

ABSTRACT

Art therapy is an intervention that applies creativity to provide individuals with a safe space that benefits their psychological well-being of individuals. Little is known about the impact of abstract art intervention on the parents of special needs children in community settings. The present study aimed to examine the impact of abstract fluid acrylic art as a way of improving the mental well-being of parents of special needs children. This pilot study (pre-post measurements, no control group design) included 11 mothers of special needs children who joined the 1-hour abstract art intervention online facilitated by an expressive arts therapist. It applied the quantitative method including the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) measures the Self-efficacy, International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule short-form (I-PANAS-SF) measures Positive Affectivity (PA) and Negativity Affectivity (NA). Those measures are self-reported by the participants before and after the intervention to quantify the impact. There were statistically significant reductions in Negative Affect measured by the I-PANAS-SF. A post-interview with brief comments about the participants' artmaking experience was conducted. There are no significant differences in the domains of Self-efficacy measured by the GSES and no significant increase in Positive Affect measured by the I-PANAS-SF. All participants expressed comfort and relaxation with the art process. This study provides beginning evidence for the efficacy of fluid acrylic art in reducing negative moods in parents of special needs children. The current results support previous findings that therapeutic art form is beneficial to the psychological states of Affect even through online delivery. The impact of the art intervention emerges as a potential non-pharmacological intervention that is relevant in community settings and worthy of further investigation.