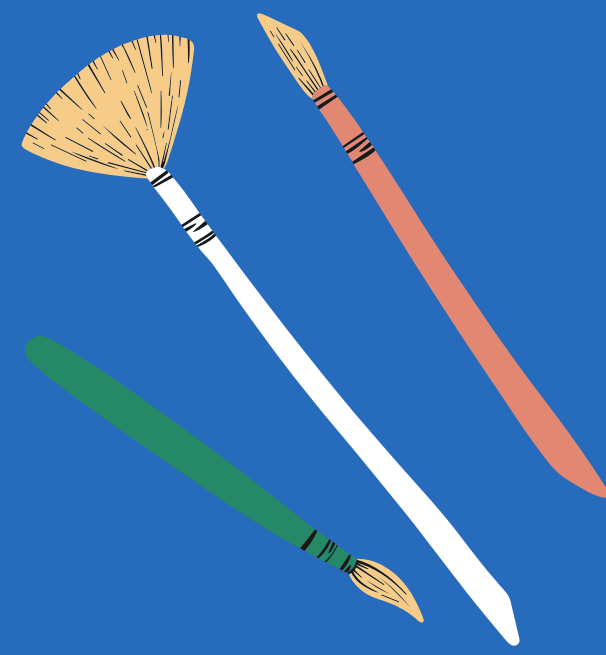


# ARTS THERAPIES RESEARCH IN ELFT

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AND QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



## RESEARCH PROJECTS

East London  
NHS Foundation Trust



## THE UNIT FOR SOCIAL & COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRY

The Unit for Social and Community Psychiatry (USCP) conducts global research on interventions that focus on the social interactions between people in mental health services. It is located at Newham Centre for Mental Health.

The USCP is jointly operated by Queen Mary University of London, and East London NHS Foundation Trust. Since 2012, the Unit has been a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre (the only one specifically for Mental Health Service Development worldwide).

In recent years, the arts therapies arm of the USCP has blossomed; the unit comprises of researchers from across the clinical academic career span who work to bridge the gap between practice and research in the arts therapies.

## AIMS OF ARTS THERAPIES RESEARCH IN ELFT

- Developing arts therapies for NHS contexts
- Understanding how arts therapies work including the techniques and processes involved
- Testing the effectiveness of arts therapies for different populations and care pathways
- Sharing our practice with service users, colleagues, funders and academic networks



"The colourful collective seven"  
ERA group artwork

## BODY-ORIENTED PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR MEDICALLY UNEXPLAINED SYMPTOMS

### BACKGROUND

Body oriented psychological therapy (BOPT) for patients with medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) is a new and innovative intervention offering patients an alternative way to engage with and manage their MUS.

### AIM

To explore the outcomes of body oriented psychotherapy for patients with MUS.

### FINDINGS SO FAR

Patients respond well to this treatment and experience their body more positively. Patients also learn to manage their symptoms more effectively and can relate bodily symptoms and emotional states.



Prof. Dr Med. Frank Rohricht  
Consultant Psychiatrist



Nina Papadopoulos  
Dance Movement Psychotherapist



## GATher-LD

Group Art Therapy for People with a learning disability (LD)

### BACKGROUND

People with LD are more likely to have untreated mental illness. This can lead to increased suffering and earlier death. Art therapy (AT) groups might help by increasing social networks and sharing experiences but this has not been systematically investigated.

### AIM

To understand what works best in AT for people with LD and to hear participant views about their experience of AT groups.

### METHOD

GATher-LD uses mixed-methods, grounded in coproduction with the Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company, a group of actors with LD. This comprises of a systematic review, ethnographic observation and interviews with stakeholders before testing of a group art therapy intervention.

### FINDINGS SO FAR

Whilst art therapy practice is diverse, many LD interventions focus on behaviour. Accessible communication methods should be used when working, and conducting research, with people who have LD.

### NEXT STEPS

Ethical approval has been granted to begin observing art therapy groups and interviewing art therapists, people with learning disabilities and their carers.



Nicki Power  
Art Therapist  
PhD Student



## ERA STUDY

@Study\_ERA  
@CatherineCarrMT

Effectiveness of group arts therapy for diagnostically heterogeneous patients in community mental health care: Randomised controlled trial.

### BACKGROUND

Arts therapies are important to service users but we have mixed evidence of their effectiveness. We need to know if group arts therapies are effective in reducing mental distress in mixed diagnoses groups, whether they are cost-effective and what works for whom.

### AIM

To test the effectiveness of group arts therapies compared to group counselling in reducing mental distress.

### METHOD

Randomised controlled trial with additional qualitative process measures and health economic analysis.

### FINDINGS SO FAR

- We worked with arts therapists to describe important features of community arts therapies groups to run this study. This was published in the Arts in Psychotherapy (see QR code).
- We have nearly finished recruitment to the study and hope to publish towards the end of 2023.



Dr Catherine Carr  
Music Therapist  
Senior Researcher



elft.nhs.uk/era



## THE ROLE OF PATIENT PREFERENCES IN THE ARTS THERAPIES

### BACKGROUND

Patient preferences play a role in engagement with psychosocial interventions; this study sought to understand more about preferences and expectations of the arts therapies, in order to support informed decision-making.

### METHOD

Meta-analysis, a large-scale survey, interviews and focus groups.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Receiving a preferred treatment is associated with lower dropout rates and stronger therapeutic alliance.
- Individual characteristics, past experiences and feeling capable in the art form contribute to how arts therapies preferences are formed.
- When selecting a modality, patients consider how they expect the arts therapies to be helpful for them, the fun and enjoyment they might experience, and the social interaction involved.



Dr Emma Millard  
Music Therapist



## SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

### ERA STUDY

"They gelled and I gelled... and I will miss seeing them. Excuse me I might, I might burst into tears – I have so far. It's been... it was brilliant. The people we met were extremely nice. The creative thing was good. The fact that we were creating different images was a reminder of both the regeneration and the rebirth of my creativity in that respect which started before the group, was definitely flowing pretty well. The art side was really good and the sharing of the images. I can't really say. It was faultless I know." Harry, Art Therapy

### BODY-ORIENTED PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR MEDICALLY UNEXPLAINED SYMPTOMS

"I learnt a lot". [I'm] leaving the group with a new perspective[and] more things to add to the toolbox" to look after myself better.

"Pain is there but able to relate to it differently and coping better with it."

### CHArt Pilot STUDY

"[I liked] the chance/space to reflect on difficult situations at work and shared experience with other doctors – we wouldn't naturally share this stuff at work; no time/space/forum in which to and also not part of the culture."

"It has allowed time to reflect on patients or experiences with other people from the same background. Talking about these have been incredibly helpful, allowing me at times to offload and share. This has been extremely helpful as a coping mechanism."

### GATher-LD STUDY

"That was amazing wasn't it. Although we've worked together for so long, we learned so much more about each other didn't we [when we did the art therapy loss workshop together]."

"Thank you for the art therapy loss workshop, the process has made me change the way I feel and think about things. I have started to process things. Before I used to kick off and I am not doing that. It has changed the way I feel about things. It was a pleasure to have you a part of the Lawnies team and I will look forward to seeing you again next time."



## CHILD & ADOLESCENT DRAMATHERAPY

### BACKGROUND

The mental health of children and young people (CYPs) is worsening and services are struggling to meet demand. Researching innovative interventions which offer choice to young people is now imperative.

### AIM

To understand the mechanisms of change in dramatherapy with CYPs suffering from mental distress and to develop a programme theory as a result of this.

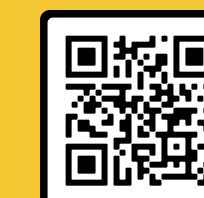
### METHOD

A systematic review has identified research gaps in relation to how dramatherapy with this age group works. Qualitative interviews and a detailed case series will be employed to explore this further.

### FINDINGS SO FAR

Dramatherapy practice is varied and is used for a range of clinical needs; it may be most useful following trauma or for early intervention. More robust research is needed.

@Elliekeiller



Ellie Keiller  
Dramatherapist  
PhD Student



## CHArt

Art therapy to address burnout and psychosocial distress in hospital clinicians

### BACKGROUND

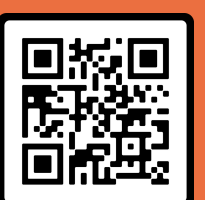
Burnout is a serious issue in the NHS and, whilst much has been written about the issue, there is a lack of research into potential solutions. This research builds on a pilot trial using art therapy to address symptoms of burnout in oncology and palliative care doctors.

### AIM

To test a tailored Compassion Focused-informed group Art Therapy intervention to reduce burnout, anxiety and depression in hospital clinicians and to explore barriers and enablers to engagement.

### METHOD

A systematic review with narrative synthesis (and possible meta-analysis) is in the process of being completed. A waitlist randomized controlled trial will also be conducted.



Megan Tjasink  
Art Therapist  
PhD Student

