

The effectiveness of music therapy in reducing some psychological disorders in children exposed to traumatic experiences

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Abstract

This scientific paper aims to reveal and identify the type of traumatic experiences in children due to the impact of natural disasters, followed up through music therapy program from a psychological perspective.

The researcher used a case study of musical therapeutic program techniques in the psychological clinic for a number of affected children, numbering twelve cases. In a period of approximately four months of psychological follow-up at a rate of two sessions per week in the year 2024 (fires, floods, Traffic accidents in cities in southern Algeria).

Its results concluded:

-There is effectiveness in music therapy techniques of program to follow up affected cases.

-Music techniques have an impact on the psychological health of children affected by natural disasters.

Keywords: traumatic experiences, children, natural disasters, music therapy program.

1. INTRODUCTION

The arts have proven to be a useful way to help patients facing mental health disorders or challenges receive treatment services, including those based on art, innovative therapy, and psychological theories.

The therapeutic aspect is in which we encourage the child to create a work of art and then tell a story about this work. "It's a good way to help them think about their feelings, relationships or Behavior."

Scientific studies increasingly confirm that viewing and practicing art may contribute to the process of promoting healing. The arts can improve our physical and mental health, enhance our ability to recover from illness, and enhance our well-being.

"Fine art therapy serves multiple groups, such as special groups and people with psychological disorders, who need to express feelings and sensations using mental images or tangible plastic art, which everyone agrees is a way to project the content and essence of the soul, which provides relief and relief for the plastic art practitioner."(Aitah & Damra Jalal, 2014)

Art therapy it is, a form of psychotherapy that uses artistic means as a primary means of communication; it is practice by both qualified and registered therapists who work with children, young people, adults and the elderly.

The refore, art therapy facilitates communication with people who may have a wide range of difficulties and disabilities. This includes, for example, emotional, behavioral or psychological health problems, learning or physical disability.(Mohamed, 2008)

In addition, Art therapy provided to groups or individuals depending on their specific needs. This type of therapy is not considers a recreational activity or drawing lesson, although its sessions may be enjoyable. The most beautiful thing is that his clients do not need any previous experience in drawing or any artistic knowledge or knowledge.

Art therapy base on the idea that the creative process, as a form of non-verbal communication, can express thoughts and feelings?

Like other forms of psychotherapy, art used to encourage personal growth, increased self-understanding, and emotional restoration for individuals who have difficulty seeking help verbally.

The problem:

The art therapist provides an environment for non-verbal and intuitive self-expression and facilitates self-expression, to relieve emotional tension.

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Creative art psychotherapy has become widespread in the age of the technological revolution and the information age. This therapy is currently offered to children and experts in this field are trying to employ creative arts, such as music, dance and drama, in order to alleviate the psychological burden felt by affected and troubled children.

Art therapy is a psychological treatment based on artistic media such as music and all things visual as a primary tool for expression, as people do not rely solely on speech in the communication process, but also interact with works of art to communicate their ideas and work to overcome the psychological difficulties they face.

When it comes to treating children traumatised by fire disasters, British musician Nigel Osborne said: 'I think there is no intervention for trauma that has more impact on the nervous system and mental health than music.' The British musician explains music psychotherapy as the use of tone to bring about changes in the body, mind and spirit, enabling children to overcome the psychological challenges they face. He stresses that while there are few studies in this field, compared to what he aspires to, a significant number of them show that music helps to adjust the brain systems affected by the consequences of trauma, as music enables children to communicate easily, express what they feel, gain self-confidence and enhance behavioral skills. Music is both relaxing and stimulating.

A successful therapist knows what the child wants to express existentially, behaviorally and emotionally and responds to it in a sophisticated musical dialogue. However, this dialogue can only be successful if the musical heritage of the individual receiving therapy taken into account.

Based on all of the above, the following questions have raised:

- 1) How effective is the music therapy program in reducing psychological disorders in children exposed to traumatic experiences?
- 2) What is the impact of using music techniques on the mental health of children?

Objectives of the study:

- To measure the effectiveness of the music therapy program in reducing psychological disorders in children exposed to traumatic experiences.
- Measuring the level of impact of the use of music techniques on the mental health of children affected by the impact of natural disasters.

Importance of the study:

- The research deals with children exposed to traumatic experiences as a target sample for reducing their psychological disorders by applying a music therapy program, to demonstrate the validity of the treatment.
- To guide psychologists practicing in the treatment of such cases to the value of the music therapy program in containing and reducing psychological disorders in children exposed to traumatic experiences.
- Benefiting from the results of this program in guiding and directing psychologists in treating psychological disorders. With some suggestions that can be used to treat such psychological disorders and choosing the optimal program as a tool used in music therapy.
- As far as we know, there are few or no such applied studies in reality and in specialised psychiatric clinics as far as we know.
- In addition to the applied aspect of the field of music therapy according to techniques and awards.

Research terms:

Music therapy:

A therapeutic intervention to measure the impact of musical exercises, motor play and musical rhythm as a method to alleviate the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the affected child.

The concept Music therapy is a sequential and structured therapeutic process in which the therapist attempts to help the child improve their mental health levels using musical experiences, exploiting the relationships that develop between children in the therapy group during the performance of the musical activity, which seen as a dynamic energy for change (Kennelly & Brien-Elliott, K, 2001)

Music use to facilitate positive therapeutic outcomes such as improved levels of communication, self-control, coping with social issues, emotional release and more.

Musical experiences can include a range of instrumental activities, free improvisation, chanting, singing specific or improvised songs, and listening to music. (Wigram, Nygaard, I, & Bonde, L, 2002)

Rhythmic Movement: Rhythmic movements are physical movements done in rhythm to music or sound. Rhythmic movements can help express repressed feelings and thoughts, develop self-awareness, improve communication, and relieve stress and anxiety.

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Kinetic dance: A type of dance in which the body use to express oneself and communicate with others, kinesthetic frequencies to stimulate different movements and rhythms.

Traumatised child:

A person, who exposed to traumatic events, has traumatic experiences and suffers from psycho-behavioral or psychosomatic disorders because of natural disasters such as fires or floods.

The variables procedurally (practically)

Traumatic experiences are measure by the effectiveness of the program techniques that children who expose to traumatic experiences in the trauma program used in this study responded to at the psychological follow-up period.

Music Therapy Program: This is a procedural program for application and is measure by the extent of improvement in children's cases in treating psychological trauma.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 knowledge of the subject

Psychologists emphasis that most emotional disorders originate in childhood and that the issues that children are exposed to are more serious than those of adults, and that the issues that children are exposed to or suffer from may lead them to serious disorders that are difficult to treat when they become chronic (Dawood, 1991)

Exposure to traumatic events can result in psychological and physical disorders in those exposed to them, as individuals after the disaster feel a clear lack of security and a great sense of hurt (Mahmoud, 2003)

If a child is exposed to a very serious psychological shock that makes him lose his tolerance, such as the sudden loss of a dear person due to natural disasters or the like. Such as the earthquakes that occurred in the Algerian region, or fires or floods, such as the floods in the sister city of Derna in Libya, or such as the disasters that are occurring now because of wars: the aggression against Gaza. The psychological crises and traumas that result from these disasters and wars; It in itself constitutes an obstacle and a bad psychological adjustment for the injured person, which makes the effects of the trauma dominate his feelings. His thoughts and behavior for a long time.

Hence the emergence of what is known scientifically as traumatic events, from which psychological disorders emerge as a delayed or prolonged reaction to an event or stress of a threatening or exceptionally catastrophic nature that is

expected to cause general distress to any person (Okasha, 2003, p. 190)

The basic symptoms of trauma-related mental disorders include a series of flashbacks to that trauma. This takes the form of dreams and memories that invade a person's imagination, and it occurs in the form of altered feelings, psychological alienation, introversion, social withdrawal, and aversion to society.

Hence, social isolation, as the individual is completely or partially isolated from social interaction and living life as it was before.

The psychotherapist provides children with therapeutic musical tools and knowledge that are sustainable beyond the treatment period. If the child experiences any trauma in the future, he or she will be able to draw on this knowledge to deal with it.

Studies have shown that art therapy has a very positive outcome in working with children in general, providing them with a broader range of expressions that they often do not have the ability to use in order to overcome trauma.

Indicates (Paul & Ramsey, D, 2000)the importance and necessity of applying music therapy in a group setting, unlike play therapy, which applied in a group and individual setting. The therapeutic benefits of using music in a therapeutic setting with refugee children exposed to threatening and violent experiences are numerous, through its role in restoring a sense of security, helping to deal with the negative effects of the terrifying or traumatic events, they have experienced, and reducing the levels of depression and emotional arousal associated with these events.

Music therapy has found its way into pediatric psychotherapy. Music therapy has its roots in the psychoanalytic trend in psychotherapy, by allowing for the non-verbal release of unconscious contents and allowing emotional contents to released, while other different trends have emerged such as Guided Imagery and Music

Which focuses on listening to musical experiences and trying to summon internal images and visualisations associated with those experiences. Music therapy has also found its way and applications in the humanistic direction by encouraging psychologists in the therapeutic group to feel the concept of the here and now.

Music therapy emphasises the use of non-verbal communication methods. Music therapy focuses on the use of non-verbal communication methods, which consider one of the most important methods of influencing the resolution of children's issues in situations where the child is unable to express them verbally. This puts music therapy on the list of candidate therapeutic methods to deal with

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children's psychological issues resulting from exposure to trauma and threats, with its non-verbal methods. (Gold, Wigram, T, & Voracek, M., 2007)

Refers to (Barton, 2011) argues that therapeutic programs for children or individuals suffering from psychological symptoms related to anxiety and depression should include many experiences, activities and programs such as yoga, movement, dance, singing and music in addition to cognitive and behavioral psychotherapy. (Gold, Voracek, T, & Wigram, M., 2004)

During their comprehensive review of many research studies that employed music therapy methods. The effectiveness of using music therapy programs in conjunction with CBT for the treatment of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents depends on the severity of the disorders suffered by the children, the diversity of the disorders, the size of the group, and the age of the beneficiaries.

There are two main forms of music therapy:

1- Individual music therapy: Individual

Music therapy where individual music therapy takes the form of interaction between the therapist and the individual patient, modifying their responses and behavior patterns in the context of the patient's individual personal experiences.

2- Group music therapy: Group music therapy

Music therapy takes the form of group interaction, whether it is singing or playing group or both, which brings those involved in their problems and disorders closer together (Mohamed, 2008, p. 133)

The methods of music therapy include music therapy, music therapy, music background therapy, music meditation therapy, music meditation Relaxation with quiet music, music therapy, music therapy, music performance therapy, singing therapy, Expression therapy, music therapy integrated with psychotherapy (Al-Attar, 2013)

2.2 Previous studies

EA study to (Poliaten, Jones, T, Akhaal, R, Mehraba, D, & Kaseeni, J, 2008) their purpose to investigate the effectiveness of an integrative group therapy program (psychological, musical and family). It includes painting, music, movement, role-playing, acting and family counselling. Compared to a music therapy program in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in a sample of refugee children in Cambodia. The study included (42) children who were divided equally into two control and experimental groups. The results indicated the effectiveness of the 14-session integrative therapy program in reducing the emotional symptoms of psychological trauma in children compared to music

therapy.

And in study of (Catani, Kohiladevy, M, Ruf, R, Schauer, E, & Elbert, T, 2009)

Compared the effect of a treatment program based on the use of behavioral therapy techniques and methods (exposure therapy) with a treatment program based on meditation, relaxation and the use of music in reducing the symptoms of anxiety and depression in refugee children who exposed to psychological trauma. Because of witnessing the destruction caused by the tsunami in Sri Lanka, the study included (31) children who were hospitalised to receive the necessary medical and psychological assistance due to exposure to psychological trauma resulting from wars. They were divided into two groups (exposure therapy and relaxation and music therapy) at the rate of one session over a period of (06) weeks, and the results indicated the effectiveness of both treatment programs in reducing the pathological symptoms of the study members during a follow-up period of (06) months.

In a study (Aitah & Damra Jalal, 2014) on was to compare the efficacy of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Music Therapy (MT) on reducing the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptomatology among a sample of War Children. (48) Syrian Children, their ageing (10-12) years. The Children PTSD Inventory use to assess the children's PTSD symptomatology, which contains 30 items. ‘. The study found that intensive treatment programs were effective in reducing symptoms of re-experiencing traumatic events, avoidance and excessive emotional.

During the review of previous studies, we found there are few studies that have presented a music program to reduce the psychological disorders of children exposed to traumatic experiences, and that most of the previous studies compared a behavioral therapy program with a music program. Thus, the current research is similar to previous studies in terms of its objectives; however, the current research differs in terms of the method used: One-group experimental design.

With the difference in the environment and individuals, as well as the diversity of disorders in the same sample with the diversity of the type of traumatic experiences that the children were expose to Fires, floods, traffic accidents.

3. Application frame work

3.1 Methodology adopted in the research

Given the objectives of the current study, it base on the quasi-experimental method, which suits the nature of the current study, as it base on conducting what

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called a scientific experiment.

It base on the selection of the extent of the effect of a specific experimental factor or variable to be measured by scientific experiment on a limited micro level to know its effect before generalising its use in the form in which it was tested to the whole community.

Therefore, a single-group experimental design with pre-post observation was use in which the researcher studies the effect of the independent variable on the members of a single group. This study relies on the study of the effect of the independent variable on the observation of the behavior of the members of the same group under the influence of (the treatment program) to observe the change in the behavior of each individual because of the experimental treatment.

The study was conduct at the psychological centers affiliated with the Ministry of National Solidarity in the relevant states and at the Al-Saada Al-Shat Association in El Oued. In this part of the research, the psychologists performed Diagnostic procedures, and the sessions held at the psychologist's office at the centers or association.

The number of affected children undergoing psychological care due to psychological disorders because of: Fires, floods, traffic accidents. (Cities in southern Algeria) Twenty cases.

Table 1.Shows the category of children examined by voice Examinees

psychological Disorder	Client		Life expectancy	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Phobia	04	02	12	10
Introversion	02	03	12	10
Stuttering	02	02	09	10
Communication Difficulties	03	02	09	08
Total Cases	11	09	10.5 years	9.5 years

Source: Prepared by the researcher, 2024.

From the above table, we can see that the total number of children consisted of (11) male cases and (09) female cases. The Life expectancy of all cases ranged from (08-12) years. It is clear that most of the cases that applied psychological examination were in the middle and late childhood.

The field research conduct in 2024 in cities in southern Algeria: El Beydh, El Oued, and Touggourt. The psychological follow-up lasted for approximately four months at a rate of two sessions per week (30 sessions in total), with each session lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.

Tools used in the research:

In order to follow up the cases with the therapist and psychologist in order for this practice to be scientific, the researchers used the following tools that are recognize in the scientific field:

Music therapy program and some techniques:

1) Vocalisation exercices : (Huche & Allali , 2002, pp. 154-156)

A- Exercice (.ma mo mi me mu.), (Bra bre bri bro bru.)

B- Singing counting exercises:

- Choral counting with a single melody with a transmission time not exceeding 03 seconds. Do not forget to breathe in before each vote and use slow breathing. Example: One, two, and three.

- Ascending staircase counting: 1-8. -Descending ladder: 8-1.

- Ladders made up of: (1-2-3), (5.4.3.2.1), and (8.7.6.5.4.3.2.1).

2) Intonation: With phonemes (e. I. o. a. an. in. u. Ou. eu. y).

3) Simple speech exercises such as counting by numbers and musical notes.

4) Voice optimisation exercises, which are lyrical and tonal exercises according to the examinee's vocal performance.

5) Art and music therapy:

Many drawings indicate the emotions that a person avoids talking about and what the subconscious mind is hiding, so that the therapist can discover them without pushing the patient to talk. When choosing songs or writing poems, it can be a clear sign of what the person is afraid of and does not talk about directly.

Diagnosis and examination of cases:

The presence of several cases of children, the psychologist diagnosed the cases. According to the following techniques:

- Speaking in a normal voice and avoiding intermittent verbal artefacts.

-Using free expression exercises through free association

-Evaluating one's own thoughts.

Through these diagnostic techniques, it found that the mentioned cases were suffering from psychological disorders, from the effects of the psychological trauma they experienced from the impact of the fires.

Consequently, in this the classification of cases, we use music therapy training to take care of them.

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3.2 Presentation of the content of the classes and the therapeutic program used

Table 02.Content and methods of the therapeutic program.

Time	Quotas Activity	objective	Implementation of techniques
20 to 30 minutes	History of the examiner	Providing case information	Presenting the case file and examining the case in the office
30 to 45 minutes	Psychological examination	Identifying and detecting cases	Use of diagnostic and screening techniques according to the type of disorder (techniques are included in the program offered)
30 to 45 minutes	Psychological diagnosis	Classify the case according to the data, causes and symptoms in order to develop a treatment program for each individual case	-Use the diagnostic techniques described above as in the screening process.
30 to 45 minutes	Simple singing exercise training	For the purpose of excitement in the class and venting the feelings of the examinee and is often used with children under 10 years old because it is appropriate for the age group	-Used while sitting in a chair or medical bed -All exercises for voice exercises, counting exercises, intonation exercises, counting exercises by numbers and notes.
30 to 45 minutes	Music therapy	For the purpose of psychological recreation, psychological security, venting	-It used by sitting on a chair, medical bed or any position that is comfortable for the examinee. -All exercises related to the

		feelings and free expression through the free association technique and is used with children older than 10 years to suit the age level.	recitation of the Quran, songs, poems, poetry, singing, or intonation of musical notes. -Use Drawing.
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Source: Prepared by the researcher, 2024.

From the above table, we can make some points about the content and the Examined children:

-Treating each case requires adherence to each activity in the previous sessions and with each examined child without exception or failure to the child for ensuring the continuity of psychological support and the mental health of the affected child.

In the individual follow-up of cases, the psychological practitioner adheres to the timing and activity directed through each session and redirects it to the examined child if he fails to perform it at least four different sessions to avoid routine. However, the activity of the first three sessions of history, examination and psychiatric diagnosis is mandatory in order to proceed to the application of the therapeutic program because it is the beginning of the classification of the case according to the type of disorder associated with it.

The results of the improvement of psychological disorders in children exposed to traumatic experiences due to fires explain by evaluating the cases after applying the music therapy program mentioned earlier, which included a set of techniques that are directly relate to the psychological well-being of the individual, such as music therapy exercises, singing counting exercises, and vocal exercises. The children responded to such techniques and interacted with them quickly in the lessons; this is of great importance to the effectiveness of the program in its reliance on such techniques.

The results of the effectiveness of the program in terms of the use of music therapy techniques are consistent with the findings of a study, Aitah& al, 2013. that used the effect of a behavioral therapy program to alleviate the severity of psychological disorders through the application of music therapy as one of the techniques of the behavioral therapy program.

The results of the effectiveness of the current program are consistent with

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the findings in all the previous studies we mentioned. On the effect of music therapy on reducing psychiatric disorders and its effectiveness.

As for the use of music techniques by the CBT program, this is very natural because the cases vary in psychological disorders that need musical exercises in order to reduce the psychological tensions of the cases, especially cases suffering from fear, stuttering, claustrophobia and introversion. This gives them a moral motivation towards feeling safe and psychologically comfortable, and motivates them to make an effort to get rid of the impact of traumatic experiences on them. Here, the therapist plays a supportive role in order to enable the affected cases to have the psychological strength to face such psychological disorders and mitigate their severity in order to protect the children from their developments and interactions, given that children live with individuals of the same age and social level.

When applying the therapeutic program, the researcher used a variety of music therapy techniques with the cases, in order to unload the feelings and express them in a way that is comfortable for the case to sing and rhythmically interact with them. It receive in cases of fear, stuttering, seizures and communication difficulties. The importance of motor rhythm has the advantage of making the examinee feel that he/she is increasing the positive power of communication. It reduces the negative impact of the traumatic experience.

This requires the psychologist to allow the injured examinee to imagine the trauma and describe it aloud to the psychotherapist, and then the psychologist's role is to encourage and strengthen the patient's defense mechanisms in challenging and confronting the psychological traumas he expose to earlier and avoiding them in the future.

-The psychologist's commitment to a therapeutic session, followed by a recreational group session, followed by a therapeutic session, followed by a recreational group session each week. This is as follows:

Table 3. Distribution of Quotas activity in the week.

Days	Sunday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday
Quotas style	Individual therapy	Group recreation	Individual therapy	Group recreation

Source: Prepared by the researcher, 2024.

-In the recreational activity, the class is recreational, if it has a team dynamic, i.e. the interaction of the examinees in the form of a sports team and in a state of rest and recreation, rather than a single restricted activity as in individual therapy

cases.

- The purpose of the therapeutic program is to improve the child's psychological state and try to mitigate the damage and disorders caused by the traumatic experiences of the natural disaster (fires, floods, traffic accidents).

4. CONCLUSION

On this basis and due to the laws of professional practice control, the researcher-practitioner adhered to the planned program to follow up the cases:

- There is an effectiveness of music therapy techniques to follow up affected cases.
- Music therapy techniques have an impact on the mental health of children affected by the impact of natural disasters.

Based on the findings of our study related to the care of these cases, we can make the following recommendations:

- The necessity of adopting codified scientific program in the management of cases, especially those that demonstrate success in psychological sponsorship.

- The psychologist must rely on new information. Keep abreast of the latest developments in treatment techniques during psychological practice. Taking into account the necessity of each age stage as deemed appropriate in his/her follow-up program.

- The importance of early intervention in diagnosis and rehabilitation, as it mitigates the potential damage to the individual's psychological well-being and facilitates the treatment process.

- The importance of exchanging information and targeted programs implemented by specialists, to be standardise and reliable test.

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