

“We are all mad here”: A Content Analysis of Facebook Posts and Comments about the Impact of the Fibre Arts on Mental Health and Wellness

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Source: Barbara Smith (image used with consent by artist)

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Author Note

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Abstract

This study focused on the fibre arts, including their social systems, and the way that they impacted those suffering from mental health disorders. Qualitative data were obtained from 9 Facebook groups to analyse how crafters with mental health disorders reported the impact of fibre arts and fibre arts communities on their mental wellbeing. The data confirmed the key finding that fibre arts are often used by people with mental health disorders as an occupational therapy because they have proven to be effective in boosting their mental wellbeing, while groups provide a supportive environment which inspires, motivates, and improves members' moods. The fibre arts have therapeutic potential but their use as therapy must be monitored, as obsessive behaviours may take over and cause mental, physical, and financial harm.

Introduction

Fibre arts have recently regained multi-generational popularity and there is a growing demand for various fibres (such as yarn and embroidery floss) and premium tools. Fibre arts include, but are not limited to, knitting, crochet, looming, weaving, embroidery, beadwork, cross-stitch, and sewing. A study by Backman, Brooks, Ta, and Townsend (2019) discussed five main benefits of knitting as an occupational therapy: improving happiness, providing creative challenges, encouraging social connections and skill development, asserting identity, and providing a creative outlet. Their findings supported the results of the 2013 international online survey performed by Riley, Corkhill and Morris. According to Lesser (2017), crafters reported exhibiting “improved cognitive abilities including problem-solving skills after participating in their chosen fibre arts” (p. 601). Another therapeutic aspect is the connection it can provide to

one's culture when using traditional methods. According to both Kirkman (2015) and Hanania (2018), connection to culture can help to provide a sense of identity, pride and comfort while fighting the symptoms of mental health disorders so the use of traditional practices is beneficial both due to the cultural connection and sense of community it provides, as well as the physical act itself. The use of fibre arts as an outlet for mental health is eloquently portrayed by Blakeman, Samuelson, and McEvoy (2013) in their posthumous analysis of an embroidery created by a non-verbal patient with schizophrenia. Finally, the social systems within fibre arts groups have shown to have a positive impact on members' mental health and wellbeing, as explored by Potter's 2017 ethnographic study on knitting groups. This information lends to the assertion that fibre arts can be an effective therapeutic tool for those suffering from mental illness. This study examined how the use of fibre arts as an occupational therapy may alleviate the symptoms of mental health disorders, and the effect of fibre arts communities on mood and wellbeing.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of Facebook posts and comments related to mental health disorders and the therapeutic use of fibre arts. Posts and comments were identified using searches performed within 9 fibre arts-themed Facebook groups already known to

the principal researcher (see Table 1) using keywords, including: "mental health," "mental health disorders," "mental wellbeing," "depression," "anxiety," "therapy," and "therapeutic." Facebook

Aran and Cable Knitting Group	Modern Hand Embroidery
Crafters With Mental Illness Overcoming Depression One Project at a Time	Snarky Crafters: Because Punching People Is Frowned Upon
Crochet Beginners Group	The Hart of Crochet
Everyday Knitter	WTFYW Just the Stitch
Mildly Offensive Fiber Artists (MOFA)	

Table 1: Facebook groups used as sources

was selected as a source as it is an easily accessible social network in the public domain which contains personal opinions and observations. All groups required an application filled out to join, an effort by the admin to reduce “trolls” and “spam” within the groups. Members of these groups were from an array of ages and skill levels, and they were predominantly female. The search resulted in many posts and comments containing declarations of the use of fibre arts as an occupational therapy and appreciation for the community’s support, as well as photos of art designed to express or discuss mental health.

Sample Selection

The posts and comments examined in this study were posted between 2018 and 2020. They were selected at random as they were chosen as they appeared in the search. Some chosen posts and comments contained images or emojis but most were entirely text. Posts containing details on the use of fibre arts as a therapy, the production of art meant to express mental health disorders, normalise mental illness, and reduce stigma, gratitude for the support and motivation provided by the community, and comments from the community providing support for people with mental health disorders were selected.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The first 275 posts and comments written between 2018 and 2020 found pertaining to knitting, crochet, looming, weaving, embroidery, beadwork, cross-stitch, and sewing in addition to references to mental health disorders in general or specific disorders found within the 9 Facebook fibre arts-themed groups were included. Any posts outside of the range of 2018 to 2020, as well as any posts or comments that did not contain references to the above-listed fibre arts as well as mental health disorders were excluded.

Units of Analysis

The units of analysis used for this study were the content of the selected 275 posts and comments regarding mental health disorders and the fibre arts.

Setting and Materials

Data collection took place in MacEwan University City Centre Campus as well as the principal researcher's home. The Internet was used to access the data retrieved from Facebook. A Facebook account was necessary because the primary researcher was already a member of the groups involved and these groups required an online form filled out in order to join.

Coding Procedure

Each post and comment was open-coded individually for keywords, phrases or constructs which expressed the person's thoughts and feelings on the pertaining topics. Codes were declarations of either general or specific mental health disorders and how fibre arts were used as therapy, the use of fibre arts as a way to express their mental health disorder or normalise it, the use of fibre arts to support others with mental health issues, and the impact of the fibre arts community on their mental health and statements of support from the community. As some posts or comments could fall under more than one of these types, they were coded under the most prominent theme expressed within the statement.

Design

Content analysis was used to identify recurring themes within posts and comments about fibre arts and mental health.

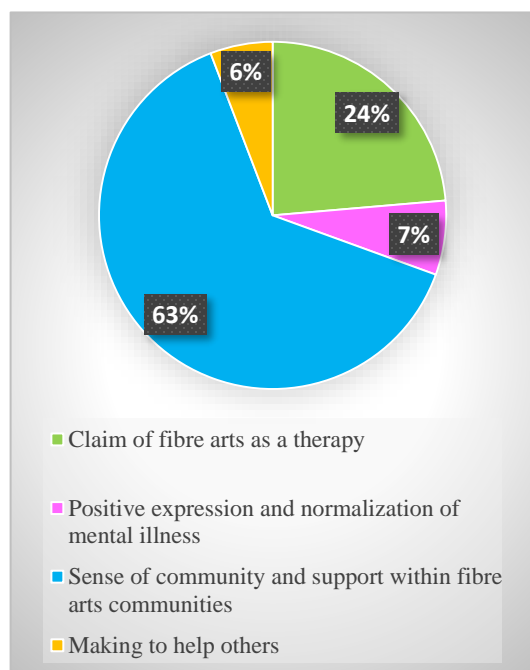


Figure 1: Content of posts and comments

Results

There were many people who either posted or commented expressing the thought that their selected craft is their *therapy* (see Figure 2). Some posted links to articles about the therapeutic value of crafting, as if to validate their views. Most people spoke about their experiences. This includes finding the rhythmic, repetitive work meditative and referring to it as “Zen”, what keeps them sane, their stress relief, or outright calling it their therapy (see

Figures 3 and 4). Many people stated that their chosen craft saved their life, a few people even citing that they had contemplated suicide. Depression and anxiety were by far the most common specific mental health disorders referred to but OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder), ADHD, PTSD, bipolar disorder, depression, anger, mania, BPD (borderline personality disorder), schizophrenia, schizotypal personality disorder, generalized panic disorder, hypochondria, social anxiety, trichotillomania (see Figure 4), agoraphobia, PPD and PPA (post-partum depression and

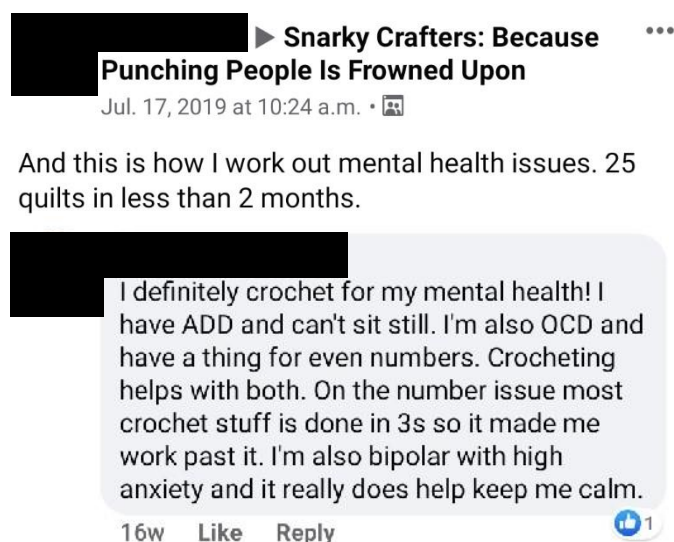


Figure 2: Quotes from Snarky Crafters (source: Facebook; used with consent from authors)



Figure 3: Quote from Snarky Crafters (source: Facebook; used with consent from author)

anxiety), and addictions were also mentioned. People commented on working with colourful yarns having an added impact on their mood. Many people claimed that they felt much happier during and after working on a project.

The third most common theme was *expression*. Fibre arts crafts were used to positively express the crafter's mental illness. This art could be

publicly displayed or shared to normalise and remove stigma surrounding mental illness. The process of creating an object that signifies something so personal and often difficult to explain verbally was considered cathartic. Additionally, these projects could be used as a personal reminder that the crafter was not alone in their suffering, to uplift them and cheer them up in desperate times, and to bring humor to a difficult subject. Examples of messages found contained motivational sayings, such as “good enough,” “I can,” “it’s okay not to be okay”, and “unstoppable”. Some members expressed a need to craft strictly for themselves, as they wanted to make their craft completely about self-care. Other members preferred their projects to consist of gifts.

The most common posts and comments were those regarding the role of fibre arts *communities* in members' mental wellbeing. This was demonstrated in the posts and comments which expressed gratitude for the group and the sense of community members experienced, as



Figure 4: Quote from Aran and Cable Knitting (source: Facebook; used with consent from author)

well as the motivation which the group provided. These posts were met with agreement, gratitude in turn, and more support (see Figure 5). There was a massive outpouring of support in almost every emotional situation. If a member posted about struggling with a project many

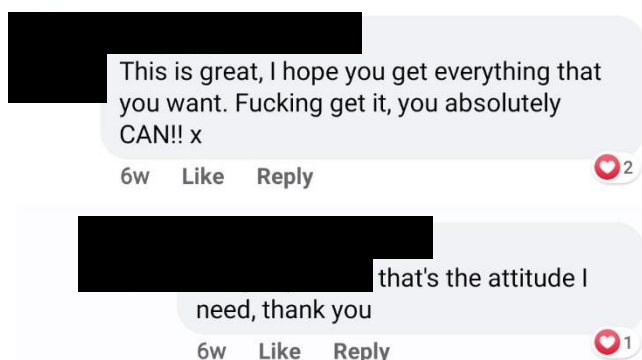


Figure 5: Quotes from MOFA (source: Facebook; used with consent from authors)

people would lend advice or encouragement. If a member said that they were struggling with their mental health people either tried to reassure them that their situation can improve or let them know that they were not alone. Sometimes people posted asking for this support (see Figure 6),

sometimes it was simply offered. On the other hand, people felt proud when they could give advice and help those who were struggling. This sense of community can expand past the groups as well, as when people crafted in public, they sometimes drew attention to themselves which began conversations with the people around them.

Finally, as the data were coded, an unexpected but important trend became apparent. Both people with or without mental health disorders used their crafting communities and their skills to *help* those with mental health



Figure 6: Quote from MOFA (source: Facebook; used with consent from author)

disorders. Fitting in all three other categories, the therapeutic act of crafting was engaged, there was a sense of community in helping others, and it was a positive expression of mental illness helping to end the stigma for someone else. Gifts were made as gestures toward friends and acquaintances, and sometimes even strangers, who were under stress or needed something to

help them with their mental wellbeing. One cross-stitch group held a challenge for its members to make small, uplifting images and sayings to be left in public places for people to find. Each had a note attached stating that it was a gift to improve the finder's day and make them smile.

Some people crafted to donate to charity or raise money for mental health programs. The "double sided bi-polar doll" (see Figure 7) was a cathartic reproduction of the maker's own mental health disorders. The dolls were sold, and the proceeds donated to charity to raise money for cancer research and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The dolls also helped



Figure 7: "double sided bi-polar doll" – by Genaphur Archer, 2020 (image used with consent from artist)

... erase stigma around mental health and normalise bipolar disorder. Another person who crocheted made a bipolar-themed teddy bear for a local childhood mental awareness charity auction. The final example led to a massive international endeavor called The Comfort Squared Project. The woman who started the project was inspired by her husband's experiences going in and out of psych wards because of his PTSD and schizoaffective disorder. Her goal was to support those with mental illnesses and those impacted by someone

else's mental illness. Makers mailed her crocheted or knit afghan squares and she sewed them together to make blankets. People were nominated and then awarded the blankets as well as encouraging and supportive notecards written by the community. Recipients were encouraged to pass along the positivity with provided blank cards and stamped envelopes.

Another way people used the fibre arts to help others was through the organization of programs and groups of their own. Some people encouraged those with mental illness to use the fibre arts to help themselves feel better based on their own success of using fibre arts as therapy. One person used crafting to face her own grief and was so successful she chose to become an art therapist. She gave her clients homework to be creative or expressive for 15-30 minutes every day in their choice of medium. Another crafter's workplace ran a Mental Health Network and she manned a knitting stall. Finally, others used their crafts to spread awareness. A quilter organized a "mental health recovery" art exhibit for a veteran's association hospital, and some teachers were encouraging their local school board to adopt craft groups for students with plans for retired teachers to teach knitting and crochet.



Figure 8: Quote from Snarky Crafters (source: Facebook; used with consent from author)

One *detriment* was reported as some people became consumed by their projects and forgot about self-care (see Figure 8). There was a range of problems this could cause. Some people were not taking the time to deal with personal hygiene by bathing or brushing teeth. Chores were often neglected and if living with others, especially children, the condition of the house quickly deteriorated. In extreme cases, people could fail to provide themselves with the

basic necessities of survival, for example forgetting to eat all day or resisting sleep. A common joke, but also a truth in the knitting and crochet community, is the never-ending “just one more row.” In addition, this obsessive behaviour can also translate to financial difficulties. People with mental health disorders are prone to impulse control issues and premium fibre arts supplies can be very expensive. Compulsive purchasing can quickly build up into overspending and debt.

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Comment and post examples</u>
Fibre arts is therapy	I use my craft (crochet and knit mostly) as I suffer from hypochondria .. and thinking about other things stops my mind from wandering to thoughts I dont want to have. Definitely great for my mental health!
Positive expressions of mental illness	Just finished stitching a fuck you to my anxiety and the negativity that it fills my head with. I'm attempting a career change, it's hard. I made this to remind me all of all things I can do.
Using fibre arts social systems as support for mental illness	Your work is amazing I hope you can find ways to keep at it!! You got this use your tools to help you through the hard moments and you'll manage through what you're going through. Always reach out for support if you need it or text 741741.
Using fibre arts to help others with mental illness	Hey MOFAs, I've been doing a series of mental health focused embroideries. The last one was 'self-care is not selfish'. I'm trying to make sure they really resonate with people when they need them most. What are your personal mantras? Ideally I'll be making them all to exhibit as a challenge to the stigma around talking about mental health. Pic of one of the others for attention 😊
Detrimental impact of fibre arts	me!! oh me!! if I start a project I have a hard time pausing until it's done. I too will neglect feeding and hold my pee forever. I do have OCD/Anxiety though and it explains a lot. But my art is definitely a saving grace for me.

Table 2: Comments and posts exemplifying the themes of the 5 main observations, all used with permission from authors.

Discussion

People who said fibre arts is their therapy

“Destroying those bad mental health gremlins one geeky logo at a time,” was how one maker spoke of their Star Trek-themed embroidery project. Many people reported finding the fibre arts therapeutic. The soothing process improved their mood and helped to alleviate symptoms of mental health disorders. For example, Corkhill, Morris, and Riley’s (2013) study found that people who knitted more than 3 times per week experienced a significant increase in their feelings of happiness and calmness because of the meditative, rhythmic nature of knitting. Negative thoughts and feelings were pushed aside as knitters focused on counting and achieving their end-product (Backman, Brooks, Ta, and Townsend, 2019). Choice of pattern made a difference as selecting simple patterns allowed people to relax into a meditative state whereas more complex patterns helped to distract, occupy, and enhance the sense of pride after producing a highly detailed craft (Corkhill, Morris, & Riley, 2013). A repetitive rhythm is involved in the process of making all fibre arts-related crafts, so it is plausible that other arts would produce the same effects as knitting. Fibre selection also played a significant role depending on the craft, as people reported that using bright, cheerful colours helped to improve their mood (see Figure 9), although one study found that it was more common for people to find texture soothing rather than colour.

According to Backman, Brooks, Ta, and Townsend (2019), there was a great a sense of accomplishment reported after creating something with one’s hands and learning skills, whether it was new techniques or new crafts. Fibre arts were perceived by the crafter as a productive use of time, making them feel useful and like what they were doing mattered. In the data gathered

there were no reports of frustration with peoples' crafts but negative feelings would have become more likely if they made mistakes or found difficulty in learning a new technique, or if their craft was also their source of income (Corkhill, Morris, & Riley, 2013), and frustrations would usually be short-lived (Backman, Brooks, Ta, and Townsend, 2019). All the qualities described are good for stress management for anyone but can be especially beneficial for people with mental illness as feeling calm, happy, productive, and useful may assist in helping to alleviate their symptoms and help their mental wellbeing.

People who used fibre arts as a positive way of expressing their mental illness, to normalise mental illness, and to remove attached stigma

Analysis of a Silent Voice: A Qualitative Inquiry of Embroidery Created by a Patient with Schizophrenia by Blakeman, Samuelson and McEvoy provided a unique perspective in telling the story of a non-verbal patient with schizophrenia who expressed herself through embroidery, her only means of communication, and explained how posthumous analysis of her work was a window into her mind; in other words, their paper was a description of the use of fibre arts as a positive outlet for

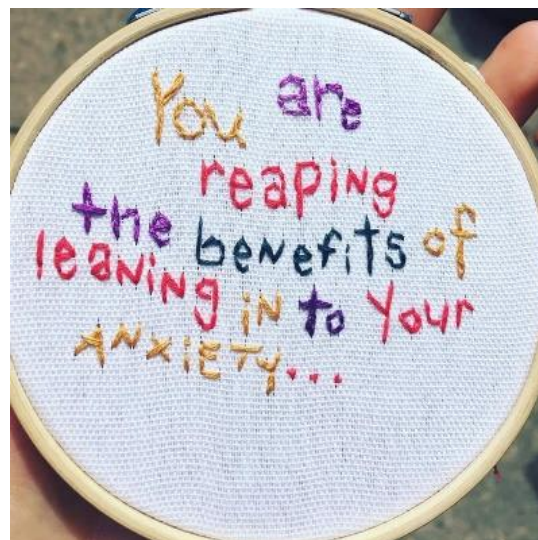


Figure 9: "You are reaping the benefits of leaning into your anxiety..." – by Sarah Fox, 2019 (image used with consent from artist)

mental health (2013). Beyond claiming fibre arts as a form of therapy, some people used fibre arts to physically represent their mental health problems (see Figure 10). Finding the right pattern to express a feeling or interest provided a creative outlet and method of self-expression, and designing a unique pattern further boosted confidence (Hanania, 2017). As in the case of the non-verbal patient with schizophrenia, works produced by people with mental health problems

may be used to analyse and potentially find a better understanding of their experiences, even if it is difficult for them to express in words.



Figure 10: “Take your meds you kooky bitch” – by Rainbow Rames, 2019 (image used with consent from artist)

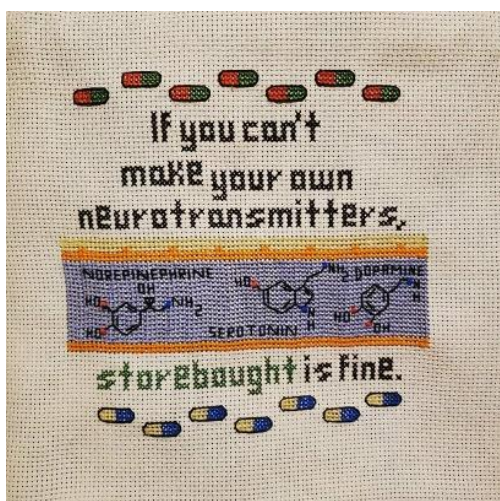


Figure 11: “If you can’t make your own neurotransmitters, storebought is fine.” – by Haley Anger, 2020 (image used with consent from artist)

There were multiple examples of crafters making themselves uplifting and inspiring art to cheer themselves up in times of need. This use of the fibre arts was beneficial in that it served two purposes: the therapeutic nature of creating the image, and the physical reminder that they could produce something beautiful and motivating. Some products served as a literal reminder to do something beneficial for their mental health, such as taking their mental health medications (see Figure 10). Finally, some crafters were able to use their skills to create a product that found the humour in their mental health disorders (see Figure 11). All 3 of these physical manifestations serve to normalise mental health disorders. When a crafter who takes medications, for example, displays that they are not embarrassed or ashamed by making one such piece of art, it shows others who see it that they are not alone and should not be ashamed either. It also helps people

who do not suffer from mental health disorders see that those who do should not be made to feel ashamed, thereby ending stigma.

One final aspect of using fibre arts in a productive way was motivation. First, there were those who typically produced items for self-care purposes. Making themselves a comfortable sweater or a soft stuffed animal to cuddle showed themselves that they were deserving of these

comforting items as well as worth the time and effort it took to make them. Secondly, there were other people who preferred their projects to consist mainly of gifts. They described making gifts as productive and satisfying as there was a sense of pride in gifting something made from the heart with skill and talent. As Corkhill, Morris and Riley found in their study, “being able to make ‘gifts for others’ ... was associated with being content and ‘less materialistic’ [and] ‘bringing creativity into daily life’” (2013, p. 55).

The role of social systems within fibre arts groups in members’ mental health and wellbeing

Most posts and comments found in the fibre arts groups were either seeking or providing support. Members of fibre arts groups typically experienced increased confidence and a sense of belonging (Corkhill, Morris, & Riley, 2018). Lesser’s (2017) study found that in group settings “respondents predominantly identified feeling happier, enjoyed learning new skills from others, enhanced coping skills, and improved social and communication skills” (p. 601). He described Duffy’s 2007 study in a women’s drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre consisting primarily of African American adult women who met every week to knit together for 2 hours. Lesser (2017) quoted Duffy as saying the program gave the women hope, self-esteem, encouraged creativity and fostered connection within the milieu as well as the external community. These findings were similar to the data gathered from the online groups and, as Corkhill, Morris and Riley (2013) observed in their study, in-person or online groups provided similar feelings.

Posts and comments containing thanks for support, motivation, and a sense of belonging were very common and the sentiment was consistently reciprocated. Respondents would express their appreciation for the sense of belonging and continue to offer support to the original poster

or commenter. Supportive comments could be found in response to every post and comments analysed which displayed negative emotions or requests for help, whether it was advice regarding difficult patterns or techniques, or uplifting words in difficult times or when mental health disorders were affecting mood and motivation. As Brooks, Townsend, Ta, and Backman (2019) reported, knitting groups (or fibre arts groups in general) were places for like-minded people to connect, socialize, and learn from each other. Many participants in their study expressed how helpful the knitting community was to them. This also had benefit to those helping, as the ability to mentor and help others built confidence and offered a sense of pride in their skills. Mentors were highly regarded in the community as their contributions to learning new skills and products were considered quite valuable (Brooks, Townsend, Ta, & Backman, 2019).

The sense of community was not entirely located within fibre arts groups alone. According to Brooks, Townsend, Ta and Backman, “[k]nitting with family, friends, or colleagues or in public (e.g., while on the bus or in a coffee shop) opened up conversations; even strangers would ask what they were knitting” (2019, p. 120). In addition, when family members historically took part in the current crafter’s choice of fibre art it fostered cross-generational connections which may have been otherwise difficult due to age differences or even mortality (2019). An example such as receiving an heirloom blanket made by a deceased family member and being able to recognise the techniques and stitches involved in its production would help the crafter connect to this relative even if they had never had the opportunity to meet. Depending on their skill level, the crafter could potentially go so far as to attempt to reproduce the blanket, creating an even stronger connection.

Unanticipated Result: People who used their craft to help others with mental health disabilities

The unexpected trend which emerged was that people were frequently using the fibre arts to help those with mental disorders, whether or not they themselves suffered from mental health disorders. “Knitters explained that giving back to others sustained their sense of well-being and mental health. When [their fibre arts group] organized some charitable giving, some participants were so active in knitting for charity that it occupied a large proportion of their time...” (Brooks, Townsend, Ta & Backman, 2019, p. 118). This involved all 3 themes discussed: crafting was therapeutic; depending on the content, it could help to normalise and end stigma; and, there was a sense of community in helping others. Making for others could take the form of gifts or donations or products made to raise money for charity. The “double sided bi-polar doll” (see Figure 7) made to raise proceeds for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention was an example of a maker taking inspiration from their own mental health disorders and using it to help others suffering from mental health issues, whereas the Comfort Squared Project showed a crafter who did not have mental health disorders trying to help those who do.

The “bi-polar dolls” also normalised bipolar disorder, helping those who suffer from it to feel less alone and outcast. As observed with Figures 9, 10, and 11, these images find the humour within the crafters’ own mental health disorders. Sharing them allowed others to see that they were not alone in their struggle. The sharing of these images also helped to spread awareness of these mental health disorders to people who do not suffer from them. Because mental health disorders can be very difficult to verbalise, having a physical representation to help explain their experiences may promote understanding and tolerance.

The second way that people used the fibre arts to help others was the implementation of programs by members of the fibre arts community. Recognising the therapeutic value of the fibre arts, people within the community often attempted to build their own therapy programs.

Hanania's (2018) report itself was a request to establish programs for Syrian refugee women to perform traditional Syrian fibre arts such as sewing, knitting, and most importantly, embroidery.

The request was based on the success seen in art therapy programs for refugee children. An important aspect of these programs was the building of communities in their new home. As observed and discussed within the "social systems" theme we have established that fibre arts groups are an effective place to build tight-knit communities, and where support and encouragement are readily accessible. Kirkwood (2015) also discussed the success of programs using the fibre arts as therapy when speaking about the Rāanga Harakeke (traditional Māori weaving with flax) programs in place in New Zealand. The traditional cultural aspect speaks to the role of the fibre arts establishing multigenerational connections. As Kirkwood explained, fibre arts when used as an occupational therapy can be "... used to assist low arousal functioning or a high level of arousal as a tool to help the system to become alert or calm, providing a 'just-right' balance" (2015, p. 43).

The potentially detrimental impact of fibre arts

Although not commonly found amongst the data collected, there were some reports that the fibre arts could be potentially detrimental to their health and wellbeing. Because people with mental health disorders may be prone to obsessive behaviour, some crafters found that they became engrossed in their projects to a harmful degree. Some reported that they were unable to walk away from their projects to use the washroom until it was impossible not to. There were also reports that self-care activities felt like "a waste of time" when compared to the crafts, meaning

that some would neglect their personal hygiene. More commonly, chores were also forgotten while engaged in a project, leading to disarray within the household. As a clean and organised living space is imperative to those with mental health disorders, failing to keep things tidy could negatively impact their mental wellbeing. If children are present, neglect of the home could have potentially dire consequences in terms of safety and feelings of guilt could be experienced by the crafter for not taking better care of their family, thereby impacting their mental health even further. Interpersonal relationships can be challenged due to an unkept household, as well as lacking communication with those around the crafter. In more extreme cases, obsessive fibre artists may forget to eat and drink, or resist sleeping. Obsessive behaviour may also lead to impulse control, a common issue for those with mental health disorders, which may lead to financial difficulties as fibre artists continue to buy more supplies than necessary. Some have stashes in boxes or racks from floor to ceiling, an amount of yarn unlikely to be used within a lifetime. Premium fibre arts supplies and tools are very expensive and it can be difficult to walk away from something so beautiful or feels so soft, or that has so much potential. This line of thinking and unchecked behaviour can quickly lead to debt. For these reasons, in extreme situations it is important for the use of fibre arts as therapy to be monitored, to help mitigate these issues.

Finally, it is important to note that there were some limitations to this study. Using the Internet as a source of data created a bias as users tended to be younger and English-speaking. Because some sentiments were open to interpretation (for example, while a comment seemed constructive or supportive, it could be interpreted as sarcastic, or may have been a case of “one-upping” or interpreted as an unnecessary criticism) or could mean more than one thing (for example, some posters claim their art is a therapy while also thanking the group for their

support) it was impossible to disaggregate. Due to the emergence of the unexpected results about making to support others, some of the data needed to be re-coded. If this study is further explored in the future it would be helpful to increase the data pool by including real-world fibre arts groups as well as those in online groups. Another data aspect of the fibre arts that would be informative would be the addition of data involving people of specific cultures practicing traditional fibre arts relative to their culture. A larger sample as well as a longitudinal study with surveys and online and in-person interviews would be beneficial. If the sample were increased the study would also benefit from the involvement of multiple researchers.

Conclusion

The results confirmed the proposed hypothesis; many crafters with mental health disorders used the fibre arts as therapy and to boost their mental wellbeing. Kirkwood (2015) discussed the use of Rāanga Harakeke as a sensory modulation form of occupational therapy which yielded positive results in both New Zealand's Whangarei Hospital's psychiatric unit and in community-led mental health programs. Hanania (2018) explained the importance of traditional embroidery practices to Syrian women and outlined the success rates of creative arts therapy for Syrian refugee children. The data gathered supported these results. Based on the success of programs such as these, more programs should be made available. Proposals such as Hanania's suggestion to provide Syrian refugee women access to crafting supplies, including embroidery, knitting, weaving, crochet, and sewing, would help to alleviate "PTSD, depression, and anxiety symptoms among refugees who have witnessed or experienced war-related violence" (2018, p. 34). The large array of mental health disorders encountered in this study showed how far-reaching the therapeutic effects of fibre arts could be. However, if more programs are implemented, they will need to be monitored as any other form of therapy would be. As mentally beneficial as the fibre

arts may be, the finding that people can sometimes become obsessed and forget to take care of themselves serves as a reminder that it is important for either a professional to monitor the use of fibre arts within programs, or for individuals themselves to maintain self-awareness so that a therapeutic activity does not become a detriment to one's physical and mental health.

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