

Expressive Art Therapy Psychoeducation Module for Mental Health, Resilience, Attitude Towards Seeking Counselling Among Trainee Teachers

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ABSTRACT: Expressive art therapy helps to reduce psychological problems, develop a more positive view of different social classes (including children, adults and the elderly) and strengthen resilience. This study investigates the feasibility of implementing the psychoeducational module "Expressive Art Therapy" in student teachers. Seven students enrolled in the preparation programme participated in this study. Study participants are required to provide feedback on each activity in which they participate, including suggestions for improvement and testimonials. The results of this study help the researcher to identify shortcomings in the activities in terms of time, resources and instructions and to make improvements in order to develop a high quality module. This research also contributes to theories and methods that the Institute of Teacher Education can use to improve its counselling and psychological services.

Keywords: Psychoeducational module, Expressive Art Therapy, Teacher Trainee.

I. INTRODUCTION

In their quest for self-discovery and a sense of belonging to a community that can contribute to religion, ethnicity and even nationalism, prospective educators aged 18 to 25 are additionally exposed to a wide range of emotions. Future educators are susceptible to the influence of their environment, their peers and the values instilled in them by their family from early childhood to this stage of development. The study also revealed numerous deficits in the mental health of university students [1–4]. Therefore, attention must be paid to the mental health of university students in order to equip them to face greater obstacles in the future. Mental health issues impact daily life. Anxiety and other serious, long-term conditions can stem from small, everyday occurrences such as tension or troublesome feelings [5,6]. The transition from secondary to higher education presents students with cognitive and psychological hurdles as they make decisions, particularly regarding finances and classmate selection, while striving to excel academically. Social factors also influence psychological stability, which is closely linked to campus life and socialisation. Keep in mind that students' psychological development and social interactions are out of their control. Students in this scenario will face challenges such as assignment load, learning environments, adjustment to the environment, academic rivalry, and time management difficulties [7–11].

In a study by [12–15], it was found that students at the Institute of Teacher Education had difficulty adjusting in their first year of study. The researcher used the technique of storytelling to identify the problems in the adjustment process. The combination with Expressive Arts Therapy helps the counsellors to quickly identify the students' main problems and indirectly the interventions can be more precise for the students. Another study [16–18] aimed to explore the intra-family problems of teenagers who become pregnant and give birth out of wedlock. Applying the expressive arts therapy approach to counselling enables a deeper understanding of the psychological crisis associated with pregnancy symptoms birth and infant mortality. This shows that art therapy can inspire these adolescents to express consciously or unconsciously hidden emotions without fear or guilt.

Meanwhile, [19] investigated the effectiveness of creative group counselling in reducing stress, anxiety and depression in single mothers and improving their psychological health and self-compassion. The Selangor Islamic Religious Council supervised this study, which involved 36 unmarried mothers living in women's shelters throughout Selangor. The researcher assessed the effectiveness of creative arts in group counselling by administering two psychological tests before and after the study, namely the Self-Compassion Scale and the DASS. This experimental study consists of a control group and a creative group. Participants sing, write, paint and draw in expressive arts therapy, while the control group performs routine exercises and activities. A total of seven sessions were attended over three days and two nights. The researcher also collected data on the perceptions and experiences of three single mothers after the counselling sessions by conducting interviews with them. The analysis of the study results shows that there is a difference between the level of self-compassion, depression, tension and anxiety in the period before and after the creative group counselling. Depression, tension and anxiety decrease as the level of self-compassion increases. Creative group counselling can positively influence single mothers and strengthen self-compassion. In addition, a group of divorced single mothers from Terengganu participated in an art therapy study [20]. The children were entrusted to divorced single mothers who took part in the study. Three days were devoted to the art therapy group, compared to the six days of the study. Interviews were conducted with the single mothers in the art therapy group before, during and after the programme to elicit their reflections on the participants' experiences. Each session included individual art making and group discussion and lasted two hours. Research findings included increased self-esteem, self-confidence, optimism and the ability to cope with feelings of isolation, develop positive emotions and perceive themselves as valuable. Through the principles of person-centredness, empathy, openness, honesty, harmony and compassion, Expressive Arts Therapy can emphasise the role of the therapist. Expressive Arts Therapy allows the individual to express themselves and release their emotions. It is not used to analyse problems, solve problems or achieve perfection [21]. Embedded in a safe environment (including schools, outpatient clinics, day care centres, other treatment centres, hospitals and non-clinical settings), expressive arts therapy integrates improvisation, writing, sounds and movement to help clients of all ages articulate their emotions, cultivate their self-awareness and uncover latent feelings. In addition, expressive art therapy is an artistic method to meet the need for resilient interventions that emphasise process and structure-oriented goals [22]. This is consistent with the process-context model of resilience, which is supported by empirical research showing that resilience can be strengthened; alternatively, resilience can be viewed as a process rather than a fixed attribute [23]. In addition, expressive art therapy based on social action theory promotes community development, co-operation and the initiation of social change [24]. This demonstrates that Expressive Arts Therapy allows for greater self-revelation and promotes direct interpersonal connection through movement for the client or group members. Therefore, [25, 26] stated that Expressive Arts Therapy in groups enables clients to deepen their psychosocial skills and increase their confidence to network well with others.

II. OBJECTIVE

In this study, we aimed to investigate the usability of the psychoeducational module Expressive Art Therapy among student teachers at the Institute of Teacher Education.

III. MATERIAL AND METHOD

1. SAMPLE

The target students for this pilot study are the students of the Bachelor of Education (Preparatory) programme for the start of their studies in June 2023/2028. These students are a total of 7 people and are between 18 and 20 years old.

2. INTERVENTION DETAIL

The content of the psychoeducational module on Expressive Arts Therapy is based on the philosophy and techniques of Reality Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy, the constructs of mental health, the constructs of resilience and the constructs of attitudes towards seeking counselling. The development of the module design is based on the modalities of Expressive Arts Therapy, which are also referred to as sub-modules. At the same time,

the four areas of reality therapy from [27] serve as a guide for the counsellors when conducting the sessions. In addition, basic concepts of reality therapy include choice and responsibility, the quality worldview album, the present moment, the identity of success and failure, and so on. [28–30]. After a student has been taught the concepts of relationships, quality worldview, needs and overall behaviour, the intervention part of reality therapy can be introduced [27, 31–33]. W stands for the exploration of wishes, desires, perceptions and basic psychological and physiological needs, which include five things: Love and Belonging, Joy, Freedom, Power and Continuity of Life. The next D is for exploring overall behaviour, determining a direction that is consistent with the client's desires, discussing the client's options and determining what the client wants to do. E stands for evaluating the customer's choice, assessing the customer's commitment, evaluating behaviour and continuous review. Finally, P stands for developing an action plan with 8 points that are simple, achievable, measurable, urgent, involved, committed, controlled by the customer and consistent. The WDEP intervention provides counsellors with a specific yet comprehensive step-by-step process to help older adults overcome most emotional, cognitive and interpersonal problems [34–37]. However, the results suggest that reality therapy training is practical for the self-efficacy of high school sophomores. In other words, the Reality Therapy training programme had a positive effect on increasing students' self-efficacy [38, 39]. Reality Therapy is a therapeutic method that can also improve the quality of life. [40–42]. In addition, mental health can also be improved in people with insomnia, social behaviour and somatic symptoms. However, this therapy does not affect people suffering from depression [43]. The Reality Therapy approach also helps to reduce behavioural problems associated with internet addiction, particularly in university students, and also helps to increase life satisfaction [44–46]. Through self-analysis, action, desire and planning, clients in reality therapy create a solid roadmap to meet their basic needs and choose effective behaviour. The formulation of change and treatment plans by clients is strongly encouraged. Over the course of treatment, individuals can develop improvement plans through self-surveys. Surveys include the following: "What are your current activities and what have you done in the last month or so?"; "What are your aspirations or interruptions?"; and "What are your plans for the future and tomorrow?" [35, 36]. The activities in this module focus on mental health, resilience and attitudes to counselling through the Expressive Arts Therapy modality. A summary of the content of the Expressive Arts Therapy psychoeducation module can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Content of the psychoeducational module of expressive art therapy

Sub Modules	Unit/ Session	Modality	Activities
Mental Health	Session 1: Group Introduction and setting conditions	movement Art	Let's Follow Me! My Beautiful Name My Good World!
	Session 2: Explores wants, desires and perceptions	Art Sand tray	4. Four Emotions 5. Sand World
	Session 3: Explores basic psychological and physiological needs	play therapy Art	6. Teacher Trainee Action Collage 7. Self 8. Self- Portrait
	Session 4: Explores the entire behaviour	Art Creative writing	9. My Tree Perseverance 10. My Journal as Teacher
	Session 5: Evaluate the customer's options	Art Poetry	11. Teacher's Body Map 12. I am a Teacher
Attitude to Counselling	Session 6: Planning and commitment	Art play therapy	13. Teacher's Creative Plan 14. Teacher's Puppet 15. Self -Review

2.1 Mental Health sub module

The Mental Health sub-module includes eight activities to introduce the group, establish the conditions and explore desires, aspirations, perceptions and basic psychological and physiological needs [47],[48]. In the first session, three group introductions and condition setting activities are conducted: Let's Follow Me, My Beautiful Name, and My Good World! These activities allow all participants to get to know their friends and build trust with each other. This is followed by the second session, which consists of two sessions to explore wishes, desires and perceptions. There are two activities in the second session: Four Emotions and Sand World. The third session focuses on the basic psychological and physiological needs of love and belonging, joy, freedom, power and the continuity of life. This session includes three activities: Teacher Trainee Action Collage, Self - and Self-Portrait.

2.2 Resilient sub module


The Resilient sub-module includes the units of self-confidence, determination, peace of mind and feelings, perseverance and the philosophy that there is no silence or aloneness [49–51]. The structure of the activities is based on the themes that explain resilience. The fourth session, My Tree of Perseverance and My Journal as Teacher, relates to the compositions of self-Confidence, Purpose, Peace of Mind and Feelings. The fifth session, the activities Teacher's Body Map and I am a Teacher, is based on the theme of perseverance and the philosophy that there is no silence or loneliness. This session explores general behaviour, states the level in line with the client's wishes, discusses the client's options and identifies what the client wants to do.

2.3 Sub-module Attitude to Counselling

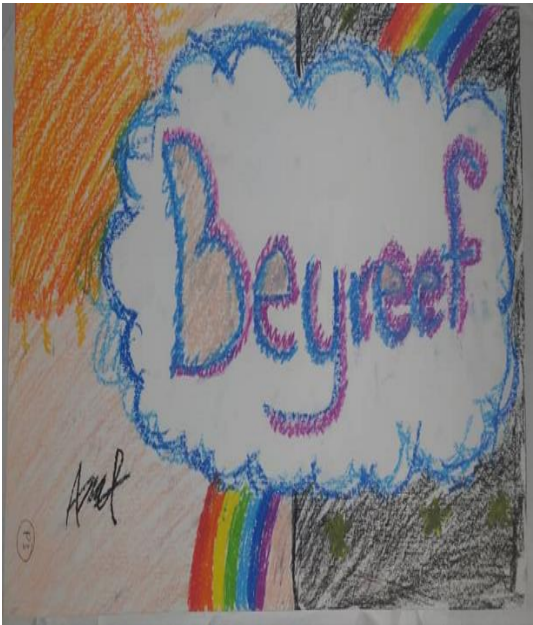
The Attitude to Counselling sub-module is the sixth session for determining attitude to planning and engagement [52–55]. Planning and commitment are the final steps that determine whether the behaviour change can take place within the specified time frame. This sub-module includes three activities: Teacher's Creative Plan, Teacher's Puppet and Self-Review.

IV. RESULT

Table 1. This is a table.

No	Activities	Result	Comment
1	Let's Follow Me The participants have to draw and make movements.		P3 explains: 'Very amusing. Can boost your confidence when speaking in front of a large audience' P5 explains: 'Singing, painting and dancing with a partner relieves stress and makes us happy together'
2	My Beautiful Name The participants have to write their own name and		P2 explains: 'Get to know other people, know the name privilege' P3 explains:

decorate it
according to their
creativity



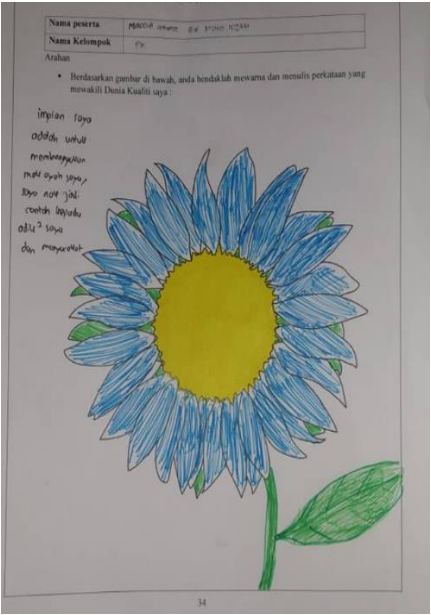
*'I have written the name
'Beyreef', which means in the
Kelantan accent'*

P6 explains:
*'The identification behind the
name 'Firdaus'
A deeper personality'*

My Good World!

3

Participants must
choose one of the
three types of
attachments
offered



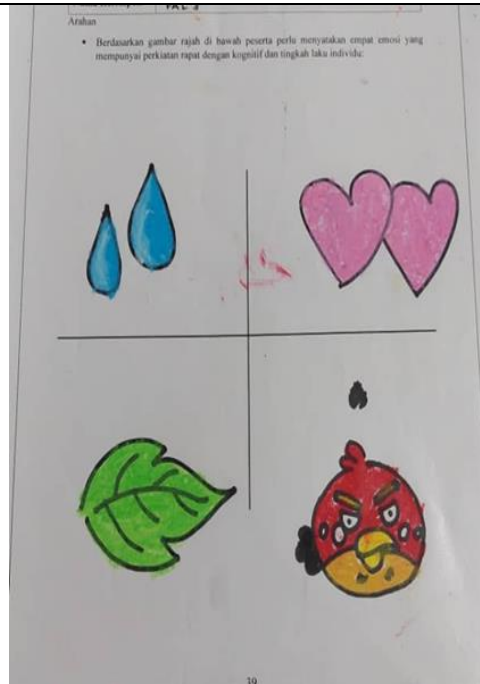
P4 explains:
*'Can strengthen my
determination and my dream to
fulfil my desire'*

P5 explains:
*'Can show examples and explain
the qualities that teachers must
have'*

P7 explains:
*'I write what you wish for a
better quality of life'*

Four Emotions

- 4 Participants must identify two positive and two negative emotions that influence thinking and behaviour.



P4 explains:
'Getting to know myself from an emotional aspect'

P6 explains:
*'Get to know your own emotions better
Deeply about every emotion'*

P7 explains:
'I know myself. These four emotions are what drive me to fight'

Sand World

- 5 The participants have to build a sand world based on the basic requirements in the form of symbols and metaphors that they select from the prepared miniatures.



P1 explains:
'I can express my feelings'

P4 explains:
'Can express things that have been hidden for a long time'

P7 explains:
'I can express my feelings'

Teacher Trainee Action Collage

- 6 Participants have to choose 3 psychological needs and two physiological needs based on the picture



P1 explains:
'Planning the future'

P4 explains:
'Can see the basic priorities in oneself'

P7 explains:
'I could recognise what I needed to become a teacher'

Self

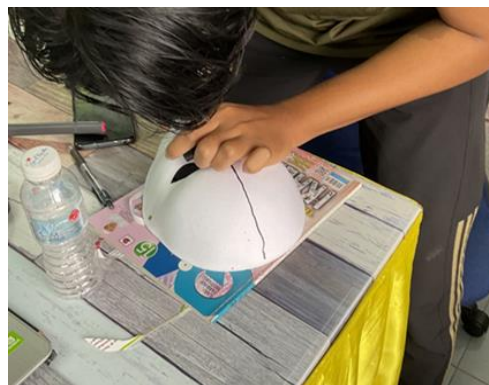
7 The participants must draw and decorate their inner and outer self on the prepared mask and represent their inner and outer self.



P3 explains:
'Can identify yourself more deeply. Love yourself'

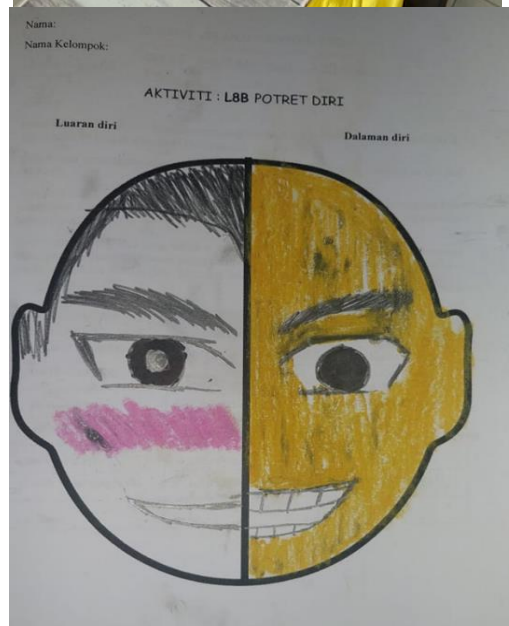
P6 explains:
'Identify someone's personnel in more depth'

P7 explains:
'It is fun and I have described my outer and inner state'



Self- Portrait

8 Participants must describe their true self, the self that is seen by others and the inner self that contains emotions and feelings that are not visible from the outside.



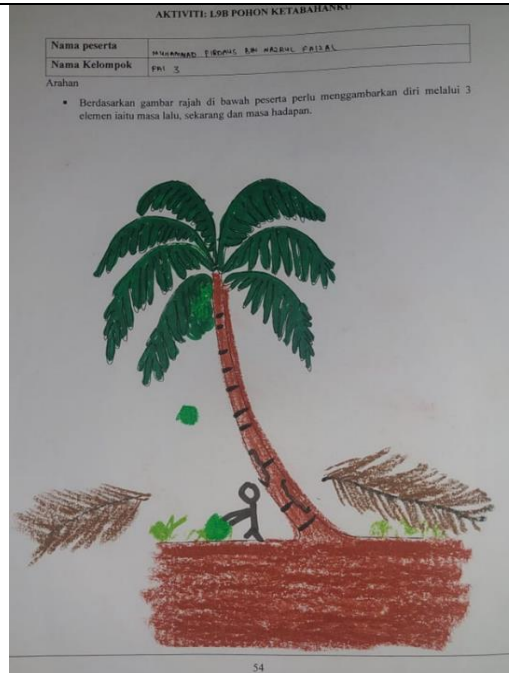
P1 explains:
'Recognise your inner shortcomings and others' opinions of you'

P3 explains:
'Can increase creativity Accept your shortcomings'

P7 explains:
'I recognize and other people's views of myself'

My Tree of Perseverance

9 In this activity, participants can get to know themselves through 3 main elements: the past, the present and the future.



P4 explains:

'This activity allows me to narrate my life from childhood to adulthood'

P6 explains:

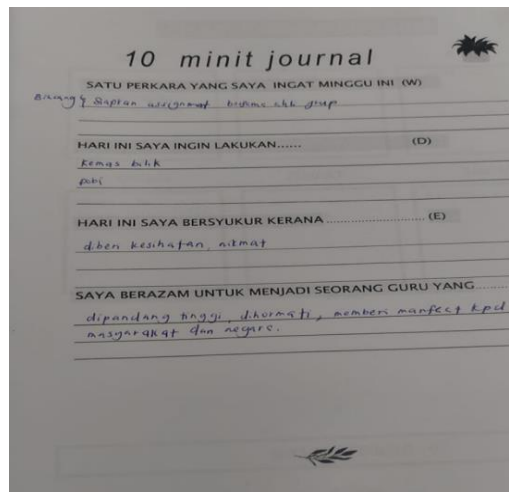
'Recognise the toughness that passes as in the past. Now and in the future'

P7 explains:

'I consider what happened in the past and in the present. I use these two components to shape my future'

My Journal as Teacher

10 Participants must express their thoughts in writing to identify physical controls, write a 10-minute diary and create a weekly action plan.



P2 explains:

'Know how to arrange a schedule, be more systematic'

P6

'Give motivation. Train to learn, organise material/time well'

P7 explains:

'I am organising my activities for next week. I have also seen my progress over the past week'

Teacher's Body Map

- 11 The participants explore the sensory body with coloured pencils, coloured paper, old magazines and newspapers.



P2 explains:

'Be inspired, the future is clearer, persevere to become a better teacher'

P6 explains:

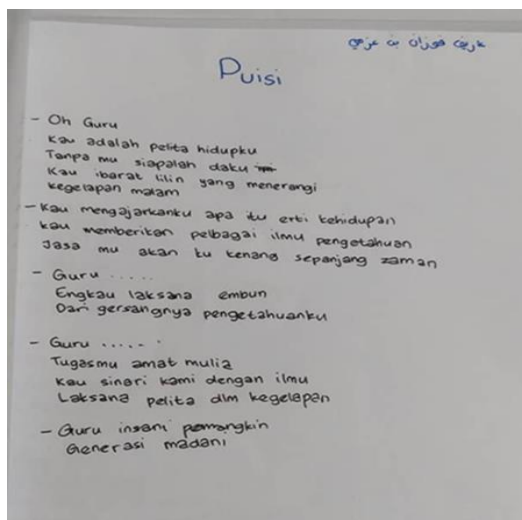
'Assertiveness for what you really want. (as a teacher trainer)'

P7 explains:

'I colour in the parts of my body that I think need to be emphasised. I can show my self-presentation'

I am a Teacher

- 12 Participants must write about themselves in the language of poetry and connect the inner and outer self.



P3 explains:

'Can write spontaneously
Generate ideas quickly'

P6 explains:

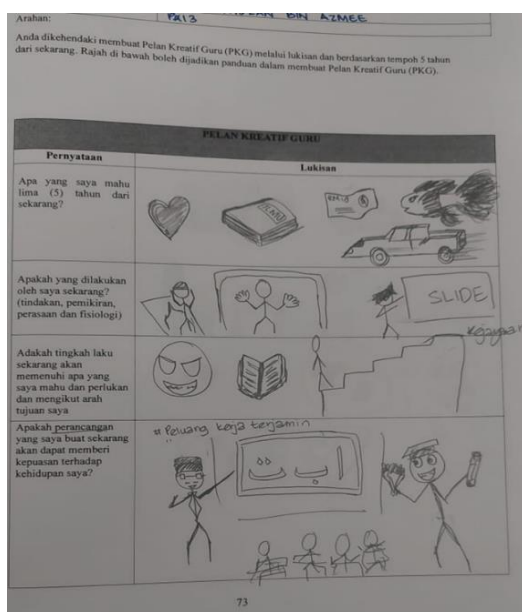
'Practise writing poetry.
Deepen the true purpose of being a teacher'

P7 explains:

'I express my desire to be a teacher by writing'

Teacher's Creative Plan

- 13 As prospective teachers, participants can make plans systematically, creatively and in writing.



P3: Explains

'Can plan to become an excellent teacher
Can draw'

P4 explains:

'Can draw plans for the future'

P7 explains:

'I found out what my goal was, to become an excellent teacher'

14

Teacher's Puppet

The participants have to make a teacher's dummy within the given time and decorate it according to their own creativity. This activity helps participants to make plans and realise that they need to make a change and strengthen their identity.



P3 explains:
'Can learn to sew.
Produces cute dolls'.

P4 explains:
'Can be creative in making dolls'

P6 explains:
'Learn to sew well.
Learn how society perceives the individual'

15

Self-Review

The self-verifacation review serves to confirm the will, action, evaluation and individual planning of the activities carried out in this module. Self-knowledge helps the individual to become more self-aware and to strive in a more positive direction.

PENILAIAN DIRI	
KEKUATAN DAN SUMBER YANG ADA	KELEMAHAN DIRI
SAYA MINAT JENI	LALAI
SAYA MINAT SUJER AGAMA	CUAI
BERDIKARI	KALUT
PANDAI BERCAKAP ^{DIN OFU} TAMAI	ANXIOUS
YAKIN	INSECURE

PERANCANGAN	
JANGKA PENDEK	JANGKA PANJANG
NAK 4 FLAT	KAHWIN
NAK PANDAI	ADA KERETA
LULUS 20 EXAM	ADA DUIT SENDIRI
JADI MANSIA ^{BERMAMAH}	JADI UNGU BERJAYA
JADI RUJUKAN RAKAN	JADI B BERJAYA

P2 explains:
'Able to identify and correct deficiencies'

P4 explains:
'Explaining my plans, strengths and weaknesses'

P6 explains:
'Recognising our true (personal) self-worth.
A deeper value'.

P7 explains:
'I set goals and what I need to do to achieve them'

² Teacher's Body Map adaptation template from (56)

The results of the study show that the Psychoeducational Module of Expressive Art Therapy achieved the objectives set by the researcher. However, based on the participants' comments and suggestions, the researcher needs to make some improvements. First, P3 suggested three things, namely a) to extend the duration of an activity to enjoy it longer, b) to provide more reference materials and time, and c) to offer the programme monthly. Next, P4 and P5 suggested a) organising more students, b) expanding the equipment for the Sand World activities so that more stories can be told, and c) adding masks for the Self activity. P6 suggested that programmes like this should be done in small groups as it allows them to pay attention to emotions and make games in digital form. Activities with

clay, puppets, collages and masks help participants to express their thoughts and feelings and reduce their self-rejection in the "Psychological counselling programme with semi-structured groups based on expressive activities" [57–60]. Moreover, people can express their thoughts and feelings more freely when they use puppets because they are free from social and psychological constraints.

Generally speaking, art therapy is seen as a "bottom-up" strategy for managing emotions; it starts with concrete experiences that are converted into mental pictures before focusing on behavior modification and cognitive comprehension. [57, 61]. This is shown by the experience of P5, who said 'Singing, painting and dancing with a partner relieves stress and makes us happy together'. Also in the second activity, 'My beautiful name', P6 explains: 'The identification behind the name 'Firdaus, a deeper personality'. The first 15 minutes of therapy are significant because they show that information about attachment styles, preferred ETC components and emotion regulation strategies is readily available. ETC theory states that people who seek therapy usually have a preferred method of processing information, which may be recognised by how they interact with media and how the first sessions are structured. Kinesthetic/sensory orientated clients are usually not interested in the finished artwork but use the art material to inspire actions or sensations. [57, 58, 61]. Firstly, when a person engages in creative activity (e.g. when they want to alleviate anxiety), the hopes and goals they have prior to their activity are referred to as their 'goal'. This can also be seen in the fourth activity, 'Four Emotions'. In this activity, P4 explains: 'Get to know me from an emotional point of view'. In contrast, P6 explains: 'Get to know your own emotions better and go deep into each emotion' and P7 explains: 'I know myself. These four emotions are what drive me to fight'. Secondly, the creative activity they choose to do in order to achieve this goal is called a "tactic" (e.g. painting for an hour). Third, the "strategy" describes the mental mechanism for controlling the emotions (e.g., diverting the subject's attention from their worry). Finally, the "mechanism" (i.e., the imaginary visual representation that fills their thoughts) mediates the induction of emotions. According to [61–63], this process leads to sensory, behavioural or emotional responses to the creative activity, which may indicate standard emotion regulation techniques [61].

V. CONCLUSION

A larger sample size is required to ensure that the results of this study can be generalised to the entire target group. The only participant in this study is a student teacher aged between 18 and 25 whose aim is to evaluate the applicability of the psychoeducational module Expressive Arts Therapy. By enhancing the human capital of student teachers at the Teacher Education Institute of Malaysia, this study can contribute to the knowledge of counselling and psychological counselling services to educate future generations. This study fills the gap in previous research by creatively exploring ideas and models and examining many variables. This is consistent with the findings of previous research. This article suggests that different attachment patterns can be identified in the first fifteen minutes of art therapy by observing the client's behaviour with art media, using the ETC components and interacting with the therapist [57–59, 61]. This contribution to the body of knowledge serves to educate and inform subsequent researchers who wish to address the same issues and concerns being investigated in the current study. To improve the effectiveness of the treatment components, subsequent research could consider increasing the duration and number of sessions according to the stage of development of the sample [57, 58]. Further research investigating the relationship between ETC expression style and attachment style could provide empirical support for these hypotheses. The relationships between attachment style preferences for ETC components and anxious or disorganised tendencies could also be illuminated by additional research. Investigating the relationship between insecure attachment patterns and overuse or underuse of certain ETC components would provide valuable insights. This knowledge could be used to develop effective strategies and techniques for art therapy interventions [61, 63].

This study supports counsellors in higher education, particularly at the Malaysian Teacher Education Institute, in organising group counselling sessions that address issues of mental health, resilience development and attitudes towards counselling. This finding is in line with previous research that has demonstrated the protective effect of supportive-expressive therapy on MS patients by reducing feelings of isolation, boosting their optimism and improving their overall quality of life. More specifically, the research findings suggest that people who participate in the intervention sessions have more hope, fewer feelings of loneliness and a higher standard of living than the control group [62, 63]. To summarise, it can be said that the self-concealment of the participants was effectively reduced by the kneading, writing, drawing and "I have a secret" activities. This is evident from the feedback and results of the semi-structured psychological group counselling programme, which focused on expressive activities [57–60, 64]. The results suggest that art therapy promotes a present-orientated awareness and reinforces the affective processes triggered by engagement with the material [58]. Art therapy is ideal for stimulating and regulating inner perceptions and emotions. The current study emphasises the significant impact of the medium of art in promoting positive outcomes. By conducting research, the development of this module can provide counsellors with a more systematic framework that focuses on students' problems. [65].

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