

Abstract

There is an increasing demand for mental health support for undergraduate students in university counselling centres. Art therapy is one of the interventions that can be applied in the mental health care of university students. Research focusing on university students shows that art therapy helps to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and promotes an increase in self-acceptance, self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and overall mental well-being. The aim of the theoretical part of the thesis was to offer an overview of art therapy with focus on group art therapy with university students. The empirical part of the thesis aimed to focus on the voice of the client, specifically mapping the expectations and themes of university students entering an art therapy group, their experiences of participating in the group and the impact they feel. The research was conducted on a sample of 11 university students. In-depth interviews were used and were conducted twice – after the group began and after the group ended. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Five themes were identified in the first interview - Working on oneself, Social reasons, Art, Organization, Professional interest. The second questioning resulted in four themes - Art Therapy Process, Social Dimensions, Participant Development and Organisation. The results of this thesis may help to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of university students who participate in group art therapy. The findings may be beneficial in making the intervention more effective.