



A Journey Home: The Transformative Role of Creative Therapies in Addiction Recovery

Un viaje a casa: el papel transformador de las terapias artísticas en la rehabilitación de adicciones

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Addiction represents a complex global public health challenge that demands comprehensive and integrative interventions. This qualitative study explores the contributions of art therapy, dance movement therapy (DMT), and therapeutic writing to the rehabilitation processes of individuals with substance use disorders attending the Casa de Campo Day Centre of the Spanish Red Cross. The research aimed to understand how these artistic modalities support personal recovery, emotional regulation, and social reintegration.

Semi-structured interviews and participant observations were conducted with nine users who had regularly attended these therapies for at least one month. Thematic analysis revealed three main categories: (1) perceived areas of improvement, including greater self-awareness, enhanced emotional regulation, social openness, and strengthened self-esteem; (2) challenges in engaging with the artistic therapies, such as initial resistance, physical or cognitive limitations, and gender-related dynamics; and (3) the role of professional and institutional support as a key facilitator of therapeutic processes.

Within the conference theme of repetition and return, the findings highlight how artistic creation becomes a cyclical and embodied process through which participants revisit personal narratives, re-encounter emotions, and symbolically reconstruct a sense of self. Through repetition in movement, image, and word, the therapeutic space allows a return to previously fragmented or exiled aspects of identity, fostering transformation and a renewed capacity for belonging.

The study underscores the value of integrating creative practices into addiction rehabilitation programmes, illuminating the rhythms of recovery as journeys of return—towards the body,



memory, and meaning. This study presents original findings from completed research that has not yet been published elsewhere.

Biography

Liliana Ospina Angulo is a Colombian psychologist and art therapist focused on the psychosocial field, specialized in supporting adolescents and adults at risk of social exclusion. Her work centres on the design and implementation of art therapy interventions aimed at rebuilding social bonds and promoting emotional well-being and resilience. She has volunteered with the Spanish Red Cross, contributing to art therapy and research projects on addiction rehabilitation. Her professional path integrates clinical practice, community engagement, and research on the transformative impact of the arts in contexts of vulnerability.

Recent Publications

López, M.A., Lage, M., González, T., Peña, M.L., Ospina, L. (2023). **Educational guide “One voice, one image”**. ISBN 978-84-09-38513-2. www.ucm.es/labe/guias-educativas

Ospina Angulo, L. (2021). **Observation and evaluation of embodiment in art therapy: design and validation of the EMOBAT instrument**. *E-prints*, <https://eprints.ucm.es/id/eprint/69674/>

López, M.A., Lage, M., González, T., Peña, M.L., Ospina, L. (julio de 2021). **Educational guide “Beneath the Surface”**. ISBN 978-84-09-32455-2. www.ucm.es/labe/guias-educativas