

The psychological benefits of embroidery as an art therapy: A journey of threads and textiles

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Abstract

Embroidery is traditional art form which is recognized for its therapeutic nature. For the mental health it is considered as an art therapy. Embroidery is a form of textile art which is well known from the ancient times. This paper uncovers how embroidery used as a medium for meditative art therapy. It is a creative approach that is used as a stress buster and healing emotional traumas. Embroidery is a mixture of repetitive designs and patterns of various stitches. The rhythmic natures of stitches capture the present moments of the life and allow people to deal with emotional responses. Embroidery regulates the mood of the individuals suffering with depression and anxiety issues.

This paper delves the positive effects of embroidery on human mind. The expressions of threads foster the creativity of individuals. This is a non verbal way of representing inner thoughts with a variety of threads. Embroidery is an art form which is very effective for the individual's mental well being. They can express suppressed thoughts with an embroidery stitches. This paper highlights the scientific nature of embroidery as an art therapy. It will explain how art therapy with embroidery reduces the stress and depression. Some case studies also demonstrate the embroidery and its uses. This paper is an investigation of the unique artistic approach for improving the mental health. Furthermore, it will shed light on the existing knowledge about the embroidery as a meditative art therapy.

Key words: Embroidery, art therapy, healing, creativity, inner thoughts

I. INTRODUCTION

Creative activities are always therapeutic for the mental health of individuals. These days' people grapple with stress, anxiety and depression which are harming the overall health. Mental health professionals treated these kinds of diseases with the integration of art therapies. The artistic expressions are very impactful for treating the anxiety and depression. Art is an expression of non verbal thoughts which are vibrant tapestry of emotions. Self expressions with the help of art are the best way to channelize the inner thoughts. There are ranges of art forms which are used as therapies for treating the mental health such as, painting, sketching, doodling, crochet, clay modelling, embroidery etc. In this paper the main focus is on the embroidery used as an art therapy. It is a unique artistic expression for treating the mental health. Embroidery is a traditional craft which is passed from one generation to next generation. It is a decorative art form which is composed with designs and patterns on fabrics. The colourful designs are aesthetic in nature. Embroidery is a mixture of colourful threads done in different stitches. This is a meditative technique which is very useful for reducing stress and anxiety. Individuals immerse themselves into this art therapy and forget the process. The engage themselves into the present moment and enjoy the overall process. It regulates the function of brain and is a best exercise for mental health. Embroidery is a powerful therapy for mental well being.

There is a sense of flow in the repetitive designs of the embroidery, which is meditative and soothing. When people used to engage with the process of stitches of the embroidery they get a calming effect and a sense of joy. Every individual is connected with the creative process with different manners. The embroidery is a tool for releasing stress and anxiety without verbal representations. People translate their suppressed thoughts with colours and intricate designs of embroidery. In embroidery every step is a transformation of personal experiences, which is a sense of accomplishment and self treatment. The motive of this paper is to explore the psychological benefits of the embroidery. It also highlights the role of embroidery in different aspects. Through this paper, there is an exploration of embroidery as a tool of self expressions as a art therapy. This paper aims the potential of embroidery for improving the mental health.



Fig.1 Mind1, embroidery with wool on cotton fabric

Source: Self clicked, self practical, Jammu

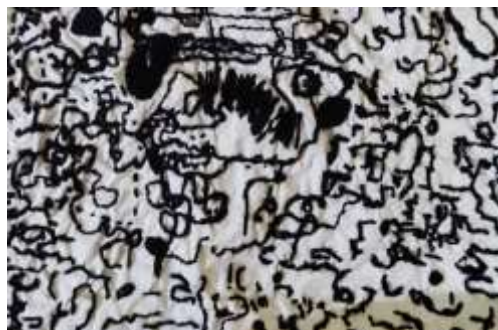


Fig.2 Mind2, embroidery with wool on cotton fabric

Source: Self clicked, self practical, Jammu

II. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF EMBROIDERY AS AN ART THERAPY

Embroidery is one of the meditative art therapies which have so many psychological benefits. The repetitive patterns of embroidery are very calming and good for concentration. Along with other art forms such as knitting, crochet, weaving, and embroidery also known for its therapeutic values. There has been a research associated with those activities which are repetitive in nature and responsible for relaxation of mind (Hawkins 2020). The process of embroidery activates the soothing effects in nervous system, which reduces the stress level. These kinds of art therapies can help the people to manage their anxiety and stress. Embroidery contributes the overall well being of individuals.

The psychological benefits of embroidery play a significant role for the individuals suffering from mental health issues. Concentration generated with embroidery stitches has its own importance which also has an impact on emotions and cognitive behaviour of mind (Kabat- Zinn 2013). Embroidery is a best way to keep away from the worries and inner tensions. By stitching different embroidery patterns it is very easy to quiet the inner chaos and enjoy this mindfulness art therapy (Chavez 2021). When people used to play with these art therapies, they enter in the state of self discovery which is far away from unwanted thoughts and inner conflicts. Textiles and embroidery provides personal sensory experiences which is meditative and easy to deal.

Embroidery art therapy is a unique revelation of thoughts which helps to keep individuals away from screen timings and other external factors. In this way, embroidery is a mental exercise for enhancing the brain coordination. People not only create the complex designs with hands and eye movements but they also shifting their concentration from stress and anxiety. This art therapy is reducing the negative thoughts and depression with creative expressions (Chavez 2021). Embroidery allows the people to find a way for de cluttering the inner struggles. It is an art form for releasing the emotions with colourful impressions of threads. The availability of embroidery is another trait that improves its cognitive advantages. There are some other forms of art which needs skill and time both and embroidery is one of them. Embroidery is useful for achieving concentration of mind. Art provides a sense of accomplishment which is very effective for self discovery (Hawkins 2020).

In brief, embroidery is not only a craft but also a tool for reducing stress, anxiety and depression. It regulates our emotions and thoughts. The designs of embroidery calm the mind and increase the focus. Embroidery improves the psychological well being of the individuals. Creative processes are the used as art therapies because of their multiple uses and positive impacts.

III. EMBROIDERY IS A TOOL FOR HEALING AND PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

In art therapy there are so many creative processes such as painting, sculpture, clay modelling, collage, doodling, crochet, embroidery etc. These exercises are basically supporters for mental healing. Embroidery is an art form which allows people to render their inner thoughts and experiences with artistic creations. Embroidery is a tactile medium, which is easy to handle. Both hands are used for stitching and handling fabrics. This is best way to engage both hands and eyes for the sensory development of brain cells. Stitching is linked with human emotions and materials which is therapeutic in nature.

The key role of embroidery is the promotion of sensory connections. The sensory connections are the organization of information from external sources, which is important for the emotional regulation (Carter 2019). Various studies show that engagement with textiles and threads helps to link with emotional perspectives. The repetition in art therapies activates the parasympathetic nervous system of human beings. It reduces the stress and relaxes the mind. Individual can create abstract designs or floral patterns according to their personal choices. Embroidery fully enhanced their creative impulses and imagination.

Embroidery is a creative process which is used for self expressions with non verbal representations. People who are suffering from trauma, it is difficult to express, but creative process are useful in these cases. Embroidery is also a tool for communicating suppressed emotions and thoughts. The complexities of mind can be visualize with the intricate patterns and designs. Moreover, embroidery is way for giving shape the inner thoughts in visual forms. By translating thoughts with embroidery, individuals escaped from the pain, anxiety and depression. These inner conflicts are transformed into creative forms of embroidery with different perspectives (Davis 2020)

The symbolic configuration of embroidery is useful for healing mind. Embroidery is a symbol of resilience, self expression, self discovery and transformation. The journey of stitching is a healing voyage of mental well being. Overall the process of embroidery increased the self esteem, focus and emotional well being. Therefore embroidery is not only a crafty medium for decoration, but also a therapeutic medium for healing processes.

Meditative art therapy of embroidery is a structures journey of healing. Embroidery helps people to uncover the emotional traces with colourful expressions. There are lot of therapies but the embroidery is the engagement of mind, hand and eyes. It is the coordination mind, body and soul. Through embroidery techniques, individuals can easily heal and calm their mind.

IV. MEDITATIVE TRAITS OF EMBROIDERY ART FORM

There are so many traditional embroideries which are based on repetitive pattern styles. Those repetitions are meditative and promoting mindfulness. When people engage in the stitching they foster a rhythm of relaxation. It is a detachment from outer world and lead towards the peaceful mental state. Embroidery is a meditative state of concentration which is moment based art form (Kabat-Zinn 2013). In this process of embroidery, individuals are able to minimise the distractions from their lives.

According to a psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi there is a flow state. The state is about the mental state in which people can easily absorbed the rhythms of the any activity. It is about the experience of total enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Embroidery is also based on the flow state in which individual performs the repetitive patterns and enjoys the process. This flow is linked with the reduction of stress, increase happiness and improving the cognitive function of nervous system.

Furthermore, embroidery provides a physical sense of achievement. The activity of creative process with hands can direct towards the sentiment of self confidence, enjoyment and emotional accomplishment. Creative activities boost the levels of self esteem among the individuals. For instance, people struggling from emotional traumas, stress and anxiety can reconnect with their inner self (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). The perception of attainment acquired from finishing an embroidery art work is satisfying as well as improving mental well being. People can embody mindfulness practices with the help of embroidery art therapy. It is incorporated with impressions of present moment, concentration and emotional lucidity into day-to-day life. In this way, embroidery is a unique art therapy which is a medium for emotional healing in broader sense.

V. CONCLUSION

Embroidery is a meditative art therapy which also creative platforms for the individuals. This is a unique process which is creative as well as therapeutic in nature. In the process people engage with hands and stitch repetitive designs, which are meditative in approach. Technique is slow, but its impressions on mind are very impactful and calming. Embroidery reduced the stress levels

and it is scientifically proved in many cases. The rhythmic patterns of stitches play a significant role for decreasing the stress levels. It is a colourful meditation of colours and fabrics. The threads are jumbled with a range of designs and patterns. There is a freedom and self expressions within the walls of creativity. Moreover, the embroidery art therapy connects the mind and soul together. It enhances the emotional expressions and self discovery. The non verbal approach of therapies is very important for the mental health. It is slow process but the outcomes are last long.

In conclusion, embroidery is not only a form of art but also a best tool for fostering mental well being and emotional strength.

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