

Helping Older Adults Stay Healthy: The Benefits of Participation in the Arts

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Objectives

- To foster understanding of the research evidence that older adults' participation in creative and performing arts programs improves health and well-being
- To impart knowledge of available resources for delivering evidence-based arts programs to older adults
- To promote networking among Ohio's arts organizations and aging service organizations



National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA)

- National service organization dedicated to fostering the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging
- Founded by Dr. Gene Cohen (*The Creative Age*) and Susan Perlstein (*Elders Share the Arts*)
- *“Ask what we can do because of age, not in spite of age.”*



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NCCA

- Technical assistance, education, research and advocacy
- Research Center for Arts and Culture
(Joan Jeffri, ArtCart and *Still Above Ground*)
- Gene D. Cohen Research Award in Creativity and Aging



NCCA Resources

- Directory of Creative Aging Programs in America
- Online Artist Training in Arts and Aging
- Grantmakers Partnership Webinar Series on Arts, Aging, and Health

www.creativeaging.org



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Published Literature Review on Arts' Impact on the Health of Older Adults

Journal of Aging, Humanities and the Arts (2010)

“Impact of Arts Participation on Health Outcomes for Older Adults”

Melissa Castora-Binkley, Linda Noelker, Thomas Prohaska, & William Satariano



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Search of the Research Literature

- Systematic literature review using Wolter Kluwer Health (Ageline), Sociological Abstracts and Academic Search Complete
- Reference lists for each article were reviewed to identify other published articles
- Keywords used: creative*, health promotion, arts, program*, aging, perform*, and health
*denotes derivatives and variations of the word



Methods

Inclusion criteria for articles

1. Creative activities that either exclusively targeted or included older adults
2. Activity was not a therapy or arts & crafts
3. Activity had to be participatory, not observant
4. Documented at least one health-related benefit



Results of the Scientific Literature Search

- 2,205 articles identified using search terms (publication dates -- 1978 through 2009)
- 42 were retained for review
- 11 met inclusion criteria and were retained



Selected Findings

- One year of participation in a professionally led chorale group: participants reported better overall health, used fewer over-the-counter medications, had fewer falls, fewer physician visits, and higher morale and decreased loneliness scores than those in the comparison group
- Six months of individualized piano instruction: older students had better scores on perceptual speed and memory tests than the control group



Selected Findings

- 15 weeks of jazz dance instruction: pre- and post-tests showed improved balance
- 8 sessions of theatrical training over 4 weeks: participants rated higher on recall, recognition, and problem-solving tests than those in comparison groups



Findings from a Recent Literature Review

Noice, Noice, & Kramer (2013), Participatory Arts for Older Adults,
The Gerontologist (doi: 10.0193/geront/gnt138)

Findings from 31 articles reviewed:

- 8 studies of dance (contemporary, ballroom, choreographed): improvement in posture, balance, reaction time, cognitive tests, gait speed, and general health
- 3 studies of expressive writing: decreased depression, improved self-concept, processing speed, verbal learning, and attention



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Findings

- 10 studies of music (piano playing, choirs, instrumentals): decreased depression and anxiety, higher nonverbal memory recall, greater cognitive flexibility, improved social and emotional well-being, increased human growth hormone
- 7 studies of theater: improved cognition, confidence, self-esteem, and reported better health
- 3 studies of painting and pottery: improved mental and psycho-social health, reduced negative emotions, higher self-esteem, and perceptions of life as more meaningful and enjoyable



Limitations of Research Studies

- Randomized Control Trials uncommon
- Small, homogeneous samples
- Convenience sampling
- Short duration of the intervention (sustained impact?)
- Limited attention to the amount, frequency, and duration of the intervention (“dosage”)
- No attention to costs of the intervention



Arts Interventions for Persons with Dementia

- New research approaches are needed
- Forget memory and cognition; focus on personal meaningfulness, imagination, and expressiveness
- Investigate positive effects on family members, staff members, and other residents

De Medeiros, K. & Bastings, A. (2013) Shall I compare thee to a dose of donepezil?: Cultural arts interventions in dementia care research, *Gerontologist* (doi:10.1093/geront/gnt055)



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Alive Inside

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONGYpmFydME>

The film:

<http://aliveinside.us/>



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1SHAXytcJ8>

Judith-Kate Friedman

<http://www.songwritingworks.org>



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Alzheimer's Poetry Project

Sparking memories with poetry

<http://www.youtube.com/user/alzpoetry?feature=mhum>

Gary Glazner

<http://www.alzpoetry.com/>



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<http://vimeo.com/48912028>

Maria Genne

<http://www.kairosdance.org>



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TimeSlips Creative Storytelling

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yxxbw7YlYs



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OPENING MINDS THROUGH ART

www.scrippsoma.org./oma-videos.html



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Cleveland Foundation's Centennial Encore Initiative

- Inspire and marshal the time, talent and experience of those 50 and older to help solve community problems in their “encore” stage of life
- Build non-profits' capacity to best use the talents of Encore workers through education and training
- Build opportunities for intergenerational mentoring
- Create opportunities for neighborhood residents to participate in volunteer and stipend positions in non-profit and public agencies



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Encore Artists Project

OBJECTIVES

- To bridge the aging and arts communities in Cleveland
- To make high-quality creative and performing arts activities more widely available to Cleveland's older adults and urban youth
- To promote community engagement, intergenerational integration, and Cleveland's social and cultural capital
- To document the benefits for artists and older participants (i.e., enlarge the scientific evidence base)



National Leadership Exchange and Conference on Creative Aging (June 10-14, Washington, DC)

- To build capacity and showcase creative aging programs
- To elevate the field of creative aging through professional development and training
- To initiate plans for the 2015 International Leadership Conference on the Arts and Aging



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Selected Conference Events

- Creativity Matters! Workshops on program development for persons with memory loss (IONA Senior Services)
- Liz Lerman's *Healing Wars*, Arena Stage at the Phillips Collection
- Intensive workshops: Corcoran Gallery, IONA



Selected Conference Events

- Singing Together for a Lifetime, Kennedy Center
- Chorus America performance on the steps of the Capitol
- Some keynote speakers: Liz Lerman, Tim Carpenter of EngAGE, Susan Perlstein, ESTA



Questions & Comments?

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