

| *Creative Circle Group Plan* |

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Rationale

The Creative Circle Group Plan Rationale

For some, invisible forces constantly creep in as silent structures that challenge our perception. Neurodivergent individuals experience a kind of invisible struggle with subterranean social expectations, creating a pattern of hurtles. These individuals appear neurotypical and present as intelligent, passionate, driven, and exhibit social responsibility and sensitivity, yet they experience severe challenges that affect the trajectory of their lives. What if neurodivergent individuals could see and visualize these invisible constructs using creative and expressive interventions? This rationale explores the efficacy of a neurodiverse, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) focused counseling group surrounding creative expression and social justice at the size of 9 members for a 6-12-month period. This group will address the unique challenges faced by adults with ADHD, focusing on creative practice using theoretical frameworks surrounding person-centered, existential, and EMDR approaches to provide holistic support.

Statistics, Correlations, Prevalence

Individuals with ADHD receive 20,000 more corrections than a neurotypical individual by age 12 from education alone (Dodson, 2022; Jellinek, 2010). ADHD affects 2–6% of the global population and can be found in 5–7% of children (Abdelnour et al., 2022). Women with ADHD face stigmatization and social discrimination, along with various social, academic, and psychological challenges. (Morley & Tyrrell, 2023). These challenges with systemic forces can result in higher rates of social anxiety, depression, and professional underachievement (Bunford et al., 2015). ADHD has higher rates of comorbidity, including (52%), anxiety (33%), depression (17%), and autism (14%)(Abdelnour et al., 2022). Adults with ADHD struggle with severe, unrecognized key symptoms with life-altering consequences.

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria

95% of individuals with ADHD experience Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD), which is a prevalent condition characterized by extreme emotional sensitivity, dysregulated emotion, and pain triggered by perceived or actual rejection, criticism, or feedback (Dodson, 2005; Dodson, 2016; Dodson, 2022; Dodson, 2023; Ginapp et al., 2023). Emotional symptoms are persistent and common in adults with ADHD and cause significant impairments, including emotional impulsivity (EI) and deficient emotional self-regulation (DESR)(Faraone et al., 2019). Emotional dysregulation is prevalent among individuals with ADHD, leading to difficulties in social interactions and professional performance (Shaw et al., 2014). Systematic correction, social disconnection, isolation, and distrust pose significant hurdles, including decreased self-esteem and reduced quality of life, where group counseling could help fulfill an important role (Massoodi, 2024; Wehmeier, 2010; Wilens & Dodson, 2004).

ADD versus ADHD and RSD

Research indicates that Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is indeed prevalent among individuals with ADHD (Dodson, 2023). Some still interchange the terms ADD and ADHD, but the American Psychiatric Association removed the term ADD from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* in 2013 (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The two diagnoses (ADD and ADHD) are now considered interchangeable. Studies and clinical observations suggest that the emotional regulation challenges inherent in ADHD contribute significantly to the experience of RSD (Dodson, 2023). The impact on individuals with the inattentive type of ADHD may not exhibit the hyperactive or impulsive behaviors commonly associated with hyperactivity; however, they still face challenges related to attention and emotional regulation (Dodson, 2023). These challenges can lead to heightened sensitivity to rejection and criticism, contributing to experiences of RSD (Dodson, 2023). Emotional dysregulation is considered one of the core components of ADHD and can manifest as heightened sensitivity to rejection and criticism (Dodson, 2016). This concept is valid for all presentations of ADHD, including the predominantly inattentive type (formerly known as ADD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Group Outcome Research and Nonverbal Expression

Cultivating a creative community of connectedness can promote development and awareness (Gladding, 2015; Gladding, 2020). Addressing ADHD through creative practice is crucial for improving quality of life and

facilitating emotional and social development (Gladding, 2020). Artistic and expressive therapies provide non-verbal means of expression, particularly beneficial for those facing impulsivity and attention challenges. These therapies offer a structured environment for processing emotions, bolstering self-esteem and confidence often diminished by social and academic difficulties (Gladding, 2015). Malchiodi (2005) highlights the holistic nature of expressive therapies, which incorporate various forms of creative expression to release tangled emotions, promoting self-awareness and emotional control by strengthening the mind-body connection. Moon (2009) emphasizes art-based group therapy's significance, providing crucial social interaction opportunities for developing social skills and reducing feelings of isolation (Gladding, 2020). In group settings, participants benefit from peer support and shared complex experiences, fostering a sense of belonging, and collaborative creative activities encourage communication and cooperation, essential for emotional and social functioning (Gladding, 2020). The therapeutic group environment offers a safe space for experimenting with new behaviors and coping strategies, aiding emotional regulation and social development (Gladding, 2020; Moon, 2009). Integrating creative and expressive therapies into treatment plans for ADHD is vital for managing emotional regulation, with structured art activities helping practice impulse control in supportive settings and the calming effect of art reducing stress and anxiety, common comorbidities with ADHD that exacerbate emotional dysregulation (Gladding, 2015; Malchiodi, 2005; Moon, 2009).

Evaluation of Visual Expressive Therapies

The study by Slayton, D'Archer, and Kaplan (2010) considers a comprehensive evaluation of the efficacy of art therapy through an analysis of various outcome studies. Key factors highlighted include the therapeutic benefits of art therapy in improving mental health outcomes across diverse populations and settings. The review emphasizes that art therapy significantly enhances emotional expression, reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improves overall psychological well-being (Slayton et al., 2010).

Efficacy of ADHD and Art Therapy

In one study by Habib & Ali (2015), the use of art therapy decreased the symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and improved the individual's self concept (Habib & Ali, 2015). Castelnau et al. (2017) explored art therapy to increase self-esteem, which resulted in promising opportunities for individuals with ADHD (Castelnau et al., 2017).

Significance of Art as Expressive Tool

Gladding (2015) asserts that the health of a society can be measured through works of art. Artistic experiences often lead to more unified and meaningful lives for individuals, whether they are the creators or the observers (Maslow, 1991). Art can be described as shapes and ideas arranged into images found in the world of objects (Gladding, 2015; Mc-Coneghey, 2003). On the other hand, the visual arts are defined as processes within the realm of art that focus on visually representing reality symbolically or otherwise (Gladding, 2015). The visual creative arts include a wide variety of media that connect with the senses, like painting, drawing, collage, photography, and sculpture (Malchiodi, 2011; Shechtman & Perl-Dekel, 2000).

Gladding (2015) mentions that expressive visual therapies are another way to track pathways into the unconscious (Orton, 1997). Deep insight is crucial to the expressive therapeutic process, and treatment of each individual relies on obtaining the client's own interpretations of their symbolic artistic images (Orton, 1997). Jourard (1971) draws a powerful parallel between human life and the work of an artist. He posits that human life is a journey of metamorphosis akin to an artist who shapes an empty canvas or formless clay into pleasing forms (Gladding, 2015). Initially, the artwork exists solely in the artist's mind. However, upon completion, this personal vision is transmuted into a public perception, a testament to the profound transformative power of art in human life (Gladding, 2015).

Creative Interventions, Creative Practice, and Expressive Arts

Gladding (2015) mentions numerous creative art approaches that can be used effectively across the lifespan of different age groups. Common artistic therapeutic activities and exercises include *Visual Journaling*, *Altered Books*, *Phototherapy*, *Photographs and Imagery*, *Serial Drawings*, *Sun/Cloud/Tree*, and *Draw a Circle* (Gladding, 2015). In addition, Gladding (2015) also mentions activities that can allow individuals to work symbolically, like *Symbolically Recreating a Problematic Life Situation*, *Systematic Desensitization*, *Incorporating Pain into Life Rather Than Fighting it* (which references existential ideas). Activities like *Problem-Solving Daydreams*, *Depression and Imagery*, *Common Object*, *Creating Emotional States*, and *Feeling Tapestry* help group members address emotional awareness, trauma, and stress. In addition, incorporating music, the senses, and somatic sensations can help with awareness (Instones

et al., 2018). Artistic units include *Internal Body and Neighborhood Sounds*, *Storytelling and Music*, and *Counselor-Selected Music*. Group activities include the *Rainbow* and *Group Mural* exercises (Gladding, 2015).

Social and Cultural Concerns

In a counseling group for individuals with ADHD, addressing multicultural and socio-cultural concerns is crucial to ensure effective and inclusive support (American Psychological Association, 2017). Cultural norms and expectations can significantly influence perceptions and management of ADHD, with varying degrees of stigma and acceptance affecting participants' openness to discussion (Sue & Sue, 2016; Barkley, 2015; Hinshaw, 2005). Diverse parental and educational approaches further shape experiences, necessitating culturally sensitive practices in behavior management (Chang et al., 2023). Communication styles, including language barriers and nonverbal communication differences, can impact group dynamics and interactions (Ponce et al., 2006; Hall, 1989). Additionally, disparities in healthcare access and educational support among marginalized communities highlight the need for tailored interventions and resources (Mandell et al., 2010; Ferri & Connor, 2005). Training group leaders in cultural competence and promoting inclusive practices are essential for addressing these diverse needs (Hays, 2008). Understanding the intersectionality of multiple identities, such as race, gender, and socio-economic status, further informs the development of customized interventions that respect and respond to the unique experiences of each participant (Crenshaw, 1991; Matlin et al., 2011).

Formal Diagnosis and Screening

Applicants will be screened with an ADHD screening tool, and an RSD screening tool, *Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria: Symptom Test for ADHD Brains* by Dr. William Dodson (Dodson, 2023). An ADHD diagnosis is a lifelong diagnosis due to ADHD being a cognitive structural difference in brain (Dodson, 2023). Participants should have a formal ADHD diagnosis in the last 20 years.

Group Concept, Group Structure, Size, Timing and Recruitment

The Creative Circle is a neurodiverse counseling group concept that uplifts a community of neurodiverse individuals and uses creative practice as a tool for expression and normalization. This counseling group will specialize in ADHD individuals experiencing Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD). The proposed group aims to address the dual challenges of ADHD and emotional dysregulation in adults by providing a structured, supportive environment for existential exploration, self-acceptance, and trauma processing. Grounded in *Existential Therapy*, *Person-Centered Therapy*, and *EMDR*, the group will equip participants with the tools to manage their symptoms, acknowledge and improve emotional regulation, and enhance their overall well-being. The group will comprise 8-9 adult female members with small groups to ensure an optimal balance between group dynamics and individual attention. Group counseling research suggests that small groups are more effective for therapeutic interventions as they allow for meaningful interactions and personalized feedback (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). The timing of group sessions will include weekly 90-minute sessions over a 6–12-month period and will be held in the evening hours to accommodate the schedules of adult participants. The theoretical framework will *connect Art-based group therapy, Person-Centered therapy, Existential concepts, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, creating a rich approach for addressing ADHD and emotional dysregulation* (Elliott et al., 2013; Ho et al., 2017; Murdock, 2017; Rogers, 1951; Shapiro, 2017; Van Deurzen, 2012). The focus of the group will be normalizing neurodiverse traits and creative expression in adults with neurodiverse challenges. The setting of the group will be a private counseling practice in Greensborough, NC. There will be a screening process, and the population will include members who are female, are diagnosed with ADHD in the last 20 years and have generally similar functioning and challenges. The size of the group will be 8-9 adult members. The length of sessions will be 90 minutes. Using a screening process, members will be recruited through word of mouth, social media, local workplaces, mental health clinics, and community centers.

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Group Objectives

__1. Enhance Emotional Regulation: Equip participants with creative practices to enhance emotional regulation and manage Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD). Integrate Existential Therapy, Person-Centered Therapy, and EMDR techniques to support complex trauma processing and overall psychological well-being.

__2. Foster Self-Acceptance and Intrapersonal Growth: Use artistic expression to help group members understand their neurodivergent thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Foster self-acceptance by creating a supportive environment that normalizes neurodiverse traits, enhancing self-identity, self-esteem, and confidence through reflection and feedback.

__3. Acceptance and Normalization of ADHD/Neurodivergent Traits: Increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of ADHD and neurodivergent experiences, promoting acceptance and normalization within the group.

__4. Nonverbal Coping Mechanisms: Provide nonverbal self-expression and emotional regulation outlets to enhance self-esteem and self-acceptance. Use art-based and expressive therapies to develop effective coping strategies for managing ADHD symptoms and reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.

__5. Promote Creative Expression: Encourage the use of diverse creative mediums for self-expression, emotional release, and personal insight, helping participants navigate their neurodiverse experiences.

__6. Improved Relationships and Sense of Community: Facilitate sharing of artistic experiences to develop empathy, understanding, and connection among group members. Enhance social interaction skills, promote communication, and reduce isolation, fostering a strong sense of community and improved relationships.

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Informed Consent

Introduction: We extend an invitation for you join *The Creative Circle* counseling group combining artistic practice with discussions on self-awareness, relationships, and personal growth. This document contains important information about the group, its purpose, and what you can expect. Please read this document carefully and please feel free to ask questions before deciding whether to participate.

Purpose of the Group: *The Creative Circle* aims to provide a supportive and creative space for individuals with ADHD and other neurodivergent traits to explore and express their experiences through artistic practice. The group will focus on enhancing self-awareness, building relationships, and fostering personal growth.

Group Format: *The Creative Circle* group will meet weekly for 90 minutes at *The Creative Circle* in Greensborough, NC. Each session will include both individual and collaborative artistic activities, guided discussions, and artwork sharing. Participation in group activities is voluntary, and you can engage at your comfort level.

Limits of Confidentiality: Confidentiality is an essential aspect of the counseling process. However, there are limits to confidentiality that you should be aware of:

1. If there is imminent risk of harm to yourself or others, confidentiality may be breached to ensure safety.
2. If there is suspicion of child abuse or neglect, confidentiality may be breached to protect the welfare of a minor.
3. If information is subpoenaed by a court of law, confidentiality may be breached to comply with legal requirements.

Benefits and Risks: Participating in this group may help you gain a deeper understanding of your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors related to your neurodivergence. It may also help you develop coping skills, improve self-esteem, and build relationships with others who share similar experiences. However, risks such as feeling uncomfortable or triggered by specific topics or activities may involve risks. It is essential to communicate any concerns you have with the group facilitators.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this group is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw, you are not obligated to provide a reason. As you consider this group as a possibility it is important that you know that your decision will be kept confidential and respected.

Consent for Minors: If you are under the age of 18, you must have a parent or legal guardian sign this form to indicate their consent for you to participate in the group. In addition, you must sign this form.

Acknowledgment of Understanding: By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided in this document. You agree to participate voluntarily in *The Creative Circle* Group and consent to the terms outlined above.

Participant's Name (Print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (if a participant is a minor, print):

Parent/Guardian's Signature (if a participant is a minor):

Date: _____

Session Plans

These sessions are designed to gradually deepen the group's emotional exploration and connection while also providing a safe, compassionate, and supportive environment for artistic expression. Adjustments can be made based on the group's specific needs and dynamics.

Session 01: Building Connection

Objective

To establish a sense of safety and connection within the group and to introduce the use of artistic expression as a means of communication and self-expression.

Opening Activity / Icebreaker

Name Tag Art: Each group member will create a name tag using the art supplies provided. The name tag should include their name and a symbol or design that represents something meaningful to them.

Skill-building Activity: Expressive Art

Guided Drawing: Group members will be guided through a drawing exercise where they will create a visual representation of their support network. This can include friends, family, pets, or other sources of support. Each group member has the freedom to interpret their network using representation (realistic depictions), symbols, metaphors, or otherwise.

Summary Activity: Sharing and Reflection

Each group member will share their name tag and the symbol they chose, explaining its significance. This will be followed by a group discussion on the importance of support networks in coping with neurodivergence.

Materials Required

- ___ Art supplies (paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils)
- ___ Name tag stickers or badges

References

- Gladding, S.T. (2020). *Groups: A counseling specialty* (8th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gladding, S. T. (2015). *The creative arts in counseling*. American Counseling Association.
- Malchiodi, C. A. (Ed.). (2005). *Expressive therapies*. Guilford Press.
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Session 02: Exploring Emotions

Objective

To deepen self-awareness and emotional expression through artistic exploration of different emotions related to ADHD/neurodivergence.

Opening Activity: Icebreaker

Emotion Word Association: Each group member will choose an emotion word (e.g., happy, anxious, frustrated) and share why they chose it. This will help set the emotional tone for the session. We will use the emotion wheel as a visual reference.

Skill-building Activity: Expressive Art

Emotion Collage: Group members will create a collage using images, colors, and words that represent different emotions they experience. Each individual may choose to focus on one specific emotion or depict a range of emotions.

Summary Activity: Sharing and Reflection

Each group member will share their collage and discuss the emotions they chose to represent. This will be followed by a group discussion on the complexity of emotions in the context of neurodivergence.

Materials Required

- ___ Art supplies (magazines, scissors, glue, paper)
- ___ Emotion wheel visual
- ___ Emotion word cards (optional)

References

Gladding, S.T. (2020). *Groups: A counseling specialty* (8th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
 Gladding, S. T. (2015). *The creative arts in counseling*. American Counseling Association.
 Rubin, J. A. (2010). *Approaches to art therapy: Theory and technique*. Routledge.



Group Participant Outcome Evaluation

Thank you for participating in *The Creative Circle*. Your genuine feedback helps us improve our services to better meet the needs of each individual with ADHD and other neurodivergent traits. Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire.

Participant Information

___. Name (optional): _____

___. Age: _____

___. Gender: _____

___. How did you hear about this group? _____

Feedback

Please rate the following statements based on your experience in the group:

___. 01. The group provided a safe and supportive environment for me to express myself.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

___. 02. I felt a sense of connection and understanding with other group members.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

___. 03. The artistic activities helped me explore and express my thoughts and emotions.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

___. 04. I gained new insights about myself and my neurodivergence through the group discussions.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

___. 05. The facilitators were knowledgeable and supportive.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

___. 06. I would recommend this group to others with ADHD or neurodivergence.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10
Strongly Disagree *Strongly Agree*

Resources

Resources for Group Members

__ 01. CHADD / Resources & Support

- __ . **Website:** *CHADD* (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
- __ . **Link:** <https://chadd.org/>
- __ . **Description:** CHADD is a leading resource for ADHD information, offering articles, webinars, and support groups for individuals with ADHD and their families.

__ 02. *Understood* / Resources & Support

- __ . **Website:** *Understood*
- __ . **Link:** <https://www.understood.org/>
- __ . **Description:** Understood provides resources and support for individuals with learning and attention issues, including ADHD. It offers articles, videos, and practical tips for managing challenges related to ADHD.

__ 03. ADDitude Magazine / Resources & Support

- __ . **Magazine:** *ADDitude Magazine*
- __ . **Link:** <https://www.additudemag.com/>
- __ . **Description:** ADDitude Magazine offers expert advice, strategies, and resources for managing ADHD in children and adults. It covers topics such as treatment options, parenting tips, and personal stories.

__ 04. National Resource Center on ADHD

- __ . **Website:** *National Resource Center on ADHD*
- __ . **Link:** <https://www.help4adhd.org/>
- __ . **Description:** The National Resource Center on ADHD provides information and resources on ADHD, including fact sheets, webinars, and resources for educators and healthcare professionals.

__ 05. RSD Workbook, Client Version

- __ . **Workbook:** *Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria Workbook*, by Dr. Megan Anna Neff
- __ . **Link:** <https://neurodivergentinsights.com/neurodivergentstore/p/rejection-sensitive-dysphoria-bundle>
- __ . **Description:** Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is often experienced by individuals with ADHD and Autism. This workbook offers ways to understand and manage RSD. Created by a neurodivergent psychologist who combines professional knowledge with personal insights.

Resources for Group Leaders

__ 01. Creative Arts in Counseling, Populations, Activities, and Techniques

- __ . **Book:** *The Creative Arts in Counseling*, by Samuel T. Gladding
- __ . **Link:** <https://a.co/d/6eJ9Vnb>
- __ . **Description:** In this comprehensive exploration of expressive therapies, Dr. Gladding illustrates the effective use of music, dance, imagery, visual arts, literature, drama, and humor in counseling. By integrating history, theory, and practical application, he offers a rationale for employing each art form along with strategies for working with clients of all ages and diverse cultural backgrounds to foster positive

change and growth. This fourth edition features Creative Reflection sections, allowing readers to reflect on their creativity, and includes a new chapter that succinctly describes the 117 exercises found in the book for easier reference.



__ **02. Art-Based Group Therapy**

- __ **Book:** *Art-Based Group Therapy: Theory and Practice*, by Bruce L. Moon
- __ **Link:** <https://www.amazon.com/Art-Based-Group-Therapy-Practice-Practical/dp/1853029313>
- __ **Description:** This book explores the theory and practice of art-based group therapy, offering insights into how art can be used as a therapeutic tool in group settings.



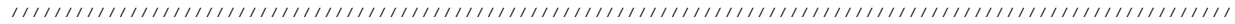
__ **03. RSD Workbook, Clinical Version**

- __ **Workbook:** *Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria Workbook*, by Dr. Megan Anna Neff
- __ **Link:** <https://neurodivergentinsights.com/neurodivergentstore/p/rejection-sensitive-dysphoria-clinical>
- __ **Description:** Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) is often experienced by individuals with ADHD and Autism. This workbook offers ways to understand and manage RSD. Created by a neurodivergent psychologist who combines professional knowledge with personal insights.



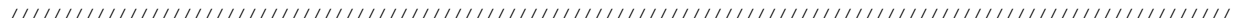
__ **04. Art Therapy Techniques & Applications**

- __ **Book:** *Art Therapy Techniques and Applications*, by Susan Buchalter
- __ **Link:** <https://www.amazon.com/Art-Therapy-Techniques-Applications-Buchalter/dp/1849058063>
- __ **Description:** This book provides a comprehensive overview of art therapy techniques, including practical strategies for working with different populations, such as individuals with ADHD.



__ **05. Divergent Conversations, Resources & Discussions on Neurodivergence, ADHD, and RSD**

- __ **Discussions & Podcast:** *Divergent Conversations*
- __ **Link:** <https://www.divergentpod.com/blog>
- __ **Description:** Divergent Conversations is a Podcast hosted by Patrick Casale and Dr. Megan Anna Neff. The collection of educational deep conversations brings together two AuDHD mental health professionals and entrepreneurs, along with prominent figures in the mental health, neurodivergent, and neurodivergent-affirming communities. Listeners appreciate and trust the podcast and its hosts, making them more likely to act on recommendations made during the episodes.



Issues in Application

Conducting *The Creative Circle* Group, designed to support individuals with ADHD and other neurodivergent traits through artistic practice, presents several practical, logistical, and ethical challenges. The feasibility of the group is supported by the availability of quality art supplies and a suitable meeting space, ensuring a conducive environment for creative activities (Gladding, 2020). However, practical considerations such as scheduling, participant recruitment, and facilitator availability require careful coordination. Potential obstacles include varying levels of artistic skill among participants, which may affect their willingness to engage, and the necessity of fostering a culturally sensitive and inclusive atmosphere (Gladding, 2020). Ethical concerns, such as maintaining confidentiality and informed consent, as well as addressing power dynamics within the group, are also crucial. Despite these challenges, with thoughtful planning and a focus on cultural and individual sensitivities, *The Creative Circle* group can offer a valuable and enriching experience for its members (Gladding, 2020).

Limitations

Gladding (2015), mentions some limitations within the creative arts that include stereotypes of the arts, creatives feeling art is work rather than a means of therapeutic expression, an unfounded link between mental illness and creativity, and individuals becoming overcritical of their work. Italian physician, Cesare Lombroso voiced his perception that there was a link between mental illness and creativity. Unfortunately, this unfounded connection exists in many perceptions today creating a stereotype which could aid in a reluctance for some to join a creative group. Gladding (2015) discusses the idea that the arts suggest creating something new and different and an exercise that is interpreted as a craft (without deep meaning or expression) may be seen as busy work by the members of the group. In addition, some individuals may become too introspective, overcritical or even passive (Gladding, 2015). Finally professional artists may see this form of counseling as work rather than a therapeutic means of expression because their daily activities involve similar modalities. It is important that facilitators keep an eye on these potential challenges.

Practicality of Conducting the Group

Conducting *The Creative Circle* Group in the proposed setting would be feasible, given the funding availability of quality art supplies and suitable meeting space (Gladding, 2020). However, logistical considerations such as scheduling, participant recruitment, and facilitator availability would need to be carefully coordinated to ensure the group runs smoothly.

Obstacles in Implementation

One potential obstacle in implementing this group is the varying levels of artistic skill and comfort among group members (Gladding, 2020). Some individuals may feel intimidated or self-conscious about their artistic abilities, which could impact their willingness to participate fully. To address this, the group facilitators would need to form a supportive and non-judgmental environment that encourages experimentation and creative expression at any skill level.

Another potential obstacle is ensuring cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in the group (Gladding, 2020). Recognizing and respecting group members' diverse backgrounds and experiences, including their cultural beliefs and values, is important (Gladding, 2020). Facilitators should be mindful of cultural differences in communication styles, attitudes toward mental health, and views on artistic expression (Gladding, 2020; Gladding 2015). Leaders should also adapt their approach to ensure all group members feel respected and valued.

Ethical and Cultural Concerns

Ethical considerations for this group include ensuring confidentiality and informed consent and addressing potential conflicts of interest (Gladding, 2020). Facilitators must also be mindful of power dynamics within the group and strive to maintain a balanced and respectful environment for all participants (Gladding, 2020). Culturally, it is important to consider how different cultural backgrounds may influence the way individuals experience and express their ADHD/neurodivergence (Gladding, 2020). Each facilitator should be aware of cultural norms and practices related to mental health and adapt the approach to be culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Despite the challenges posed by practical, logistical, and ethical considerations, *The Creative Circle* group harbors immense potential for enrichment and personal growth. Through meticulous planning and a nuanced understanding of individual and cultural disparities, this initiative can transcend barriers, offering participants a transformative and holistic journey of self-discovery through artistic expression.

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