



kreARTiv – From Shadow into Light. Return journeys to a safe place after environmental disaster

kreARTiv – Vom Schatten ins Licht. Die Reise zurück an einen sicheren Ort nach der Flutkatastrophe

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We investigated the effects of Creative Arts Therapies (CATs) on trauma symptoms, psychological distress, wellbeing, resilience, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in adults affected by the 2021 German floods, and whether these effects differed from no treatment. Natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, pose increasing risks, with preliminary research indicating high prevalence of psychological distress and PTSD among those affected. Creative Arts Therapies offer a creative and embodied nonverbal approach to trauma treatment, and research indicates a positive effect of CATs for trauma symptoms and health outcomes.

However, current literature on CATs post-disaster focuses mainly on child survivors and qualitative methods. This study addresses these gaps with a quasi-experimental controlled trial, examining CATs' effects on health outcomes for flood trauma survivors, compared to a waiting list control group. Participants were 38 adults and two adolescents, who completed the PTSD short screen scale, PCL-5 Checklist, the DASS-21, HSI-24 Wellbeing inventory, RS-13 resilience scale, ASKU self-efficacy scale, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, and unidimensional VAS scales on stress, quality of life, and life satisfaction. Repeated measures ANOVA showed significant reductions in PTSD symptoms, wellbeing, resilience, self-esteem, stress levels, and physical QOL for CAT participants from baseline to follow-up. Depression and stress were significantly reduced between pre-intervention and follow-up. Independent samples t-test indicated CAT participants had significantly higher wellbeing scores post-intervention and significantly higher resilience change scores compared to the control group. Sub-group analysis of DMT data showed similar trends of health improvements. The preliminary results of this study support CATs' effectiveness in improving trauma symptoms,



wellbeing, and protective factors for flood survivors. Single return journeys are exemplarily reported. Future research should focus on larger samples and explore CATs' mechanisms of change.

Keywords: trauma, environmental disaster, PTSD, Creative Arts Therapies, controlled study

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Recent Publications

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