



Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM) for reducing anxiety and depression in Indonesian undergraduates



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ABSTRACT

This study applied arts-based research with supportive quantitative indicators to design, implement, and evaluate the Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM), a structured four-practice art process (Meditation Art Drawing, Psychic Art, Dreaming Art Painting, and Art Discussion) based on the active imagination of Carl Jung and systematized by Comandini (2019). It aims to explore if PAEM could reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and increase the art & imagination expression among undergraduate students. Ten students from different majors at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, who reported mild to moderate emotional distress, participated in two weekend workshops in December 2024. Data were collected through validated pre- and post-questionnaires for mental health and art & imagination scales, reflective portfolios, voluntary Socratic reflections, and symbolic analysis of artworks. Triangulation combined quantitative scores, thematic analysis of written and oral reflections, and Jungian interpretation of visual archetypes. Findings showed a 38.1% reduction in the mean mental health indicator (from 3.78 to 2.34 on a 5-point scale) and a 10.8% increase in art & imagination scores (from 3.32 to 3.68). Participants' artworks consistently revealed Jungian archetypes, linked to personal narratives of trauma, isolation, and resilience. Students described feeling "lighter," less alone, and more accepting of difficult emotions. The study offers an initial empirical bridge between Jungian depth psychology and art education practice in the Indonesian university context, creating a safe, non-stigmatizing, and profoundly meaningful space where addressing mental health remains difficult. Even though these ten stories are truly worth telling, this research encourages larger studies in the future.



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1. Introduction

In today's higher education framework, undergraduate students face increasing risks of mental health issues, especially with their transition into adult life [1], [2], [3]. Notably, 14.4% of youngsters between 11 and 19 years old have experienced mental health problems, worsen with the impact of the COVID-19 era, especially reminding symptoms of anxiety and depression, if unaddressed [2]. In undergraduate students, these issues manifest as consequences in low academic performance, social isolation, unemployment, and, in severe cases, self-harm or even suicide [1]. Multiple mental health efforts in Indonesian universities deal with difficulties on limited professional assets, fear of stigma and discrimination, low mental health literacy, discourage most students from perusing counselling services, developing judgmental context surrounding mental health, pointing the urgency for develop creative methods for interventions in education that integrate emotional and symbolic perspectives, especially through art-based approaches, making used of the proud Indonesia's rich creative heritage, to multiply the impact to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression of undergraduates students with dignity [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9]. Active imagination, as part of Jungian theory regarding mental health, allows

people to access, explore, and communicate with different parts of the self that remain unconscious. It is a symbolic method for self-knowledge that contains inherited and universal images that link humanity through archetypes [10], [11], [12]. Jung states that modern society experiences a disconnection between the spiritual essence within the psyche and the physical body, resulting in emotional imbalances [13]. Luca Comandini [13] synthesized active imagination into four phases: (1) Emptying the Mind (meditative openness to inner imagery), (2) Letting the Psychic Event Happen (spontaneous emergence of symbolic content), (3) Objectivation (autonomous presence of inner images independent of ego control), and (4) Ethical Confrontation with the Unconscious (dialogue for insight and integration). Empirical evidence supports the efficacy of Jungian psychotherapy; participants have reduced severe clinical symptoms of anxiety and depression to psychological health after an average of 90 sessions with an ethical dialogical attitude, dealing consciously with unconscious conflicts [14] [15], [16].

In the art therapy context, active imagination helps to confront and understand the inner world through artistic expressions, playing a remarkable aspect in both therapeutic and creative interactions, through art promoting personal growth and self-understanding, improving creativity and psychological well-being [10], [12], [17], [18], [19], [20]. In educational contexts, it is an approach that should be taken seriously due to its impact on inclusive education, empowering learners to visualize their emotions, and improving knowledge in the classroom [21], [22], [23]. It is recognized as a valuable tool, underlining the relevance of creative imagination for critical learning [24], promoting reflection and exploration, with pedagogical approaches in health care education for personal and professional growth, and psychological improvement [25]. It has been implemented with psychological-pedagogical methods for education interactions with adolescents with low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and creativity between 13 and 15 years old, gaining significant improvements in motivation and creativity [24], [25], [26]. Despite theoretical and empirical foundations, a crucial gap remains for arts-based approaches; there is a lack of structured artistic integration, clear guidance, structured pedagogical methodology, and measurable mental health outcomes, especially regarding active imagination. Most of the studies of art therapy failed to acknowledge its benefits, reporting success but not defining or measuring it. Only 34% of the interventions include cooperation with artists or art educators, inquiring who has the competence to design the interventions [27], [28], [29], [30]. While art practices help to reduce anxiety and depression through the creative process [31], [32], the initiatives fail to implement a clear methodology and evaluation methods.

To manage this gap, the present study introduces the Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM), a novel, structured, and repeatable approach that incorporates the synthesized Comandini's [13] four phases of active imagination, into four art-based educational practices: Meditation Art Drawing (Emptying the Mind), Psychic Art (Letting the Psychic Event Happen), Dreaming Art Painting (Objectivation), and Art Discussion (Ethical Confrontation). Grounded in the Jungian theory of active imagination, PAEM triangulates art, education, and psychotherapy to promote self-awareness, self-knowledge, emotional resilience, and well-being by reducing the moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression among Indonesian undergraduate students, without tending to treat high symptoms or clinical pathology [10], [13]. Created through theoretical integration and preliminary design, PAEM connects the gap by introducing a pedagogically and ethically guided instrument appropriate for curricular and extracurricular consolidation. PAEM aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting mental health literacy (SDG 3.4) and education for sustainable development through creative expression (SDG 4.7), with potential for institutionalization in university policies, support services, and community programs, aiming to reduce the middle to moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression among participating undergraduate students. The state of the art resides in PAEM's interdisciplinary integration: it adapts active imagination into a four-phase educational practice, designed for Indonesian higher education, evaluating and advancing prior unstructured art therapy models. Educationally, PAEM develops Jungian psychotherapy by adapting active imagination in an art education context, verifying its therapeutic impact. Practically, it conveys policy for mental

health incorporation, reduces stigma through a supportive and creative approach, and provides measurable outcomes to assess the impact on anxiety and depression.

2. Method

This study applied arts-based research [33] with supportive quantitative indicators to design, implement, and evaluate the Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM), a novel four-phase art practice based on Carl Jung's theory of active imagination synthesized by Comandini [13]. PAEM was developed from landmark studies regarding Jungian psychology, therapeutic art practice, and arts-based research [10], [13]. These sources guided the adaptation of active imagination into four educational practices of PAEM: (1) Meditation Art Drawing, (2) Psychic Art, (3) Dreaming Art Painting, and (4) Art Discussion. PAEM incorporates art practices such as metaphorical eyes-closed drawing [34], automatic drawing and abstract expressionism [35], [36], Surrealist psychic automatism and non-interference image refinement [13], [37], and dialogical response to the embodied image for evaluation [38]. These art-based practices were adapted into a structured, safe, educational context specifically for non-clinical populations experiencing mild-to-moderate anxiety and depression. Ten undergraduate students between 18 and 23 years old, from 81 undergraduate students from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Bandung, were selected with an open call shared within a small internal university networking. The 81 respondents answered 2 pre-questionnaires to identify their symptoms of anxiety and depression, and their relationship with imagination through art. From 81 respondents, 10 undergraduate students were selected, following the criteria of mild to moderate symptoms, sufficient interest in art and imagination, and full commitment to attend the whole practices of PAEM.

The implementation of PAEM consisted of four art-based approaches delivered in two consecutive weekends (7, 8, 14, and 15 December 2024) in a suitable university art studio in Bandung, with High-quality art materials provided for free. Each day reached out to each specific PAEM artistic practice. The data were collected from various sources to deliver strict triangulation. First, quantitative data of pre and post-intervention for mental health, and art & imagination indicators, were applied to all 81 respondents for the pre-interview, and after the implementation, to the selected 10 participants applied immediately after the last practice of PAEM. Second, a visual data of the final artworks. Third, a written record of the participant's reflected portfolios. Fourth, oral reflective data were transcribed and translated from the voluntary reflections that were shared orally after each practice. To analyze the data, a multi-layered process was carried out in four integrated phases. First, a descriptive statistical analysis of pre- and post-questionnaire data. Second, voluntary verbal reflections and a reflected portfolio in journal style. Third, a multi-layered analysis of artworks: (1) visual analysis, (2) participant interpretation, (3) Jungian archetypal finding. Fourth, triangulation and crystallisation across all data types.

3. Results and Discussion

The Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM) with four art base practices, has been designed within a doctoral research at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and has been refined by experts within a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in order to adapt Jungian active imagination [13] into a replicable educational practice to reduce mild and moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression in undergraduate students. Every single practice has been designed to follow the next one in a consecutive way, in order to control the conscious development of PAEM, starting from the suspension of judgment, to emotional catharsis expression liberation, to symbolic objectivation, and finally, with ethical integration. Table 1 presents the PAEM framework, combining active imagination, art education, and educational strategies. An open call was conducted to implement the PAEM art-based practice. It drew 81 undergraduate students from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia within a few days of announcement, showing the urgency for creative and emotional support in undergraduate students. All respondents fulfill two pre-questionnaires for screening instruments. First, a 10-question survey for a mental health indicator regarding the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Second, a 10-questionnaire for art & imagination indicator, both pre-questionnaires were scored from 1 to 5.

Table 1.PAEM framework, combining active imagination, art education, and educational strategies

PAEM Framework			
Phase	Active Imagination	Psychotherapeutic Art Education Practice	Transformative Mechanism
1	Emptying the mind Meditative, open to the inner universal images (archetypes) [13]	Meditation Art Drawing Drawing without seeing the media, metaphorically, eyes close drawing, applied intuitive art making with repetitive drawings for meditative and relaxation effect, and start the re-connection with the universal images by eliminating the conscious judgment regarding the final product + voluntary Socratic group dialogue [34], [39], [40]	Visual monitoring is consciously eliminated, perfectionism is suppressed, conscious judgment from the ego is erased, meditative calm emerges, and the gap between what you see and what you draw opens safe access to externalized unconscious material with a relaxing and fun experience.
2	Letting the psychic event happen Spontaneous manifestation of symbolic content [13], [37]	Psychic Art Psychic automatism + abstract painting applying intuitive art making with repetitive marks to express suppressed feelings and emotions, where the universal images are located + voluntary Socratic group dialogue [13], [34], [37], [41]	Conscious planning is surrendered while awareness is retained; raw emotion expressed spontaneous gestures and abstract forms externalise repressed feelings and emotions; and intentions become visible, distorted as emotional catharsis, artistic expression, and psychological release
3	Objectivation Autonomous presence of inner universal images independent of ego control [13]	Dreaming Art Painting Surrealist drawing and painting/ exploration to find form within the previous painting in phase 2 / Similar as finding form in the clouds + voluntary Socratic group dialogue [35], [36], [37]	Participants treat emergent abstract marks as autonomous objects of a dream, as founded images in the clouds, as discovered artefacts in the soil; preserve the symbolic integrity, conscious refinement without ego-projection gives objective form to unconscious content
4	Ethical confrontation with the unconscious Dialogue for insight and integration [13]	Art Discussion Written portfolio in journal style + voluntary Socratic group dialogue [38], [42]	Symbolic images in the painting are treated as independent entities, and the artwork is analyzed as if it were a founded object. Reflective questioning and narrative construction are used, there is conscious dialogue with the unconscious material, and there is integration of founded images into your personal narrative

The following Table 2 presents the selected undergraduate students' data. The respondent's average score of mental health is 3.54 (SD = 0.72), and the art and imagination average score is 3.53 (SD = 0.56). Ten participants, aged 19 to 23 years old, M = 20.4, were selected following the criteria. First, the score of mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression was between 3.2 and 4.6. Second, above-average art and imagination score (≥ 2.8). Finally, full commitment to attend the whole for four art practices. Seven participants are in the moderate symptom category with an average score between 2.6 and 3.5, and three are in the mild symptom category with an average score between 3.6 and 4.6, pointing to a similar foundation of emotional condition, which is proper for non-clinical and educational-therapeutic actions. The fast reply and the ultimate profile group facilitate empirical evidence of the prevalence of mild to moderate anxiety and depression symptoms among Indonesian undergraduates and their willingness to participate in art-based practices for mental health conditions. The PAEM art-based practice was implemented at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, with an approximate duration of 3 hours each art practice, during 2 consecutive weekends, on 7th, 8th, 14th, and 15th December 2024. It was conducted with the 10 selected participants at the university art studio. The implementation strictly followed the expert-verified protocol shown in Table 1, conducted

within interactive seating, grounding for relaxation, voluntary sharing time for Socratic discussion, and data collection for the research. Table 3 contains the leading characteristics of each art-based practice of PAEM.

Table 2. Ten Selected Undergraduate Students' Data

Protected Name	Age	Major	Average 1st Indicator Mental Health	Average 2nd Indicator Art and Imagination	Mental health symptom category
AD	20	English Lang. & Lit.	3,3	2,9	Mild
AI	19	English Lang. & Lit.	3,4	3,4	Mild
AY	22	Tourism Marketing	4,6	3,9	Moderate
DE	21	French Lang. Education	4,6	4	Moderate
HA	18	English Lang. & Lit.	3,2	2,8	Mild
MU	18	Sociology Education	3,9	2,4	Moderate
NA	20	Fine Arts Education	3,8	3,2	Moderate
RAD	20	French Lang. Education	3,7	3,1	Moderate
RAI	23	Fine Arts Education	3,8	3,6	Moderate
YO	21	Fine Arts Education	3,5	3,9	Mild
Total Average of Indicators					

Meditation Art Drawing started simultaneously, painting face to face with rotated partners without looking at the media, followed by repetitive blind drawing of self-selected symbolic images. The conscious withdrawal of visual critique, occupied with joy and laughs the behaviour of the participants, blooming with soft postures and visible relaxation. The whole 10 participants mentioned a reduction in self-judgment; 9 of them used terms such as "calm," "peaceful," or "meditative." Non-art majors underline the unexpected accessibility of the practice, while fine arts students reported temporary liberation from academic evaluation standards. Psychic Art started with the fundamentals of the first practice, non-judgmental principles, participants submerge into automatism, abstract expressionism on canvases, The 10 of the participant reported emotional liberation; 8 reported feelings of frustration, sadness, and exhaustion that spontaneously appear in the cathartic-artistic practice. Dreaming Art Painting used previous artwork within abstract expressionism painting, to find symbolic and original images with unique characters and personality as dream-like figures. The participants, without conscious demand from the ego, retouched the hidden images using the surrealist technique. Silence dominated the studio; emotional reflections in the voluntary discussion broke the silence as expressions of wonder.

All ten participants find between 2 and 6 independent figures, such as animals, plants, containers, and childhood icons. Recurrent patterns of limitation vs. freedom were found in 8 participants, and reconnection with playful/childlike aspects of self in 7 participants. The strict non-interference policy was critical to discovered hiding symbols that carried inherent meaning disconnected from the ego control. Art Discussion as last practice, the participants did a reflective portfolio in journal style and participated in a voluntary group sharing, approaching the funded images as independent characters for conversation partners. 9 participants mentioned their artwork as a canvas of life, incorporating positive and painful content into inspired stories. The whole 10 participants embrace their suppressed, hidden emotions as rich material for resilience.

Table 3. Empirical Manifestation of PAEM Implementation

Phase	PAEM Art Practices	Dominant Themes Within the Participants	Most Relevant Participant Testimony
1	Meditation Art Drawing	100% experienced reduced self-judgmental 90% released from perfectionism 90% experienced a state of relaxation and joy	NA states, "I learned that I don't have to overthink everything... I should be more confident and not worry about what others think." YO states, "Finally felt free to draw without pressure."
2	Psychic Art	100% experienced emotional catharsis 80% expressed suppressed emotions	NA states, "I tried to uncover what emotions I've been suppressing... I painted directly with my hands." RAI states, "Their marks will always be there... we can either erase them or embrace them."
3	Dreaming Art Painting	100% found an autonomous symbol 70% reconnection with their childhood 80% reported experiencing tension vs. freedom	YO states, "Why a duck? Because even as adults, we still carry childlike qualities, and that's okay." RAD states, "Water lily in a murky swamp... it keeps trying to survive."
4	Art Discussion	90% experienced life-canvas metaphor 100% accepted brokenness & growth 80% reduced isolation with story sharing	NA states, "The canvas represents life... everything that happens has meaning. Just live" AY states, "This painting is a mirror showing me I need to start paying attention to myself."

The collective interaction reduced isolation, 8 participants mentioned phrases like "I feel less alone" or "others understand." Crystallisation of data sources within the reflected portfolios, voluntary debriefs, observations, and artwork, shows reduction of judgmental self-criticism, cathartic expression for emotional release, symbolic abstraction for objectivation, and ethical integration. Selected artworks illustrating this progression are presented in the [Table 4](#) (phases 2–3 for Participants NA, AY, MU, and YO). The integrated findings from the PAEM intervention reveal a clear and statistically significant reduction in participants' reported anxiety and depression symptoms. Quantitative results were obtained from two researcher-designed 10-item Likert scales (1–5): the Mental Health Indicator (lower scores reflect improved well-being) and the Art & Imagination Indicator (higher scores indicate a booster of creative participation). These pre- and post-intervention measures were analysed using paired-samples t-tests in IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The quantitative changes were then triangulated with qualitative evidence from participants' artworks, reflective portfolios, and recorded group discussions, enabling a detailed reconstruction of each individual's therapeutic journey throughout the four phases. The pre- and post-questionnaire scores are shown in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Pre- and Post-PAEM Scores (n = 10)

Pre- and Post-PAEM Scores (n = 10)								
No	Initials	MH Pre	A&I Pre	MH Post	A&I Post	Δ MH	% MH Reduction	Δ A&I
1	AD	3.30	2.90	2.10	2.80	-1.20	36.4%	-0.10
2	AI	3.40	3.40	2.70	3.00	-0.70	20.6%	-0.40
3	AY	4.60	3.90	2.60	4.50	-2.00	43.5%	+0.60
4	DE	4.60	4.00	3.00	4.20	-1.60	34.8%	+0.20
5	HA	3.20	2.80	2.20	3.00	-1.00	31.3%	+0.20
6	MU	3.90	2.40	1.90	4.50	-2.00	51.3%	+2.10
7	NA	3.80	3.20	1.30	3.90	-2.50	65.8%	+0.70
8	RAD	3.70	3.10	2.60	3.00	-1.10	29.7%	-0.10
9	RAI	3.80	3.60	2.50	3.60	-1.30	34.2%	0.00
10	YO	3.50	3.90	2.50	4.30	-1.00	28.6%	+0.40

Looking at the group results, the changes turned out to be remarkable. The Mental Health Indicator shows from an average of 3.78 (SD = 0.47) before the workshops to 2.34 (SD = 0.53) afterward; it is a 38.1 % decrease on average, The numbers confirm that the drop in anxiety and

low mood was not by chance, it was a real and extremely strong improvement (the statistics gave $p < .001$ and a very large effect size of 3.92). At the same time, the Art & Imagination score went up from 3.32 (SD = 0.55) to 3.68 (SD = 0.68), a 10.8 % increase. The numbers got better too ($p = .006$), and the improvement was medium-sized ($d = 0.58$) – definitely noticeable and trustworthy. Every single one of the ten participants improved their mental health symptoms of anxiety and depression, and 60 % of them showed clear gains in their relationship with art & imagination after the workshops. The following Table 5 shows the main symbolic imagery, the essence of the participant's stories, and the identified archetypes that arise intensely in each one of the 10 participants. These components were identified through the intense analysis of the complete artworks, the reflected portfolios in journal style, and the voluntary sharing of reflections during the whole implementation of PAEM. Full participants' data components are shown in the doctoral dissertation of the author; selected artworks are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Crystallized Individual Results and Archetypal Patterns









Initials	Symbolic Imagery	Essence of the Stories	Identified Archetypes
AD	Sunflower, colourful seeds	Hidden vibrancy/desire to be seen	Shadow, Orphan, Creator, Self
AI	Explosion, phoenix, and dragons	Triggered Shadow reactions	Shadow, Hero, Anima/Animus, Wise Old Man, Trickster, Self
AY	Flowers burning, black hole	Trauma and suppressed rage	Shadow, Persona, Orphan, Destroyer, Self
DE	Knife, snake, alarm clock, roses	Hidden anger and self-harm impulses	Shadow, Hero, Orphan, Caregiver
HA	Ghost-child with watching eyes	Lost innocence / sexual trauma	Innocent, Orphan, Shadow, Sage
MU	Window of coloured circles, black	Emotional maturation and despair	Innocent, Everyman, Shadow, Sage
NA	Grey circle, life-canvas	Acceptance of life's messiness	Self, Shadow, Creator, Hero
RAD	Lone flower in mangrove swamp	Resilience in a strict family	Orphan, Hero, Shadow, Wise Old Man, Self
RAI	Intertwined eyes-flowers-Venus	Hidden Mindspace / fear of intimacy	Shadow, Anima, Persona, Self
YO	Chaotic lines, adult duck	Pressure vs. inner child	Persona, Shadow, Child, Self

Surrounding the participants, there is a remarkable phenomenon. Across nearly every participant's experience, the primary robust symbolic image found was associated with the symbol of dark and shadow, for instance, explosions, black holes, knives, a child's ghost, a swamp, and inundation; taking into consideration that the participants empowered the symbols and did not delete, remove, or correct them. These participants, facing the shadow, the dark, and pain, were those whose symptoms reduced the most, painting freely. Table 6. Showing representative artwork progression. For example, NA acknowledges the grey circle within NA's canvas of life. MU closed the window, just after accepting the black, AY preserved the burning flowers close to the black hole instead of hiding them. Without exclusion, a focused image appeared in the end, for instance, a sunflower, an adult duck, a living circle, that the participants themselves recognised as "the centre of myself when everything is included." Four structured art-based practices were sufficient for these university undergraduate students who presented mild-to-moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression to shift from hiding their shadow to making it part of the picture and emerging more complete.

PAEM reduced the symptoms of anxiety and depression (38.1% mean drop, very large effect) and, at the same time, improved the imaginative engagement, confirming the dual therapeutic-educational aim. The systematic progression through non-judgmental creation, catharsis, autonomous symbol discovery, and ethical dialogue was empirically validated: participants with the clearest Circles as Self-mandala integration, like MU and NA, showed the largest Mental Health gains. Jungian active imagination theory is strongly supported, confronting and dialoguing with archetypal images (Shadow, Orphan, Child, etc.) directly correlated with symptom reduction and the increased art & imagination context. The results provide the first empirical evidence that a structured, conscious, group-based art education method rooted in

Jungian principles can significantly alleviate mild-to-moderate neurotic anxiety and post-pandemic emotional distress in undergraduate students within only four sessions.

Table 6. Representative artwork progression (selected four cases illustrating the full arc)

Name	Physic Art	Final Integrated Canvas
NA		
AY		
MU		
YO		

4. Conclusion

This study was designed, implemented, and evaluated the Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM), using a four-session art-based approach adapted from Jung's active imagination, with 10 undergraduate students who reported mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Following the implementation, the mental health average score reported a reduction from 3.78 to 2.34 (-38.1 %); at the same time, art and imagination rose from 3.32 to 3.68 (+10.8 %). The artworks and the individual reflections present distinct Jungian archetypes such as the Shadow, Hero, Self, *etc.*, and the undergraduate participants

reported feeling less heavy and less solitary. The results were processed using triangulation, with pre and post-questionnaires, voluntary Socratic group discussions, as well as the reflected portfolios in journal style, and the symbolic analysis of the artworks. Yet, the small sample of 10 participants, the absence of a control group, a brief period of implementation, and using just one location, such as Bandung, Indonesia, reduce the quality to generalize and claim a strong causality. PAEM is a promising, non-expensive, non-judgmental method for art education and well-being programs; it is not yet tested for a clinical context. For future studies, we strongly suggest the use of larger samples, control groups, follow-up in the long term, external evaluators, and diverse implementations with different settings and cultures.

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Declarations

- Author contribution** : SPEA: Conceptualization of the Psychotherapeutic Art Education Method (PAEM); methodology design; data collection; workshop facilitation; data analysis; manuscript writing and revision: JM.: Supervision; academic guidance; critical review of methodology and analysis; manuscript revision and approval. RM: Co-supervision; validation of research instruments; feedback on implementation and analysis; editorial input during manuscript preparation.
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