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Hong Kong Expressive Arts Therapy Service Center

The Art of Life Journey

Expressive Arts Therapy Multi-Ethnics Active Aging Community Scheme

Brief Evaluation Report

10/2024-9/2025



Background

'The Art of Life Journey' Expressive Arts Therapy Multi-Ethnic Active Aging Community Scheme aims to provide cross-cultural emotional support and life-and-death education resources for ethnic minority seniors and Chinese seniors residing in Hong Kong. Due to language barriers and cultural differences, ethnic minority seniors in Hong Kong have had limited access to emotional support services and life-and-death education. This project seeks to address this gap for both ethnic minority and Chinese seniors, as well as their caretakers, using expressive arts therapy and life-and-death education. Building on last year's success, the project will expand its outreach to more seniors. By using visual arts, music, and dance, it will help overcome language barriers and enable participants to express their emotions and thoughts on life-and-death, helping them cope with anxiety and depression. The project will also train ambassadors to promote life-and-death education among their peers. This approach emphasises artistic exchanges between seniors from different ethnic backgrounds to foster cross-cultural understanding. Their artworks and stories will be showcased in the form of exhibitions and storybooks to engage the public and promote an inclusive society.

From 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025, we carried out six projects (**Table 1**), providing therapeutic services to a total of 396 participants in the form of groups, workshops, and training sessions. They were invited to complete questionnaires before and after participating in the activities to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

Table 1. Project Components and Description

Project Name
Project A: Expressive Arts Therapy for Emotional Relief Group
Project B: "Journey of Life" Explore Ambassador Training
Project C: Expressive Arts Therapy "Journey of Life" Group
Project D: Expressive Arts Therapy "Journey of Life" Workshop
Project E: Ethnic Minority & Chinese Elders Life Connect Workshop
Project F: Life Journey Art Exhibition & Workshop

Service Satisfaction

The service users' evaluations of the activities were consistently favorable (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Service Users' Evaluation of Various Service Aspects

Scope of Services	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. has a good tutor	5.77	100%
2. content is inspiring	5.70	100%
3. overall is satisfactory	5.73	100%
Average	5.73	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 318 participants were included.

Knowledge and Awareness of Emotional Well-being

To evaluate the effectiveness of the group activities (Project A-C), participants were surveyed before and after their participation regarding their understanding of emotional health and their awareness of their own emotions. All measured aspects showed an improvement of 10-20% in the scores (**Tables 3 and 4**). Furthermore, among those who initially disagreed with the statement that they possessed knowledge about mental health and awareness of their own emotional well-being, over 80% changed their response to agree after the activities (**Table 5**).

Table 3. Pre- and Post-Activity Assessment of Service Users' Understanding of Emotional Health

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score			p value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. I know ways to express my feelings and emotions.	4.92	5.47	+11%	0.000
2. I am aware of my feelings and emotions.	4.76	5.44	+14%	0.000
Average	4.84	5.46	+13%	0.000

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree. A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 146 participants were included.

Table 4. Pre- and Post-Activity Assessment of Service Users' Emotional Self-Awareness

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score			p value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. I feel that I could express myself using the arts.	4.61	5.55	+20%	0.000
2. I am aware of my feelings and emotion.	4.76	5.44	+9%	0.000
3. Arts expression helps improve my feelings and emotion.	4.65	5.53	+19%	0.000
Average	4.77	5.53	+16%	0.000

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree. A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 146 participants were included.

Table 5. Pre- versus Post-Program Changes in Mental Health and Self-Awareness

	Pre-service Disagreement	Post-service Agreement (%)
<i>Pertaining to knowledge of emotional health</i>		
1. I learnt ways to express my feelings and emotion.	10	79%
2. I know about emotion.	14	100%
<i>Pertaining to self-emotional awareness</i>		
1. I feel that I could express myself using the arts.	28	80%
2. I am aware of my feelings and emotion.	5	85%
3. Arts expression helps improve my feelings and emotion.	10	93%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; Responses were categorized as agreement (scores 4-6) or disagreement (scores 1-3). N = 146 participants were included.

To assess the impact of the workshops (Project D-F), post-activity surveys were administered to measure changes in participants' understanding of emotional health and self-awareness. All participants (100%) reported positive improvements in these areas (**Tables 6 and 7**).

Table 6. Post-Workshop Changes in Emotional Health Understanding Among Service Users

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. I know more ways to express my feelings and emotion.	5.47	100%
2. I know more about emotion.	5.53	100%
Average	5.50	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 153 participants were included.

Table 7. Post-Intervention Changes in Emotional Self-Awareness Among Service Users

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. I feel that I could express myself using the arts more.	5.53	100%
2. I am more aware of my feelings and emotion.	5.53	100%
3. Arts expression helps improve my feelings and emotion.	5.52	100%
Average	5.53	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 135 participants were included.



Emotional Health

To evaluate the effectiveness of the expressive arts therapy groups on emotional well-being, the World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5) was used. Post-intervention, a significant 17% increase in the total WHO-5 score was observed among participants, which was statistically significant (Table 8).

Table 8. Post-Intervention Improvement in Emotional Well-Being Among Service Users

In the last two weeks...	Average Score			p Value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. I have felt cheerful in good spirits.	3.85	4.28	+11%	0.000
2. I have felt calm and relaxed.	3.61	4.21	+17%	0.000
3. I have felt active and vigorous.	3.51	4.18	+19%	0.000
4. I woke up feeling fresh and rested.	3.49	4.13	+18%	0.000
5. My daily life has been filled with things that interest me.	3.48	4.08	+17%	0.000
Total	17.94	20.93	+17%	0.000

Note: Note: The scale ranges from 0 to 5, where 0 = At no time; 1 = Some of the time; 2 = Less than half the time; 3 = More than half the time; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = All of the time. A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 146 participants were included.



Regarding Social Functioning and Daily Work Capacity

Problems people face (such as financial issues, interpersonal relationships, and physical health) can sometimes affect their ability to complete certain daily tasks in life. Therefore, we adapted the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (W-SAS) to measure whether expressive arts therapy group activities could reduce the impact of these problems on participants' social functioning and daily tasks. Participants reported being better able to manage these activities, whether in personal, family, or social contexts (**Table 9**).

Table 9. Positive Changes in Service Users' Social Functioning and Daily Work Capacity After Participating in Group Activities

People's problems sometimes affect their ability to do certain day-to-day tasks in their lives. To rate your problems you encounter, please select how well you are able to manage the following activities despite these problems.	Average Score			p Value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. WORK – if you are retired or choose not to have a job for reasons unrelated to your problem, please tick N/A (not applicable).	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2. HOME MANAGEMENT – Cleaning, tidying, shopping, cooking, looking after home/children, paying bills, etc.	5.68	6.42	+13%	0.000
3. SOCIAL LEISURE ACTIVITIES – With other people, e.g. parties, pubs, outings, entertaining, etc.	5.72	6.55	+14%	0.000
4. PRIVATE LEISURE ACTIVITIES – Done alone, e.g. reading, gardening, sewing, hobbies, walking, etc.	5.90	6.73	+14%	0.000
5. FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS – Form and maintain close relationships with others including the people that I live with.	6.03	6.85	+14%	0.000
Total	5.83	6.64	+14%	0.000

Note: As the vast majority of participants were retired or not employed, the impact on work was excluded from the efficacy analysis. The scale ranges from 0 to 8, where 0 = Totally incapable; 2 = Can barely manage; 4 = Can fairly manage; 6 = Can adequately manage; 8 = Can fully capable; A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 146 participants were included.



Social Aspect

One of the objectives of this project was to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into the community. Data indicated that after participating in the group activities and workshops, ethnic minority participants reported an increased sense of acceptance and support from the local community (Tables 10 and 11). Furthermore, regardless of being Chinese or non-Chinese, the group activities helped participants expand their social networks (Table 12).

Table 10. Changes in Non-Chinese Service Users' Attitudes Towards the Local Community After Participating in Group Activities

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score			p Value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. I feel accepted and supported by the local community.	5.19	5.66	+9%	0.000

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree. A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 94 participants were included.

Table 11. Post-Workshop Changes in Non-Chinese Service Users' Attitudes Towards the Local Community

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. I feel accepted and supported by the local community.	5.56	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 77 participants were included.

Table 12. Expansion of Service Users' Social Networks Through Program Activities

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. I have made new connections/friends via this activity.	5.53	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 316 participants were included.



Emotions Related to Life and Death

Discussion of life and death is often a social taboo. People tend to avoid the topic, and may even suppress or refrain from acknowledging and expressing related emotions, which can exacerbate anxiety surrounding mortality. Our activities were similarly effective in enhancing participants' capacity to confront emotions associated with the theme of life and death, and also significantly reduced their associated anxiety (**Tables 13 and 14**).

Table 13. Post-workshop changes in Service Users' Emotions Related to Life and Death After Participating in Group Activities

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you.	Average Score			p Value
	Before	After	Percentage Difference	
1. I am aware of emotion related to life and death issues.	5.07	5.59	+10%	0.000
2. I am capable of expressing emotion related to life and death issues.	4.95	5.54	+12%	0.000
3. I feel anxious to life and death issues.	4.30	3.46	-19%	0.000

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree. A two-tailed paired t-test was conducted, with $P < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance. N = 146 participants were included.

Table 14. Post-Workshop Changes in Service Users' Emotions Regarding Life and Death

Please indicate how much the following statements apply to you after attending the activity.	Average Score	Agreement Rate
1. I feel more accepted and supported by the local community.	5.27	100%
2. I became more capable of expressing emotion related to life and death issues.	5.29	100%
3. My anxiety related to life and death issues decreased.	5.24	100%

Note: Agreement was rated on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Totally Agree; The agreement rate includes the selection of options 4-6. N = 153 participants were included.



Net Promoter Score

Finally, to understand the service users' experience and their likelihood of participating in our services again, we used the Net Promoter Score metric, asking service users about their willingness to recommend the activities. The results show that the program achieved a high NPS of 66% (**Tables 15 and 16**), indicating widespread recognition of the positive impact the service had on them.

Table 15. Service Users' Willingness to Recommend the Activities

On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely would you recommend this activity to your relatives and friends? (0 = least; 10 = most)											
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of participants	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	28	55	54	168
Percentage	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	9%	17%	17%	53%

Note: N = 318 participants were included.

Table 16. Categorization of Service Users Based on Willingness to Recommend

Category	Description	Percentage
Detractors (Score 0-6)	Not satisfied or lack loyalty to the activities	4%
Passives (Score 7-8)	Generally satisfied but not enthusiastic	26%
Promoters (Score 9-10)	Possess strong loyalty; they will continue to support and recommend to others	70%
Net Promoter Score	Percentage of Promoters minus Percentage of Detractors	66%



This report was authored by Dr. Yiu Ho Cheung Jensen.

Reviewed and approved by Professor Au Wing Tung Winton of the Department of Psychology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.



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The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council Shamshuipo District Elderly Community Centre

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