**ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS**

We have recently been discussing results from a recent science report titled ‘What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression: identifying and reviewing the 'active ingredients' of effective interventions’ [1]. The next part of this series that we will discuss is ‘Engagement with the arts’.

What is engagement with the arts?

Arts based interventions involve activities such as composing music, dancing, painting, acting and journaling [2].

Why is engagement with the arts important?

Engaging with arts based activities encourages communication, social skills and interpersonal relationships, as well as helping people to give voice to their experiences. There is some thought that it may also help with anxiety and depression.

What did the research show?

The researchers looked at research from 36 published research articles, and found that a majority of articles reported that young people who engaged with the arts showed improvement in anxiety and depression.

What did young people think about engagement with the arts?

Young people reported that art is an expressive form which is free from judgment, and thought that it could be integrated more in schools and mental health services.

How could a young person could try engaging with the arts?

There are many ways to participate in the arts – dancing, singing, journaling, writing a story, drawing or painting art, or playing music are just some of the ways available. You can do it on your own or with friends, or you could join a club at school or in the local community.

Are there any other resources to help with engaging with the arts?

The following website has many links to help with doing lots of different arts based activities: https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/

References

1. Wellcome. *Report summary: What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression*. 2022; Available from: <https://wellcome.org/reports/what-science-has-shown-can-help-young-people-anxiety-and-depression>.

2. Easwaran, K., Narasimhan, L., Japee, Y., Raja, T., Murali, A., & Easwaran, D., *Why art matters for youth mental health: A youth led participatory insight analysis.* PsyArXiv, 2021(Sept).