

The psychometric effects of drama therapy on socio-economically disadvantaged and refugee women in Lebanon

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The need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is ever-present for vulnerable populations in the Arab World. High rates of psychological disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety have been observed in the refugee and socioeconomically disadvantaged female population within the Arab world. Women are especially more vulnerable to these mental health issues and are at a greater risk of developing complications. MHPSS services in the Arab world are lacking and in need of reform to provide better services to disadvantaged populations. Economic costs, stigma and lack of availability of mental health services, especially for vulnerable populations, create a barrier to accessing these services when needed. In order to overcome these issues, drama therapy, a form of creative art therapies, is used. This study examines the psychological impact of Drama Therapy Intervention (DTI) on the previously mentioned population.

To do so, this study utilizes a quantitative approach and repeated measure design. Quantitative data was collected using six scales to measure PTSD, emotional well-being, self-esteem, depression, and anxiety prior to and after participation in a 3-month long, 12-session drama therapy programme.

Participants consisted of adult socioeconomically disadvantaged and refugee women in three separate locations across Lebanon. The groups took part in DTI programmes implemented by Intisar Foundation.

The findings consist of mixed-models analysis, conducted by Information International SAL in Beirut. Preliminary findings indicate significant changes in PTSD and depression scales. Demographic variables such as age, education and refugee status did not have a significant effect on psychological changes. As a conclusion, to address the darker aspects of wars and

violence, the most effective approach is to explore the realm of mental health in a holistic drama approach involving both the mind, body, and senses.

Biography

Her Highness Sheikha Intisar AlSabah is a Kuwaiti social entrepreneur, philanthropist, author, film producer, and columnist with a vision for a peaceful and aspirational Arab world. Her humanitarian work, philanthropic and entrepreneurial initiatives have become even more significant in scope, reach and impact. In 2018, Her Highness launched a pioneering initiative to heal one million Arabs through the use of drama therapy with the establishment of the Intisar Foundation, a UK registered charity dedicated to supporting Arab women affected by war through the creative and therapeutic approach of drama therapy. The Foundation was officially registered with the UK and Wales Charity Commission on March 8, 2019, marking International Women's Day. It is the first organization to work on the mental health of women affected by war and trauma in the Arab world.

Ms. Karima Anbar is a French Diplomat, who has extensive expertise working in human rights, women's rights, political analysis and civil societies in Arab countries. After completing her Master's degree in Political Sciences at the Institute of Political Sciences in Lyon, she started her career working for French Foreign Ministry for eight years in Arab countries such as Jordan, Palestine, UAE, and Kuwait. Ms. Karima also worked closely with high profile individuals, international organizations and institutions. Last, but not least, she is renowned for her remarkably strong advocacy for women's rights and human rights.

Dr. Lina Haddad Kreidie is Academic Director of the TLS-Gender programme at the Lebanese American University (LAU). Kreidie is a political psychologist, an assistant professor, and a research consultant on women's empowerment at Intisar Foundation. Kreidie is also a 2018 US Fulbright Scholar, a Jerome and Hazel Tobis fellow at the University of CA, Irvine Interdisciplinary Center for the Scientific Study of Ethics and Morality, and a member of the Harris Council, University of Chicago Harris School for Public Policy, joining its council

for public policy between 2012 and 2022, and an affiliate faculty at the Pearson Institute for the study and resolution of conflict at the University of Chicago.

Recent publications and conference presentations

The memory of war and women in peace. ECArTE Conference, Vilnius, Lithuania (2022)

Drama therapy a therapeutic intervention for socioeconomically disadvantaged women impacted by trauma in Lebanon: a psychometric analysis. International Dramatherapy Conference, The Netherlands (2022).

Sakhi, S., Kreidie, L., Wardani, F., AlSabah, I & Anbar, K. (2022). **Drama therapy as a mental health intervention for women in the shatila refugee camp, Lebanon.** *Intervention*, 20(1), 58. https://doi.org/10.4103/intv.intv_12_20

Sakhi, S., Kreidie, L., Wardani, F., AlSabah, I., & Anbar, K. (2020). **The power of theater expression and communication: a psychological therapeutic intervention in a refugee camp: an IPA study into the narratives of women refugees' experience with drama therapy.** *Psychology Research*, 10(1), 10-23. doi: 10.17265/2159-5542/2020.01.002