

Case Study

## The Impact of Artistic Expression on Emotional Intelligence: A Clinical Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

This case study investigates how an individual receiving psychological therapy can improve their emotional intelligence (EI) through artistic expression. It has been demonstrated that emotional intelligence—which includes self-awareness, emotional control, and empathy—is essential to mental health and overall wellbeing. During the course of 12 sessions, a 35-year-old female patient with a generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) diagnosis engaged in an art therapy intervention that centered on painting and creative journaling. Emotional intelligence (EI) tests conducted before and after the intervention, as well as the therapist's qualitative comments, showed that the patient's emotional control and empathy for others had significantly improved. According to the research, creative expression might be a useful instrument for raising emotional intelligence and providing a different perspective in clinical settings.

**Keywords:** Case Study, Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, Art Therapy, and Artistic Expression

Emotions can be reactions to things that happen in our surroundings or internal stimuli. Moods and emotions are not the same thing. Emotions can be either positive or negative. They are only responses. However, our wellbeing can be significantly impacted by how we react—or don't.

Among the six fundamental emotions are:

1. Contentment, joy, delight, satisfaction, and well-being are all characteristics of happiness, which is a pleasant emotional state.
2. Sadness is a fleeting emotional condition marked by depressed mood, disappointment, sadness, hopelessness, and apathy.
3. Fear: You experience what is referred to as the flight or fight response when you are afraid of danger.
4. Disgust: This feeling of disgust can be caused by a variety of things, such as an unpleasant taste,
5. Anger: This feeling of disgust can be brought on by a variety of things, such as an unpleasant taste, sight, or smell.

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Received: November 12, 2024; Revision Received: November 15, 2024; Accepted: November 18, 2024

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6. Surprise: a startling physiological reaction brought on by an unforeseen circumstance.

**Emotional Intelligence (EI)** The ability to identify, comprehend, and control one's own emotions as well as those of others is known as emotional intelligence (EI). Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are the five main elements of emotional intelligence (EI), according to Goleman (1995). Higher EI has been linked to better psychological outcomes, such as increased emotional stability and enhanced social functioning, according to research.

**Artistic expression** refers to painting, dancing, and other forms of artistic expression offer a special forum for people to process and communicate their feelings nonverbally. It has been demonstrated that art therapy, which integrates creative endeavours into psychological treatment, aids in the development of emotional awareness, emotion regulation, and interpersonal skills. The purpose of this case study is to look into how artistic expression affects emotional intelligence in a medical context.

This case study aims to investigate how an organized art therapy intervention can enhance the emotional intelligence of a person dealing with interpersonal difficulties and emotional dysregulation.

### CASE STUDY

The patient, a 35-year-old female, has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and struggles to control her emotional reactions to stress. She described feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and having trouble recognizing and expressing her feelings. She had never used art therapy before to deal with tense interpersonal connections, emotions, or interpersonal relationships. She had never done anything like that before.

#### **Intervention:**

The twelve weekly sessions of the art therapy intervention lasted roughly sixty minutes each. The participant painted and kept a creative journal during each session. The sessions' subjects were intended to promote introspection and emotional investigation. For instance, one session pushed participants to construct visual representations of their own aspirations and goals, while another concentrated on using color and texture to convey current emotional states.

#### **Assessment:**

- The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), a standardized test, was used to measure emotional intelligence at the beginning and completion of the intervention.
- Additionally, participant self-reports and therapist observations were used to collect qualitative data. To evaluate improvements in emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy, the therapist's notes were examined.

#### **Research Evidence**

The relationship between emotional intelligence and artistic expression has been the subject of numerous research.

According to a study by Karkou and Sanderson (2006), art therapy greatly increased participants' capacity for emotional expression, which in turn improved their capacity for

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emotional regulation and interpersonal comprehension. Likewise, Moon (2010) showed that art-based therapies could promote more emotional understanding and empathy, especially for those who are coping with emotional dysregulation or trauma.

The notion that art can aid in the processing of emotions is also supported by theoretical models.

According to Levine and Malkin's (2009) Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC), artistic expression promotes cognitive and affective processing, which could result in increased emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

This study supports the findings of the case study, which indicates that creating art can assist people in better managing.

Several studies have explored the connection between artistic expression and emotional intelligence. A study by **Karkou and Sanderson (2006)** found that art therapy significantly improved participants' ability to express emotions, leading to enhanced emotional regulation and interpersonal understanding. Similarly, **Moon (2010)** demonstrated that art-based interventions could foster increased empathy and emotional insight, particularly for individuals dealing with trauma or emotional dysregulation.

Theoretical models also support the idea that art can facilitate emotional processing. The **Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC)**, proposed by **Levine and Malkin (2009)**, suggests that creative expression through art encourages both cognitive and emotional processing, which may lead to improved self-awareness and emotional understanding.

This research aligns with the case study findings, which suggest that engaging in artistic expression can help individuals better manage their emotions and connect with others on an empathetic level.

## DISCUSSION

### Analysis:

Throughout the intervention, the participant's emotional intelligence significantly increased. The Emotional Intelligence Scale scores before and after the test showed a notable improvement in empathy and self-control. In particular, the patient reported feeling more sensitive to other people's feelings, especially in her interpersonal relationships, and exhibited a more balanced emotional reaction to stressful events. The participant reported improved emotional recognition and expression in qualitative interviews, especially following the creative journaling exercises. She also reported feeling less anxious, which she credited to the act of confronting and expressing her emotions through visuals. It appeared that the therapeutic application of art promoted emotional clarity and regulation by offering a secure environment for emotional inquiry.

### Clinical Implications:

According to this case study, integrating artistic expression into therapy practice may help improve emotional intelligence, especially in people who have trouble regulating their emotions or interacting with others. For patients who might have trouble putting their emotions or experiences into words, art therapy can provide an alternate means of emotional expression.

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Considering the favourable results in this instance, more investigation is necessary to examine the wider potential of art therapy in enhancing emotional intelligence in clinical populations. Future research should also look at how these interventions affect mental health and emotional intelligence over the long run.

### CONCLUSION

This case study suggests that including artistic expression into treatment may enhance emotional intelligence, particularly in those who struggle with emotion regulation or social interaction. Art therapy can offer patients a different way to communicate their feelings if they may find it difficult to put their feelings or experiences into words.

Given the positive outcomes in this case, further research is required to explore art therapy's broader potential for raising emotional intelligence in clinical groups. Future studies should also examine the long-term effects of these interventions on emotional intelligence and mental health.

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#### *Acknowledgement*

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

#### *Conflict of Interest*

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Nagpal, R. & Kumar, R. (2024). The Impact of Artistic Expression on Emotional Intelligence: A Clinical Case Study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(4), 1324-1327. DIP:18.01.125.20241204, DOI:10.25215/1204.125