BT-ABT

BAPU TRUST FOR RESEARCH
ON MIND & DISCOURSE

QUEERING THE ARTS

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

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Preface to the report

The Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse runs a year long course, titled, 'BT-ABT - Psychosocial wellbeing in Development using ABT'. ABT is the evidence-based use of art forms, integrated in a way to offer choices for people with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities, to accomplish their own individualized mental health goals within a safe, recovery-oriented, therapeutic relationship.

In our experience, ABT serves as an alternative augmentative communication method for supporting *all* persons with disabilities, including children and elderly. In keeping with the overall scope of works of the Bapu Trust, the BT-ABT course provides the framework and skillsets for working in the mental health sector, with a disability inclusive development perspective, inspired by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

WCCL Foundation (World Centre for Creative Learning Foundation) invented Arts Based Therapy in its present form; and has over last 12 years, trained over 250+ students, to enable work in a number of disability and development areas. These include de-addiction, children and women at risk, persons, especially children, with disabilities, mental health, cancer care, dementia, Parkinson's, etc. ABT founding figures include Ms. Asha Pillai Balsara, Mr. Zubin Balsara, Mr. Aanand Chabukswar and Ms. Deborah Daniels. (Visit https://wcclf.org for more information.) In this time, WCCLF' students studied the day to day effectiveness of ABT in diverse settings among a diversity of people with needs. Bapu Trust is among WCCLF students now hosting the course, in the format prescribed by WCCLF with their permission to teach.

The ABT 'View' (ethics and value base of the Subtle Energy Guide) and integrated artistic skill sets that are taught in the course, are congruent with the vision and practices of disability inclusive development. The ABT framework is interdisciplinary, including basic counselling, body psycho-therapies, trauma-informed counselling, Indian psychology, philosophy, research base on arts-based therapies, cognitive sciences and social justice theories. ABT is a safe way of approaching deep-rooted habitual behaviours, building insight, empathy, compassion and connection among individuals and families. Support interventions using ABT can be broken down into specific actions, based on therapeutic goals, so that support can be customized to the client's express needs. ABT addresses low and high support needs of persons with mental health issues and psychosocial disabilities and indeed persons with disabilities in general. ABT helps a person to mobilize social capital and support systems.

ABT as a creative modality fulfils to the maximum, the purpose and vision for which Bapu Trust was created: 'healing environments will be creative, non-hazardous, non-violent and playful; and will respect the dignity and autonomy of the person.'

The ABT Evidence Base Initiative of the Bapu Trust

The Arts Based Therapy course is an intensive year long course, with 400 hours of theory, creative labs, assignments, and projects. The student learns to juggle multiple artistic mediums, purposively, to be able to assess the needs of their client group, and to titrate interventions that will address those specific needs. The ABT course offers tools for assessment, which are specific to the use of arts and healing, as espoused by the course. Typically a single support session would have a matrix of arts.

For example, a session could start with an opening ritual of breathing practice, followed by a memory game(s). This could be followed by a rhythm session, ending with visual art activity. An artistic 'grid' helps the student to match the session plan with the client needs. A pre- and post- test tool, observation sheets and various kinds of projective tools complete the ABT tool box.

At the very foundation of ABT practise, is its 'View'- the Subtle Energy Guide, developed by the WCCLF, drawn from Indian traditions of Mind training, particularly Mahayana Buddhism. The SEG, as it is called, gives the value base and a worldview for the students, to have a purposiveness in what they deliver, and to connect to something larger than themselves. The SEG is interwoven into every artistic practice and skill set, and when a student is 'stuck' in the matrix, it is the SEG that comes in handy.

The evidence base for 'art therapy', especially in western contexts, has existed for some decades. Art therapy often uses one art form, for example, visual art therapy or music therapy, or dance movement therapy. The therapist usually 'specializes' in one art medium. Often times, the art expression is dissected in cognitive / behavioural terms. The theoretical framework for the analysis is derived from western psychology, particularly those developed in the late 19th, early 20th centuries, during and after the War period.

However, the heady mix of Indian mind traditions, ritual healing, and integrated arts based therapeutic modalities, along with, its precision of practice with client groups, unfortunately, has remained unknown or invisible. These have a history of over 2500 years and counting. We humbly make an effort to bring to the reading publics, and to healers worldwide, our student reports, as an emerging evidence base for Arts Based Therapy.

Bhargavi V Davar and Kavita Saju Nair Pune

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to convey my gratitude to '*Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse'* who bestowed me with an opportunity to enrich my skillset and become a part of the Arts Based Therapy movement. This project would not have come to fruition without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance throughout.

I am quite thankful to our lovely faculty members, *Ms. Bhargavi Davar* and *Ms. Kavita Nair* who initiated me into this therapeutic realm. Without their able guidance, I couldn't have completed this course. Their love and blessings kept me motivated even during hard times.

Special thanks to Ms. Bhargavi, who also served the role of a supervisor. It was an honour to have sought assistance from her. Her unconditional support helped me get through everything.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my batchmates who have cheered me every time I hit a roadblock. Without their constant presence throughout the project, I might have gotten lost. In times of self-doubt, I found solace in their supportive voices.

Lastly, my family and friends have been a great support for me. I couldn't possibly have endured this difficult journey without the support of my partner.

Saransh Bisht

1. Abstract

An Arts Based Therapy intervention was carried out with seven queer individuals with an aim to enhance their intrapersonal as well as interpersonal skills.

The participants in the study were chosen based on their identity, age and individual interests. These participants had been involved in political activism. They also had a relatively clear understanding of their marginalization. All of them were residing in New Delhi, India.

Three major therapeutic domains were narrowed down by the facilitator after careful observation. The participants were assessed early and later in the intervention using various assessment tools provided by Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse.

A careful examination of these assessment results followed the intervention.

The participants in the study, displayed a better sense of cohesiveness with the group as well as the communities they belong to. Under political stress, they were able to support not just their peers, but other marginalized communities too.

Some of the participants were able to create a balanced self-image even amidst the uncertain times. It was quite remarkable that these participants were able to maintain a stable relationship with Arts Based Therapy, throughout these six months of intervention and displayed positive growth in various domains.

Over the course of these six months of intervention, most of the participants were able to improve emotional expression using verbal (speech and creative writing) and non-verbal (performative arts) means.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Larger Problem

As part of the Action Research Project, the researcher worked with persons who identify as 'queer'. Being queer in a largely heteronormative society can be quite distressing. Queer individuals face discrimination, prejudice, denial of civil and human rights, harassment and family rejection on a daily basis. These social factors play an integral role in exposing them to psychological distress.

Queer individuals may experience multiple forms of marginalization at the same time on the basis of their race, caste, class, ability and income. These intersecting experiences of marginalization further explains the complex nature of social exclusion, faced by queer individuals.

Along with social and economic marginalization, they witness an absence of any mental health services specifically designed for the needs of queer population. Mental Health services in India are still restricted to the urban middle-class sections of society. Prejudices and stereotypes still govern the social psyche in India. In this atmosphere, carrying the double stigma of mental illness and queerness is quite difficult. In mainstream mental health settings, queer individuals often feel compelled to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity; Conversely, within the queer community, mention of their mental health status is often unwelcome. Transphobia, Homophobia and Hetero centrism is quite the norm even in the mental health sector. This impedes the recovery process and the effectiveness of treatments and services already available.

The psychological stressors however have multiplied in recent times. Owing to political unrest and economic instability, young adults now face new challenges. In India (and worldwide) rise of the conservatism (ideology) has made queer community uneasy and has increased their vulnerability. The intolerance is experienced as having gone up considerably. In their fight for equality, this poses a huge threat.

These were some of the immediate concerns which came up while interacting with the young adult queer population.

2.2 Literature Review

Being queer- Insult as a badge of honour.

The Oxford English Dictionary, since the nineteenth century, reads queer as '*strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric; also: of questionable character; suspicious, dubious*'. The term 'queer' came to be used as a slur since late nineteenth century. Various multi-media platforms used 'queer' as a derogatory term, using it to highlight the fact that homosexuality was strange and abnormal. The term came to signify effeminate gay men and got linked with hate speech and homophobia soon enough. The term was later reclaimed by the LGBT community (in the west) in the twentieth century amidst the AIDS epidemic and quickly became a symbol of rebellion and resistance against the heterosexist society. The slogan '*We're here, we're queer, we will not live in fear*' soon became a rallying cry which still echo in protests led by the LGBT community around the world. As late as 1980s and 90s, LGBT activists began to collectivize to form organizations under the umbrella term 'queer'. A combination of these factors meant that the early 90s can be pinpointed as the decade in which 'queer' was radically reclaimed. *The former insult was worn as a badge of honor.* Soon enough popular culture came to take up 'queer' as a term that encompasses identities other than *cis*-gendered heterosexuals.

In the academic discourse, the word 'queer' is often understood as something that avoids categorization (in language). However, its position is in stark opposition to the normative or dominant modes of thought.

Much of queer studies in the 1990s revolved around efforts to define or claim this term, its indeterminacy being alternately touted as either a strength or weakness. Eve Sedgewick defines queer as '*the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality, aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically*' (Sedgwick, 1993). In a similar vein, Judith Butler characterized queering as '*a contestation of the terms of sexual legitimacy*' (Butler, 1993); and Lochrie et al. defined it as '*a category marking the sexual as the site for a variety of cultural struggles*' (Lochrie et al. 1997). Other thinkers made an attempt to demystify the undertones of the term, harnessing its vagueness to extend its range past the realm of the sexual. David Halperin worked to move 'queer' away from being a term that defined any particular person or

thing, preferring it as a position—as '*whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant… it demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative*' (Halperin, 1995).

In India, queer discourse is intricately connected with the discourse on caste. Dalit individuals embodying the very essence of dissent (queerness), play an important role in the queer discourse in India. For centuries, caste system has dictated almost every aspect of Indian society. Dalits, who are considered outside the caste system (*a-savarna*) endure complete social ostracization even in present-day India. They are othered from the mainstream society and therefore are in opposition to dominant structures, in the Indian subcontinent. Caste hierarchies and heteronormativity are interlinked and are together responsible for the marginalisation of queer subjects.

What is Expressive Arts Therapy?

Expressive Arts Therapy combines psychology and the creative process to promote emotional growth and healing. This multi-art, or intermodal, approach to psychotherapy and counseling uses our inborn desire to create—be it music, theater, poetry, dance, or other artistic form—as a therapeutic tool to help initiate change.

In contrast to Art Therapy which only focuses on visual mediums, Expressive Arts Therapy employs tools beyond visual capacity. According to PACFA (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia),

> '*All art forms offer avenues for inquiry into personal life meanings. Understandings can be gained through using the art form to represent and construct your own story, or by using forms already created, such as dramas, poems, paintings, novels or musical compositions. The purpose is always to create re-experiencing of selected aspects of your life so as to understand and consider them as you make sense of them. Some approaches use single art forms, whilst others may invite you to use a number of ways of expressing what is important to you, including talking about your experiencing as you inquire into it*' (Dunphy, K., Mullane, S. & Jacobsson, M., 2013).

Arts Therapy, as defined by ANZACATA (The Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association):

> '*Arts therapy or arts psychotherapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses creative modalities, including visual art-making, drama, and dance/movement to improve and inform physical, mental and emotional well-being. Arts therapy works by accessing imagination and creativity, which can generate new models of living, and contribute towards the development of a more integrated sense of self, with increased self- awareness and acceptance.*' (ANZACATA, 2012).

Expressive Arts allow individuals to expand their healing environment and develop self-awareness through self-expression.

> '*Art is a unique way for people to communicate and gain understanding, as well as heal and express themselves*' (Wadeson 1980).

> '*The creative process in art therapy allows people to access the imaginative part of themselves to bring inner guidance and self-healing to a conscious level*' (Feldman, 1999).

The core of Expressive Arts Therapy is based around the basic principle of healing. The process of indulging in creative diversion of stress and trauma improves our psychological wellbeing. It enables catharsis of angry, hostile feelings through a non-intrusive, self-initiated process.

Other than its general advantages, Arts Based Therapy can cater to the needs of any heterogeneous and homogenous group. It can also be adapted to the needs of social groups otherwise ignored by mental health services. The dynamic nature of this form of therapy allows it to be quite inclusive and effective.

The social structures that govern an individual are often considered secondary in certain forms of therapy. Arts Based Therapy on the other hand takes into consideration the external as well as internal stressors which an individual is unable to express through verbal and/or non-verbal mediums.
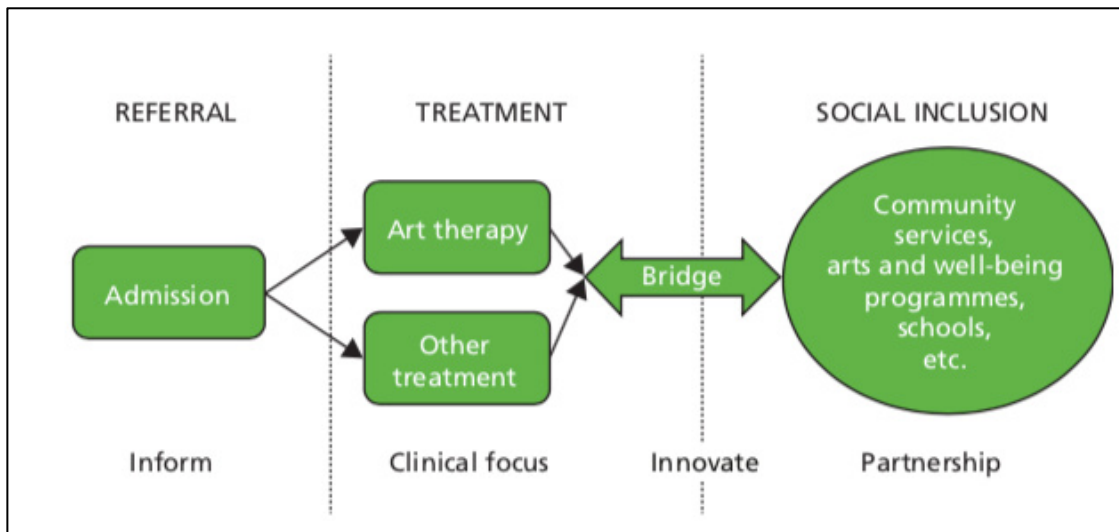
The above figure successfully describes the multiple agencies that are catered to in arts based therapy. The therapy is often tailored to impact these diverse agencies in subtle ways.

> '*Art therapists really can be anywhere; any setting in which it would make sense that there would be a therapist or a counsellor is where art therapy can be helpful. For example, it's increasingly used, she says, in substance abuse, where it can help provide the motivation for treatment'* (Jackson, 2015).

The use of metaphors

According to the American poet, Wallace Stevens (Buttel and Doggett, 2014)-

> '*...a metaphor is a conscious use of similarities in which the relationship between manifest and latent content is apparent to the conscious ego function of self-awareness. This differs from a symbol in that the manifest content of the symbol is not consciously related to the latent content.*'

The metaphors that have been deemed to carry a latent signifier contain the power to heal fragmented parts of our consciousness. Explicit or subtle, metaphors are quite embedded in the framework of Arts Based Therapy. It brings into focus disorganised emotions that forever looms in a desire to be recognised.

Steve Killick proposes that whilst image making is the first step:

'… [*I*]*t can give form to emotional experience, enabling the patient to develop an increasingly metaphorical language which assists him or her in the effort to convey experience. The therapist attempts to develop a conversation with the patient in which this effort is encouraged, but not demanded*' (Gordon & Killick, 1993).

One other advantage of ABT is that the metaphor is played with, using multiple diverse mediums. There is no dearth of art forms, which can be modified to serve the purpose of healing. The therapy facilitates in expressing the inner world through metaphors.

Different therapeutic modalities aim to discover the language of metaphors that enhance human transformation. Myths, which form the basis of our existence, are communicated as metaphors. They evoke possibilities and construct a vision for human beings to conquer. They help navigate the inner world of an individual.

Arts Based Therapy works with spotted (not negative) and healing (positive) metaphors. While spotted metaphors act like a red beacon and indicate a scope for change, healing metaphors form the basis of inner transformation. These act as the construction blocks of therapeutic dialogue (between the therapist and the client). Arts Based Therapy helps individuals embark on a journey of 'self-knowledge'. Carl Jung explains this internal turmoil (when self-knowledge leads to a shift):

'*Neurosis is an inner cleavage — the state of being at war with oneself. Everything that accentuates this cleavage makes the patient worse, and everything that mitigates it tends to heal him. What drives people to war with themselves is the suspicion or the knowledge that they consist of two persons in opposition to one another. The conflict may be between the sensual and the spiritual man, or between the ego and the shadow. It is what Faust means when he says: 'Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast apart.' A neurosis is a splitting of personality*' (Jung, 1938).

'*Only he who has accepted himself completely*,' concludes Jung, '*possesses 'unprejudiced objectivity*,'' that ingredient without which he will be unable to help others nor even himself.

ABT for queer individuals

There is currently a limited amount of research on the intersection between queer issues and arts-based therapy.

Arts Based Therapy has proven to be of aid in promotion of social justice by using various artistic mediums to encourage positive relationships and supportive social networks among stigmatized groups. It has the power to unconsciously resist or subvert oppression.

To illustrate anti-oppressive practice in relation to music, Bennett (2000) suggests that music can act as a vehicle for oppressed youth to collectively communicate hegemonic struggle. For example, Beadle (1993) argues that rap music empowers African-American youth to assert anger, pride, self-worth and their African-American identity (Grzanka, Bain, & Boggan, 2016).

Thus, different art forms may enable queer youth to also express their unique internal and external conflicts.

2.3 Hypothesis

The three most common therapeutic goals deduced were the following:

1. Improve verbal and non-verbal expressive capability
2. Build a sense of community and move towards establishing healthy relationships with the other
3. Create a balanced self-image

The hypothesis of the Action Research Project is:

Arts Based Therapy can help to create a balanced self-image and improve one's interpersonal skills.

3. Methods

3.1 Eligibility Criteria for Client

The researcher decided to work with an adult group from a marginalized community. It seemed feasible to collectivize young queer adults as the researcher identifies as queer as well. They have personally suffered greatly because of unavailability of mental health resources in the past and therefore the researcher thought it a good idea to engage the young queer individuals with Arts Based Therapy.

The researcher had advertised about their requirements on social media and thereafter connected with interested individuals. After having a detailed discussion with each individual, all of them agreed to commit to the sessions until the end. These individuals were also informed about the journey they would embark on, in brief.

Initially the group comprised of ten people. However, three of them dropped out in the initial phase because of personal reasons. The rest managed to complete the ABT journey with the researcher.

The demographics of the group are as follows:

Table 1: Demographics of the group

Age	19-25 years
Gender	A wide spectrum of gender identities.
Background	All of them identified as queer. They have witnessed marginalization in the past. All of them belong to middle-class households.
Other information	All of them are either undergoing or have undergone talk (one on one) therapy. They were new to the idea of Arts Based Therapy and were drawn towards it.

3.2 Logistics

Location and Space: The sessions were conducted at various venues throughout the project. The group was invited for sessions at either a residential society in South Delhi or an outdoor space such as Lodhi Gardens or Deer Park, South Delhi. Both the venues are located at a comfortable distance from the residences of participants. The indoor space was filled with objects ranging from books to colorful clothes. The outdoor space gave the participants enough room to expand their observation and concentration skills. It gave them an opportunity to connect with nature. Other than these two venues, the sessions were also conducted at various venues where the participants met the facilitator individually. These venues were decided after a discussion with the individuals concerned. This was the case before the lockdown.

After the nationwide lockdown was put in place during the coronavirus pandemic, sessions were conducted on Skype or Zoom (online platforms). The individuals would connect with the facilitator from the comfort of their home. The participants were asked to arrange for the required materials in advance.

Duration: The duration of the Action Research Project was six months (January - June). The sessions (both group and individual) were mostly sixty to ninety minutes long.

3.3 Data Sources and Data Collection Protocols

Most of the information was collected through observation. Given the physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants, it was thought best to observe rather than employ them in other quantitative assessment models.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as '*the systematic description of events, behaviors and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study*'. Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a '*written photograph*' of the situation under study.

Advantages of Observation:

- Observation is one of the main bases of formulating a hypothesis. By observing a phenomenon continuously, the researcher may get well acquainted with the observed.

- Observation can deal with phenomena which are not capable of giving verbal information about their behaviour, feeling and activities simply for the reason that they cannot speak e.g. individuals who can't express themselves through verbal or non-verbal mediums.

Limitations of Observation:

- There are many personal behaviors which are not open for observation.
- Most of the social phenomenon is abstract in nature and therefore not register-able.
- Observation can be controlled by faulty perception. Two persons may judge the same phenomena differently. One person may find something meaningful and useful from a situation, but the other may find nothing from it. The personal bias, personal view or looking at things in a particular way often creates obstacle for making valid generalizations.

The therapeutic goals of each participant and the overall group were deducted with the aid of ABT general assessment forms (developed by WCCL Foundation). The areas of need and therapeutic goals were identified for each individual in the group after thorough *observation*. From all the goals, three most commonly occurring therapeutic goals were chosen. These three goals were selected to be the primary focus and a springboard for the Session Record Sheets (See Appendix A), ABT Grid for improvisation (See Appendix B) and sessions themselves in the action research project phase.

Certain ABT assessment tools were used to construct a mechanism for the Arts Based Therapy facilitators to compare the pre- and post- expressions of the participants. The assessments included self-portrait assessment and mandala assessment.

Ethical Consideration: The consent forms were all signed by the all the participants willing to be a part of the Action Research Project. (See Appendix E).

Documentation Plan

For the purpose of documentation, a phone camera was used to click pictures and record videos of the sessions. All the art work created by the clients were collected and stored

digitally. The duration of the recording varies from one to two minutes. The focus was to document the journey of individuals throughout the Action Research Project.

3.4 Methods Used

Artistic Skills

The Arts Based Therapy sessions covered integrated artistic skills. Initially the participants were given an opportunity to experience all of these diverse tools. However, once the therapeutic goals were set, the activities were centred around those goals. Various artistic tools were used throughout our journey with an aim to encourage participants to break free of their psychological barriers and move towards the re-construction of their artistic selves.

Rhythm: Various rhythm activities were included throughout the six months (of ABT sessions) keeping in mind the impact of rhythms on the individuals. Since many of them were averse to 'creating' a rhythm, several warm up sessions led to their intimate encounter with various rhythms. Both group and individual sessions were designed to cover various dynamics and patterns. Other than the musical instruments, participants were encouraged to use their bodies to create rhythms.

Voice: The initial sessions touched upon various breath and sounds exercises. Soon they were comfortable enough to try out melodies and speech exercises. These voice exercises were aligned with the goal to let participants explore various voice expressions. These voice exercises often served a platform for individuals to experiment with various rhythms.

Body: A lot of emphasis of given on the bodily expressions of the participants. After the few initial hesitance, the participants took a lead in making use of various body parts to express. The exercises involved the use of every body part. The participants were encouraged to be aware of different sense organs of their body and thereafter use these organs to express their thoughts and feelings (create a dialogue). Various movement related games and exercises were also brought in the session plans.

Visual Art: In the initial phases, the participants were introduced to various artistic tools, mediums and base. They were given the liberty to experiment with the diverse set of tools

(including dry and wet mediums). They were acquainted with various techniques and forms. Thereafter, visual art acted as one of the various mediums of expression.

Games and Exercises: The participants were indulged in a couple of games and exercises. These games and exercises comprised of various other artistic skills and involved building a relationship with the 'other'. Some games and exercises were more suited to a group session, while others were played in pairs (individual sessions). The facilitator was a part of these games and exercises as well.

Improvisations: The session plans tried to incorporate various artistic skills catering to the therapeutic goals. Many a times, more than one artistic skill was explored/touched upon by an activity. This helped the individual to have a comprehensive experience. This helped the facilitator to design a plan which would include even those skills which the individual is not comfortable practicing (such as body movements/voice exercises).

There were also instances when the individual participant would not participate in the planned activity and so the plan had to be improvised or/and simplified to suit the comfort and feeling of safety of the participant.

Metaphor: After setting up of therapeutic goals and assessing the participant's understanding of metaphors, certain metaphors were consciously added in the session plan. Certain healing metaphors were included in the session. Many of these metaphors were inspired by nature as nature had proved to provide multiple healing metaphors. The metaphor of 'four *elements'*, for example, were used widely in the sessions.

Beyond: Almost all the sessions were designed to include meditative practices. Several breathing practices were explored in each session. These practices, like the four-pebble meditation, were added in the sessions as both- the opening and the closing ritual, with a goal to help them relax their minds and bodies throughout the session and to conserve the energy created during the session. The participants were guided through imagery meditation sometimes. These were rich in healing metaphors and helped initiate or close the session.

4. Results

4.1 Results Summary

With an aim to check the validity of the hypothesis that Arts Based Therapy can help create a balanced self-image and improves one's interpersonal skills, an intervention was carried out with seven queer young adult persons.

The results of the action research project support the hypothesis.

For the purpose of the research, three therapeutic domains were selected and the participants were assessed in these domains before and after the intervention. Each domain consisted of several subdomains. These three therapeutic domains were:

1. Expressive Capability (EC)
    i. Self-Expression in visual & performing art (EC 1)
    ii. Improve conversational skills (EC 2)
    iii. Improve emotional expression using speech & creative writing techniques (EC 3)
    iv. Improve emotional expression using non-verbal means using movement, theatre, music or visual arts. Skills (EC 4)
2. Group Interactions (GI)
    i. Build a sense of community where each member can - ask for help, share & accept - material, ideas & solutions, Loving Presence (GI 3)
    ii. Experiencing small successes & building confidence (GI 4)
3. Self-Awareness (SA)
    i. Create a balanced self-image - confidence /esteem (SA 1)
    ii. Understanding destructive emotions (SA 2)

Over the course of their journey, most of the participants were able to improve emotional expression using verbal (speech and creative writing) and non-verbal (performative arts) means.

In the later phase of the intervention, they also displayed a better sense of cohesiveness with the group as well as the communities they belong to. Under political stress, they were able to support not just their peers but other marginalized communities too.

Some of the individuals were able to create a balanced self-image even amidst uncertain times. It was quite remarkable that the participants were able to maintain a stable relationship with Arts Based Therapy throughout these six months of intervention and displayed positive growth in various domains.

All participants had shown improvement in the domain of self-expression through visual art and verbal mediums (creative writing and speech).

It is noticeable that two participants underwent a decline in the domain of self-awareness in total (*See Figure 2*). One participant had not been able to create a balanced self-image. Four participants had shown no change in understanding destructive emotions. While two other participants had displayed deterioration. While assessing the results, it is also important to understand the tough circumstances that some of the participants were facing because of the three months long lockdown which surely influenced the post assessment scores.

Overall, Arts-Based Therapy had enriched every life it touched.

Figure 2: Pre and post assessment scores in the domain of self-awareness
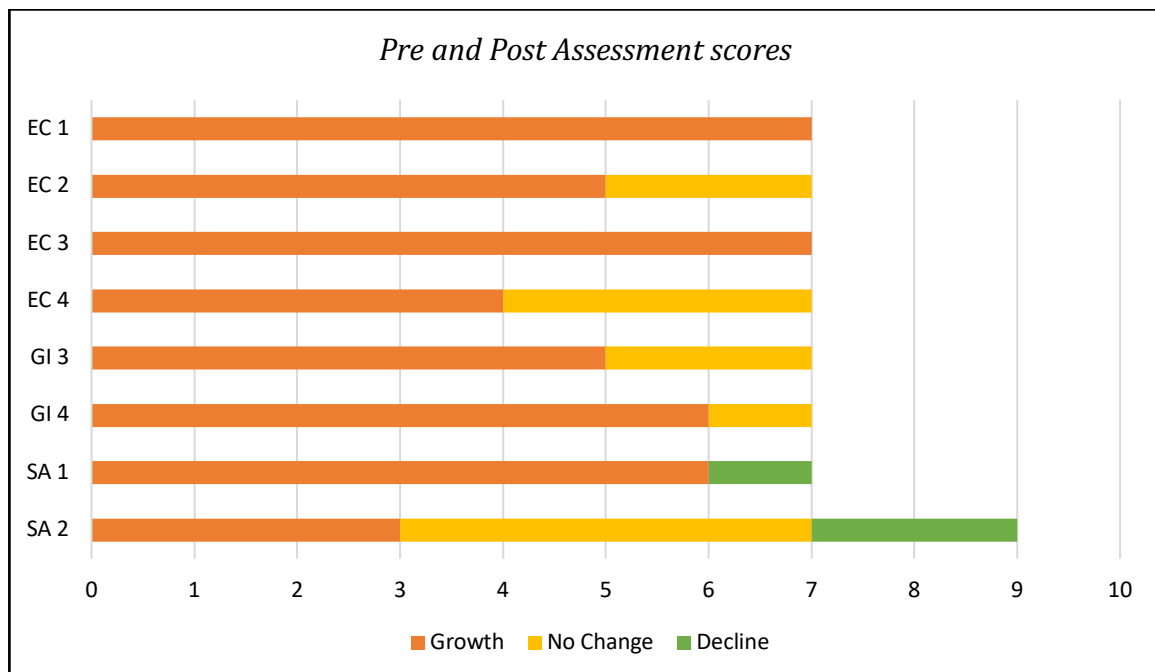
4.2 Results Detailed

a. Background and Creation

Seven individuals were a part of the Action Research Project. They participated in the arts based therapy sessions offered by the facilitator.

The details of those individuals are mentioned below. These participants have attended the sessions regularly and have been exposed to most of the activities.

Akhil

(Preferred Pronouns: he/him)

Akhil had an exuberant personality. He had depicted versatility when it comes to trying something new. He was comparatively new to certain things/activities. However, he was more than excited to indulge and explore. Throughout the period of engagement, he was quite sincere and followed every instruction diligently. He had a comforting aura. His readiness to conquer new territories encouraged the facilitator to think of new activities or improvise the session often.

He was able to express himself well. Other than the initial hesitation, he never shied away from using his body or his voice. Initially he didn't display innovation or creativity in his creations. But he soon expanded his creative side. He started thinking out of the box and nurture his artistic self. He had fun doing the sessions. And so, did the facilitator.

Aizan

(Preferred Pronouns: he/him)

Aizan was a creative individual who had always engaged with his artwork intimately. Even though he was a bit reserved (doesn't create a bond immediately), he was quite careful about other's needs. His engagement with the art sessions was dependent on his mood/wellbeing. He took joy in painting. He loved to use his hands to paint. He was quite playful and often brought the right amount of energy to the group.

Many a times he had to postpone art sessions. He rarely shared details of his suffering (most probably because he didn't want to bother others with the information). He liked to deal with his problems individually. And this individualistic characteristic of his

personality seemed to have been a constant. Though throughout their journey with ABT the facilitator had seen him change. He seemed to be more sociable later. Perhaps because of a sense of familiarity and having created artwork in collaboration with others.

He had a complicated relationship with his body. He seemed to be more rooted in the metaphorical realm and had displayed so in his artwork. Though he was quite comfortable using his body as a tool to create.

Ken

(Preferred Pronouns: he/him, she/her, they/them)
Ken had quite an amiable personality. He had a good sense of humour and was chirpy. He often made everyone giggle with his kooky talk. He was good with performances and rarely shied away from expressions.

Even though he had always been expressive of his opinions (especially political ones) he rarely brought to the fore his 'feelings'. He seemed to have an evolved and mature thinking. His flamboyance added to his aesthetic.

Just like others, because of several reasons, we had to postpone multiple sessions. Arts Based Therapy sessions seemed like an activity he only performed when at a comfortable/better space of mind. His creations depict the various ups and downs. Initially, he used to find it difficult to sit with himself in silence (would get agitated) but the agitations seemed to have reduced considerably.

Vaibhav

(Preferred Pronouns: he/him)
Vaibhav is a gentle soul. He had undergone transformation in the six months of engagement. The facilitator perceived him to be quiet and shy. But as their journey progressed, Vaibhav became quite expressive and communicative. He felt at ease and would enjoy the sessions. Initially he had a stiff posture and rarely used his facial expressions to convey. As he was encouraged to get out of his comfort zone, he started to become quite relaxed as a person and unafraid to express.

He always had a smile on his face. One would never realise the harsh challenges he might be facing. He didn't hesitate to share his story with the facilitator. However, the facilitator was unsure whether he would have shared his story with them in the initial phase of their journey. He was quite considerate of his peers and had always been helpful while interacting in group settings. His approachability had helped create a long-lasting bond.

Bella

(Preferred Pronouns: she/her)

Bella was quite an approachable person. She had been able to communicate her thoughts and feelings well. She had been quite considerate and made it a point to have a session with the facilitator. She wished to understand how Arts-Based Therapy works and was quite invested in the work she was supposed to do in the sessions. She painted in her free time and found the ABT sessions quite reflective. She had been able to feel the impact of the various activities and had reflected on the changes.

She was always cheerful while performing activities. She had been quite understanding and was quite ready to start the sessions even after the lockdown was in place. She had expressed her experiences with anxiety in one of the issues. She seemed to have a stronger bond with ABT thereafter. She admired her own company and was intuitive. She had been helpful to others. Her thoughtfulness amazed the facilitator sometimes.

Henna

(Preferred Pronouns: she/her)

Henna was quite a composed person. She understood the purpose of the sessions and always held a rigid composure. She was quite balanced emotionally and had never shown signs of either of the extremes. She interacted and indulged, but still maintained a comfortable distance.

She was quite generous and had always been considerate to the facilitator. She was quite apprehensive to continue sessions online. However, she agreed to try them. Even if half-heartedly, she managed to complete as many sessions as possible. According to the facilitator, she stuck to ABT because of her warm nature. She has been straight forward when it came to expressing her opinions. She had developed a meaningful relationship

with the facilitator over the course of time. She had displayed her caring nature in very subtle ways throughout the engagement.

Kripa

(Preferred Pronouns: she/her)

Kripa had been quite vocal about her life experiences. Even though her experiences were rich in emotion one couldn't make out the stress she had been undergoing on the very first day. She had been a dancer and had stopped dancing a long time back. Even though she was quite apprehensive about using body movements and voice exercises at first but as the sessions progressed, she had become open to the idea of getting out of her comfort zone. She was a risk taker and a quick-witted person. After interpreting the instructions given, she would create something entirely new and/or unexpected. She had displayed an enormous amount of courage. However, she couldn't acknowledge so. Her struggles didn't discourage her to quit Arts Based Therapy sessions.

She was quite comfortable with her social identity. However, her idea of self and her own abilities had evolved. It was quite an inspiration for the facilitator.

A detailed analysis of pre and post assessment tests of the seven participants are given below. Both ABT tools (Draw yourself and mandala assessment) and WCCLF ABT General Assessment are used to draw these conclusions.

Akhil

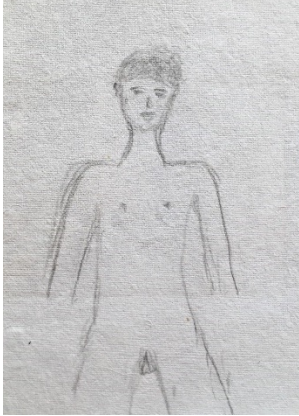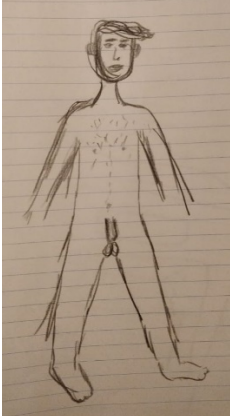*Figure 3: Akhil's pre and post assessment (Draw yourself)*

Pre-Assessment (Draw yourself)	Post Assessment (Draw yourself)

Figure 4: Rating Scale Scores for Akhil during the intervention

Rating Scale Scores (Akhil)

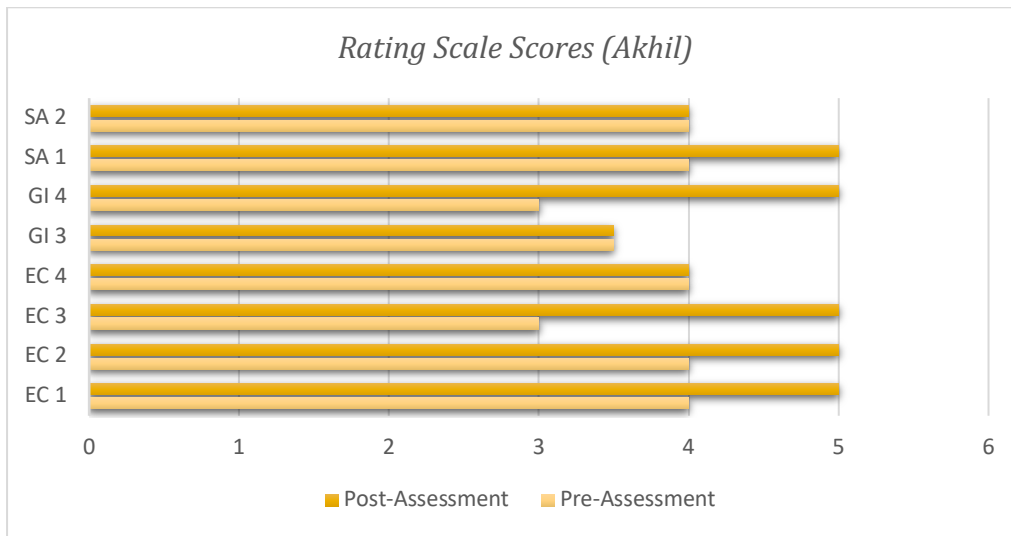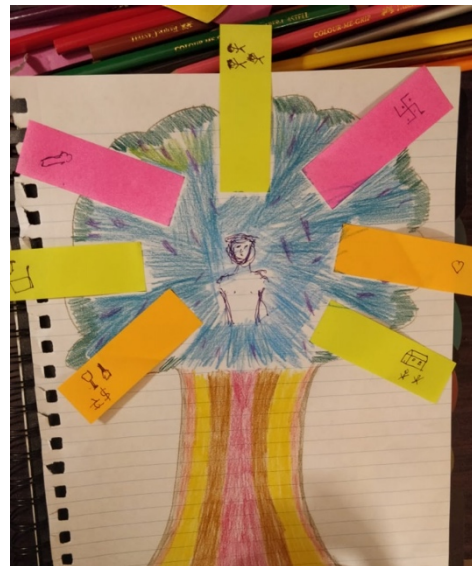Legend: ■ Post-Assessment ■ Pre-Assessment

Figure 5: Artwork: early in the intervention

Figure 6: Artwork: later in the intervention

Facilitator's inferences

Akhil had been able to attend sessions regularly with little or no postponements. The facilitator was able to bond with him because of his sincerity and ever passionate nature. Compared to the initial phase of the journey, Akhil had shown improvement in expressive capabilities. Thanks to his zeal to learn, he was able to utilize multiple ABT tools specifically the ones catering to speech and visual art. It is worth noting that Figure 5 is starkly different than Figure 6. The latter artwork has more bright elements than the former. The participant had chosen to use materials other than the usual artistic tools.

And the different textures denote different symbols. This nuanced understanding of visual art is quite commendable. His self-image too seemed to be more detailed and enhanced than the earlier one (*See Figure 3*). This might denote an increase in self-confidence. Though the non-representation of the hands seems to be constant.

Aizan

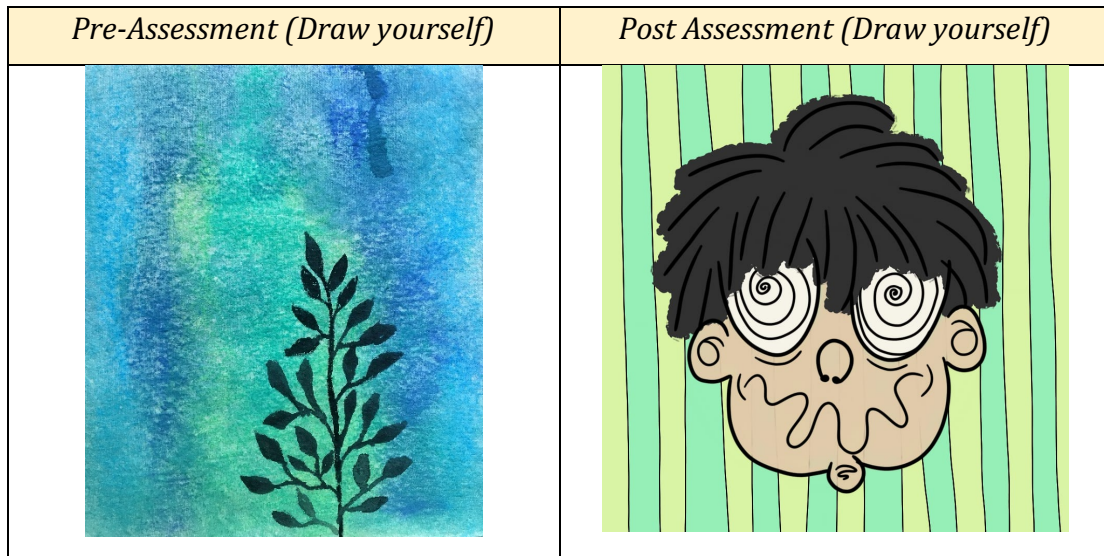*Figure 7: Aizan's pre and post assessment (Draw yourself)*

Pre-Assessment (Draw yourself)	Post Assessment (Draw yourself)

Figure 8: Rating Scale Scores for Aizan during the intervention
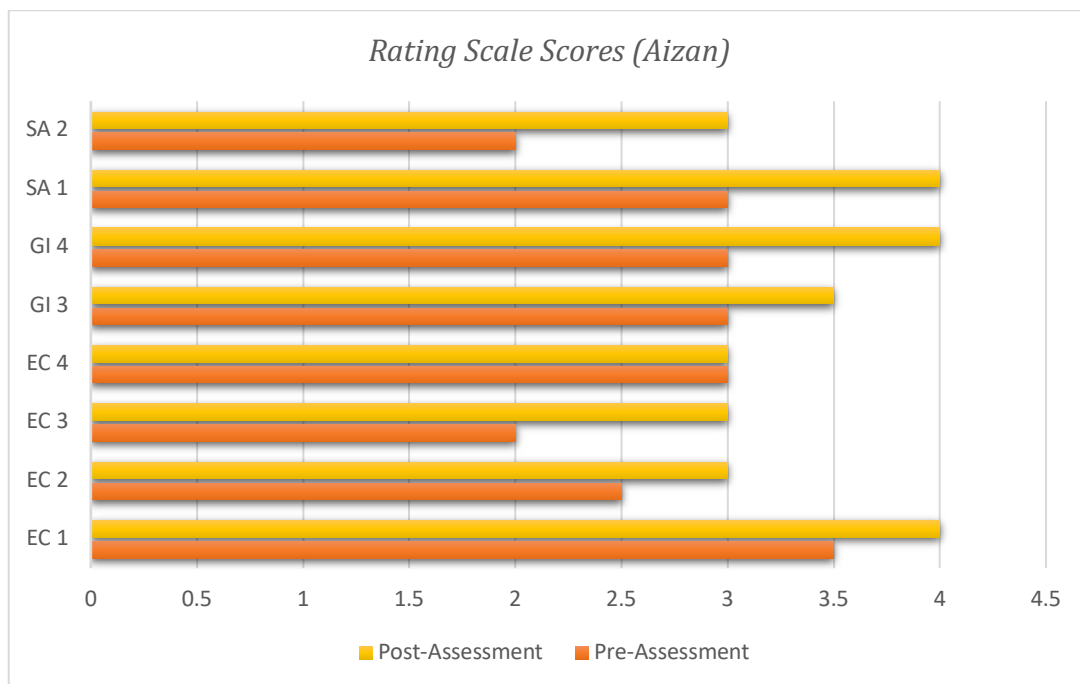
Facilitator's inferences

It is quite evident that Aizan had been depicting the self metaphorically. This was not just true for visual art, but also bodily performances. When asked to give a voice to the puppet, he chose to speak in '*cat language'*. The self might have been mystified by the multiple metaphors he used for communication. Nonetheless, Aizan had been able to show improvement in the domain of emotional expression through verbal and non-verbal mediums. He was able to build meaningful connections with the facilitator as well as other participants. These improvements are quite evident in the above graph (*See Figure 8)*. His artworks seem to be much more reflective later in the intervention. He started putting more emphasis in the message conveyed through the artwork rather than the other attributes. As is visible from the artwork (*See Figure 7*), he had moved from a metaphorical representation to a different visualisation (made digitally) of the self. Here he is much more expressive of his emotions and present state of being.

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After the lockdown, not much intervention had been possible. However, Aizan was quite excited to have the sessions online. He was quite involved in activities requiring different mediums of expressions. Even though he didn't get out of his comfort zone, he tried to engage in these activities in the best possible way. The lockdown period posed as a great hindrance to the ABT journey. That didn't stop him to continue what he had begun. His efforts to maintain that level of self-reflection throughout the sessions is commendable.

Ken

Figure 11: Ken's pre and post assessment (Draw yourself)

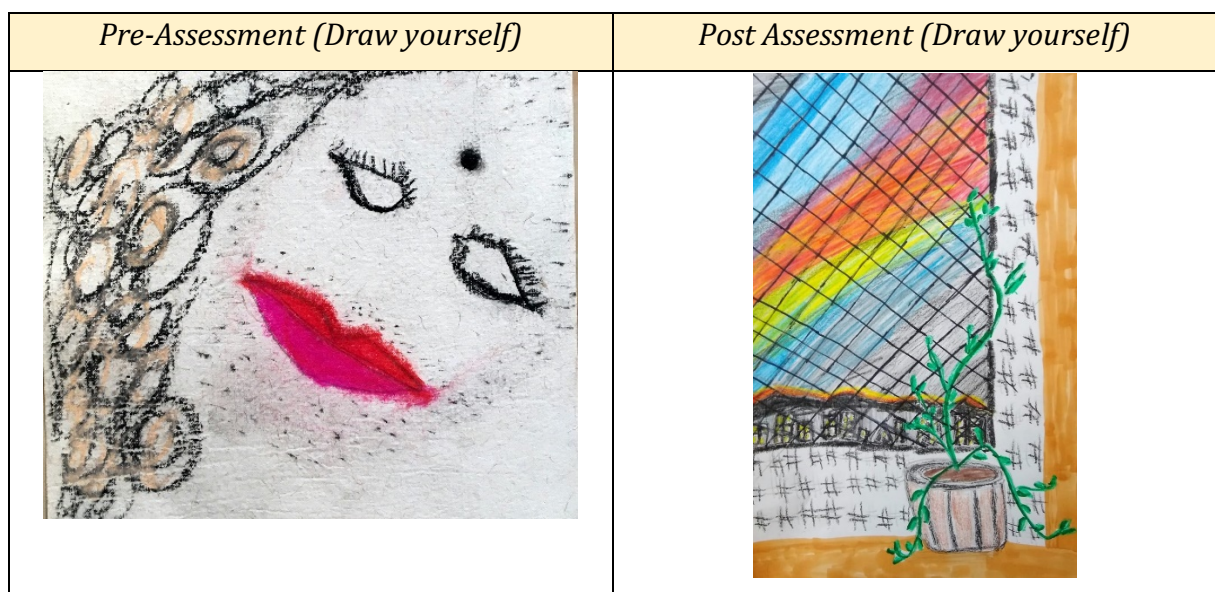| *Pre-Assessment (Draw yourself)*	*Post Assessment (Draw yourself)*

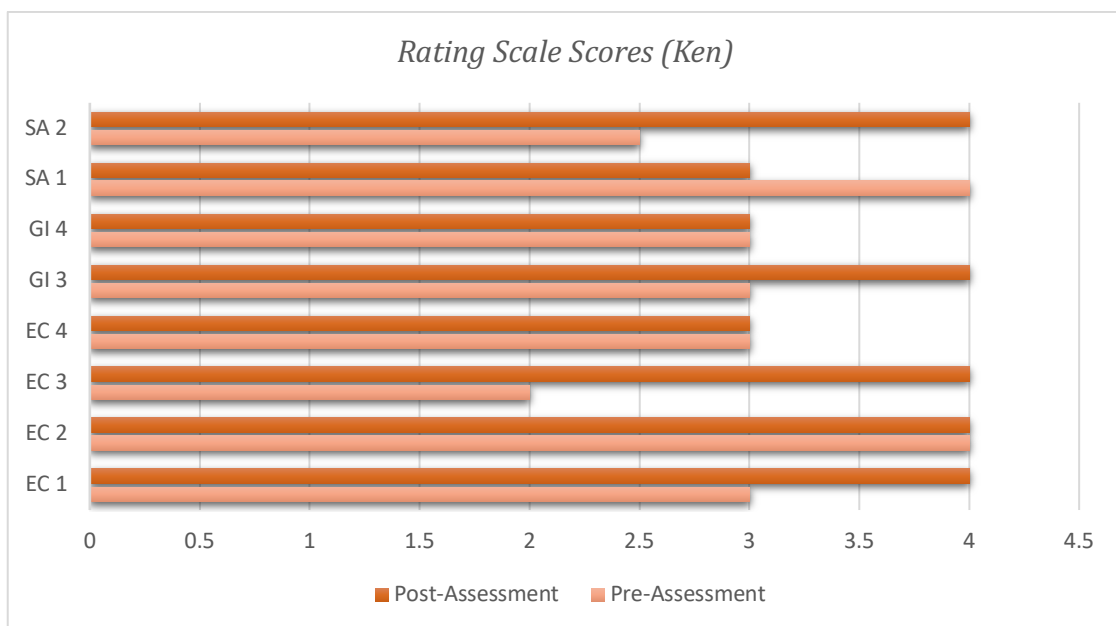*Figure 12: Rating Scale Scores for Ken during the intervention*

Figure 13: Artwork: early in the intervention

Figure 14: Artwork: later in the intervention

Facilitator's inferences

As discussed earlier, Ken was an energetic person. He was quite expressive and therefore not much change is visible in the Expressive Capability parameters (*See Figure 12*). He had shown progress in several domains. He had been able to manage his negative emotions which would be evident in the meditative practices. He had been able to find a better internal balance. One can also witness a difference in his efforts in the domains of visual and performing arts. The progression is quite noticeable in the above images (Figure 13 and 14). He had been able to add quite many elements in his creation. He had used multiple bright colours on the plain white background even though he didn't have access to many artistic materials at home. His ingenious side is much more visible in the second image (Figure 14). The central figure is complete, and he had worked on every detail (including the hair).

While depicting himself on a sheet of paper (See Figure 11), he moved from a space of exaggerated self-image (Figure 11- pre assessment) to a holistic self-image (Figure 11- post assessment). He depicted himself as creeper moving / growing towards light

(outside). He depicted the outside with a colourful background (rainbow). Even under stress, he was able to complete this drawing well in time and did the best he could with the available art materials.

Vaibhav

Figure 15: Vaibhav's pre and post assessment (Draw yourself)

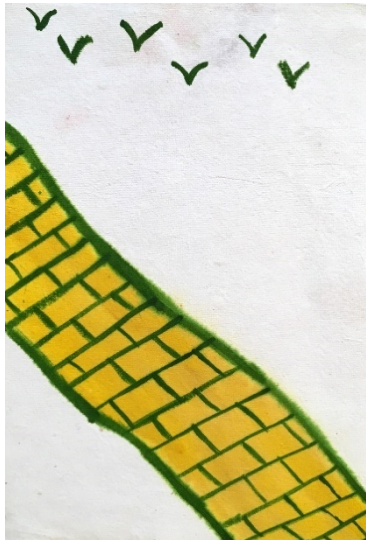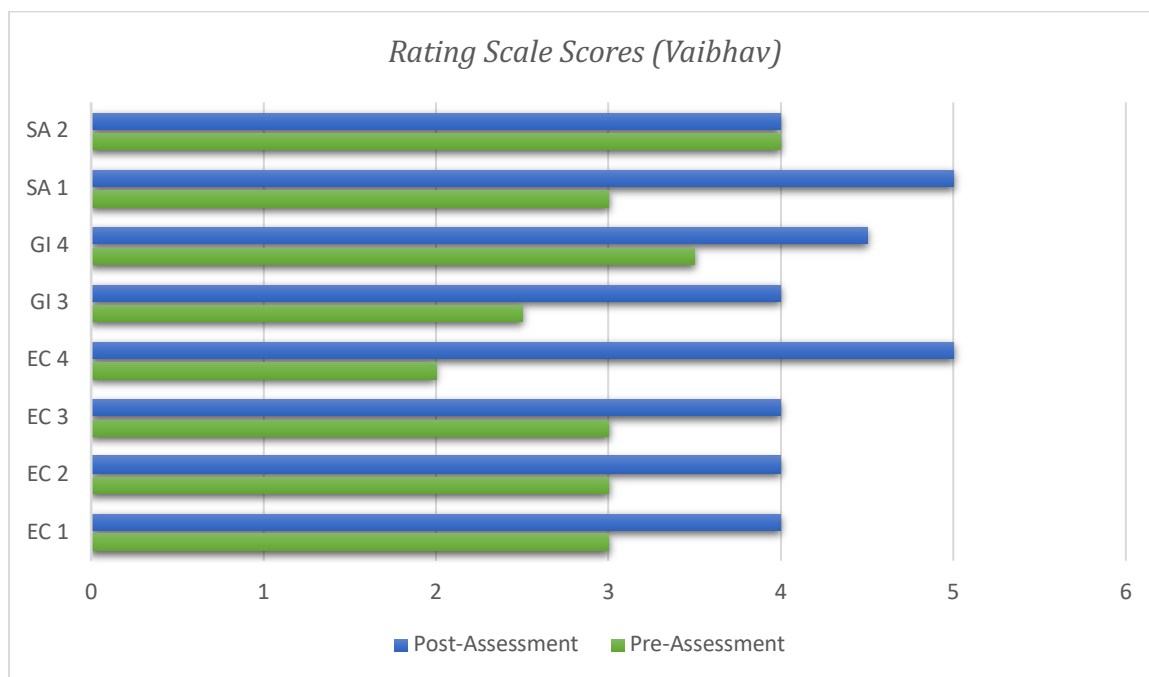| Pre-Assessment (Draw yourself)	Post Assessment (Draw yourself)

Figure 16: Artwork: early in the intervention

Figure 17: Artwork: later in the intervention

Figure 18: Rating Scale Scores for Vaibhav during the intervention

Rating Scale Scores (Vaibhav)

Legend: ■ Post-Assessment ■ Pre-Assessment

Facilitator's inferences

Vaibhav had shown dramatic growth in expressive capability. His willingness to try out each and every activity has resulted in this development. The activities were designed to incorporate a wide variety of ABT tools. These multiple options gave him the opportunity to work on self-expression. With time, Vaibhav was also able to build a strong bond with the facilitator as well his peers. Other than voice exercises, he also started enjoying games involving body movements (earlier he would hesitantly try exercises involving voice and body movements). His self-image certainly improved or became more defined as shown in the pictures above (*See Figure 15*). In the first image he used the metaphor of a 'hawk' crying tears of blood (a violent image). To make the second image he used both the front and the back side of the sheet (one side has been shown above). He drew an image of a saint at the back and a dark figure in the front (vice a versa) depicting a contrasting nature of himself (denoting a better and complex understanding of his personality).

In the artworks depicted above (*See Figure 16 and 17*), it is apparent that the participant started using more colours in his creations. He also developed imaginative capability. His ability to visualise and express an intimate scene within the outline is admirable. He was able to make use of the empty space (white space) on the base (not the case in Figure 16).

Bella

Figure 19: Bella's pre and post assessment (Mandala assessment)

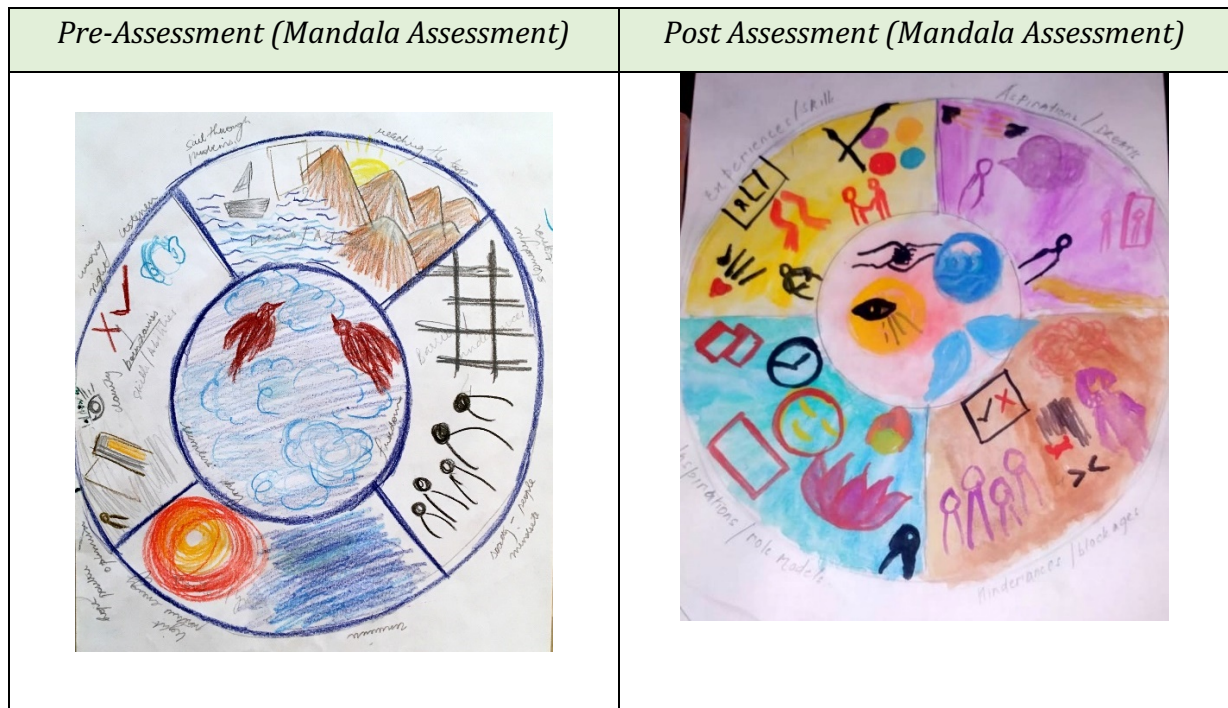| Pre-Assessment (Mandala Assessment)	Post Assessment (Mandala Assessment)

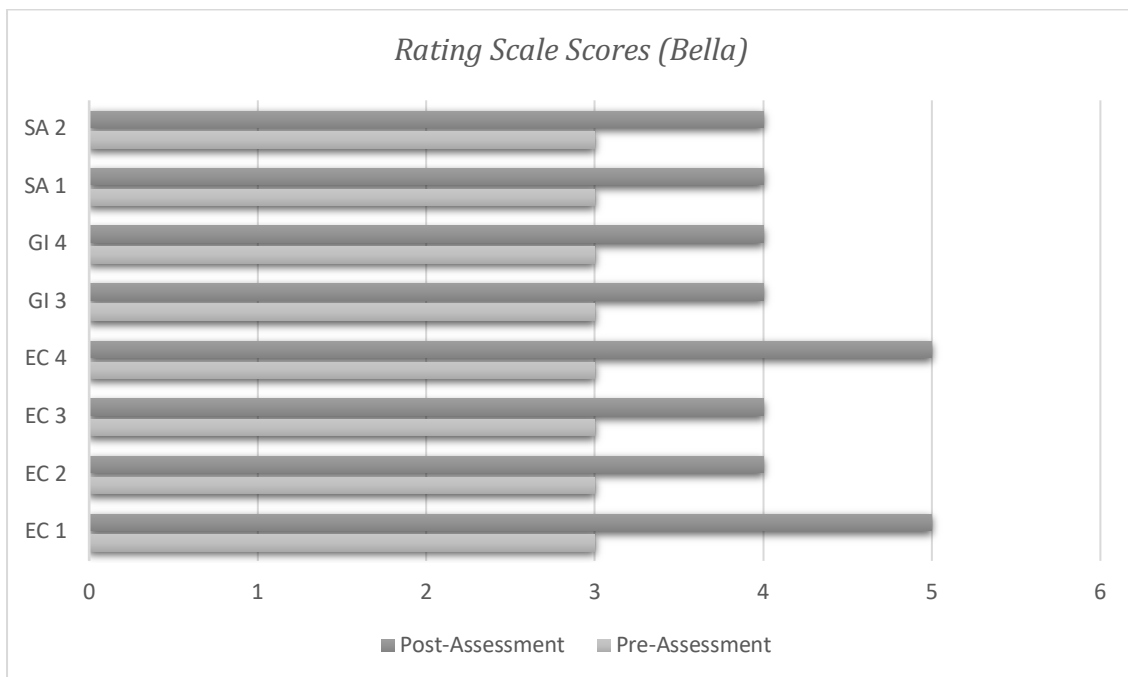Figure 20: Rating Scale Scores for Bella during the intervention

Figure 21: Artwork: early in the intervention

Figure 22: Artwork: later in the intervention

Facilitator's inferences

Bella had shown growth in almost all the domains (*See Figure 20*). She is an artist and was quite well versed with the language of visual art. Her ever growing interest encouraged her to try and master the different ABT tools provided by the facilitator. From a state of indifference in the initial sessions, Bella was able to utilise these tools to express herself better. As is quite evident in the graph, Bella had been able to utilise the mediums of visual and performing arts to good advantage. One can witness this journey through her artworks (*See Figure 21 and 22*). Even though she had used dark colours in both the artworks, she had filled half the outline with a lighter colour (sky blue). The second picture seemed clearer and more demystified. Though the dark figures tell a different story.

Bella had used a different medium to create the second mandala (See Figure 19- post assessment). She had also filled the empty / white spaces in the mandala with vibrant colours. If one looks closely, she later considered arts (especially visual art) as one of her

skills. The quadrant representing things or people who inspired her has become more defined.

Henna

Figure 23: Henna's pre and post assessment (Mandala assessment)

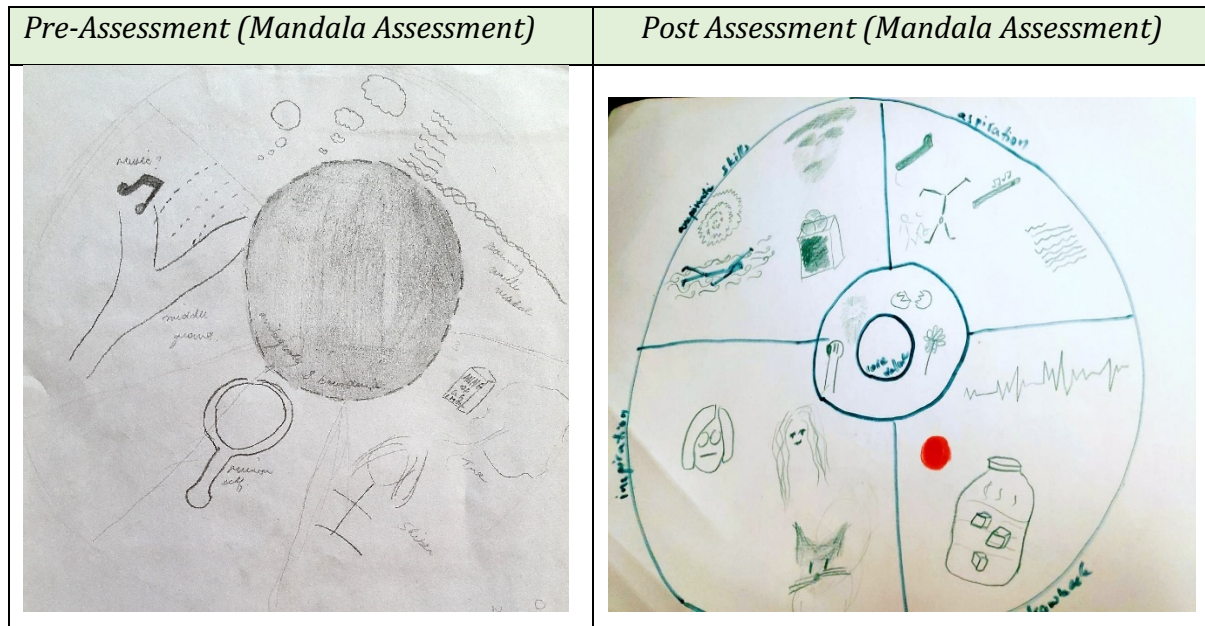| Pre-Assessment (Mandala Assessment)	Post Assessment (Mandala Assessment)

*F*igure 24: Artwork: early in the intervention

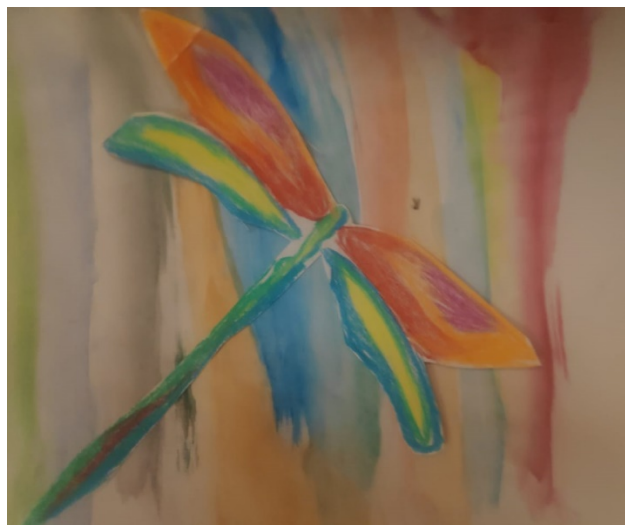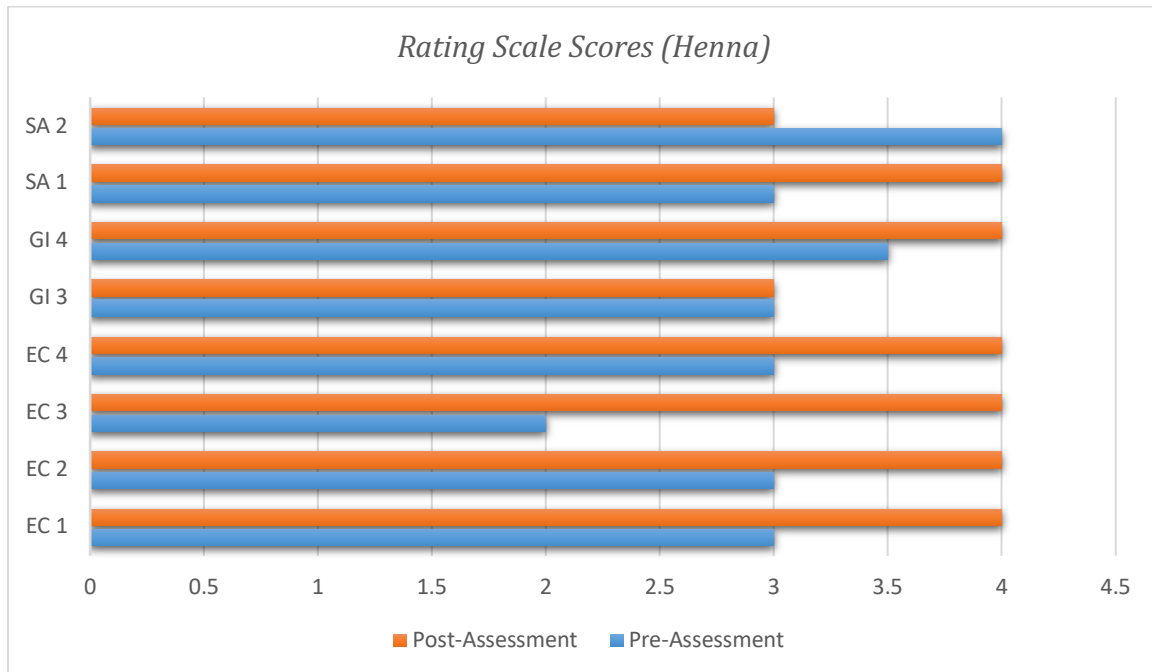Figure 25: Artwork: later in the intervention

Figure 26: Rating Scale Scores for Henna during the intervention

Facilitator's inferences

Henna constantly maintained a reserved or rather inexpressive composure throughout. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that the expressive capabilities were unobservable. She had shown considerable development in expressive capability as is visible in the graph (*See Figure 26)*. She had been able to move away from a stance of zero participation to involved participation. Even though lockdown posed multiple hindrances, Henna wished to continue with the ABT sessions. Throughout the journey, Henna was able to improve her ability to express using verbal and non-verbal mediums. She became quite receptive to using alternate mediums to express later.

She was able to use voice and body movements much more effectively than before. Her trials with the unacquainted tools certainly resulted in this improvement.

This inner journey had been beautifully depicted above (*See Figure 24 and 25).* In the latter artwork she opted for a brighter and more diverse set of colours to depict her thoughts and feelings. The superimposition of one character over a colourful background resembles the ability to visualise and execute overlapping aspects of her persona. If one compares the two mandalas, other than the obvious change in the content, black and

white pencil shading has transformed into a more colourful and reflective presentation. In the earlier mandala (*See Figure 23- pre assessment*), the core values seem to have a semi-permeable outline (doted outline). This is not the case in the second mandala (*See Figure 23- post assessment*). This might indicate a more concretised core value system.

Kripa

Figure 27: Kripa's pre and post assessment (Mandala assessment)

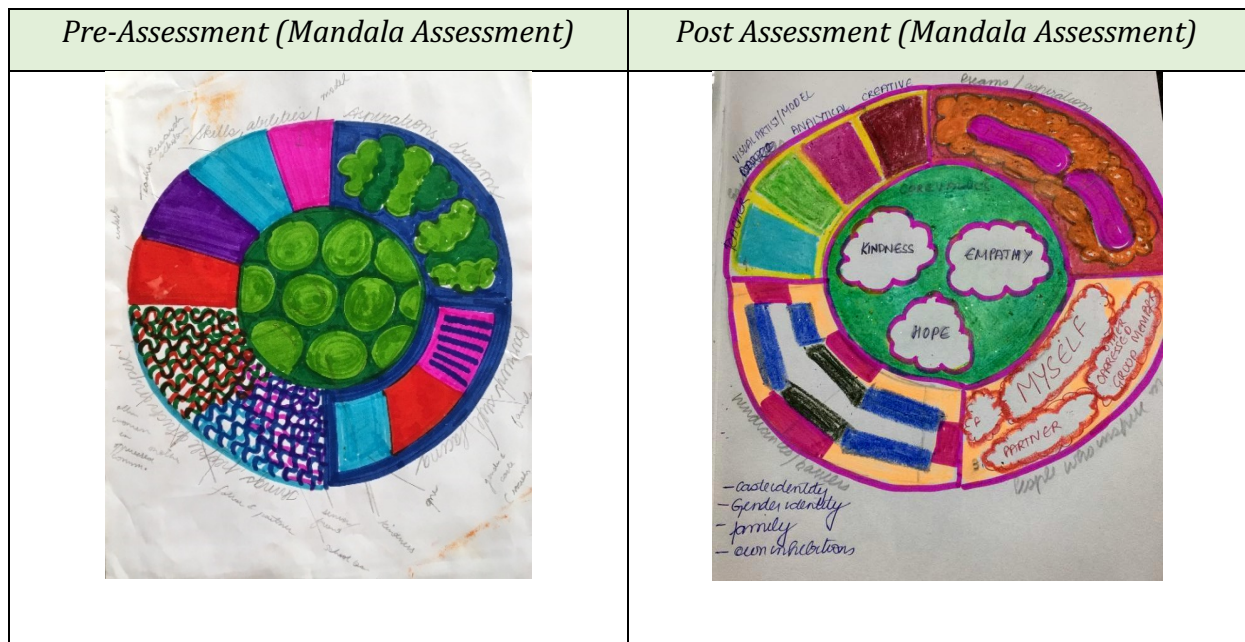| Pre-Assessment (Mandala Assessment)	Post Assessment (Mandala Assessment)

Figure 28: Rating Scale Scores for Kripa during the intervention

Figure 29: Artwork: early in the intervention

Figure 30: Artwork: later in the intervention

Facilitator's inferences

The Arts-Based Therapy sessions reminded Kripa of her childhood when she would be allowed to dance and paint as much as possible. The ABT sessions helped her regain her confidence to create something after a very long time. In the initial sessions, Kripa was a bit unsure about using voice and body movements in the sessions. However, with time, she exhibited considerable improvement. She was much more comfortable with these two mediums and was delighted to express through the medium of visual art.

The two drawings (*See Figure 29 and 30*) portray her journey through the visual art world. Kripa was able to use materials in her immediate surrounding to express her present state of mind beautifully. The use of lively colours presents her thoughts and feelings well.

If one analyses the Mandalas created by Kripa, nothing much has changed in terms of representation of symbols. They seem quite identical rather. This might symbolise a very strong belief system.

b. *Comparative Analysis*

In the following section the tabulations of each subdomain listed in the WCCLF General Behaviour Rating Scale that are relevant to our therapeutic goals for comparative analysis are presented. All the subdomains were rated out of 5.

Here is a list of domains and subdomains presented in this section:

4. *Expressive Capability (EC)*

   v. Self-Expression in visual & performing art

   vi. Improve conversational skills

   vii. Improve emotional expression using speech & creative writing techniques

   viii. Improve emotional expression using non-verbal means using movement, theatre, music or visual arts. Skills

5. *Group Interactions (GI)*

   iii. Build a sense of community where each member can - ask for help, share & accept - material, ideas & solutions, Loving Presence

   iv. Experiencing small successes & building confidence

6. *Self-Awareness (SA)*

   iii. Create a balanced self-image - confidence /esteem

   iv. Understanding destructive emotions

EXPRESSIVE CAPABILITY (EC)

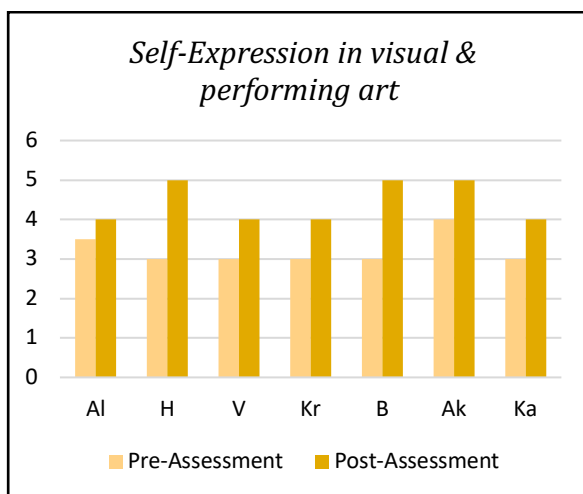*Figure 31: Self-expression in visual and performing art.*   *Figure 32: Improve conversational skills*
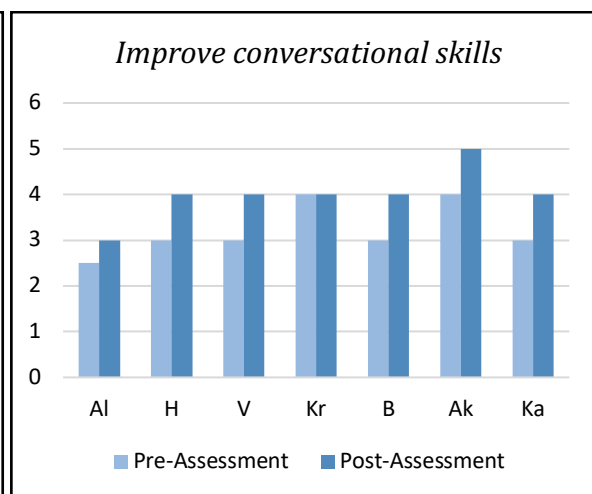
Improve emotional expression using speech & creative writing techniques

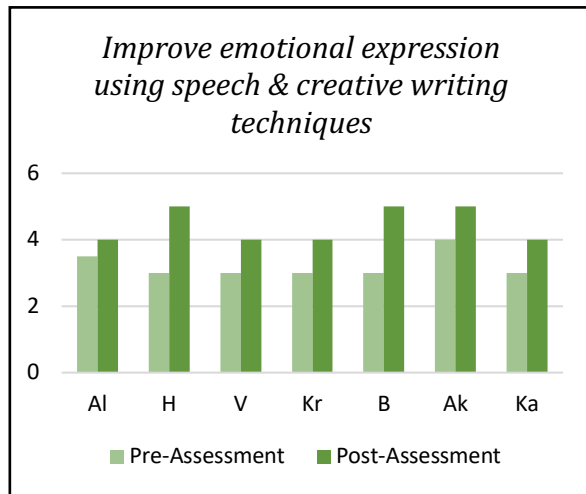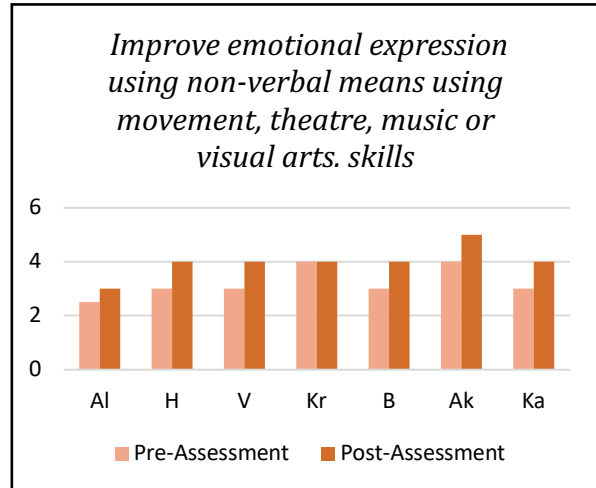**Improve emotional expression using non-verbal means using movement, theatre, music or visual arts. skills**

The session plans had been designed to cater to self-expression. Various tools were utilised throughout the project work in order to encourage and witness the changes that the participants underwent. These tools helped the participants to explore their inner selves and communicate with the 'other' through various verbal and non-verbal mediums.

Most of the participants were hesitant to use their voice and body initially. These activities would sometimes even create stress. It was evident in both group and individual sessions. Even though the individuals were not pressured to perform, they were interested to try them out. Soon enough, one could observe changes. These participants had become comfortable making different sounds/noises (of animals, birds or gibberish). They were even able to move a leg or two. By the end of the journey, they were able to dance to their own tune (literally and metaphorically). Same was the case with their work with stories and other artistic tools. They were able to construct and narrate a story without any hindrance. They had stopped thinking twice before getting into action mode. They had started to work with metaphors quite early. The participants were able to use multiple symbols and images representing their thought. They had become quite well versed with this relatively new language of symbols.

It is quite evident from the graphs above (*See Figure 31, 32, 33 and 34*) that most of the participants demonstrated growth in various aspects of self-expression. In the domains of visual and performing arts, all the participants have exhibited improvement. The same is true for expression using speech and creative writing techniques.

GROUP INTERACTIONS (GI)

Figure 35: Build a sense of community where each member can- ask for help, share & accept- material, ideas & solutions, loving presence
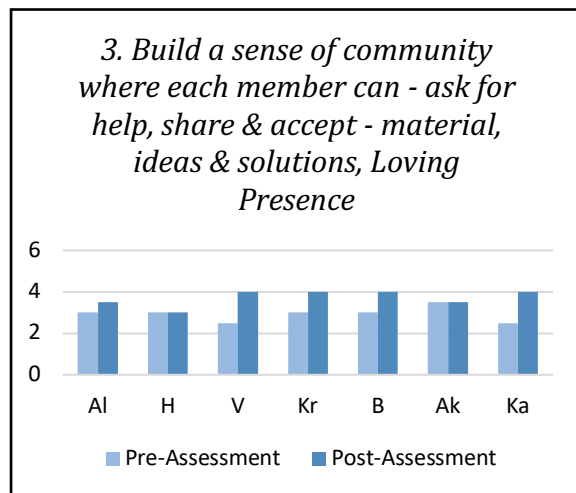

Figure 36: Experiencing small successes & building confidence
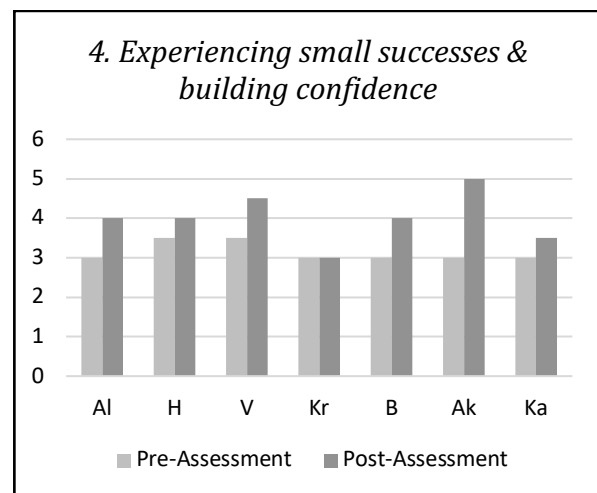
Even though some of the participants were familiar with the other participants, they displayed no sense of camaraderie (initially). The participants seemed hesitant to share their intimate space with the others. Activities like '*Round Robin'* helped break these barriers. Other activities involved aspects of interdependence. Once, a participant broke down and the other participants slowly formed a circle and symbolically conveyed warmth and love to the person. This is evident of the fact that the individuals had started to experience collective warmth and reflected so in the sessions. After the lockdown, no group sessions were possible. However, the feeling of interconnectedness could be witnessed by the facilitator while conducting sessions with the individuals. In the graphs (See Figure 35 and 36), most of the participants seem to have improved in both the scales.

SELF AWARENESS (SA)

Figure 37: Create a balanced self-image- confidence/esteem   Figure 38: Understanding destructive emotions
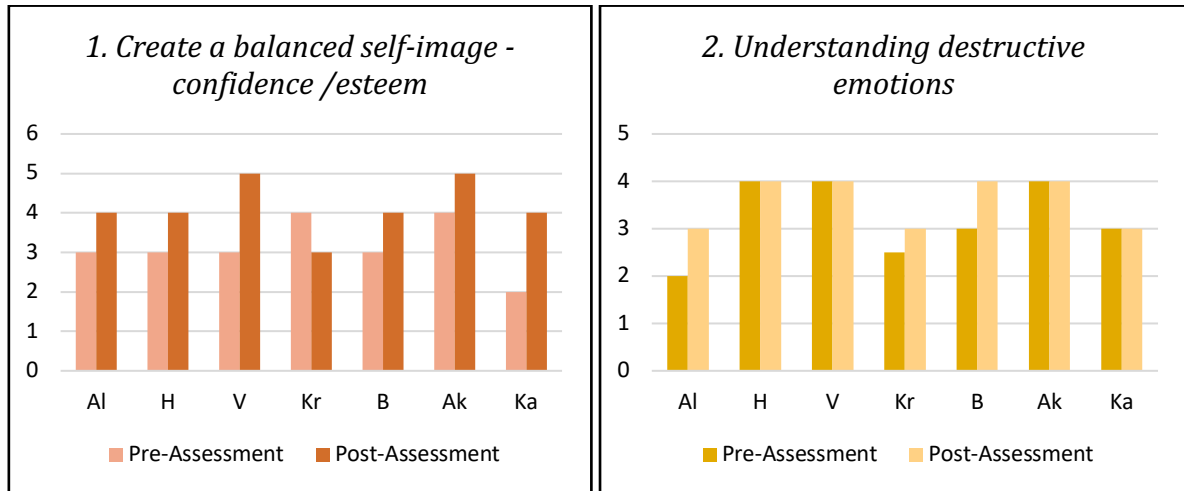
The perception of self is quite evident from the 'Draw yourself' and 'Mandala' assessment. However, multiple activities which require to explore parts of oneself also has helped understand the self-awareness quotient of various participants. The facilitator encouraged participants to have conversations between their idealised-self. Several negative emotions directed towards one's self had come up during the sessions. As evident from the graphs above (Figure 37 & 38), a few people were able to foster positive thoughts and feelings towards the self. The participants had undergone personal turmoil during the lockdown months and therefore, it was quite difficult for many to maintain a balanced self-image.

b. Correlation

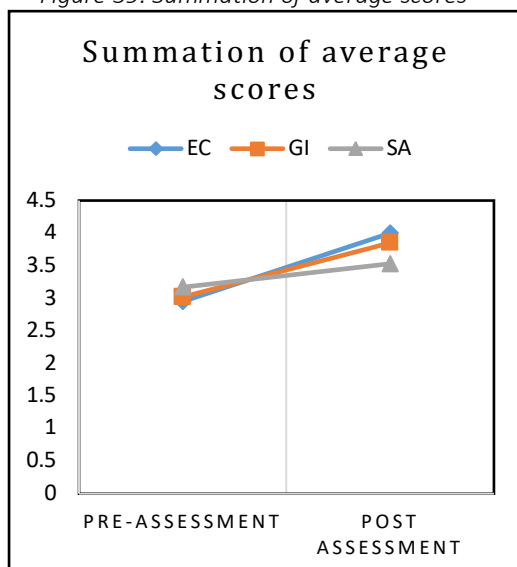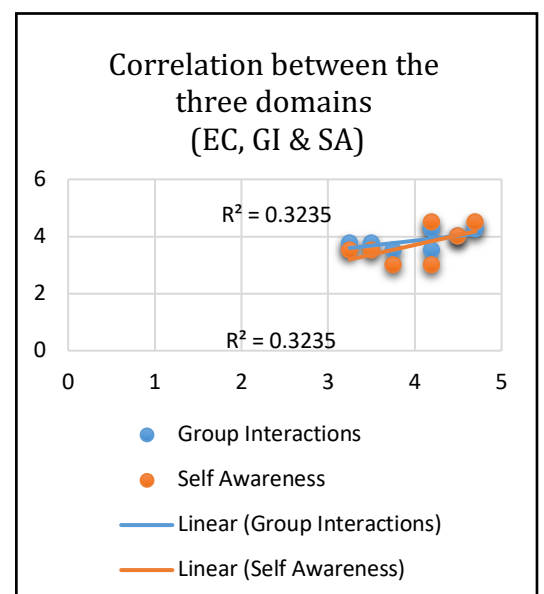*Figure 39: Summation of average scores*

Figure 40: Correlation between the three domains (EC, GI & SA)

It can be inferred from Figure 39 that overall, the participants have demonstrated improvement in the three therapeutic domains - Expressive capability (EC), Group Interaction (GI) and Self Awareness (SA). They have shown an impressive growth in expressive capability. This seems to be the case because the lockdown period gave people time to look for alternate modes of expressions. The facilitator encouraged the participants to make use of readily available materials to create art. This might have led to these innovative pathways for the self.

As depicted in Figure 40, the two therapeutic domains - GI & SA seem to have a positive correlation with Expressive Capability (EC). This indicates that growth in the expressive capability might have provoked growth in other domains too. It can be said that having a balanced self-image (better relationship with the self) might lead to a better relationship with the 'other'.

5. Discussion

5.1 Limitations

The limitations as experienced by the facilitator are detailed as follows:

1. External hindrances: Throughout the action research project, multiple external factors slowed the pace of the work. These external factors had not been considered or taken into account while deciding the group or the session plans. Since the facilitator was working with some college students, their time commitments were most of the times dependent on their unpredictable university schedule.

The biggest hurdle to the ABT work was the nationwide lockdown which was imposed by the Government of India on March 25, 2020 to control the spread of coronavirus in the country. This was preceded by an increase in corona cases nationwide, especially in metropolitan cities like Delhi. Therefore, the work had paused after 1st March 2020.

The facilitator started utilising the online spaces (Skype) to conduct sessions late April onwards. Fortunately, every participant had access to internet and a device to connect with. However, some of them were facing troubled times at home and therefore couldn't confirm a particular date and time in advance.

2. Work with individuals: The action research project was supposed to incorporate both group as well as individual sessions. However, after the month of February 2020 it wasn't possible to conduct any group session. And therefore, some therapeutic domains (like Group Interaction) had to be re-looked and stitched into the session plans carefully.

3. The online sessions: The online sessions conducted over Skype or Zoom had proved to be tricky. Even though the individuals were able to join the sessions from the comfort of their homes, they didn't feel at ease. Some had shared their inability to find a safe space to connect with the facilitator for the session. This was quite stress inducing for many. It was also difficult for the facilitator to plan the session much in advance as the participants did not possess a wide variety of art materials (or any material at all).

4. Shortcomings of the rating scales: The observations and rating scales fail to capture the verbal as well as non-verbal conversations that might take place outside the purview of the study.

Quantification of any qualitative capability is also a tricky job. It is quite dependent on the observer. Even though the facilitator had received training, it was quite a difficult task to rate individuals on a scale of 0 to 5. Given the limited scope of the study, it wasn't possible to document multiple anecdotes which were noted during the course of the research.

5. Capacity of the facilitator: It is important to acknowledge the facilitator's inexperience working with adult individuals. Even though they had worked with queer individuals in the past, a long engagement was never a possibility. It was relatively difficult for them to schedule online sessions with the individuals. The facilitator also didn't have adequate experience of conducting sessions online (either on Zoom or Skype). It was also observed that the kind of intimacy shared in offline sessions could not be matched with the online sessions.

5.2 Learnings

Re-questioning old concepts: The project enabled the facilitator to reassess their past knowledge systems. The field work required them to change their outlook towards arts as a healing medium. Every client and every group brought their own set of challenges and in order to deal with these challenges they had to reformulate their session plans. Every day was a new learning experience. Breaking the barrier of rigidity was the only way forward. A flexible outlook proved to be beneficial not just for the facilitator but also

for the clients/participants. This experience helped the facilitator broaden their scope of intervention.

Improvisation is the key: The facilitator realised soon enough that while engaging with Arts Based Therapy it quite important for a practitioner or facilitator to understand that even though they might be well prepared for the session, one should always be ready to improvise. The circumstances and situations change from time to time and therefore improvisation is quite an essential tool. The needs of the group can change constantly even within the session. An experienced practitioner would be able to map these needs and improvise in order to cater to them based on intuition.

Engaging with narratives: The facilitator got a chance to engage with diverse narratives. It was an honour for them to have come across such enriching stories during the course of this project. This immersive engagement helped them understand empathy as a virtue.

Importance of solidarities: One could witness the emergence of solidarities in the facilitator's work with communities. According to them, it was quite a rewarding experience. Empathy and respect form the basis of forming or re-forming solidarities. Arts based intervention has pushed them closer to the cause and relation of people's suffering. It has aided their learning process greatly resulting in forming new bonds of compassion and hope.

Healing is multi-directional: The facilitator's engagement with a diverse group made them realise that healing can mean quite different things for different people. Our inner world is in constant motion and therefore every individual might be receptive to a different mode of healing at different points in time. And a healer would require a wide variety of tools in their toolkit to cater to everyone.

5.3 Future Implications

Arts Based Therapy can serve as a transformative tool to tackle psycho-social issues in community spaces. It has a better outreach and is quite accessible unlike other forms of therapy. It can reintegrate various knowledge systems that promote community level healing.

Adequate research might ensure a wider acceptance of Arts Based Therapy as an acceptable mode of therapy. Even though, ABT can revitalise or rather redirect the mental

health sector with its multiple resources, there is also a need to relook at some of the methodologies which might become ineffective under extraordinary circumstances. For example, during the lockdown, the need for mental health services increased exponentially. However, due to the required physical interaction in most of the therapeutic forms very few individuals were able to avail these services. There is a wide scope of expansion within the existing healing traditions.

This research can further serve as a reference for professionals or academicians engaging with Arts Based Therapy. It can also be a point of reference for social workers/ mental health practitioners who wish to engage with queer population.

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Appendix

Appendix A

A Few Sample Session Record Sheets

	TG	Communion	Creation	Closure
1	Acquaint the group with the World of Colours and provoke imaginative skills,	The group was guided through a meditative practice. Imagine a color and paint every corner of the room.	Visual Art: Using dry mediums (crayons, soft pastels, sketch pens, pencil colors) to create something (anything) on the sheet. And then use wet mediums.	The members were asked to sit in silence for about five minutes and focus on their breathing.
3	Expressing through voice	They were guided through a meditative practice. Make sounds using vowels and consonants to then form gibberish words/sentences.	Puppets were used to talk to each other in gibberish.	Meditative exercise
4	Construction of an inner sanctorum	Observe the nature around them for some time in silence. Variation of catch-catch game.	Make Healing Altar using provided art materials	Lay n ground and feel the nature through their senses.

Bapu Trust for Research on Mind and Discourse
Pune

The Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse (1999-) is a registered NGO, located in Pune city, India. The vision of Bapu Trust is to see a world, where emotional wellbeing is experienced in a holistic manner, and not just as 'mental disease'. Bapu Trust dreams of healing environments, where every person uses their own capacity to make choices, heal themselves, recover and move on. Recovery methods are creative, non-violent, non-hazardous and playful. Bapu Trust works with multiple stakeholders within the development sector on the inclusion of persons with mental health issues and psychosocial disabilities including disabilities, poverty, community development, social justice, policy and law and human rights. The touchstone of Bapu Trust since the advent of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is 'Transforming communities for inclusion' of persons with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities. Towards this end, Bapu Trust has invested in developing a sustainable service delivery model, Seher, inspired by the vision of Article 19 (Right to live independently and be included in communities). Bapu Trust's domains of work include research, trainings, enabling multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms in India and Asia and innovative services within community development.

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