



Dr Alexandra Caulfield, Anne Ferrey, Nia Roberts,
Jeremy-Leslie Spinks, Helle Mölsted Alvesson, Geoffrey
Wong, Trish Greenhalgh

University of Oxford, Nuffield Department of Primary Health Care
Sciences, Oxford, United Kingdom

How can we use creative arts interventions to improve wellbeing in older people?

As populations age globally, there is growing interest in the role of creative arts to improve health at national and international levels. Creative arts encompass a wide range of activities, including performing arts, visual arts, design and craft, literature, culture and digital and electronic arts. Participation in creative arts has been linked to lower mental distress, increased social connection, improved quality of life, personal growth and empowerment. Despite this, it remains unclear exactly how participation in creative arts interventions can improve wellbeing in older individuals. We used realist synthesis methods to examine how creative arts interventions can improve wellbeing in older individuals, and to identify important aspects are to focus on when designing and optimising these interventions, working in conjunction with stakeholder group of older individuals, policymakers and creative arts practitioners. Emerging results suggest the dual importance of creative process and social aspects of the interventions, including ideas related to escapism, emotional regulation or catharsis, challenge and productivity, investment in health, sense of self and spirituality or sense of meaning.

Keywords: older people, wellbeing, creative arts, community

Biography

- Academic Clinical Fellow in Primary Care, Nuffield Department of Primary Health Care Sciences, University of Oxford
- Academic GP with research interests in healthy ageing, older people, wellbeing, creative health