

Book review: J. Hope Corbin, Mariana Sanmartino, Emily Alden Hennessy, Helga Bjornoy Urke (Eds.) (2021). *Arts and Health Promotion Tools and Bridges for Practice, Research, and Social Transformation*

书评 : *Arts and Health Promotion Tools and Bridges for Practice, Research, and Social Transformation*

Fung Kei Cheng 郑凤姬
Hong Kong

Abstract

Applying various forms of art to health promotion, art practitioners play a significant role in enhancing holistic health and inspiring dynamics between body, mind and health. This book adopts a humanistic approach to examining the association between art and health and addresses that inclusiveness, meaningfulness, and life satisfaction shape a deeper interpretation of health.

Keywords: art, health equity, health promotion, holistic health

摘要

艺术从业者运用各种艺术形式在健康促进一环占着重要的角色，既加强整体健康，也启发了身体、心灵、健康互动的概念。此书采用人本主义的趣向探讨艺术和健康的关系，以包容、富于意义与生活满足感为健康赋予更深刻的诠释。

关键词：健康促进, 健康公平, 整体健康

With an aim to explore how the arts link with health promotion in a proactive and active manner, *Arts and Health Promotion Tools and Bridges for Practice, Research, and Social Transformation*, comprises 21 chapters within five parts, in which the authors share their experiences in applying arts-based initiatives to promote health equity, social transformation, and social justice in 18 countries across Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and North and Latin America. They exhibit what art professionals contribute to these developed, developing, and under-developed worlds. The participants involve not only adolescents, students, and women, but also people marginalized due to their sexual identification as well as adults with dementia, HIV patients, victims of domestic violence, disaster victims, and refugees. The achievements of these art projects add values to the promotion of physical, mental, spiritual, and sexual health, resulting in extending the usefulness of art forms in health-related activities.

The book analyses ontological, epistemological, ethical, and methodological perspectives to enhance holistic health, with regard to biological, psychological, medical, social, and environmental concerns. It also illustrates a wide range of effective practical tools, using visual (for example, artwork, drawing, storyboard artefacts), auditory (such as music), vocal (for instance, choir), gustatory and olfactory (for example, cooking), and tactile (such as ceramic work, handicrafts) sensations, literary instruments (for instance, poetry, drama, storybook, autobiographical stories, documentary film-making), sports, and community arts. These multi-faceted and multidirectional measures expose cognitive, sensory, perceptual, kinesthetic, bodily, literary, experiential, ideological, emotional, psychological, spiritual, communicative, aesthetic, and symbolic expressions. Their comprehensive functions reveal dynamics among the body, mind, and health.

Meanwhile, the authors of this compilation adopt sophisticated research methods, including quantitative and qualitative inquiries (but focusing on the latter, pertaining to case study, action research, school-based intervention, documentary film and photovoice), investigating physiological, mental, spiritual, biomedical, epidemiological, social, cultural, religious, historic, organisational, economic, and political dimensions which increase health awareness and empowerment and enrich community health. The book encourages a humanistic approach to examining the association between art and health in extrinsic and intrinsic ways.

This compilation emphasizes the role of creative and participatory arts in critical health promotion through top-down and bottom-up channels for individual and community health and well-being, including improvements in lifestyle, healthy life and living conditions, nutrition and hygiene, especially for preventive purposes. Such participation benefits self-discovery, communication, acceptance, tolerance and resilience for both therapists and clients, turning out inclusiveness, meaningfulness, and life satisfaction, which shape a deeper interpretation of health.

However, there is room for refinement. First, the book contains limited discussion on the effectiveness of dance or movement therapy and arts-based events with natural material (such as gardening and floral arrangement) to promote health. These activities can boost the diversification of art therapy. Second, with the aid of technology, social media provide a potential vehicle to defeat space and time zone obstacles. If this edited volume could have delved into how this innovation for the arts can help health promotion, it would have inspired practitioners to attain more resources for their performance. Third, although the book covers underprivileged groups, those with disabilities are not in view. This group of people probably suffer from additional hindrances to working with art. Professionals could pay greater attention to them and integrative art therapy that can better accommodate their needs. Fourth, there is a dearth of dialogue about advanced care planning, life and death education, and palliative care through health promotion programmes. This review suggests that researchers should study these topics such as advance directives and bereavement, for which art is likely able to liaise with people going through these difficult issues. Fifth, art and culture are interrelated. Cultural interpretation of art can affect health promotion that it may create misunderstandings. The book would have enriched its readability if it would

had looked into the cultural impact of art on health promotion. Sixth, the compilation directs much effort toward qualitative studies, as previously mentioned. Given that sufficient experimental, quantitative data could have supported the results of art-driven interventions on health promotion, they could have increased the reliability of the outcomes of arts on health promotion. Lastly, this review recommends formulating a training model for art practitioners to promote health, resulting in strengthening arts for the healthcare field.

This edited volume expands the horizon of arts on health promotion and exemplifies the potential of art-oriented approaches through individual, group, and community-based programmes to support health promotion, particularly for disadvantaged groups. It explicates art devices for self-discovery, meaning making, connection and engagement with others, collaboration and mutual support, sustaining micro- (individual), meso- (interpersonal), macro- (societal) implications and benefits to creative, innovative, participative, artistic, informative, and educational health promotion. As a result, civil society can be established with synergy and diversity for a healthier community through art as a change agent. The book is a reference for art practitioners, service providers, helping professionals, medical adepts, policy makers, researchers, volunteers and students to experience sharing and inspiration, players who are open-minded and eager to equip themselves with art skills will find resourceful.

About the Author

Fung Kei Cheng, PhD, focuses on applying Buddhist and Chinese cultural theories to a variety of disciplines, including counselling and psychotherapy, mental health, public health, complementary and alternative medicine, conflict resolution, management, gender studies, cultural studies, and sustainable development. Her research outcomes have been published in international peer-reviewed journals in English and Chinese. She can be reached at oasischeng@yahoo.com.