Humanizing a working environment with cultural activities

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Historical background

Early form of communication
Facilitate cooperation and protection
Emotional expression, touch and vocalization
Rites of passages

Molinaro 1986, Hanna 1995
Brown Parsons 2008
"If you are not prepared to be wrong, you don’t come up with something new”
Prof Ken Robinson

Feeling safe increase creativity

Today we often educate out of creativity

Hierarchi:
1. Maths
2. Languages
3. Humanities
4. Arts (Arts, Music, Drama and Dance)
Undeserved suffering - learning disorder?

Was disturbing at school

Went to the doctor:

"**Gillian is not sick, she is a dancer**"

At dance school, she discovered other people who had to move in order to think.

Gillian went to Royal Ballet School and then Andrew Lloyd Webber’s – Cats, Phantom of the Opera..
A model of perception levels

Arts - Perception levels - Assessment methods

Emotional and cognitive understanding of oneself and others

Verbal – cognitive
Visual
Emotional
Sensational
Motor

According to G Downing theory of Perception levels, Ref Kristen Monroe
Methods – cultural activities and health

Hormonal analyses HPA-axel plasma och salivia
Self figure drawings
Video recordings and videointerpretation
Verbal cognitive evaluations
Interviews qualitative analyses
Labanotation "Effort – Shape"
3 D measurement with lights
fMRI  PET
First person perspective analyses
Researched contexts

1. Biological
2. Therapeutical
3. Cognitive
4. Cultural
5. Environmental Medicine
6. Social Medicine
7. Pedagogical
1. Biological context

Saliva Cortisol

Plasma Cortisol

DHEA-S

Prolactin

NPY

Oxytocin

Bojner Horwitz, Theorell, Anderberg
The Arts in Psychotherapy 2003
Bojner Horwitz 2004
2. Therapeutical context

Control

Treat

Bojner Horwitz, Theorell, Anderberg
The Arts in Psychotherapy ´2006

Bojner Horwitz, Lennartsson, Theorell, Ullén 2015
Frontiers in Psychology
2. Therapeutical context

Dance and music individually 18 months

Bojner Horwitz, Anderberg
Fibromyalgi- caused by stress?
2007
3. Cognitive, visual/verbal

Video interpretation
The patients interpret standardised movement patterns after dance

Controls/Treatments

Results: Increase differentiation of emotions

Bojner Horwitz et al 2003
Bojner Horwitz, Theorell, Anderberg
The Arts in Psych 2004
4. Cultural context

Theatre and dance; for, by and with pain patients

Bojner Horwitz et al. 2010. 

Romanowska J, Shibbolet 2014  Leadership program
5. Environmental Medicine context

Is cultural activity at work related to mental health in employees?

Cultural activities at work = a buffer against exhaustion

SLOSH data
2006, 2008, 2010 (n= 5037, n= 9623, n= 8912)

Is cultural activity at work related to mental health in employees? Int Arch Occup Environ health.
Theorell T, Osika W, Bojner Horwitz E et al 2012
6. Social Medicine context

Cultural palette in Swedish Health Care centers for women with burnout symptoms

Dance, music, theatre, film viewing, stillness and show

SOC
KEDS
SRH
TAS

Grape Viding, Theorell, Osika, Bojner Horwitz 2015
Cultural health activities in primary health care
The importance of the link between emotional regulation and compassion. How do we know when a person is in contact with his/her emotions?
7. Pedagogical context

Writer’s Block and Dance

Embodied knowledge/cogn. Applied in academic writing process
Rites (writes) of passage
Phenomenological - Hermeneutic method

Focused attention  Open awareness

Bojner Horwitz, Stenfors, Osika 2013
Journal of Transpersonal Studies
How can we use our research in society?

- Revitalization
- Increase body awareness
- Relaxation
- Existential meaning
- Symbolic reading
- Self-reflection
- Oxytocin

SOC
Cultural activities at work - a buffer against exhaustion

SLOSH data
2006, 2008, 2010 (n= 5037, n= 9623, n= 8912)

Cultural palette for patients and health care staff – increase emotional regulation decrease exhaustion

Grape Viding, Osika, Theorell, Hallqvist, Bojner Horwitz 2015
Cultural health activities in primary health care
Twin data registry – CAQ
Dancers, musicians,

Bojner Horwitz, Lennartsson, Theorell, Ullén

Frontiers in Psychology 2015
Collaborations with professional actors, dancers and musicians

Health care system, school system etc
Passive and active contact with creative arts
Healing theatre
Artists in Residence

Bojner Horwitz et al. 2010.
The Arts in Psychotherapy 37: 13-19
Writers block – contemplative inquiry in movement academic setting

Bojner Horwitz, Stenfors, Osika 2014
J of transpersonal studies
Contemplation in movement

Focused attention

Open awareness  Osika 2011 SU

"Cognitive breathing"
How to capture a change?

Hormonal analyses

Videointerpretation

Self figure drawing

Verbal questionnaires/ focus group/first person interviews

Follow-up research
Ongoing implementation

RASA BOX

Writers block

Cultural Health Box, Train the trainer program

PLAYMAKERS

Digital education
How can we theorize?

Emotional brain theory
Le Doux; 1992

Embodiement theory
”To bodily understand another person’s emotional state”

Mirror neuron theory
”Observed impressions are mirrored in other person’s gestures”
Humanizing a working environment with cultural activities

Aim: Explore the self reported impact of cultural activities on health care providers after having participated in different self chosen cultural activities defined as ”Cultural palette” in the workplace
Studies show that taking part in pleasurable art-based cultural activities within a group context has a potential to influence people on

1. Physiological
2. Biological
3. Social level

(Grape Widing, Osika, Theorell, Bojner Horwitz 2014 The ”cultural palette”)

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Center for Social Sustainability
Centrum för social hållbarhet
Short term exposure to patient’s distress and pain can provoke occupational stress related symptoms:

- Elevated blood pressure
- Anxiety
- Depressive symptoms

- among health professionals

(Figley 2002, Rubino et al 2009)
How can we theorize?

Health care professionals are often exposed to disturbing visual images in their work
(Laws 2001, Rubino, Luksyte, Perry and Volpone 2009)

Maybe need to address these traumatic sensual stimuli on a more sensual and embodied, rather than verbal, level.
Little research on practical links between

1. Cultural activities
   and

2. Health care professionals who are vulnerable to stress
The cultural palette for staff

• Activities chosen by the participants from a range of possibilities
• Period of 10-12 weeks
• Once a week for an hour
• At three different primary health care setting in Sweden
• Focusgroup interviews
Data collection and analyses

• Three focus group interviews with the participating staff and cultural activity producers

• All interviews recorded and texts were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically

• The analytical prism of the focus group interviews is based on a phenomenological – hermeneutic method (inspired by the french philosopher Paul Ricouer)
Presentaion of the structure analyses

1. Cultural activities as having a physiological impact on the individual
2. Cultural activities as enhancing relationships in the workplace
3. Difficulties in implementing cultural activities in the context of the health system institution
The complete interpretation

"Humanizing a working environment with cultural activities in a health care setting"
Explanations of the findings 1)


The correlation between arts as an embodied non verbal or pre-verbal experience =

The arts and a trauma both take place within the senses and the nature of the disturbing images and sensory stimuli that health care workers experience on the job that correlates with the sensory experience of secondary trauma (Hass Cohen and Karr 2008)
2) "Became an individual and not a labelled professional"

Break down the hierarchy of the medical world, enabled those with less power to feel personalized and to become human beings.

It humanized the working environment
3) 

“No one wanted to organize them”

Even thought:

“One strenght with the CP is that it is conducted during work hours and that it is voluntary”

Difficulties in implementing relaxing and playful activities in health care systems because we have to deal with stress (better to not change) Grant & Kinman 2014.
Conclusion

Arts based cultural activities had a set of interconnected individual, group, community impact that make them an effective way to reduce stress, enhance joy, and shift the work culture in the health care center to one of caring for the staff as a first step in order to care for the patients.

The inclusion of CP becomes a cheap sustainable way to receive multiple impacts.
"The CA are about life style changes which is the most important part of our work with patients"

Life style changes – embodied in creating space for arts based cultural activities, can be incorporated into the individual, group and systemic levels of health care frameworks and become a step towards change into the overall health care system.

Difficulties to organize...
BUT how organize in society?

RASA BOX

Writers block

Cultural Health Box, Train the trainer program

PLAYMAKERS

Digital education
Qualitative & Quantitative
Need both

Qualitative studies necessary for hypothesis generation and for deeper insight into processes and intentionality

Quantitative studies necessary for societal decisions
Art – an appropriate method to reduce work related stress for health care workers
Cultural activities and compassion

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