.

The study linking social integration and depression reports that their data limited social groups to no more than 10 friends with each patient, which could have limited the data, especially when focusing on those dealing with over-integration.

The source linking perfectionism and depression reports that their data covers patients with suicidal ideation but not for suicide attempts which could cause overlap in figures. It also reports on the lack of diversity in its sample group, pulling from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Their sample group also consisted of mainly Caucasians, limiting the study ethnically.

Conclusion

Suicide is a harsh reality. It is self-inflicted harm. It is the explosion of inner turmoil that many suffer from. It is incredibly important that people are aware of the effects that it not only has on the individual, and their social circle, but also the global effect that it can have on everyone. In the United States alone, it is documented as one of the leading causes of death and costs the economy upwards of \$51 billion dollars every year. Of course, suicide is painful when there is a relationship with the victim. However, it is important not to distance oneself from the realness of the data on suicide.

The fact that males are impacted more than women by nearly four times warrants attention. Among these men, artists are a large portion of these figures. It has been theorized that those with underlying mental disorders are drawn to the arts, possibly due to the expressionistic benefits, though it is unclear why so many more suicides are committed by male artists. Many artists do struggle with societal pressure and financial instability due to the low paying job opportunities. Many have a hard time supporting families and their identity and self-worth are questioned. Artists often resort to juggling multiple jobs to make ends meet. Dreams get put on hold and often these artists struggle with mental health because of it.

It is only fitting that male artists use art therapy as an approach to manage their depression. It

is not a guarantee that it will cure their depression, it has been proven to help alleviate the pressure of life while giving the patients a voice to express themselves. In fact, it is recommended that a professional helps with the guidance of the treatment.

In conclusion, male suicide is a concern that requires more attention. Understanding the factors associated with male suicide, such as depression and the stigma around mental health, societal pressure, and financial burdens, can lead to the support and prevention of suicide that is needed to spare these lives. It is important to have space for men to feel comfortable expressing themselves emotionally without feeling judged. Encouraging open conversations about mental health, providing affordable and accessible mental health services, and helping create a culture of compassion will save many men in the process.



Case Study: Art Therapy and Trauma

Mental health is an important aspect of overall health, when that is damaged it can cause irreparable harm to oneself as well as those around them. The rate at which people commit suicide has grown exponentially over the last few decades and it is contributed to many factors, however, depression seems to be at the forefront of them all. Even though the data confirms that suicide is most commonly found among adult males, mental health generally stems from the development during childhood and adolescence. The freedom and appeal of art therapy could be most beneficial in the treatment of depression in the youth especially.

“Evaluating Art Therapy to Heal the Effects of Trauma Among Refugee Youth: The Burma Art Therapy Program Evaluation” created by Cassandra Rowe, Rose Watson-Ormond, Lacey English, Hillary Rubesin, Ashley Marshall, Kristin Linton, Andrew Amolegbe, Christine Agnew-Brune, and Eugenia Eng is a case study focusing on the benefits of art therapy on youth dealing with trauma. The particular study is centered around those from the country of Burma, who have dealt with food scarcity, poverty, political violence, and human rights violations. This pressure has forced its people to migrate around the world, with many coming to the United States. The Art Therapy Institute is a program established in North Carolina that works with refugee

children and adolescents to help decrease their trauma-related symptoms. The point of this study was to examine the impact of art therapy programs on mental health among youth as well as reveal the gaps in the identification of trauma.

“Art therapy is an expressive psychotherapy that uses the art-making process to improve social, mental, and emotional functioning and increase feelings of well-being.” (Rowe et al, 2016). By using individual and group sessions, art therapists are able to let patients work to freely express themselves through artistic means. “Studies indicate that refugee children and adolescents have high prevalence of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, and difficulties in peer relationships (Hodes, 2000).” (Rowe et al, 2016). The benefits of common art therapy practice include limited spoken communication and freedom of expression, which is appealing to many patients that practice. After evaluations had been conducted, it was found that 83% of the participants had directly experienced some sort of traumatic event such as lacking food, witnessing rape, or experiencing physical violence. The program consisted of standard art therapy tactics lasting 50 minutes a piece and spanned 16 weeks from start to finish.

Common challenges that researchers faced with their analysis consisted of language and cultural barriers, forcing some of the clinicians to change up the key terminology that was used. All of the testing was done in English to provide a control over the instruction;

however, the language barrier became quite blatant. The clinicians also believed that the short time that they spent with the patients contributed to the results of the study regarding the effects of art therapy.

Trauma, one of the main factors of depression and suicide is important to take notice of and attempt treatment. Art therapy has shown considerable success among the depressed, however, it is particularly useful with children and refugees. The focus on talking that normal therapy sessions consist of is limited with art therapy, which is particularly appealing to young, developing minds or as this study shows, a population that may struggle with language barriers. Many issues with mental health stem from the development stages of childhood and adolescence, so it is extremely important that effort and caution are stressed when working on healing those with any type of therapy. Art therapy, which can work under the guise of creative play, can do wonders for these developing minds.

Visual Analysis: Art Therapy and Mental Health

Featured in “Child Art Therapy” by Judith Aron Rubin is a collection of art therapy pieces created by children. Among those in the collection is a drawing by a young girl named Dorothy. Her piece, titled “One of Dorothy’s Many Bird Drawings”, conveys a drawing of an eagle. This particular bird became a powerful motif in many of Dorothy’s works. The series of works that Dorothy created was due to the art therapy program she was placed in as a child due to brain damage and schizophrenia disorder.

“During her first three sessions, Dorothy concentrated on the drawing and painting of birds, an animal she often pretended to be, making birdlike noises and flapping movements with her arms. She seemed stuck on a rather compulsive and careful way of doing this repetitive subject, always drawing the birds first in pencil.” (Rubin, 2005). As most people do, the patient made sure to lay down the design in pencil first, always being careful with her creation before adding color to it. With later sessions, she was instructed to attempt a work of art without planning and start with only painting the design out. The patient did as instructed and immediately fell in love with the expressive freedom that she felt from this simple change.

Dorothy’s motif in this painting, as well as several others, was an eagle. Perhaps it was due to the freedom that these birds had, being

particularly appealing to someone that had such limitations in life, or simply because the subject matter was beautiful to the patient.

This painting appears as a still shot or a study of an eagle clutching a snake in one of its talons while it gazes out into the distance. For a child, this painting is done quite well, with an understanding of layering and composition, she stays generally in the lines and makes sure that all of the feathers lay where they should. Though the piece is aesthetically appealing, the true beauty of Dorothy's work is shown in the collection of pieces that she creates, her pieces begin as ordinary and very structured but as limitations are removed from her creative process her imagination takes off and she begins to explore different techniques and subject matter. Where this piece is seemingly normal, one of her next creations features an eagle dismembering a man accompanied by text that reads "Egles. Egles are mad. They want to kill man and eat them." This being the first visual sign of aggression shown in her work, it seemed to alleviate something inside of the patient with her next few pieces showing elegant, beautiful birds without such violence. The dramatic shifts in her subject matter showed those working with her to pay attention to the link between her art and her emotional status.

This patient was seen by an art therapist for 24 sessions and covered a variety of work using different techniques and guidelines. However, it was the work with the birds that warranted analysis. "While some worried that Dorothy was using art as an escape, I felt that art

became a place for her to feel good because of her competence, to experience some sensory and playful pleasure, and to find her way back to reality through her fantasies, by airing rather than burying them." (Rubin, 2005). Dorothy struggled with mental and physical health issues that would be difficult for anyone, however, she was provided an outlet that could help regulate her feelings and behavior. The benefits of art therapy are widely applicable to different variations of mental health as shown in this study. The growth in this one patient from these sessions is incredible and shows how beneficial art therapy can be for those struggling with mental health issues.

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Rubin, Judith A.. Introduction to Art Therapy : Sources and Resources, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebook-central.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=668457>.

Case Study: Identifying Beneficial Art Therapy Techniques

Depression is a debilitating disease, often affecting many aspects of people's lives. It has been combatted in the past with bouts of medicine and general therapy, however, it often resurfaces with little warning. With the increasing complexity of the world, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation are more common now than ever before. This is why it is important to find a working solution to tackle the factors of depression before it escalates towards suicide.

Art as a Therapeutic Tool in Depressive Disorders: A Systematic Review of the Literature created by Fernando Brandao, Carolina Silva, Kleber de Oliveira, and Janari Pedroso is a collective look at several case studies that aimed to identify which art techniques had been used most in the treatment of depressive disorders and what the effects were on the patients. "14 articles were selected, among which the main techniques of art therapy used were: manual work (drawing, painting, and modeling), music, poetry, photography, theater, and contemplation of art pieces." (Brandao et al, 2019). It is important to consider which types of art therapy are more beneficial to patients and the effects that they could have on certain demographics.

It is reported that suicide is the second leading cause of death in the world, with depression being the main cause. It is a complicated

illness and often difficult to notice in friends and family. More times than not, many know that they themselves suffer from it but choose not to seek help. Possible reasons to avoid treatment are often due to fear of dependency on the medicine, adverse effects of the medicine, or the social aspect of support. Which leads to many suffering in silence.

The study concluded that the therapeutic tools cited the most were manual work, drawing, painting, sculpting, and modeling; with most of the studies showing positive results. The study by Montag et al., which used painting and sculpting in practice, observed an increase in levels of emotional awareness among those studied. The study by Lefevre et al., which used photography, painting, drawing, and sculpting in practice, noticed a decrease in patients' overall distress by 7%, with "a significant reduction in all of the symptoms: pain, anxiety, evil, fatigue, sadness, and depression. A study of significant correlations indicated that technical satisfaction, aesthetic beauty, and leisure are involved to varying degrees in symptom reduction." (Brandao et al, 2019). The study by Jani et al., which used music and theatre in practice, documented that there was a reduction of 60% in aggressive behavior and a reduction of 50% in general mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and attention problems in women. The study by Mandic-Gajic et al., which used drawing and painting in practice, resulted in a reduction of depressive themes and increased self-confidence. It is important to note that many of these studies used music alongside other artistic practices. In fact, music was

recorded as the second most used technique in these studies.

“It can be understood that art therapy is a safe and reliable tool for treatment not only of depression but also of other mental disorders.” (Brandao et al, 2019). While manual techniques are recorded as the most used and generally the most beneficial, it is important to note that as individuals, people are affected differently by the different types of art therapy. Art therapy is a method of treatment that is relatively easy to understand and implement. It can be practiced individually or in a group setting, with benefits outweighing the costs many times over. Freedom of expression, increased self-confidence, and increased social interaction seem to be the greatest benefits of art therapy.

Visual Analysis: Art Therapy and Social Integration

Art therapy is commonly used for those who struggle with speech or opening up to a standard therapist, often being used with children or patients with mental disorders. However, it has shown real promise to a wide variety of patients with little to no mental disorders who are simply stressed by the difficulty of life. Many patients are reluctant to consider art therapy as a healing practice due to the stigma around it being used for children without understanding the full benefits of it. Perhaps by observing some of the techniques and common practices used in a normal therapy session, one could use art

therapy to combat poor mental health.

This painting titled “One of Sam’s Figurative Paintings” is a piece created during an art therapy session documented in the book *Introduction to Art Therapy: Sources and Resources* by Judith Rubin. This painting was created by an early adult male who was described as quite large, extremely bright, and diagnosed with schizoid personality disorder (a disorder in which people avoid social activities and interactions with others). Those that suffer from schizoid personality disorder often recluse and lack the social interaction that is required for healthy mental status. Having dropped out of high school and isolated himself at home, the patient was sent to both individual and family therapy to help with his social interaction issues. It was there that different art therapy techniques were used to help Sam open up a bit more.

His early work with art therapy began with him isolated in a corner with a canvas where he painted several colorful and organic works, all seemingly abstract. As the months went by, he began opening up and even participating in drama therapy with other patients. Though it is reported that drama therapy doesn’t significantly benefit males, it really made a difference in this patient. The different roles that he played really enhanced both his emotional behavior and his additional artistic work. As he began to gain confidence and comfort within himself, his subject matter began to shift from abstract work to a more representational one.

The piece titled “One of Sam’s Figurative Paintings” is an example of his work around this time in which his colorful shapes began to take a more humanlike form. It is rather “distorted and grotesque”, but the movement in the piece along with the lighting causes this piece to feel more serene as if leaning more towards surrealism than anything else. It features an almost dream-like figure surrounded by organic shapes that are considerably less interesting than the features of the face. The figure is the main focal point of the piece and is thought to be a self-portrait of sorts, perhaps repressed inner feelings. His creation here is featured in an allegory that he tells his therapist about, in which a relationship between a human and a group of aliens slowly reveals feelings of restored hope in this young patient. His work shows creativity, originality, and real technical proficiency in painting. Generally, those who attempt art therapy do not have previous experience, yet he seems to have some knowledge of the craft, this is perhaps why he took to the manual side of art therapy so well. The growth that he made while attending these sessions shows the effects of art therapy on someone who may suffer from social restraints.

The self-confidence that grew while working on these paintings certainly impacted his willingness to open up to those around him. Social integration is, of course, an important factor in a healthy mental status and is reinforced with art therapy techniques such as drama therapy.

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Rubin, Judith A.. Introduction to Art Therapy : Sources and Resources, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebook-central.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=668457>.

Case Study: Art Therapy Vs. Depression

“Recovery from Depression – A 6-Month Follow-up of a Randomized Controlled Study of Manual-Based Phenomenological Art Therapy for Persons with Depression” written by Christina Blomdahl, Suzanne Guregard, Marie Rusner, and Helle Wijk focuses on the use of phenomenological art therapy (PATd) and the link between depression and recovery time. “Recovery from depression takes time, and more than 50% of patients suffer from chronic symptoms despite treatment (Ezquiaga et al., 1998; Rush et al., 2006). Persons affected by depression have an enhanced risk of committing suicide (DeJong et al., 2010). It is therefore important to

shorten the recovery time to reduce the risk of suicide and offer possibilities to participate in normal life, work, and activities that promote health and self-esteem (Corbiere et al., 2009; Piltch, 2016).” (Blomdahl et al., 2018).

All of the participants were patients from a specialist psychiatric outpatient care in Sweden, they were all adults and suffered from severe depression. They were each given a series of questionnaires, referred to as The Montgomery-Asburg depression rating scale (MADRS-S), The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES), and The Scale for Suicide Ideation (SSI) to gather the initial data on each participant. In this particular study, PATd is a version of therapy that is conducted over several weeks in which the patient would create art and speak on the meaning of their creations with the therapist or within a small group of fellow participants; TAU, or treatment as usual, was used on those in the control group. After the data was collected and the art therapy sessions were conducted, the patients went back to their normal lives and asked to come back after three and six months for follow-up examinations.

It was discovered that “depression declined faster for participants in the intervention group and showed a significant reduction between the start and end of treatment in contrast to participants in the control group.” (Blomdahl et al., 2018). The findings from the study showed an increase in self-esteem as well as a decrease in sick leave. This study indicates that art therapy has a positive impact on those with depression. It gives patients an

opportunity to reflect on emotions, thoughts, and inner turmoil. The small artistic choices made during these sessions all build upon one another. “These decisions are seemingly small and practical, such as choosing colors or the size of the paper. However, the choices reflect deeper meaning and become symbolic for the person. (Blomdahl et al., 2018). The satisfaction that this type of therapy instills in patients is unique among the types of therapy and shows in the results of many similar studies as well.

The study had significant success in proving its hypothesis of art therapy having a positive reaction against depression, however, it did run into its own share of limitations. The study was initially conducted with 96 patients being referred, though only 61 were able to fully contribute, limiting the study. The treatment was also held over 10 weeks, with one session per week, which may not have fully benefited those with such severe depression to the fullest extent.

“PATd was more effective than TAU alone. The combined treatment reduced symptoms earlier and the effects were sustained over time. This study makes an important contribution to the growing evidence about art therapy as an effective method for supporting recovery from depression.” (Blomdahl et al., 2018). The largest takeaway was the impact that art therapy has on those that suffer from depression and suicidal ideation. Of course, the complexity of mental health and comorbidities can play a role in the success of this type of therapy, but it is promising.

Visual Analysis: Collages and Depression

“How Ashley is presently feeling” and “How Ashley would like to feel” is an art therapy technique that was conducted on an adolescent named Ashley that suffered from depression caused by the death of her grandfather. This particular collage technique is used to express oneself and to establish hope for the future. The benefit to this practice is that it tells the therapist if there is a lack, or presence, of hope within the patient, if not, then more severe treatment is expected. It also gives insight of the patient’s emotions to the therapist beforehand. “The use of collage allowed Ashley to express freely without having to verbally speak or feel inadequate regarding her art skills.” (Brooke and Charles, 2015).

The first piece in this series “How Ashley is Presently Feeling” is full of expressive faces, one visibly hurting bent over in pain, sadness and stoicism shown on the other faces displayed. Her images were all described as particularly drained of color or pale, while even including the word pale within the piece. She also included a photo of a camera with nothing displayed in the screen, when asked for a meaning associated with it, she explained that she felt blank with nothing to show to people. Ashley also explained that she had a lot of feelings that were difficult to describe. Thus, being the beauty of art therapy, not everything needs to be explained, but rather

felt and expressed. The second piece in the series “How Ashley would like to feel” features a few clippings from a magazine showing a family enjoying surfing, someone kicking a soccer ball, it also displays the words “Happy” and “Sing Away Your Worries”. The family is located in the center of the paper, possibly signifying importance as it is also the largest photo among the collage. It is also limited with information and the clippings are much more spread out than the first piece that she created.

While describing her first piece, Ashley expressed feelings of hopelessness, believing that no one in her social circle cares about her or her feelings. In fact, each piece that she



included among the two collages each came with a description from Ashley as to why she chose these photos out of all the possibilities among the magazines. This technique got her to open up about herself and her feelings quite a bit. It was discovered that her depressive feelings stemmed from the loss of her grandfather. “Since her grandmother moved in, Ashley feels like she is expected to be “happy” all the time. Ashley expressed having difficulty with her loss and perceived the family’s expectations as the reason she became depressed. Her perceived role in the family is to be the perfect child, meet everyone’s expectations, and always smile. Ashley finished the discussion by saying that since her grandmother moved in, she feels invisible, and no one cares about her feelings.” (Brooke and Charles, 2015). After the collage technique of expressing her feelings and connecting her feelings to words, she began to draw connections between her familial expectations, anxiety, and depression with her grandfather’s death.

The wide variety of art therapy techniques that can be conducted to help those with depression are widespread but often create an environment for one to open up and express themselves. The tactic of creating past, present, and future events is a common tactic and often tells therapists a number of things about the patient. Generally, it is difficult to process intense emotions, let alone talk them out to a therapist. This is why art therapy is such an important method of healing.

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“How Ashley is presently feeling”

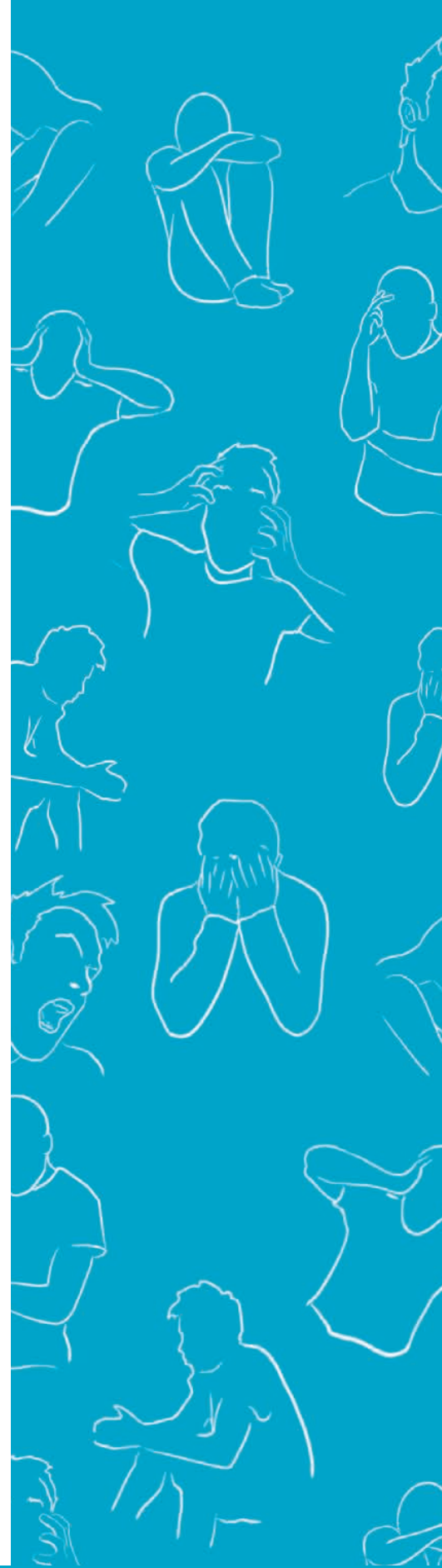
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“How Ashley would like to feel”

Conclusion:

The research included has shown a variety of mental illnesses and the way that art therapists have worked with them to help them navigate their feelings and express themselves more. The key aspects of art therapy are self expression and social integration. Creating art isn't the important part, it is getting in touch with oneself. By educating people on depression and societal expectations placed on men in modern society, this project highlights the significance of helping those who struggle with depression and mental health. The rate of male suicides has increased exponentially over the last few decades. I plan on creating an art therapy book that will change that. It will focus on different techniques that are commonly found in therapy sessions with helpful coping mechanisms. Many that appeal to artists, but can be applicable to a wider audience if need be. The goal is to help male artists who may be suffering with depression, but if this book can help save a single life, it will be worth its creation. The research covered in this project has shown a variety of art therapy techniques and the frequency at which they are used. It covers the statistical data on the demographics that benefit from the different branches of art therapy such as dramatherapy, music therapy, and painting. It even used real world examples of patients and therapists working together on projects to understand how a normal session works. My art therapy book will be designed in a way that the user can work on it independently or with others depending on the social mood of the user.



Chapter 3: Visual Process

Overview

“The symptoms of depression include a feeling of worthlessness, a lack of desire to do anything, even those things you used to love to do, a feeling of overwhelming sadness, thoughts of death or suicide, a lack of energy, changes in appetite (overeating or not eating), changes in sleeping patterns (inability to fall asleep or sleeping a lot more than usual), difficulty concentrating and making decisions, and a lack of desire to be sociable.” (Cherry, 2010). Males often deal with mental health on their own, for a number of reasons. It could be due to shattering the masculine image that they have built their entire lives, or that they see psychology as too intrusive or perhaps too feminine, they would rather deal with pain on the outside rather than any happening on the inside. With mental health being neglected for a majority of their lives, men eventually become depressed until living becomes unbearable.

The concept of this project is to create a tool that men can use on their own to help them discover a different side of themselves. There is no need for talk therapy with this book, it is simply filled with grounding techniques commonly used for patients with anxiety and depression to help in times of severe distress. It also consists of many art therapy techniques

that are commonly used in the psychology field to help those struggling with getting their inner turmoil out of them and out onto a canvas. This workbook contains 30 bare pages for artistic use to go along with each of the art therapy techniques. The hope is to save lives with this book, no more gatekeeping psychology tips and tricks that can better us as a people.

Design Plan

I set out to create this workbook to help those struggling with depression by supplying these helpful tips and techniques. However, I discovered that there was a lot more involvement with the underlying design work than I had initially anticipated. I needed to really focus on my target audience for this. So I looked into marketing strategies, gender psychology, color associations, and interesting publication design. I began by using mindmaps and mood boards to start my initial research to sort of guide me in a specific direction and then I began to work on my initial sketches. This allowed me to explore a variety of layouts that I believed would be visually appealing to my audience while also being practical. I set out to do around 300 sketches to allow myself a variety of designs to choose from when working on the actual designs. From there I narrowed the designs

down and paired them with the headings and color pairings that I had planned on using early on in the rough sketches. Again, I had designed more layouts than I had intended on using so that I could continue to narrow down the designs. By using design concepts like the rule of thirds, the golden ratio, Ockham's razor, and text hierarchy, I was able to narrow these designs down to 30 interesting layouts that would appeal to the male artist while also using the subject matter to tend to his mental health, which you will see in the following chapter.

Color Associations

Color is fairly subjective and emotional. It is often the most important element of a project. "Our response to a color is based on our life experiences and cultural associations." (Adams, 2017). Color is often used to evoke emotion in its viewers, it can inspire action, and even change moods. We have been studying the effects of colors for decades, with the infinite colors and color combinations that we can access, it is difficult to assess exactly how color will affect each person. These associations cover a more generic, encompassing group of people.

Red is often seen as an extreme color, associated with warnings, fire, or blood. It has been used for everything from political propaganda to fast food manipulation in modern society. Variations of red have been used among cultures to signify good luck, freedom, and passion.

Blue often communicates honesty and loyalty. It is often associated with water and sky and maintains a link to nature. Variations of blue have been used to represent masculinity, holiness, sympathy, and peace. Research has reflected an inverse effect on the brain than the color red.

Yellow is regarded as the embodiment of cheerfulness, optimism, and happiness. It is often used to elevate moods in viewers. Among different cultures, it has also been associated with courage, cowardice, or timidity.

Orange is a secondary color that is particularly subjective in associations. It pulls attributes from both of the primary colors that mix to create it. It is linked with feelings of energy, youth, and heat.

Purple, historically, has been associated with royalty or eastern religions. It carries religious or aristocratic connotations with it. Depending on the amount of red or blue that it contains could shift the meaning of the color from an intense effect to a calming one on the viewer. Among different cultures, it has been linked with wisdom, luxury, and wealth.

Green, similar to blue, is associated with nature and the environment. Different variations of green can be linked to illness and decay. Modern day designs use green in relation with healthy eating or recycling, all things related to sustainability and life.

It was with these color associations that I began using green as the main color throughout the

design work, I wanted “Sustainability and life” to really shine through, however after awhile I wanted to use a second color to complement the green, and visually it just wasn’t working well. So, I took a break from the interior of the book to work on the cover. I used blue and yellow as my main color choices, both having an influence on mental health, and used the cover to help dictate the interior color scheme. Blue and yellow both have associations with mental health, life and nature. The high value contrast created between the darker blues and the bright yellow is visually attractive to the male eye as well.



Gender and Design

Considering that the goal is to appeal to males that are struggling with depression and possibly suicidal ideation, I thought it best to find out what appeals to males visually in the realm of art and design. I looked into marketing design to help with insight into what appeals to the different genders. By observing the basic elements of design, it is interesting to note that there are quite a few differences in what appeals to the male mind and what appeals to the female mind. Now we are working with generalizations here, and there are always exceptions to these, however, with subjective concepts it is best to appeal to the widest audience possible when creating new work. These observations have been made for decades and play a large role in marketing products to the different genders.

Typography, an important element of design, when it is slanted or used as a script typeface it is associated with femininity. Think of the differences in men and women’s soaps or razor brands that we see on shelves today. If we stripped the packages of the other elements, we could assume which ones are targeted to men and which are targeted to women. Men generally gravitate toward thick, bold typefaces that shout stability and power.

Color, possibly the most influential element of design, can generally make or break a design. Color is a tricky topic considering that different cultures associate different meanings with each one. In some parts of the world, red

can be associated with power, and in other parts it can be associated with love. In the western world, gender and color are commonly associated with one another as well. Blue is often targeted to males, while pink is aimed at women. Males prefer higher contrast in their color pairings, whereas females prefer a softer palette, similar to pastels or muted tones. It is important to note that neutrals are not often associated with a specific gender like blue or pink, neutrals generally enhance the colors that they are paired with.

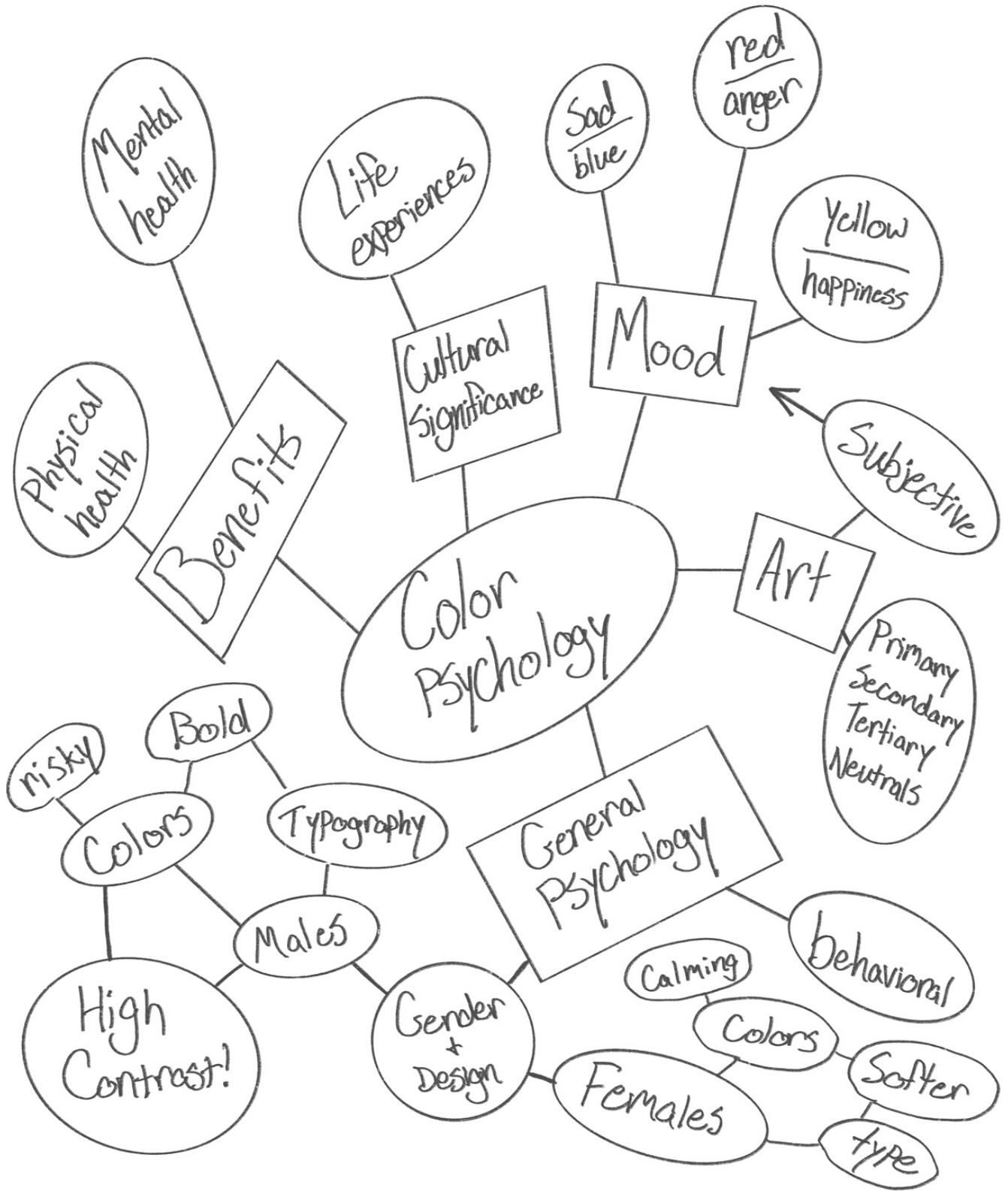
Imagery is another important element that can appeal to specific genders. The subject matter of images, especially in this digital world that we currently live in, can keep the attention of a viewer for a second or an hour. Whether we realize it or not, representation among imagery makes a difference to viewers. Seeing people of a similar age, race, or gender can intrigue us enough to analyze a photo a bit longer than initially intended. Similar to color and typography, imagery has associations that are gender specific as well. Where women tend to spend more of their time observing photos of clothing, babies, and flowers; men spend more time observing sports, electronics, and nature.

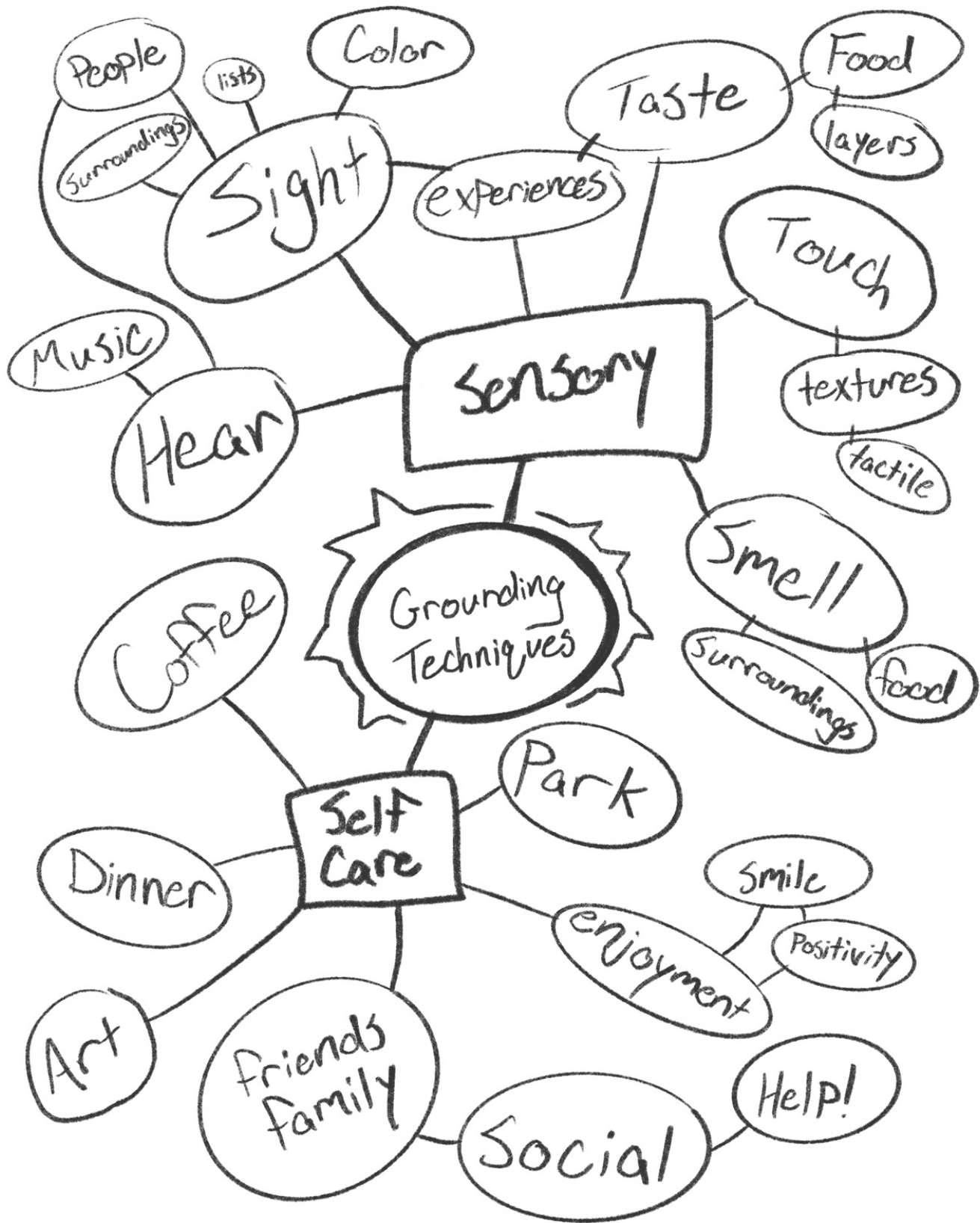
As previously stated, these are generalizations in the world of design and marketing. But these simple observations have been used in marketing for decades to sway the masses into buying specific products. By noting the differences between males and females in the world of design, I will be able to market more to my intended audience of males with depression.

Mindmapping

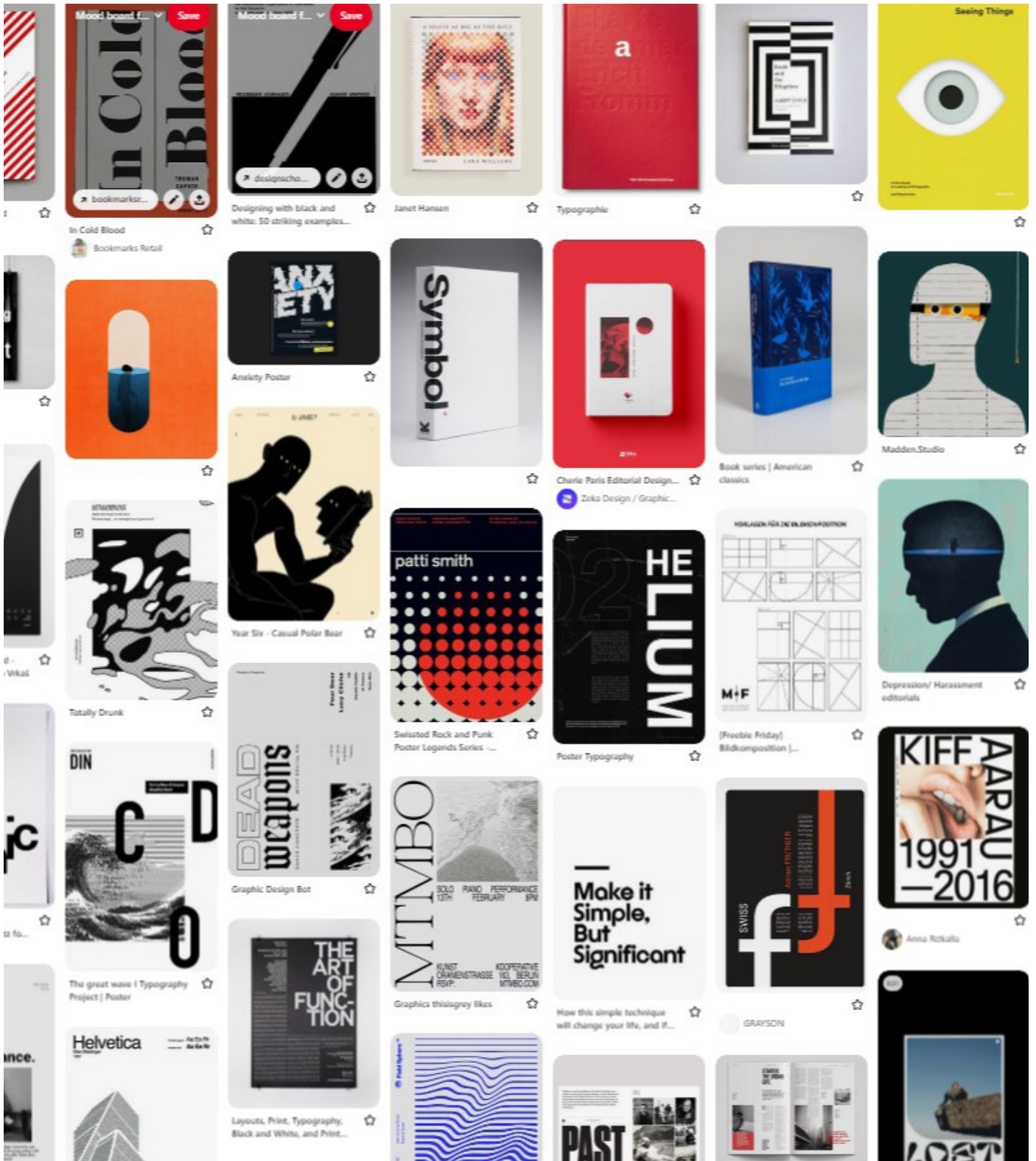
By using mindmapping as a research method I was able to channel the direction that I was wanting to go with my research through brainstorming. By focusing on color associations and grounding techniques, I was able to push my final design work a bit further than I had initially intended. It provided a good foundation for where I wanted to go with the work.

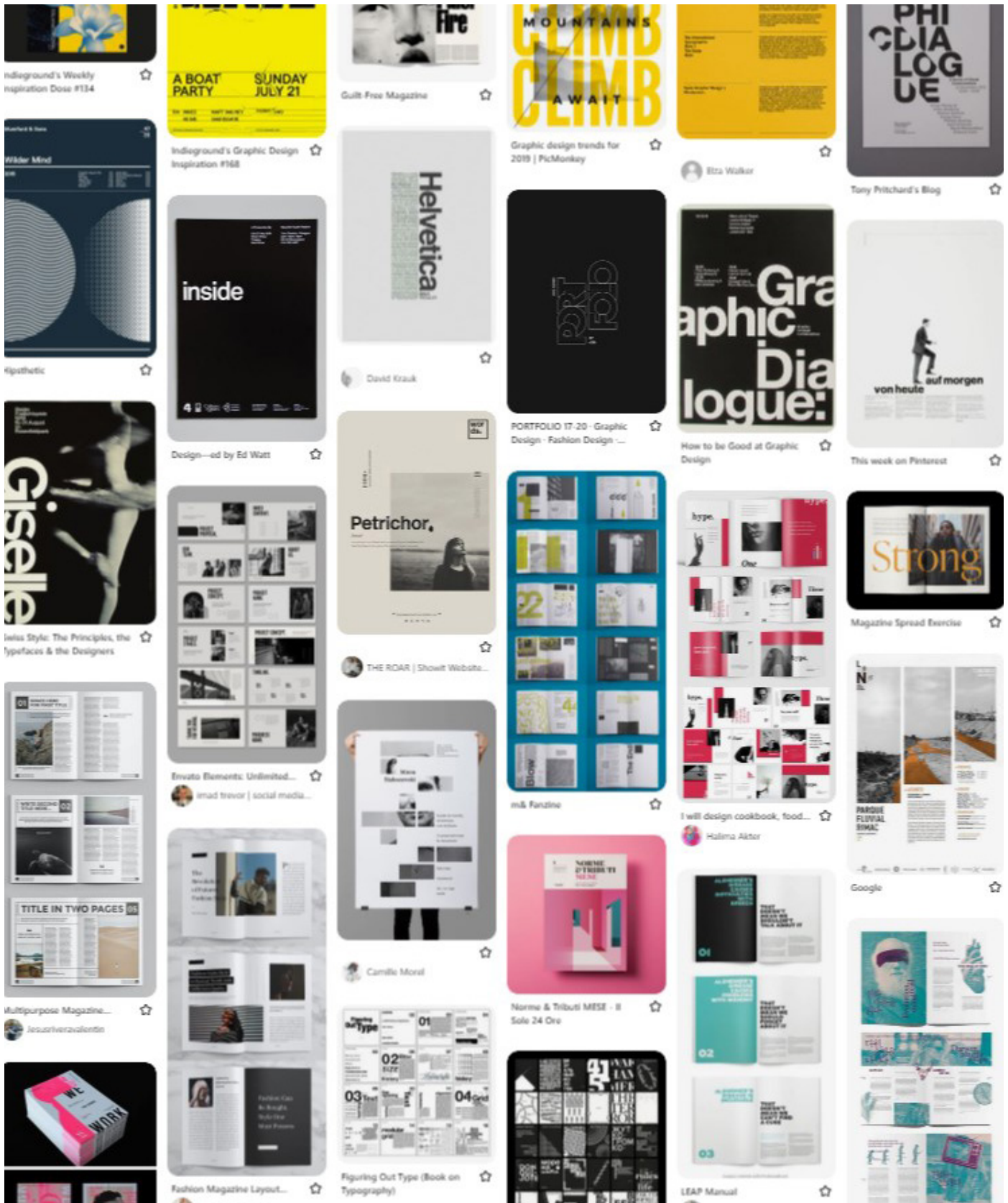






Moodboard

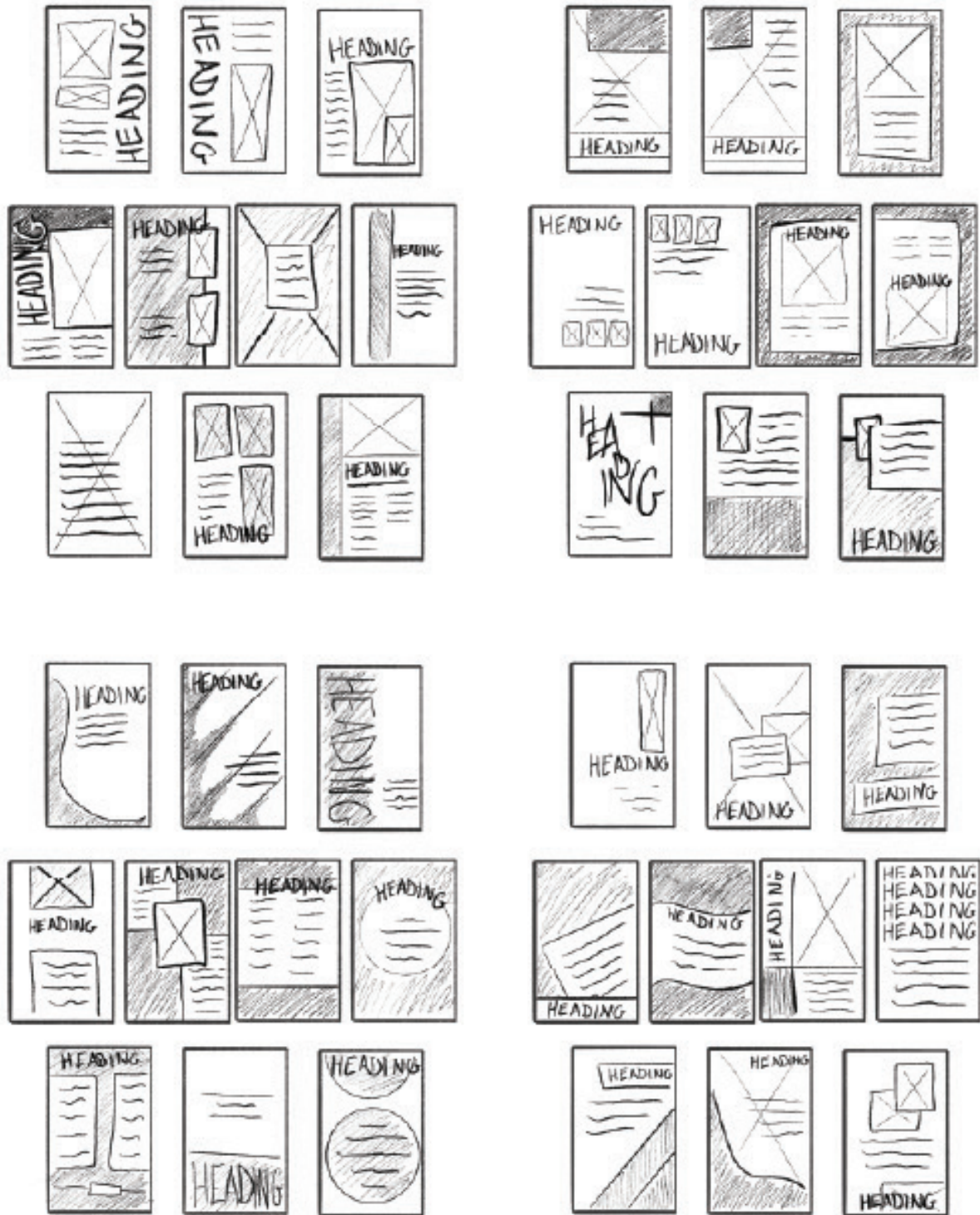




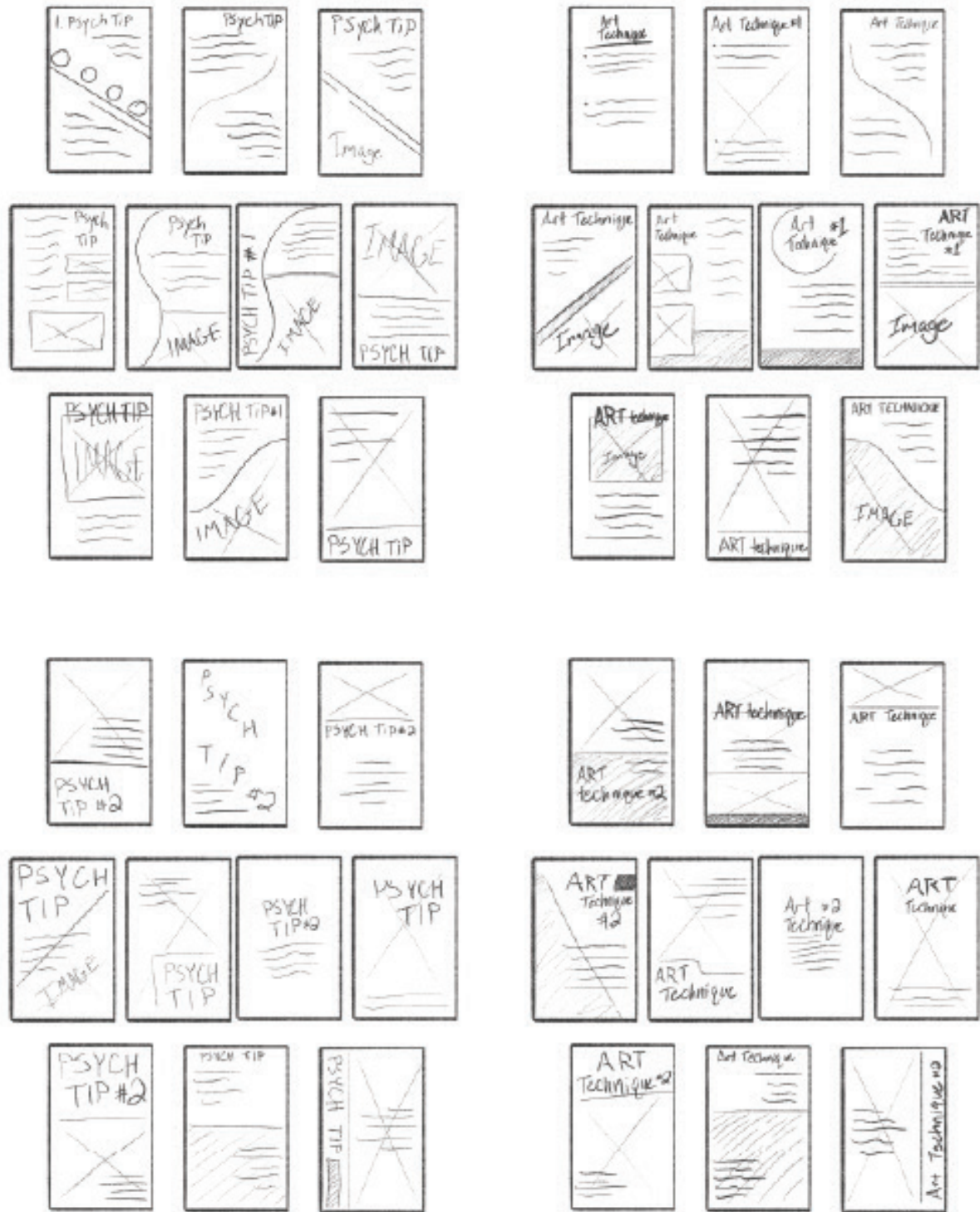
Thumbnails

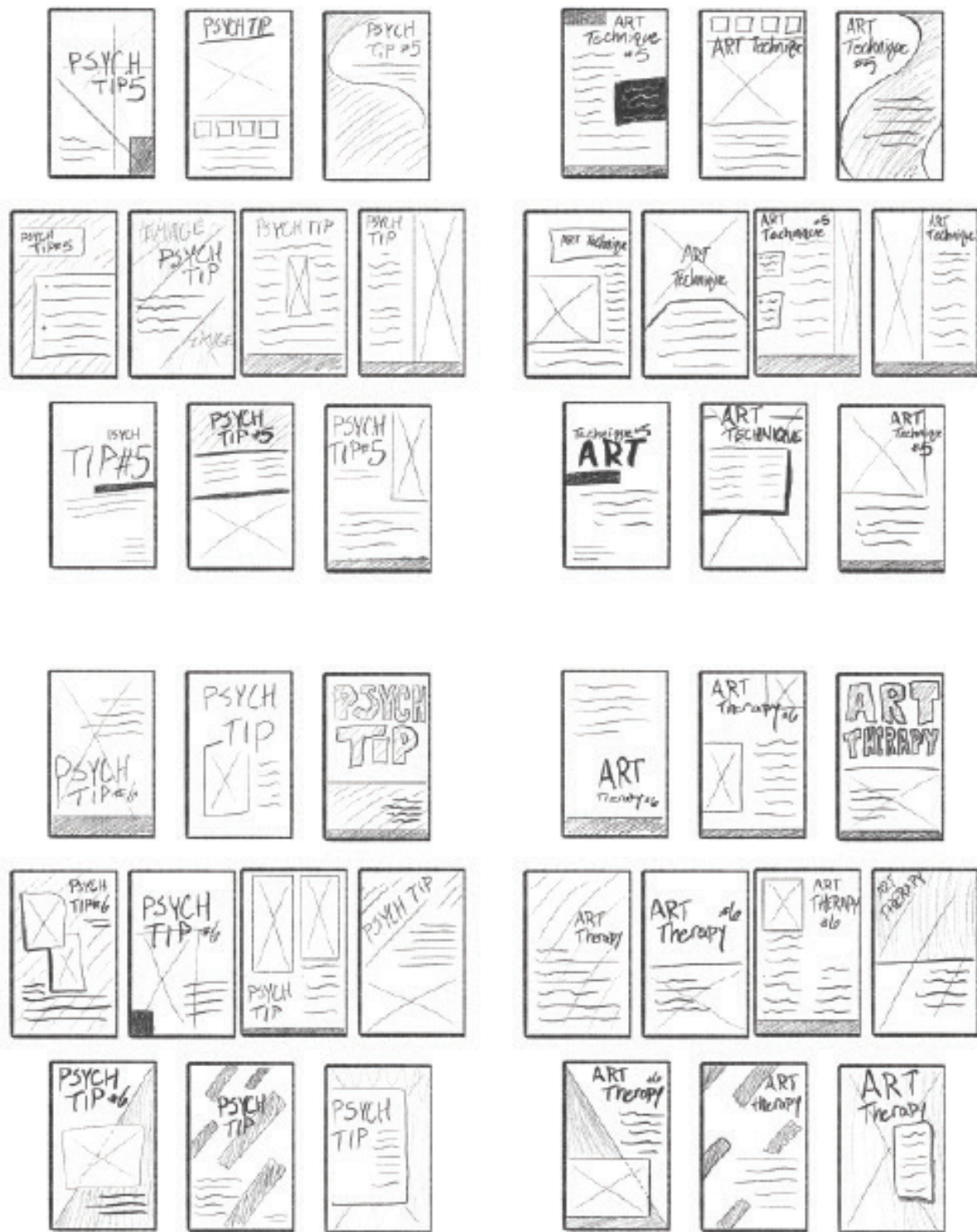


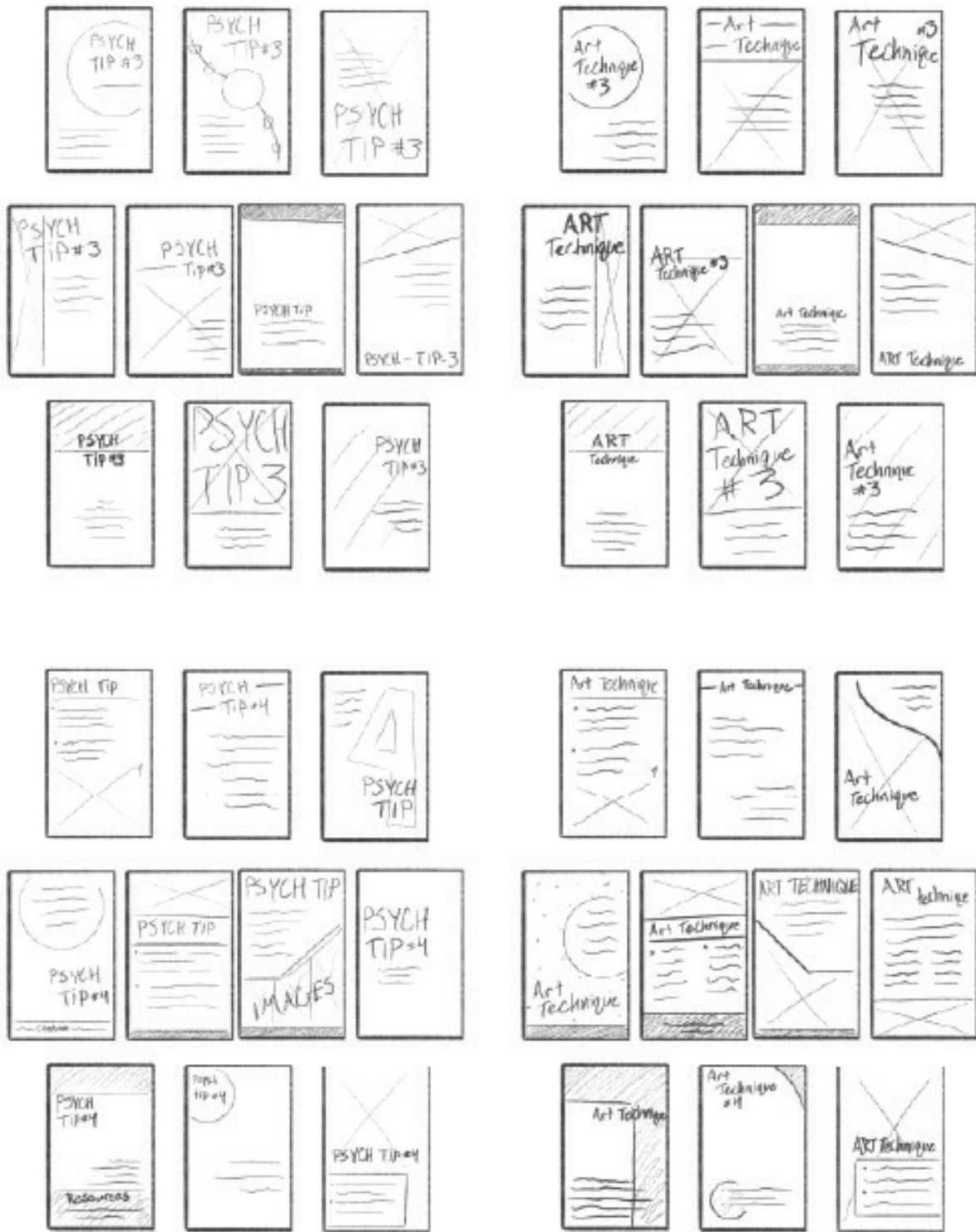




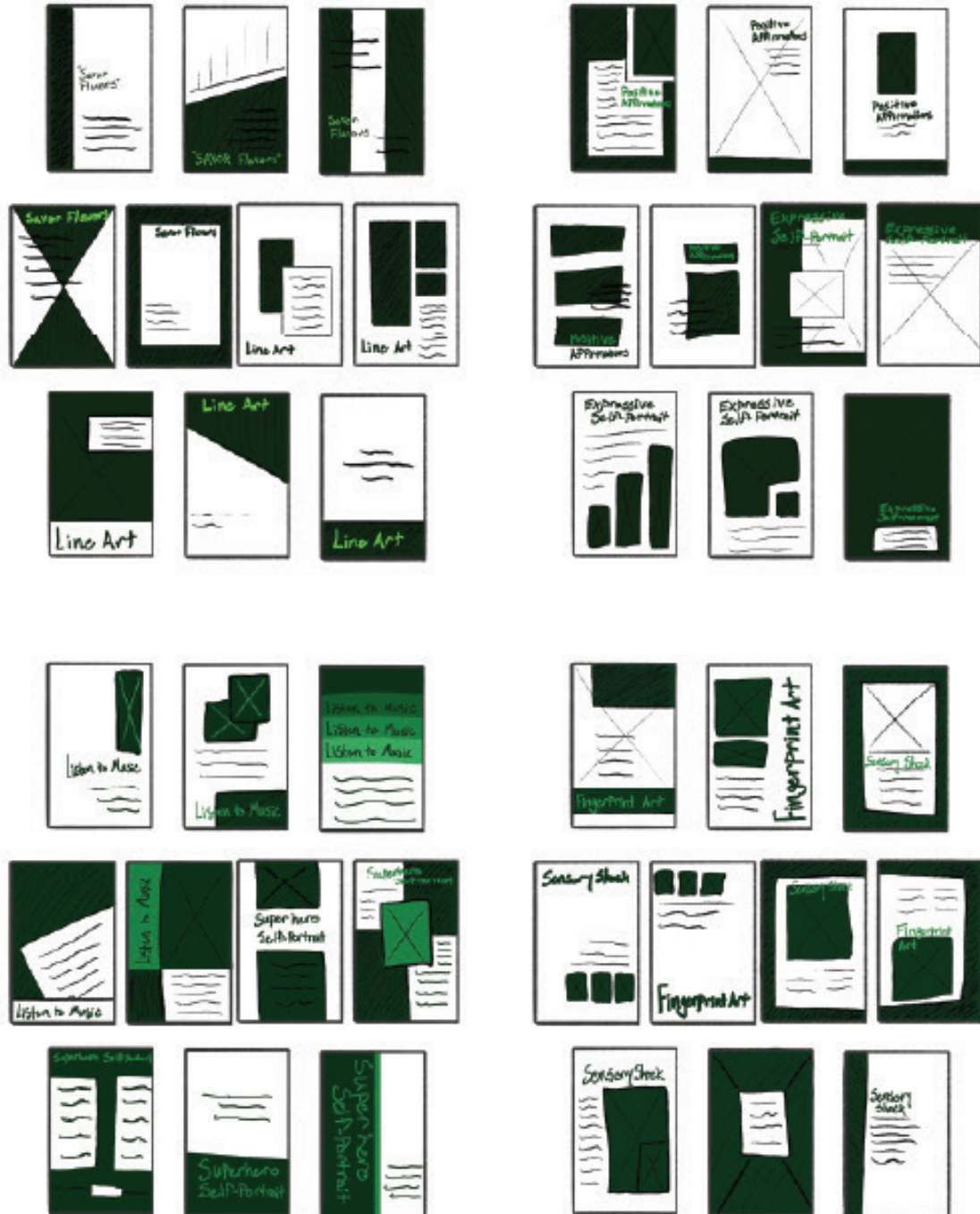




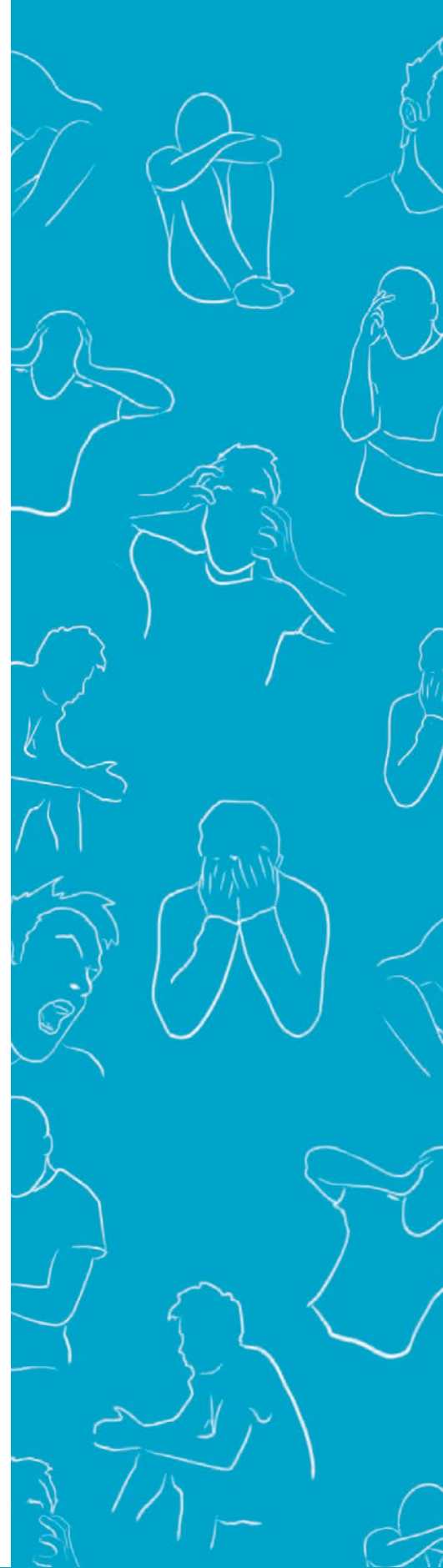




Roughs







Chapter 4: Final Solution

In creating this project, I was challenged between creating a physical workbook or in creating a digital version for an app or website so that it could reach a wider audience. There is a large difference in reading art therapy practices on a screen and actually having the tangible thing in front of you, especially considering the included mixed media paper that is found within the workbook. The physical workspaces, dedicated to artists, can be removed from the book, framed, and used for actual art in galleries, around one's home, etc. The entire point of the workspace is to encourage self-expression and to get those struggling to open up about their problems in one way or another, creating art through these exercises is a creative way to do just that.

The final designs are included in this chapter, the cover features a split-expression face on the front referencing the ability to “mask”. Masking is an ability to conceal one's emotions to protect themselves, often used to avoid speaking on mental health concerns. Again, the color blue is primarily used throughout the book in reference to its color association with healing and feelings of sadness. The textured effect of Benday dots along the cover will stick out to artists as references to the pop-art movement. The heavy color contrast between the background and the bright yellow of the pencil and logo will catch the attention of passing eyes.

The layout of the workbook alternates from an anxiety grounding tip to an art therapy technique that can assist with depressive episodes. After the sequence of 15 of each, the book is filled with 30 mixed media sheets of paper for use with the many different art therapy techniques. This workbook is designed to allow men that do not necessarily want to go speak to a professional or perhaps cannot afford a therapist to use art as a healing force to combat their mental health issues. Art is commonly used to heal those struggling with depression and anxiety. Financial stress or lack of medical assistance should not prevent someone from good mental health.

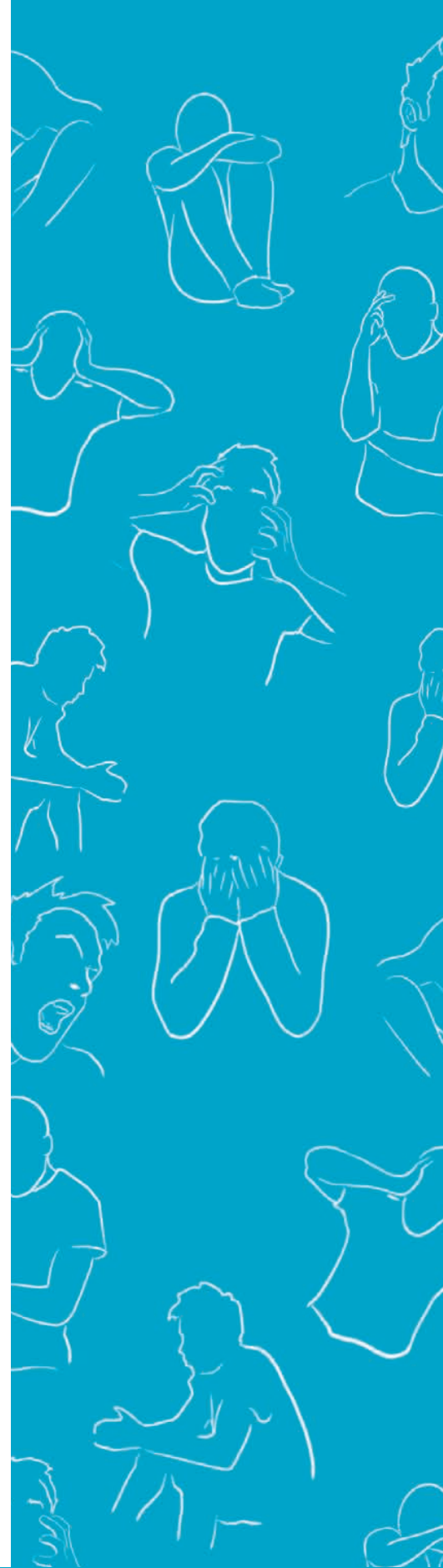
As stated previously, marketing tactics are used to appeal to a specific audience, through my research I was able to understand which elements specifically appeal to males over females in design. Bold typefaces, such as Impact, high contrasting color schemes like the navy blue against white, or visually stimulating imagery such as the superhero illustration are all examples of how I used marketing tactics to appeal to my target audience of male creatives with depression. “Understanding gender preconceptions and predispositions is just a starting place, not a set of hard and fast rules.” (Cousins, 2021). Even though these are common guidelines and practices in the world of marketing, there are always exceptions to what may appeal to an individual.

Art Therapy Techniques

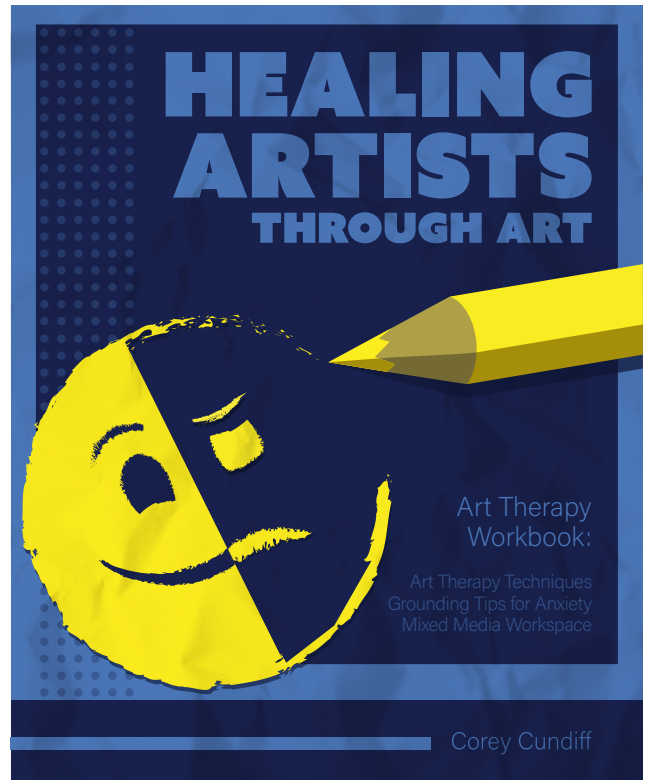
Art therapy techniques are used in a number of ways to help the patient heal from inner turmoil. By allowing the patient to use art as a conduit to express themselves, it creates a safe association between art and healing. Most patients are uncomfortable with directly opening up to a stranger about their deepest thoughts and feelings. This is where the strengths of art therapy come in. The general concept that art therapists tend to encourage with their patients is self-expression, that way the therapist can truly get to understand them through the analysis of their work.

Grounding Tips

The grounding tips featured throughout the workbook are used to combat severe anxiety. Grounding is a tactic often used on the senses to distract you from distressful thoughts and feelings. When a panic attack occurs, emotions seem to overpower your thought process and makes it difficult to think clearly, so it is important to ground yourself with these tips so that you do not hurt yourself or someone else.



Final Designs



Sensory Evaluation

“5-4-3-2-1 Technique”

Sensory evaluations are a common grounding technique for those dealing with anxiety and depression, they are used to “ground” those that are experiencing high levels of stress. The “5-4-3-2-1 technique” challenges sufferers to look for 5 things in their immediate surrounding that they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things that they can hear, 2 things that they can smell, and 1 thing that they can taste.



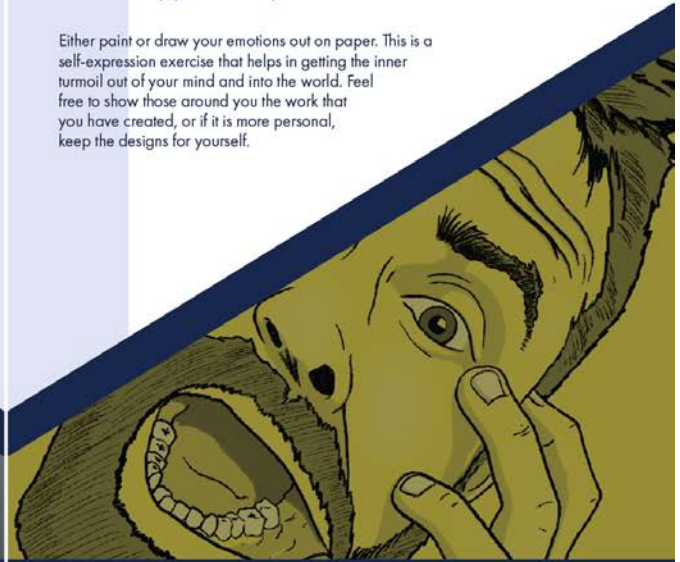
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Psychology Grounding Tip #1 | Healing Artists Through Art

Paint Your Emotions

Art Therapy Technique #1

Either paint or draw your emotions out on paper. This is a self-expression exercise that helps in getting the inner turmoil out of your mind and into the world. Feel free to show those around you the work that you have created, or if it is more personal, keep the designs for yourself.



Art Therapy Technique #1 | Healing Artists Through Art

2

Paint with Music

Art Therapy Technique #2

Music therapy is one of the most promising forms of art therapy, often creating calming effects on listeners. When combining music with the physical arts such as painting, interesting outcomes happen. Common practices while combining painting with music, is to paint feelings that emit from you while listening to specific genres, or to simply let your imagination take hold of the brush while listening to a song on repeat.

Another simple grounding technique for those that suffer with anxiety and depression is to just simply breathe. This practice is called “4 for 4 breathing”. This particular name helps remind you to inhale for 4 seconds, hold it in for 4 seconds, and exhale for 4 seconds. In keeping up with the name, do this practice 4 times in a row or until the current feelings subside.



“4 for 4 Technique”

Breathing Techniques

3

Psychology Grounding Tip #2 | Healing Artists Through Art

Art Therapy Technique #2 | Healing Artists Through Art

4

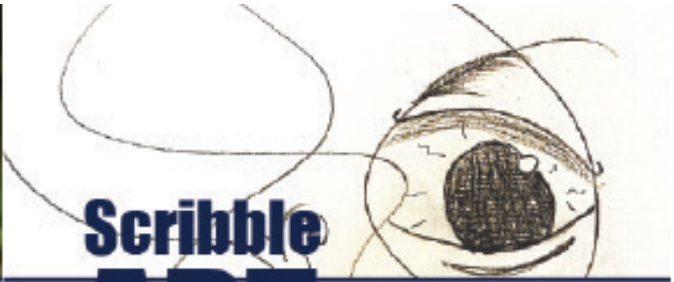


Physical Activity

We all should be aware of the benefits that physical exercise has on our mental health. Running or walking has many benefits other than heart health. While exercising may not be at the top of everyone's list of fun activities, it could be used as a grounding technique during a panic attack. Next time you are feeling on edge, go for a walk and focus on the number of steps that you take on your walk, or the rhythm.

5

Psychology Crossref: Title #2 | Healing Artists Through Art



Scribble ART

Art Therapy Technique #3

This technique is especially freeing, start your canvas out with a series of scribbles, completely organic. Either self-made or created by a friend and the challenge is to create something aesthetically beautiful from it. You can be as expressive with this practice as you possibly can. Make it uniquely your own creation.

Art Therapy Technique #3 | Healing Artists Through Art

6



Anchor Statements

"My name is...."

Anchoring statements are another grounding technique to get someone suffering from anxiety and depression to get out of their head during an anxiety attack. Repeating phrases such as "My name is ____, I am __ years old, I live in ____." While continuing to add on with observations around you is a great way to combine your senses with safe, rehearsed sentences.

7

Psychology Crossref: Title #4 | Healing Artists Through Art



Finger Painting

Art Therapy Technique #4

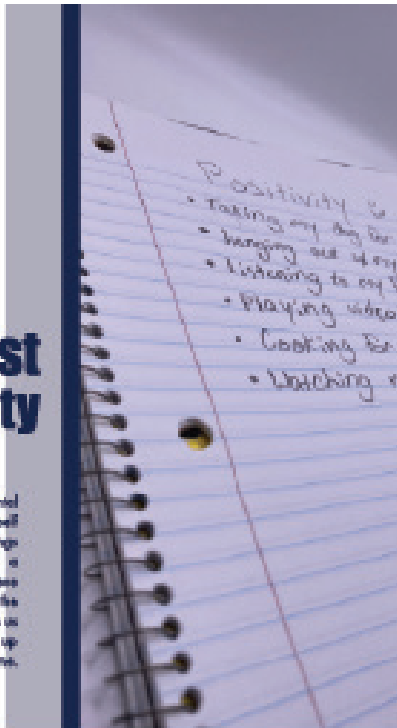
Finger painting is not exclusive to children, sometimes the tactile feel of the paint on your skin can help ground you while you produce a wonderful expressionistic piece of art. It does feel good to let loose and let the feel of getting messy with art supplies take you back to the days of when you were younger with hardly a care in the world. The idea is to paint your emotions, however, feel free to push boundaries as what you are capable of creating with only paint and your hands.

Art Therapy Technique #4 | Healing Artists Through Art

8

Make a List of Positivity

By creating these physical or mental lists, not only are you distracting yourself mentally, but you are describing things that bring you happiness. With a tangible list, it is much easier to achieve goals that we set for ourselves. If the goal is to do something that makes us smile, then the first step is to think up things that could get us to that outcome. It is simple, but very effective.



8

Psychology Grounding Tip #8 | Healing Artists Through Art

Recite Orders

Multiplication tables

Attempt reciting information that you do not regularly think about, like multiples of 3, or attempt at saying the alphabet backwards. The mental focus that you apply to these tasks will distract you from any anxiety distress that you may be facing at the time. Over time, you may master some of these orders and will have to create new ones to distract yourself.

11

Psychology Grounding Tip #8 | Healing Artists Through Art

Dream Journal

Art Therapy Technique #5

Not only are journals used for writing. Create a journal specifically of drawings representing your dreams. It could help work out some issues that your subconscious mind is struggling with, while also supplying you with some creative subject matter.

Spiritual Painting

Art Therapy Technique #6

Sometimes we experience overwhelming religious or spiritual experiences in specific settings, feelings of grandiosity or perhaps inner bliss. Try to remember how you felt in such an emotional time and attempt to recreate those feelings on paper.

Art Therapy Technique #6 | Healing Artists Through Art

12



Safe Objects

Generally those that suffer with anxiety or depression have physical ticks. It has become increasingly popular over the years to have "fidget items" to ease the ticks, and over time these items become safe objects for us. We build associations with them, they become as important to us as our wallets and phones. They often act as grounding pieces whenever we are stressed, over time you may eventually be able to imagine the item to ease your stress rather than keeping it on your person.

13

Psychology Graduate Tip #7 | Healing Artists Through Art

Using a medium of your choice, create a piece of art that focuses on something important to you. Whether it is a friend or family member, perhaps a fond memory, a pop culture reference, or something from nature.

By focusing on these things that "anchor" you, you are reinforcing grounding behaviors, while also reminding yourself of the positivity in your life.



Art Therapy Technique #7

Anchor Art

Art Therapy Technique #7 | Healing Artists Through Art

14

Positive Affirmations

Getting yourself in the habit of giving positive affirmations, not only grounds someone during distress, but also uplifts self-esteem and increases self-worth in individuals.

Expressive Self-Portrait

Art Therapy Technique #8



Self-portraits are an incredibly simple way of showing others how you feel about yourself. By creating an expressive self-portrait you can play around with stylization, colors and lines while being as creative as possible. Do not let the concept of realism hold you back with this project.

15

Psychology Graduate Tip #8 | Healing Artists Through Art

Art Therapy Technique #8 | Healing Artists Through Art

16

Savor Flavors

Grounding techniques focus around the senses, so it only makes sense that taste is included in these tips. When one is undergoing distress, candy is a small convenient food that can help center focus away from the stressor. Sour candy has been found quite beneficial, however, all food works in this manner.

11

Psychology Grounding Tip #9 | Healing Artists Through Art

A common art therapy tactic is to express your feelings with lines only. The challenge is to only use various lines rather than shapes and colors. By focusing on this simple request, it not only gets you to think outside of the box in regard to the design, but it allows you to express yourself with the simplest element of art.

Line Art

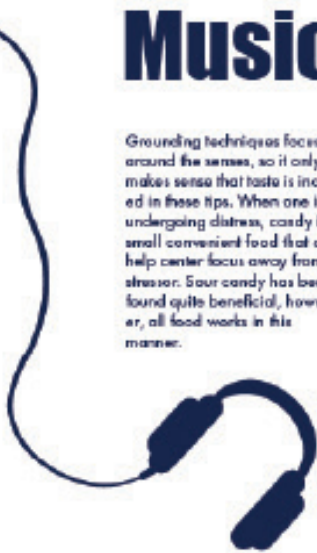
Art Therapy Technique #9

Art Therapy Technique #9 | Healing Artists Through Art

16

Listen to Music

Grounding techniques focus around the senses, so it only makes sense that taste is included in these tips. When one is undergoing distress, candy is a small convenient food that can help center focus away from the stressor. Sour candy has been found quite beneficial, however, all food works in this manner.



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Psychology Grounding Tip #10 | Healing Artists Through Art

Different from the Expressive Self-Portrait, the Superhero Self-Portrait is used to visualize yourself stronger than you really are. By doing so, one can build up their self-esteem while envisioning themselves in the life of someone that "survives the day".

Art Therapy Technique #10

Superhero Self-Portrait



Art Therapy Technique #10 | Healing Artists Through Art

28

Rainbow Game

By using your sense of sight, look around your surroundings and find in sequence each color from the rainbow. Starting with red, locate on them and say it aloud. This practice is used to distract one from a possible anxiety attack.



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Psychology Overview 10411 | Healing Artists Through Art



Art Therapy Technique #11

Childhood Memory Painting

By painting scenes from your childhood, one can reflect and possibly work through particularly challenging issues that stemmed from these developmental years, or rather reflect on good times that one may have had during this time. Often, people feel ashamed of things that were beyond their control at such a young age and prefer not to discuss it with other people, this is where expressing yourself through art comes in handy.

Art Therapy Technique 111 | Healing Artists Through Art

22

Texture Search

Often, those that struggle with mental distress work on grounding them in the present by focusing on one of their five senses. Touch is one of the most commonly thought of when attempting to ground someone from an anxiety attack. A nice practice to do is to observe and touch each new texture is new environments when you are feeling particularly anxious.

23

Psychology Overview 10412 | Healing Artists Through Art



Create a piece of art with only your fingerprints. Your fingerprints are unique just like you are. Make your artwork one of a kind and meaningful with this personalization. The sensation of print on the skin along with the challenge of creating something with such an interesting shape really works with distracting the nervous system from distress.

Art Therapy Technique #12

Fingerprint Art

Art Therapy Technique 112 | Healing Artists Through Art

24

Sometimes all we need is to take a little time out of our busy lives to take care of our own needs. By taking a day or two each week to treat ourselves with our favorite things we can alleviate the stress of everyday life. Whether it is getting a cup of coffee or hanging out with our friends, or even reading a book, these small things pull us away from the mundane patterns and gives us something to look forward to.

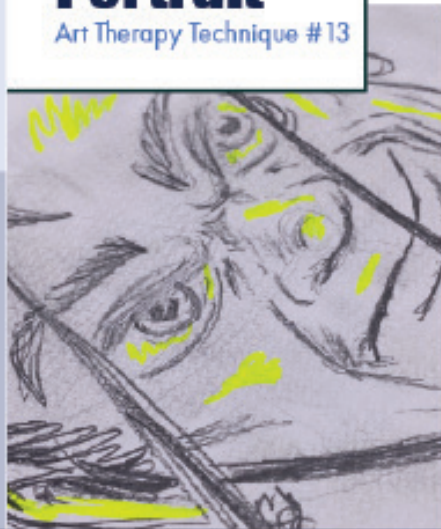
Self-Care

26

Psychology Graduate Thesis #12 | Healing Artists Through Art

Reflection Portrait

Art Therapy Technique #13



Reflection portraits are drawings or paintings of yourself from the past, the present, and the future. This technique is all about self-reflection. How you saw yourself as a kid, your thoughts on yourself as you are now, and hopes for the future you. This is a common technique used in art therapy, and is very helpful with expressing self-love.

Art Therapy Technique #13 | Healing Artists Through Art

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Sensory Shock

By attempting to "Shock" your senses, one may be able to ground themselves by bringing their body back to the reality in front of them. Taking a cold shower, listening to high-pitched frequencies, or even eating spicy foods can do enough to the body to get one out of that dreaded headspace that they may find themselves in.

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Psychology Graduate Thesis #11 | Healing Artists Through Art



Vision Collage

Art Therapy Technique #14

For this technique, you will create a collage from books and magazines of things that bring you joy. Perhaps it is something that you hope to do someday. This technique not only builds hope but perhaps makes you fall in love with your interests and hobbies again, while also being artistic with the collage medium.

Art Therapy Technique #14 | Healing Artists Through Art

28

Image Search



Whether living or deceased, we live on through our photos, whenever you are feeling particularly distressed look at photos of loved ones, use these photos as safe objects when you have no other distraction around. Anyone that you feel comfortable around will generally work.

29

Psychology Overview: The #15 | Healing Artists Through Art

Create Comics

Art Therapy Technique #15

If you like to dabble with illustration, creating a comic book or comic strip might be for you. Similar to the superhero self-portrait it is common to imagine ourselves as extraordinary, and that is the focus of this practice. Get in the habit of exploring your imagination and pushing the limits on the impossible within your stories.

Not only will this practice push your creativity and imagination, but it will also create an entertaining story for yourself and those you share it with.



Art Therapy Technique #15 | Healing Artists Through Art

30

The second half of this workbook is dedicated as a workspace to practice each art therapy technique.

It is important to keep the tips and techniques from this workbook even after the workspace is filled up.

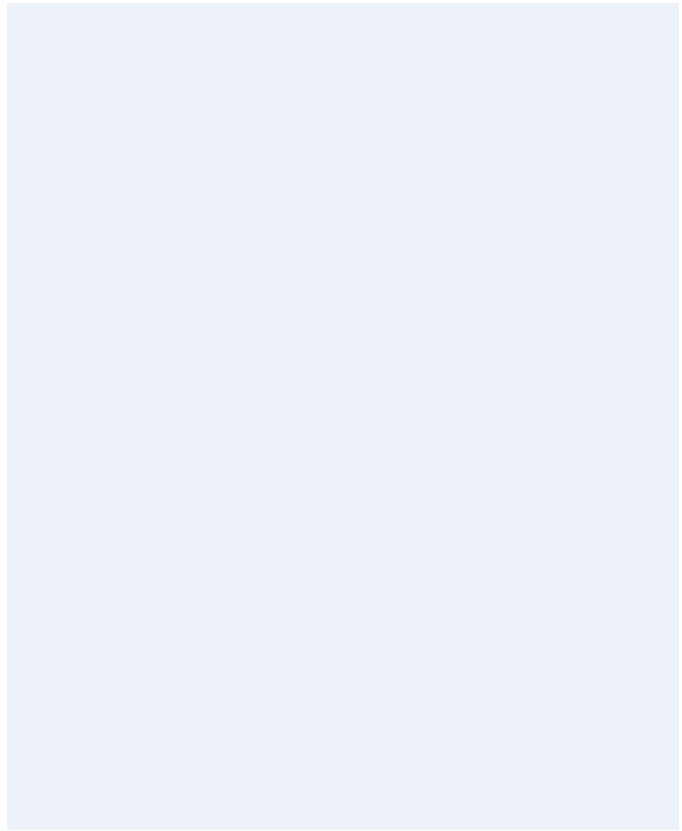
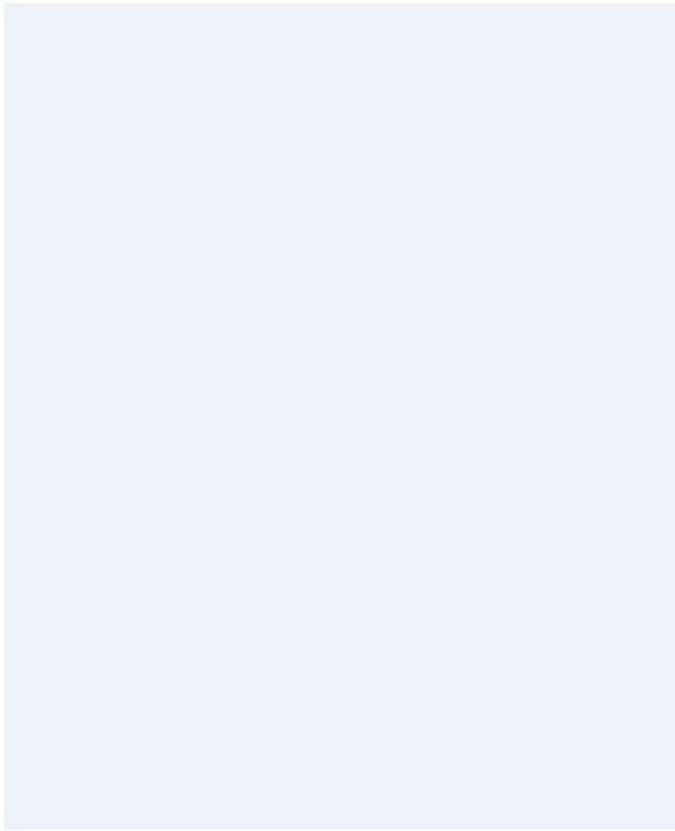
It is also important to remember that we need the lows in life to remind us what the highs are, and that depression is temporary.

Additional Help:

If you are having a mental health crisis, please dial 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Visit the ADAA for additional resources pertaining to anxiety and depression.

31

Healing Artists Through Art



Do YOU need help?

Art Heals

Do you struggle with anxiety or depression? Is the pressure of everyday life becoming unbearable? Do you feel alone, as if no one understands exactly what you're going through? Don't worry, this is a common feeling that many people experience at some point in their lives. However, many people handle their mental health recovery differently. Some find solace in talk therapy, some lean into their relationships, and some isolate attempting to solve their problems alone.

There have been countless studies proving the benefits of art therapy on mental health and this workbook aids in that exact relationship. It is filled with helpful grounding tips as well as art therapy techniques to practice.

It really does get better.



Design Process

Final Design (See Page 48):

As previously stated, the cover is designed with calming colors, high contrast, and bold type to stand out to the intended male audience. I designed the inside cover using the smiling mask motif from the cover of the book but lowered the opacity to suggest that the inside cover isn't as important as the opposing side which is the title page. On the title page, I continued with the high contrast and bold type from the front cover, along with the repeated dot pattern, hinting at pop art's infamous benday dots. I wanted to throw in some art and design references throughout the book that fellow designers may appreciate.

Final Design (See Page 49):

Figuring out the layout of the workbook was fairly difficult when realizing that I couldn't include mixed media sheets after every art therapy technique, so I adjusted by including the grounding technique on the left of every spread and the art therapy technique on the right. The mixed media paper will be supplied later in the workbook. This first spread focus on sharp angles with bold lines, while the designs are seemingly mirrored from one another. The second spread featured uses high contrast with a large rectangle on the left page to act as a focal point, while there is an organic shape flowing from the text on the right page to form this contrasting relationship with one another.

Final Design (See Page 50):

With the first spread on this page, I did another design that almost mirrors one another. I changed the right and left alignments of the bodies of text and also broke the visual frames of the titles with the images underneath them. The next spread, I again manipulate the left and right alignment of the bodies of text, but I also place the bodies of text in the lower third quadrant of the design and balance them out with the title "Anchor Statements" on the left and the expressive colors in the image on the right.

Final Design (See Page 51):

With the left side of the spread on this page, I placed the title directly in the center of its frame, while splitting the composition in half letting the text compete visually with the imagery. On the right side, I did something different and included simple vector art to get the point across with the "Dream Journal" technique. On the "Recite Orders" page, I did not include heavy imagery to give the reader a visual break from the last few pages, in fact I do that after every few pages. With the "Spiritual Painting" page I lowered the brightness of my image so that I could have the white type really show in that top corner to balance the body of text in the bottom right corner.

Final Design (See Page 52):

On the top spread, I am steering away from the odd frames (like the rule of third divisions) in publication design and getting closer to splitting the pages nearly in half, and again in pairing vector art on one side with a raster image on the other. The bottom

spread really leans into geometric framing, where I included several basic rectangles across the two pages, and even used several as clipping masks for my artwork on the “Expressive Self-Portrait” side. I kept the rectangle motif across the spread, incorporating a small one on the far right to suggesting a relation between the two pages.

Final Design (See Page 53):

The top spread here is where I am attempting more dramatic layout choices that I hadn’t done yet, I wanted to keep each spread unique and not rehash the same designs over and over. I believe that designers will appreciate that and perhaps they will associate some of the techniques and tips with certain elements that I have designed with. In turn they may know exactly where to flip in the book because of the elements that stuck out to them. The bottom spread has a sort of duality with a freeflowing design on the left paired against a very structured right side.

Final Design (See Page 54):

The top spread goes back to the rule of thirds, but also uses color and high contrast to help with visual movement across the two pages. The left side of the bottom spread is closer to a 5x5 grid rather than the 3x3 that I had been using, I have noticed that in publication design odd framing appeals more to my eye than even, so I tend to use it in my own work quite a bit.

Final Design (See Page 55):

On the top spread, I again use bold rectangles to frame my text, this time center

aligning the body of text and bouncing back and forth between even and odd framing with the foreground and background shapes. I balance the right side out by breaking the image frame with another rectangle and justifying the body of text to create the visual rectangle that it does. The bottom left is heavily centered with the text, while the right design references a mirrored version of the “Make a List of Positivity” page from earlier.

Final Design (See Page 56):

This last bit of design work here uses space and imagery to balance nicely with the type, the breaking of the frames keep me visually interested while reading the techniques. The bottom spread includes the suicide helpline number along with an explanation as to why the next thirty pages are blank, it is for the reader to put to use with each of the art therapy techniques.

Final Design (See Page 57):

I included two blank pages here to reference the 30 blank pages prior, while wrapping up with another interior cover and a fairly text heavy back cover. I kept the type blue and a lower contrast to make it a bit difficult to read unless directly holding the book. I understand that mental health is difficult to talk about most of the time and I did not want someone to feel uncomfortable if others noticed the subject matter from a distance.

Mockups









Chapter 5: Conclusion

My project is focused on tackling the issue of suicide among male artists by looking into the causes of depression. With a topic as broad as depression, it is often difficult to pinpoint every cause associated with it. I set out to look for a solution that could benefit the most amount of men possible. There are countless examples in which therapists use art therapy to ease the stress that life has dealt out. It is through this therapy that one finds themselves free to open up and express the issues that they are dealing with.

Through my creative process I focused on aiding those with depression and anxiety which are two major causes to male suicide in modern time. I made sure to include 15 grounding tips throughout my project that focuses on pulling someone out of their own head and bringing them to the present. For those with severe anxiety, they will understand completely. Overthinking is a common practice for those struggling with anxiety and when not handled properly it can lead to anxiety attacks. Anxiety attacks are often represented by intense chest pain, shortness of breath, or feelings of impending doom. To combat severe anxiety it is common to practice grounding techniques to distract one from their thoughts.

In my work I have included 15 different grounding techniques that could help someone experiencing severe anxiety. Sensory

evaluation is a good practice in which you observe your immediate surroundings through each of your senses. A common breathing technique used in therapy is nicknamed the “four for four” in which you take a series of four deep breaths while holding each for four seconds a piece in order to recenter oneself. Physical activity is an obvious one, however, while exercising you can focus on the senses, perhaps the rhythm that your feet make when hitting the pavement or focus on your breathing or what you see while doing so. Anchor statements, are statements that are easy to remember that remind you who you are and where you are in relation to the world; common practice is repeating your name, favorite hobbies, family members names, etc. Making lists of positivity focuses less on the senses but often distracts you by having you reflect on things in life that make you feel good about yourself. By reciting orders one can distract themselves with the mental focus that it takes to recite something mental, such as multiples of 3. Safe objects are small items that are often textured that can distract your sense of touch, some people carry pens, or lighters or keychains. Positive affirmations are used to positively affect one’s self-esteem. Savoring flavors is a topic from the workbook that targets the sense of taste with specific foods that seem to shock the tastebuds, distracting the user from their mental stress. Listening to music is a common practice that most people use without

realizing the benefits from it. The effects, depending on the music, change the listeners behavior accordingly. The rainbow game featured in the workbook focuses on the sense of sight to target colors in one's immediate environment, similar to the sensory evaluation practice. Texture search is another practice similar to the last that focuses on varieties of texture to ground oneself. Self-Care is another one of those that seems overwhelmingly obvious to combat anxiousness, however, we often neglect treating ourselves due to the busy lifestyles we all live. Every now and then, it is important to take care of yourself with small things that make you happy. Sensory shock is exactly what it sounds like, shocking oneself through the use of their senses, for example, taking a cold shower when particularly distressed, or eating spicy foods, or listening to high-pitched frequencies. Lastly, image search is the last grounding technique in the series that focuses on using one's sense of sight to find photos of loved ones that bring up feelings of safety and comfort.

While these grounding techniques focus primarily on the senses to calm a distressed mind, the 15 art therapy techniques are a little more complicated in execution. Each of the techniques focus primarily on self-expression for the user to get their inner turmoil out and onto paper for further analysis.

Painting one's emotions is a common practice used in art therapy, it is often meant to be an abstract work. The color choice, brush strokes, and subject matter can be analyzed to get to the root of the inner turmoil from the artist.

Painting with music on combines music therapy with art therapy and often creates a calming effect on the listener. Scribble art is a tactic that is often used with children in which someone scribbles shapes onto a canvas and an artist breathes life into it by detailing the workspace. It is similar to Rorschach's inkblot test in the sense that one's perceptions of a single element can determine the subject matter. Finger painting, along with getting in touch with your childish side can give you that tactile feel that grounding techniques use to calm one down from mental distress. A dream journal can be used daily to help interpret your subconscious activity through illustrative works, whether drawn or painted,



it can often bring about interesting subject matter. Spiritual paintings, often people have intense spiritual experiences at some point in their lives, by documenting the experience it could bring relief to people when they are feeling particularly down. Anchor art, similar to the anchor statements from the grounding tip section, uses one's anchors as the subject matter of their artwork, such as a family member, their pet, etc. An expressive self-portrait is a particularly easy way of showing others how you currently feel by exaggerating the exterior features to represent the internal feelings. Line art is a practice that uses the most basic element of art to produce some abstract work, by only using lines it creates a challenge for the artist to attempt to express themselves with simple line, while focusing on problem solving, it pulls them out of their habit of overthinking and puts their attention to better use. A superhero self-portrait is a tactic that has the artist imagine themselves as a powerful superhero and what they may look like, this not only gets the artist to get creative but also empowers their sense of self-worth by having them envision themselves in a better light than what they may currently see them as. Most depression sufferers have dealt with trauma at some point in their lives and it may be jarring for some to think back on their youth, however, painting moments from one's childhood may bring them some sense of peace, especially if it gets them to open up about their subject matter. Fingerprint art, similar to the finger painting technique, the tactile quality of the paint, however it also gives you the opportunity to create something particularly unique, just like your fingerprint. The reflection portrait is a fun exercise in

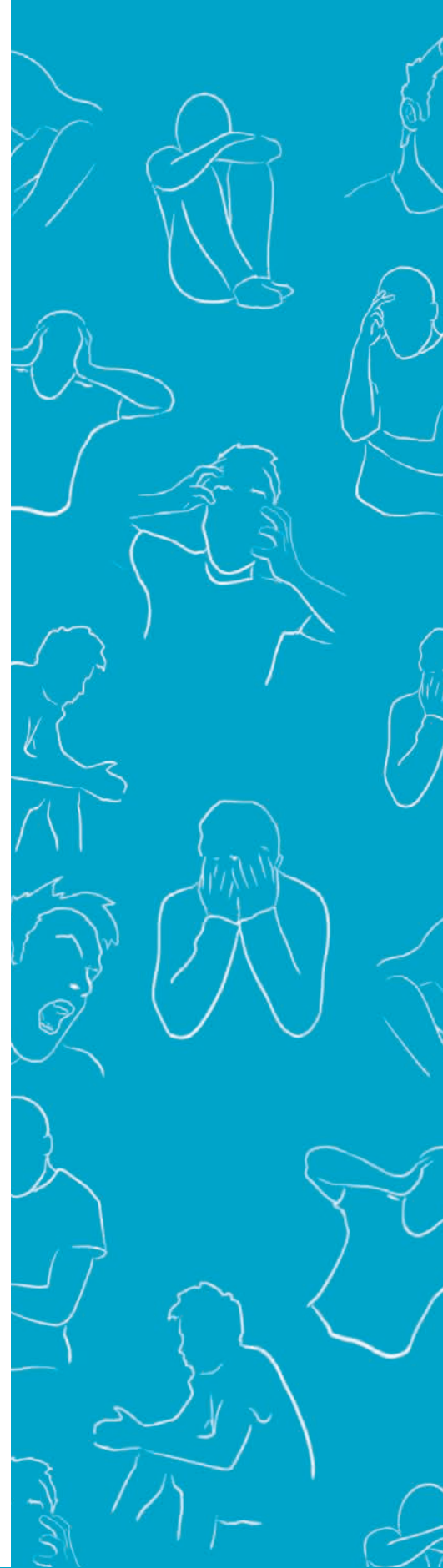
which the artist draws themselves from the past, present, and future. This technique is all about how one sees themselves from different perspectives, encouraging self-love. A vision collage is a technique that combines the craft of collage making with the artist's favorite things to do, the idea is to remind the artist of the best things in their life, when one is struggling with anxiety and depression it is difficult to think on the positives of one's life regularly, so it helps to remind them. Last among the art therapy techniques is to create comics, this one is particularly illustration heavy but it becomes a process that artist's find extremely rewarding afterwards. Whether the artist includes themselves in the comic or whether they make it with another subject matter, these stories can often be analyzed as well to determine the mindset of the artist.

Each of these art therapy techniques can be used in a variety of ways to help an artist express himself, or perhaps distract him from his struggles until he can find professional assistance with his health. The idea here is to use art to heal, or more specifically, to give an artist another way to channel their pain rather than them feeling like suicide is the only solution. This workbook and the techniques incorporated throughout will give art therapy access to many struggling artists who deserve to live. Males, especially male artists, have an incredibly high rate of suicide. It could be due to a number of reasons, societal pressure, financial struggles or perhaps mental health issues. As observed in this project, there are many instances in which art therapy is used to combat the causes of depression and suicidal ideation. Art can heal, we just have to allow it.

With unlimited time, money, and resources, I would create a much larger version of this workbook and use it to educate people on art therapy and its benefits. I think the world is currently suffering from a large mental health crisis and unless action is taken depression and suicidal ideation will continue to be on the rise. I believe that my workbook, once fully developed, can have an impact on the masses in ways that have not yet been explored to this extent. I would like to reach out to mental health practitioners as well and offer my workbook for patients of theirs to give a more hands on approach to their practice.

I plan on getting the workbook published and sold near art supplies in stores, with the proceeds going to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. I want nothing more than to better the whole of humanity, so if one of these workbooks or even the funding can benefit a single life, I will know that it is all worth it.

I believe throughout this project that I have grown as a designer but also as a person. Through the countless articles and studies that I have read through I have gained a deeper appreciation for those that struggle with mental health, depression, and suicidal thoughts. With learning so much about the factors and symptoms of depression, I am on the lookout to constantly help those that I come into contact with in easing the pressures of life.



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