



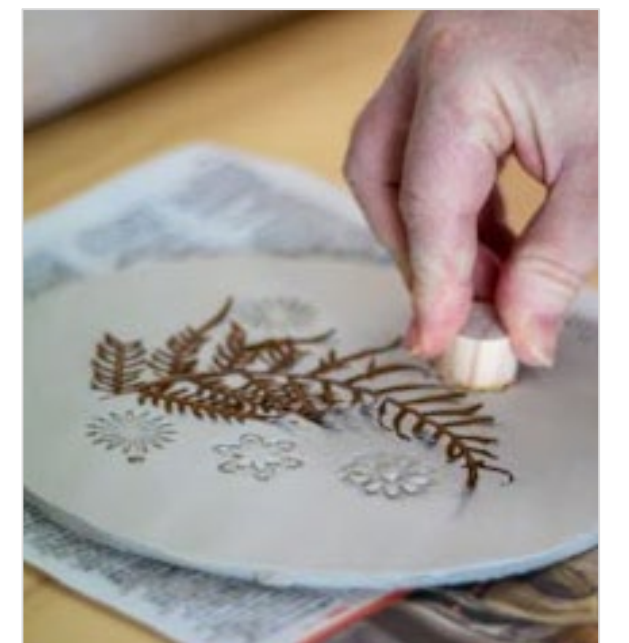
The Art of Wellbeing: Evaluating the Impact of the ManPAC Social Prescribing Creative Café & Arts Programs on Participant Wellbeing

Christina Davies,¹ Mark Labrow,² and Alison Pinder²

¹ The University of Western Australia, ² Mandurah Performing Arts Centre

Introduction

In 2022, the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre (ManPAC) worked with GPs, health and social organisations to create an arts-based, social prescribing program called the 'Art of Wellbeing'. The program was funded by LotteryWest and aimed to support participant mental health, social wellbeing and the development of art skills and interests via artist-led workshops. As part of its commitment to providing a high-quality program, ManPAC commissioned The University of Western Australia (UWA) to conduct an evaluation. The evaluation focused on the impact of the program on participant a) mental wellbeing, b) social wellbeing, and c) art skill development.

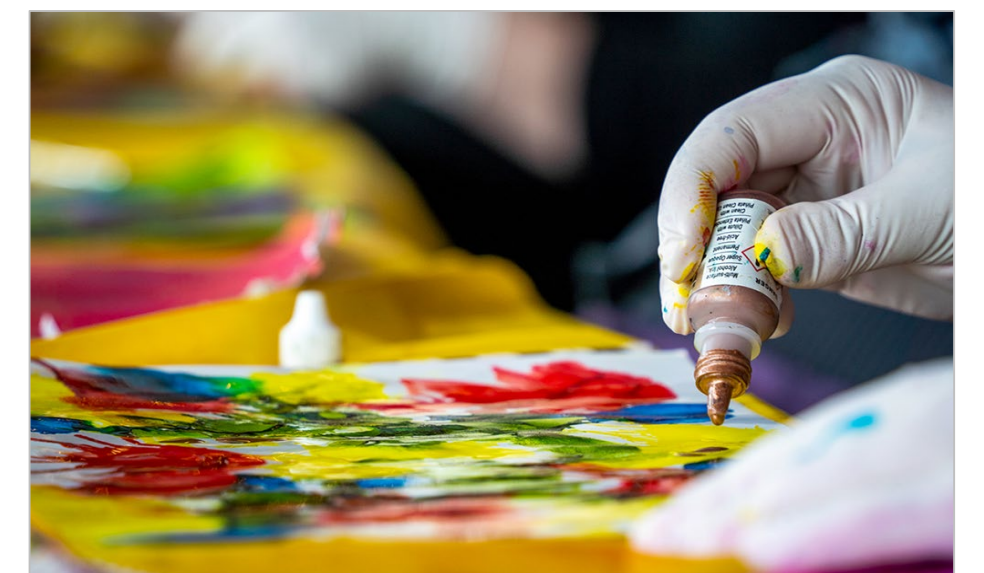


Method

Project: The program ran for 26 weeks and included 13 distinct, artist led, 'Creative Café' workshops, plus bespoke arts workshops that were developed at the request of participants. The Creative Café was split into two age groups and ran on a fortnightly basis (Group1 18-49 years, Group2, 50+ years). Each workshop ran for two hours per week (i.e. Wednesday, 10am-12noon).

Evaluation: Before commencing the program, participants completed a paper-based consent form and baseline survey. At each session, participants completed a paper-based pre- and post-workshop survey. Practitioners/family also evaluated the project via a survey. Permission to conduct this evaluation was granted by the UWA Human Research Ethics Committee (2022/ET000266).

"This program has been an asset for building community wellbeing."
Health practitioner/worker



For further information please contact:

Program: Mark Labrow, ManPAC, mark.labrow@manpac.com.au

Evaluation: Christina Davies, UWA, christina.davies@uwa.edu.au

"Really enjoyed it. Creative, fun & inspiring." Participant, 30-49yrs

"Fantastic opportunity for our clients who wouldn't normally be able to access this type of program. Please re-fund!" Community Practitioner

Results

- Fifty-three people were referred to the program, 50 provided consent to take part in the evaluation, 46 provided feedback (92% response). Due to participation in one or more workshops, 266 pre-post surveys were completed. Eighteen practitioners/family also completed a survey.

Previous Arts Experience and Reason for Referral

- One in two participants had not previously taken part in an arts program before, therefore, ManPAC provided an opportunity to engage in a novel experience. The majority of participants were referred for social health reasons (e.g. to develop friendships, networks, reduce social isolation) and mental health reasons (e.g. improve confidence, self-esteem, mental wellbeing). The opportunity to create new interests, expression and develop skills were also reasons for referral.

Enjoyment

- Participants enjoyed the program (97%), and looked forward to participating each week (95%). Practitioners/family (100%) and participants (99%) agreed the program should be continued.

Participant Mental Health and Social Health

- The program increased participant happiness (96%) confidence and self-esteem (87%). Significantly more participants felt happy after a workshop (94% happy, $p < 0.001$) compared with baseline (42%) or before a workshop (58%; Figure1).
- Participants indicated the program was an opportunity to socialise and form friendships (93%).
- All practitioners/family agreed the program had a positive impact on participant mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression, boredom, stress, happiness, confidence, self-esteem, 100%) and social health (e.g. friendships, community connection, reduced isolation, reduced loneliness, 100%).

Development of Art Skills and an Interest in the Arts

- The majority of participants learnt something new (93%), developed an interest in the arts (88%), and intended to make art at home (72%).

Participant Physical Health (*not a direct aim of the program*)

- Most practitioners/family though the program improved participant physical health (e.g. physical activity, physical function, general health, 67%).



"Our clients benefited greatly from this workshop and the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Thank you."
Community Practitioner

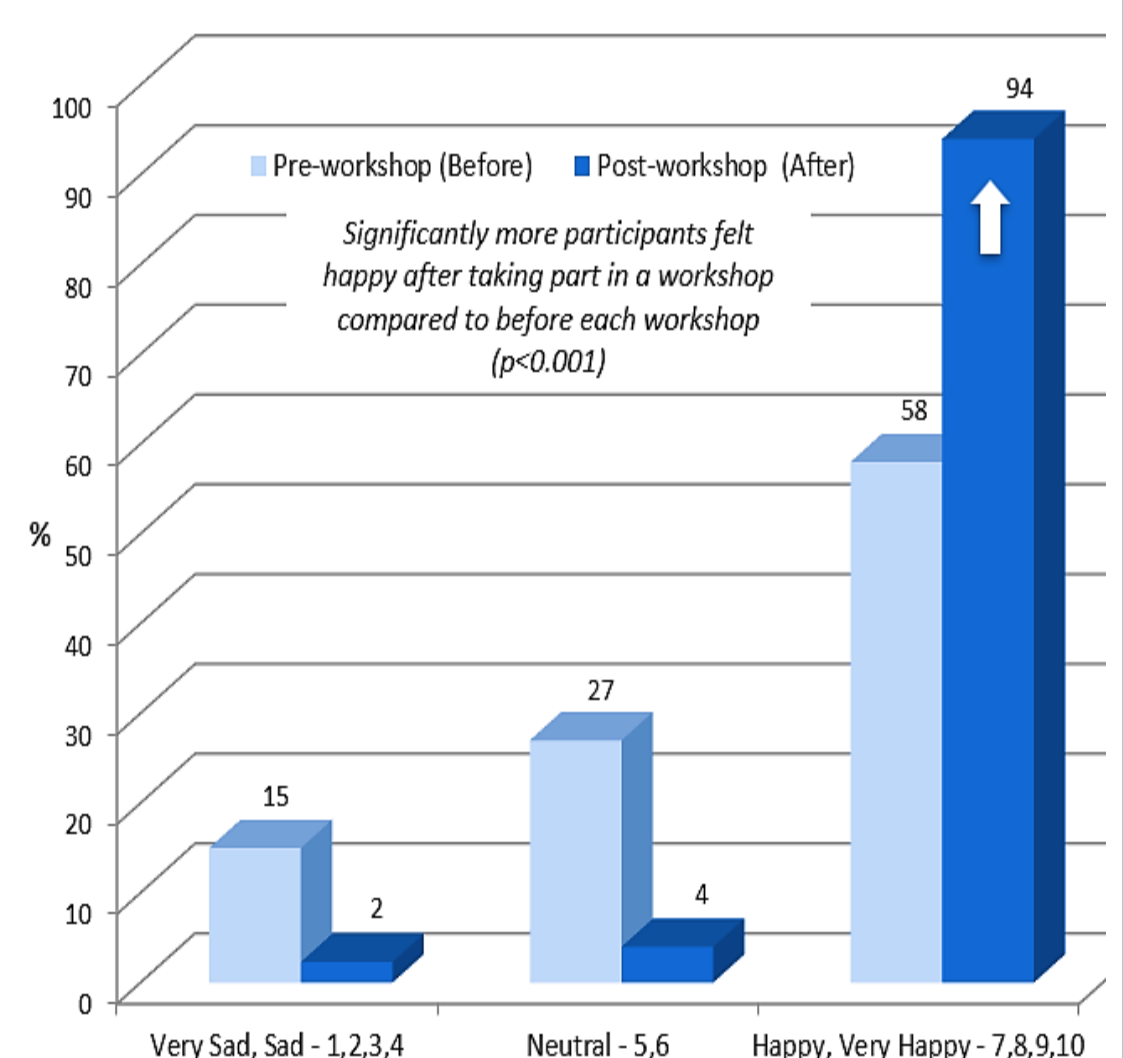


Figure 1: How do you feel right now? (n=266)

Conclusion

The 'Art of Wellbeing' program successfully achieved its aim of supporting participant mental health and social wellbeing. The program was an enjoyable experience that expanded art skills, creativity and assisted participants to foster an interest in the arts. Overall, respondents involved in the evaluation (participants, practitioners, family) were overwhelmingly happy with the program. It is recommended that Funders continue to support and expand the 'Art of Wellbeing' program so as to actively engage participants in activities that support health and wellbeing.