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Attachment, Shame, the Expressive Therapies and Substance Use Disorders

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Attachment, Shame, the Expressive Therapies, and Substance Use Disorders

Capstone Thesis

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Expressive Arts Therapy

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Abstract

Substance use disorders (SUDs) currently affect a significant number of people, directly and indirectly, in the United States. Low rates of treatment and high rates of relapse point to the need for an increased and diversified engagement of SUDs theoretically and clinically. This literature review explores current research on SUDs and attachment, SUDs and shame, and SUDs and the Expressive Therapies. The literature review provides relevant theoretical frameworks and current clinical applications for treatment of SUDs considering attachment and shame's role in substance use from an Expressive Therapies perspective. The role of relationships and imagination in both the maintenance and treatment of SUDs is highlighted throughout each section of the literature review and focused on in the final discussion. The literature review stresses the flexibility and complexity underlying SUD's and the need for complex and flexible interventions. Based upon the findings and grounded in an Expressive Therapies perspective, future research integrating a multicultural perspective is recommended, as is research exploring substance use as self-harm and substance use as affect intensifier.

Keywords: substance abuse, expressive therapies, shame, attachment, imagination

Attachment, Shame, The Expressive Therapies, and SUDs

Introduction

Substance use and abuse significantly affects the United States. In 2014, over 21 million people in the United States struggled with substance abuse (American Addiction Center, 2019). In the same year, just under 11% of these people sought treatment, with relapse percentages between 40% and 60%. The National Institute on Drug Abuse found that substance abuse costs the United States over $740 billion annually (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2019). This dollar amount begins to hint at the real cost of substance abuse that daily takes its toll from the bodies, minds, and spirits of people all over the United States.

The predominance of substance abuse, the reluctance to seek and provide treatment, and the high relapse rate all indicate the extreme complexity of substance use in the United States. The complexity and flexibility of substance abuse asks for a response in kind. With that in mind, the goal of this literature review was not to discover the universal underlying cause of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). Neither was it to uncover the ultimate treatment method, as tempting as both were. The aim of this literature review was to explore how SUDs connect to two aspects of the human experience, attachment and shame, and what can be gleaned from these connections from an Expressive Therapies standpoint. This thesis further explored how the Expressive Therapies currently frame and engage SUDs and the potentials of this engagement. Finally, the thesis explored connections between attachment, shame, and the Expressive Therapies and potential avenues for further research and discussion.

The first sub section, attachment and SUDs, found connections between SUDs and insecure attachment styles, mood regulation, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, underlying negative views of self, and experiences of trauma (Fletcher, Nutton, and Brend, 2015;

Thorberg and Lyvers, 2010; Green, Myrick, and Crenshaw, 2013; Lavitt, 2017). The articles

pointed to the therapeutic potential of longer term, relationship-based models. The articles also

indicated the possible efficacy of imagination-based interventions.

The second sub section, shame and SUDs, found connections between SUDs and

emotional regulation, negative relationship with the self, and isolation from aspects of the self

and isolation from others (Bilevicius, Single, Bristow, Foot, Ellery, Keough, and Johnson, 2018;

Luoma, Kohlenberg, Hayes, and Fletcher, 2012; Karlsson, 2015; Phelps, Paniagua, Willcockson,

and Potter, 2017). The articles pointed to the therapeutic potential of directly engaging the

experience of shame and shameful aspects of the self. The articles also indicated the efficacy of

engaging the intra-relationship and cultivating self-acceptance and compassion. Finally, the

articles inferred the potential, again, of imagination-based interventions and the use of artmaking

to engage shame.

The third sub section, the Expressive Therapies and SUDs, found the efficacy of the

Expressive Therapies in engaging SUDs lies in art-making's ability to express, contain, and

distance through imagery, to circumvent avoidant behaviors, to improve mood, and to reflect

upon the self (Conner, 2017; Wise, 2009; Skeffington and Brown, 2014; Young, Rodriguez, and

Neighbors, 2013; Chilton, Gerber, Councill, and Dreyer, 2015; Austin, 2016). The articles also

highlighted art-making's capacity to build community, cultivate meaningful and beneficial

relationships, and to directly engage, frame, and transform experiences and relationships

(Conner, 2017; Wise, 2009; Skeffington and Brown, 2014; Young, Rodriguez, and Neighbors,

2013; Chilton, Gerber, Councill, and Dreyer, 2015; Austin, 2016; Kossack, 2008).

This literature review indicated the potential of framing therapeutic engagement of

SUD's from a relationship-based perspective (intra, inter, and trans), the use of art-making to

engage and transform these relationships, and the use of art-making to cultivate more effective expression and effective experiencing of the emotional aspect of life. The literature review also pointed to the need to bring multicultural awareness into research, theory, and practice in SUDs and Expressive Therapies work. Finally, the literature review pointed to research potential around substance use as self-harm, substance use as affect intensifier, and the use of Expressive Therapies in engaging underlying dynamics associated with self-harm and mitigating affect experience.

Attachment and Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)

Fletcher, Nutton, and Brend (2015) reviewed current and past research on Attachment Theory and Attachment Theory's use in treating SUDs. The article utilized a case study to illustrate and explore the findings of the review. The article maintained the prevalence of substance use in North America and the negative effects of substance use on both the individual and societal levels. In the review, the article emphasized the connection between insecure attachment styles and SUDs. The case study highlighted the client's insecure attachment style and explained and explored how this attachment style engendered and maintained the client's SUD. For example, the case study's subject reported a history of relationship instability, beginning in his early childhood. The client began experimenting with substances in high school and reported finding both emotional release and emotional escape through substance use. This pattern of relationship instability and substance use for both emotional release and escape continued through adulthood and brought him into treatment (2015). The article demonstrated the efficacy of using Attachment Theory as a framing tool for psychoeducational purposes and for interventions. The article argued for a long-term Attachment Theory approach which focuses on the underlying emotional processes that influence behaviors as opposed to a short term, CBT

approach which focuses upon behaviors themselves. The article posited the lack of research in Attachment Theory and SUDs and recommended more research in Attachment Theory and SUDs. The authors did not discuss SUDs and secure attachment styles. The article was also limited by only presenting research on SUDs within the frame of Attachment Theory.

Thorberg and Lyvers (2010) stated the connection between substance use, mood regulation, and problems with interpersonal relationships. The article reported the lack of research into attachment's role in substance use, mood regulation, and problems with interpersonal relationships and the potential therapeutic benefits to treating SUDs through increased research. The participants were from inpatient alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers in Queensland, Australia. One hundred individuals participated (58 men and 42 women). All participants were at least 18 years old, the mean age was 36.2 years. All participants had been substance free for two to three weeks. The study utilized the revised adult attachment scale (RAAS), the NMR scale (to measure one's expectancies around one's own ability to effectively engage negative moods), the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS), and the differentiation of self-inventory (DSI). The authors found that the participants in the study had significantly higher insecure attachment levels than the community and student samples. However, the article did not give demographic information about the participants other than gender and age. Another limitation of the study was self-selection process, which potentially excluded diversity of experience and personal history within the study.

Green, Myrick, and Crenshaw (2013) discussed the lack of research upon attachment during adolescence. The authors hypothesized that this lack of research indicates play therapists' limited understanding of adolescents and limits play therapists' ability to effectively work with adolescents. Through a literature review on attachment and adolescents and two case studies, the

article presented information on attachment and adolescents. The authors framed information on attachment and adolescents for play therapists and explored how play therapy could be an effective approach in working with adolescents from an attachment standpoint. The article stressed the mutability of attachment styles and the potential of play therapy to help create more secure attachment styles. The article described play therapy's ability to create and cultivate relationships of trust, through play therapy's ability to elicit and contain emotional expression in a caring, supportive, and nonjudgmental environment. The article was limited by the lack of demographic information in the case studies (only age and gender were given). Expanded research on the content of this article could address how play therapy affects the adolescent's relationships with their parent(s) and/or caregiver(s).

Lavitt's interview with Gabor Mate (2017) discussed the causal relationship between experiences of childhood trauma, attachment, and future addictive behaviors. The article asserted the need for treating addiction from a trauma informed standpoint. Mate framed the discussion within an attachment perspective, stressing the need infants and children have for nurture and support from their caregivers and the potential negative consequences, including SUDs, that can result from insecure attachment. In the interview, Mate defined addiction as behavior that cause alleviation or enjoyment and is both desired and difficult to abjure. Mate stressed the necessity to treat the emotional pain caused by experiences of trauma and the resulting insecure attachment styles when treating SUDs because the function of addictive behaviors is to relieve this emotional pain. In the interview, Mate did not support his assertions with scholarly references or case studies. However, Mate has researched and written extensively in the SUD field (https://drgabormate.com/). The interview illuminated the need to further

examine how a trauma informed understanding framed by attachment theory could be directly utilized when treating SUDs.

Fletcher, Nutton, and Brend (2015) detailed the use of substances for security, consistency, and emotional regulation and demonstrated the intimate and complex relationship those struggling with substance use can potentially have with their substance(s) of choice. Sobriety can, therefore, cause additional attachment disruption with the loss of the person's most secure relationship, that with substances. Secure attachment develops through relationships of mutual trust within which emotions can be expressed and regulated over time and with consistency. In view of this, the article advocated for longer term approaches in which appropriate time is given to repair attachment through the therapeutic relationship and in group work.

Green, Myrick, and Crenshaw (2013) demonstrated the potential of expressive play, within a therapeutic context, to engender mutual trust and encourage and contain emotional expression. The article highlighted the role of intimacy, empathy, acceptance, and freedom as essential to expressive play's efficacy in working with adolescents with insecure attachment styles. The expressive play becomes the vehicle for emotional expression, both moving the expression out of the client and containing the expression as it moves out of the client. The therapist adds a second layer of secure containment through their empathetic and accepting witnessing of the expression. In this, the therapist also demonstrates how the client themselves can tolerate, contain and respond to their own emotions through self-compassion and self-acceptance. The article also demonstrated how play can give the client distance from the emotion being expressed. This distance decreases the possibility of the emotion overwhelming

the client and increases the ability of the client to effectively experience and engage the expressing emotion.

In Lavitt's interview with Gabor Mate (2017), Mate stressed the role of substances in alleviating emotional pain for those who have experienced childhood trauma and have insecure attachment styles connected with the experience of trauma. Mate stated that, interwoven in this pain is an unconscious and underlying narrative of inner unworthiness and outer hostility. The unconscious belief of unworthiness potentially affects one's ability for self-compassion and self-acceptance, thus affecting effective emotional regulation and motivation for change. The underlying belief of general hostility decreases one's ability to trust others and engage in mutually enhancing relationships, affecting one's ability to participate in relationships which can help one develop towards a secure attachment style. Both underlying beliefs then hinder emotional expression and effective containment. Mate's interview points to the potential of treating SUDs and insecure attachment through engaging, unraveling, and transforming the underlying unconscious narratives people hold about themselves and the world. This involves not only the expression and containment of emotions, but more generally aspects of the unconscious. The imagination, in this context, proves itself a powerful player in SUDs, and a potentially effective place of engagement.

Thorberg and Lyvers (2010) also indicated the place of imagination in working with SUDs. The article demonstrated the role of perception and expectation in mood regulation and coping strategies. The study found that the expectancy not to be able to regulate negative emotions was linked with anxiety, depression, and maladaptive coping strategies including substance use. The articled linked the expectancy to be able to regulate negative emotions with

adaptive coping strategies. Again, this indicates the powerful place of imagination in mood regulation and coping strategies.

Shame and SUDs

Bilevicius, Single, Bristow, Foot, Ellery, Keough, & Johnson (2018) presented the connection between depression, substance use, and gambling. Using the self-medication hypothesis, the authors proposed that those with depression use substances and gamble to avoid negative emotions, and that shame is the mediator. The article investigated shame's role in substance use and gambling by those experiencing depression. The authors defined shame as a global, self-directed emotion that is inspired by perceived failure and potential social isolation because of the perceived failure. Two hundred and ten young adults participated in the study. The majority of participants were female (76%). Fifty-nine percent of the participants were White, 16% were Filipino, 5% were Indigenous, 4% were Chinese, 3% were South Asian, 2% were Black, and 11% were Other. All were University students. The study showed causal relationship between shame and substance use and gambling for those with depression. The study would have benefited from a more thorough discussion of shame and of affects more generally. Another limitation of the study lies in the nature of shame, which is self-isolating. The self-isolating effect of shame could have made shame's admittance and disclosure difficult for those participating in the study.

Luoma, Kohlenberg, Hayes, and Fletcher (2012) discussed the connection between shame and SUDs. The article evaluated the effectiveness of treating SUDs by treating shame through acceptance and commitment therapy and mindfulness and acceptance-based intervention. One hundred and thirty-three adults diagnosed with SUDs participated in this study which took place in a 28-day residential treatment community located in Reno, Nevada.

Seventy-two of the participants were male and 61 were female. Seventy three percent of the

participants were White, 14% were non-White and 13% were Hispanic. The study found that the

use of acceptance and commitment therapy and mindfulness and acceptance based-interventions

were more effective in treating substance use than treatment as usual. The authors argued that

the use of acceptance and commitment therapy and mindfulness and acceptance based-

interventions enabled the participants to engage rather than avoid shame. The authors argued

that this engagement helped participants break a cycle of shame in which the avoidance of shame

leads to increased shame which leads to more avoidance of shame and increased shame. The

authors found that breaking this cycle is connected to a decrease in substance use. The study

could be replicated and expanded by further engaging the concept of shame and further attending

to cultural considerations in the experience of shame and in substance use.

Karlsson (2015) analyzed Gunilla Linn Persson's The Tale of Myself though the lens of

narrative therapy. The analysis focused on the role of story-telling in Persson's recovery from

both mental illness and alcoholism. The article explored shame in mental illness and alcoholism

and storytelling's ability to dissolve shame. The article also asserted the need for art created by

those with mental illness and SUDs for research purposes and to increase society's

understanding. Further research could expand upon the clinical possibilities of storytelling as

well as the connections between mental illness, substance use, and shame.

Phelps, Paniagua, Willcockson, and Potter (2017) posited the danger, cost, and ubiquity

of SUDs in the United States. The article also expressed the need for more treatment generally

and more effective treatment specifically for SUDs. The articled explored the connection

between self-compassion and substance use in the hopes of informing treatment for substance

use disorders. Participants (n = 477) were recruited via social media. Eighty-six percent were

white, 7% Asian, less than 1% African American, and 6% reported as other. Fifty-five percent

reported as female. The study used the Self Compassion scale and the Alcohol Smoking and

Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) for measurements. The study found an inverse

relationship between self-compassion and risk of substance use disorders. High risk of substance

use disorder correlated strongly with each of the sub-categories of self-compassion (self-

compassion, self-kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, self-judgment, isolation, over-

identification). Since the study included self-selecting process of participant recruitment and a

predominance of white participants, further studies would benefit from random sampling and

focus on specific non-white cultures and subcultures.

      Bilevicius, Single, Bristow, Foot, Ellery, Keough, & Johnson (2018) demonstrated the

potential of engaging shame in SUD treatment. The article emphasized the difference between

shame and guilt by defining guilt as a negative response to an action and shame as a negative

response to the self because of an action. In addition to this negative response to the self, shame

includes the fear and/or experience of another's negative response to the self because of the

action. One has become un-accepted by oneself and one fears (and perhaps is) being un-

accepted by others. In this isolation, there is both a fear of being seen and a pain in being seen

(because of the negative view of the self), a desire not to be seen and a desire to be seen. This

formulation of shame involves four facets; intra-personal relationships, interpersonal

relationships, imagination, and emotional regulation. In the experience of shame, the

imagination intensifies the emotional experience through the amplification of fear and

heightening of negative self-perception. The tension caused by conflicting desires further

intensifies the emotional experience. Substances are then used to tolerate/regulate/cope with this

intensified emotional experience. Substances are also used to isolate the self from others and

isolate aspects of the self from the self. The four facets of intrapersonal relationships, interpersonal relationships, imagination, and emotional regulation are for potential effective sites for engagement within the therapeutic relationship. Issues of acceptance thread through each of these facets making acceptance, then, a key component in therapeutic work.

Luoma, Kohlenberg, Hayes, and Fletcher (2012) stated that shame connects to SUDs in two ways, which, like Bilevicius, Single, Bristow, Foot, Ellery, Keough, & Johnson (2018), involve the intrapersonal relationship and emotional regulation. First, the article observed that the negative view of self involved in shame increases the possibility of the use of substances as self-destructive behavior. Second, the article stated that shame increases the possibility of substance use to avoid the painful emotional experience of shame itself. This double duty of self-harm and emotional avoidance make substance use especially appealing for those experiencing shame. Like Bilevicius, Single, Bristow, Foot, Ellery, Keough, & Johnson (2018), the article indicated the need to address the intrapersonal relationship when working with substance use and shame. In addition, the article stressed the potential of engaging the affect and experience of shame itself, and emotional regulation more generally. Issues of acceptance, again, thread through both self-harm and emotional avoidance.

Karlsson (2015) explored the potential of directly engaging the shameful self (connected to SUDs and mental illness) through personal narrative poetry. As stated above, when substance use is connected to shame, often issues of acceptance are at play. This article described how writing poetry can transform shame into acceptance within both intra and interpersonal relationships. The poet no longer avoids aspects of herself which she found shameful but turns towards these aspects by making them into poetry. This turning toward and engaging are movements akin to acceptance. The article further described how the pattern of shame is

transformed into acceptance through the role of the audience. The poet becomes her own audience and has the opportunity to deepen her self-acceptance through reading her own work. Shame can be further disrupted and transformed at the inter-relational level when other people read and engage the work. Both intra and interpersonal relational exposures carry the risk of causing further shame and indicate the necessity to begin this process within a therapeutic relationship informed by acceptance and empathy.

Phelps, Paniagua, Willcockson, and Potter (2017) also pointed to the potential of engaging the intra-relationship when treating SUDs. The article (2017) found an inverse correlation between self-compassion and risk of substance use disorder. The article connected shame to self-compassion through three subcategories of self-compassion; isolation, self-judgment, and over identification. Shame consists of the isolation of the self through self-judgment by the over identification with negative aspects of the self. Karlesson (2015) pointed to the therapeutic potential of engaging negative aspects of the self via personal narrative poetry thus transforming shameful into acceptance. This article indicated the potential of cultivating self-compassion as a more immediate response to the self, especially within the context of suffering. Like self-acceptance, self- compassion is a turning toward the self, thus disrupting the pattern of shame, and avoidant behavior connected to substance use, which are turnings away from the self. Self-compassion could be seen as a deeper, more intimate and more loving connection to the self than self-acceptance. The potential power and vulnerability connected to self-compassion should be kept in mind when considering its use in therapeutic settings.

Expressive Therapies and SUDs

Conner (2017) discussed the need for externalization when treating SUDs. The article emphasized the predominant tendency of those with addiction in identifying as the addiction.

Identifying as the addiction, the article stated, makes engaging addiction difficult because the person is trapped within this identity narrative. The article proposed using art to externalize addiction and engaging the externalized addiction through the narrative practice of influence mapping. The article detailed a specific art intervention which externalized addiction through art and engaged the externalized addiction through influence mapping. The article suggested the benefits of externalization of addiction through art, specifically in engendering expression, discussion, and cultivating personal control. Further research is needed to measure and analyze the direct effect of externalization of addiction in reducing substance use. Detailed case studies describing the use of influence mapping and externalization of addiction would benefit future treatment of SUDs.

Wise (2009) posited the connection between marginalized communities, SUDs, poverty, and isolation. The chapter researched the effects of open studio participation for those carrying SUD diagnoses, specifically around social isolation, and described themes which emerged for this population during open studio. The study framed itself within the harm reduction model and connected this model to the open studio model. The study took place in New York City at a harm reduction center in bi-weekly sessions over a two-year period. All participants shared substance use related issues. Examples of participants' art work were provided in text. The study found that participation in open studio could lead to positive social interactions and that artwork produced could lead to group conversation and increased interaction among participants. Themes of safety, humor, holidays, impact of harmful behavior, self-care, and feeling overwhelmed emerged during this study. The study did not clearly delineate the participating population. Future research would benefit by a more thorough engagement with the case studies and a theoretical linkage to the broader field of Expressive Therapies more generally.

Skeffington and Brown (2014) stated the need to approach substance use as an avoidant behavior arising out of exposure to trauma rather than treating the SUD as the primary issue. The article explored the use of art therapy and imagery in treating SUDs. The case study took place in Australia in a closed art therapy group for women. The group and study were conducted over an eight-week period. The subject of the case study was a white, Australian woman in her thirties. The subject had a post-graduate education level and had recently given birth. The study found that the use of art therapy and imagery circumvented some avoidant behaviors, provided opportunity for behavior change, and encouraged engagement with hidden and/or avoided aspects of self. The article stated the study was limited by the limited eight-week span of the group. The article also recognized the possible effect of the subject's simultaneous use of anti-depressants and individual therapy upon the study. The article recommended further studies utilizing both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The study did not address the possible effects of other group members upon the subject or group dynamics upon the results of the study.

Young, Rodriguez, and Neighbors (2013) asserted the danger of heavy drinking for young adults and the need for interventions which reduce heavy drinking in this population. The study evaluated the effectiveness of expressive writing as a brief intervention for alcohol abuse. Two hundred undergraduate students from a southern university, between the ages of 18 and 50, participated in this study. The majority of participants were female (76%). The study found that writing about negative drinking experiences led to the intention to drink significantly less compared to the control. Writing negatively about a drinking experience marginally effected intended heavy drinking episodes. Writing positively about drinking experiences had no significant effect. The article did not indicate how the subjects of the study were chosen nor did the study provide the demographics of the participants other than gender and age-range. Further

research is needed to analyze the connection between future drinking intentions and actual drinking occurrences.

Chilton, Gerber, Councill, and Dreyer (2015) expressed the need for further research on therapeutic potential of positive emotions. Art therapy, they stated, is an effective means to improve mood. However, the reasons for this have not been sufficiently studied. Through arts based research, the article explored the production of positive emotions through the creation of visual art and poetry within a collaborative (pairs) format and this production's effects upon the participants. Five pairs of art therapists participated in this research. The article presented the poetry and three visual art pieces created in the data collection and data analysis aspects of the research. The article found that the co-researchers created images from nature to communicate, express, and explore positive emotions. The article stated that, in this study, the created images effectively communicated, expressed, and explored positive emotions. The article also found that the co-creation of art encouraged emotional meaning making. The article did not describe biological, social, psychological, spiritual context within which the artistic process took place for the individuals and pairs of co-researchers.

Austin (2016) used a personal narrative to affectively engage, explore, and communicate the arts-based data collection process used in the research project, Grace Street. The article described the use of art making and group supervision to develop and focus the research questions. Personal biases and assumptions were also effectively exposed, engaged, and explored by the researcher through group supervision and art making. The article communicated the feelings of fear, excitement, creativity, and freedom in conducting arts based research during the research project, Grace Street. The article described the use and engagement of journaling, song-writing, poetry writing, story writing, and field note taking in creating a musical for the

presentation of research. The article presented a transcript and video of musical, Grace Street. The article did not describe demographics of researcher. The article stated the need to present information through an affective narrative but showed no evidence or reasoning to support this assertion.

Conner (2017) pointed to the place of identity and underlying narrative in treating SUDs. This article indicated the potential of using artmaking and imagery work to contain addiction and, by containing it, to also give the self distance from addiction. This containment and distancing can provide the individual both space from the behavior and something tangible to actively confront, engage, and manipulate. This containment and distancing can also positively affect the underlying identity narrative which is contributing to the substance use. Finally, the externalization of addiction through artmaking enables the individual to actively participate in a transformative process by which addiction is turned into art.

Wise (2009) found that art-making and imagery work can be potentially effective aspects of interventions within a group therapy framework. The article (2009) detailed art-making and imagery's ability to engender and encourage engagement and connection between group members, thus addressing the social isolation those carrying SUD diagnoses experience. Art-making and imagery work within a group therapy framework could also lead to the creation of community, which could provide participants new support systems and meaningful relationships. This creation of community, support systems, and meaningful relationships could positively affect behavior change around substance use.

Skeffington and Brown (2014) also pointed to the potentially effective place of art-making and imagery work when treating SUDs within a group therapy context. The article (2014) detailed art-making and imagery work's ability to circumvent avoidant behavior patterns

associated with substance use issues arising out of exposure to trauma. Like Wise (2009), Skeffington and Brown (2014) were informed by perspectives which treat SUDs as complex and multifaceted. The effectiveness of imagery, as detailed in Skeffington and Brown (2014), could be due to imagery's ability to hold and expressive complexity. When working with people with avoidant behavior patterns connected to SUDs, art-making and imagery-based engagement could be an effective intervention because imagery's complexity allows for the complexity of substance use to be expressed and engaged. This again points to the ability of artmaking to externalize, contain, and distance expressed by Conner (2017). Within the group therapy framework, individuals also have opportunity to engage in the transformative process also described by Conner (2017) as a group, rather than as an individual. The participation in group transformative experiences can potentially lead to greater group coherence and community creation, thus bringing potentially more therapeutic power to the group.

Young, Rodriguez, and Neighbors (2013) pointed to the potential of influencing intention by reflecting upon former experiences of substance use within a specific and provided framework. This type of intervention could be effective when treating SUDs by focusing on framing memories, intention, and intention's connection to future behavior. Part of the efficacy of using art-making for engaging past experiences of substance use could be connected to the distancing and containment of these memories as described by Conner (2017). Directly engaging past substance use through the transformative action of art has the potential to change one's relationship with the past substance use, thus potentially transforming one's current and future relationship with substance use. Directly engaging past experiences of substance use through art also potentially changes patterns of avoidant behavior described by Brown (2014).

Oklan and Henderson (2014) demonstrated the possible effectiveness of artistic collaboration within the therapeutic relationship, specifically within the modality of music, when treating SUDs. This collaborative approach could enhance the therapeutic relationship through increased instances of attunement in general and specifically aesthetic attunement. As in Young, Rodriguez, and Neighbors (2013), Oklan and Henderson (2014) described how the expressive arts were used to engage (directly and indirectly) and differently frame the participants experiences with substance use. This engagement and active framing has the potential to change the relationship someone carrying an SUD diagnosis has with the substance, and, therefore, change their behavior around substance use. Again, part of the efficacy of the dyad music collaboration could be due to art's ability to distance and contain and the disruption of avoidant behavior through direct engagement of substance use.

Chilton, Gerber, Councill, and Dreyer (2015) found that engaging and exploring positive emotions through art making in dyads contributed to the participants' ability to engage positive emotions and make meaning of emotions. Similarly, Oklan and Henderson (2014) and Chilton, Gerber, Councill, and Dreyer (2015) described the therapeutic efficacy of making art in dyads. Again, art-making in the dyad format could enhance the therapeutic relationship through increased experiences of attunement. Focusing on positive emotions could also be an potent means to increase positive intra-relational experiences and, consequently, improve the intra-relationship. Finally, directly engaging positive emotions could disrupt avoidant behavior patterns associated with SUDs, as described by Brown (2014).

Austin (2016) described the therapist's use of art-making as a research tool and as a tool for self-reflection. Those carrying SUD diagnoses could use art-making for the same purposes. Framing art-making as research brings curiosity into the intra-relationship and can begin to

loosen patterns of engagement with the self, as described by Conner (2017), including patterns of avoidant behavior as detailed by Brown (2014).

Discussion

Kossack (2008) described theoretical foundations for Expressive Arts Therapy and the therapeutic possibilities of Expressive Arts Therapy within an attachment framework. Kossack focused on the role of relationship in therapy and the utilization of Expressive Arts Therapy in the therapeutic relationship. The article explored themes of relationship and presence, attunement and mis-attunement, embodiment, and improvisation and play. The article advocated for the use of Expressive Arts Therapy as a vehicle for effective intra and intersubjective therapeutic engagement. An expanded approach to this study would include addressing the role of cultural competency in the theoretical or clinical aspects of expressive arts therapy. The article did not focus on clinical application of Expressive Arts Therapy.

Kossack (2008) explored connection and disconnection within the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal relationships. The author explored the promise of taking the perspective of an artist and engaging in artmaking from a therapeutic standpoint within these relationships. Those carrying SUD diagnoses often struggle with connections (and disconnections) in their lives, in themselves, and with their substance of choice. In each section of this review, the connection between relationships and SUDs emerged. Kossack (2008) highlighted the ability of art-making to engage and transform relationships, with the self, with others and with the world. The article proposed the Expressive Therapies ability to creatively engage connections and disconnections in relationships and creatively utilize the power of these connections and disconnections therapeutically. The Expressive Therapies do this, largely, by

involving the imagination through creativity and art-making. As an image-based function which

bridges and overlaps the more conscious and less conscious aspects of human experience, the

imagination is powerful, complex, and flexible. Both the attachment and shame sub sections

demonstrated the vital role imagination plays in the experience, interpretation, and engagement

of intra, inter, and trans-relational aspects. Both sub sections also demonstrated the connection

between these relationships and SUDs. Using art-making to creatively engage the imagination

has the potential to transform people's relationships with themselves, with others, with the world,

and with their substance use.

Emotional regulation, experience, and tolerance are involved in these complex systems.

As demonstrated in Attachment Theory, from the very beginning of life, emotions are

experienced and regulated in relationships (Fletcher, Nutton, and Brend, 2015). Not

surprisingly, both the attachment and shame sections demonstrate the connections between

difficulties in emotional regulation and tolerance and SUDs. Imagination's role in the emotional

regulation and experience is significant because of imagination's active task in relationships, but

also, more generally, because of imagination's creative and influencing role in perception and

experience. Therefore, engaging the imagination through creativity and art-making can

transmute how one experiences and regulates emotions, thus altering one's substance use

patterns.

Potential avenues for future research are first indicated by one major deficiency

highlighted throughout this review; the multicultural perspective. This can be accomplished

through studies which focus on the manifestation and function of attachment, shame, and

substance use within specific cultures and subcultures in both the United States and globally.

This would necessitate engaging the trans-relations aspect of human experience and would

necessarily have to explore privilege/oppression's influence within these specific manifestations of attachment, shame, and substance use. The multicultural perspective also necessitates exploring the expression and function of art-making within specific cultures and subcultures, and privilege/oppression's influence in this art-making.

Another avenue for viable research was indicated by substance use's role in emotional regulation, which was highlighted throughout each section of this literature review. The review focused on a specific method of regulation; avoidance. However, substance use's flexibility and complexity indicate the potential for not only avoiding specific emotions and emotions more generally, but perhaps also as an intensifier of specific emotions and emotions globally.

An innovative channel for possible research was indicated by substance use's connection to negative underlying narratives about the self. This connection combined with the negative effects of substance use point to the promise of researching substance use as self-harm. Substance use can be a means to punish the self in response to this negative underlying narrative, to fortify/continually create this negative narrative, and/or as a means to experience/release/control emotional pain (Fletcher, Nutton, and Brend, 2015; Lavitt, 2017; Phelps, Paniagua, Willcockson, and Potter, 2017). Substance use's flexibility and complexity enable it to accomplish self-harm across the continuum, from more passive to more active.

In this literature review, substance use's power is indicated by its flexibility and complexity. Substance Use Disorders potentially serve many functions both maladaptively and efficiently. Substance use is a shape shifter, in that substances can be used to fulfill a wide variety of needs in the same person. Today substance use may help someone avoid difficult emotions. Tomorrow, substance use may help them feel less alone. The next day, maybe they use substances to cope with trauma. The next, maybe they use substances because they see

themselves as an addict. The next, maybe they use substances just to feel, something, just to feel anything at all.

This literature review points to two similarly flexible and complex places of intervention when treating SUDs: relationships and the imagination. The power of imagination and relationships were demonstrated throughout the thesis in the roles they play in both maintaining and dissolving substance use. When treating SUDs, one should consider both the flexibility and complexity of substance use's underlying causes and functions, and the flexibility and complexity of the corresponding therapeutic engagement.

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In the judgment of the following signatory this thesis meets the academic standards that have been established for the above degree.

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