



## Beyond words: Art therapy for self-expression with female inmates



Review article



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### Abstract

This study investigated art therapy as communicative therapeutic intervention among female prison inmates at the Kumasi Female Prison. The study participants for the research comprised 34 inmates who had agreed and shown interest in partaking in the research. This group was purposively sampled with the help of the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale, which had indicated the inmates with high levels of stress. The study took to the qualitative approach of research and made use of the descriptive method. A thematic analysis of data was employed and findings for the study revealed that art used as a non-verbal communicative tool, had the power to express pent up negative emotions by prison inmates. It was also found out that since inmates may feel uncomfortable with verbal therapies, engaging in art activities serve as a way of communicating uncensored emotions in a safe and trusting environment without fear of judgment. The study suggests that art therapy be made part of the healing therapies in Ghanaian prisons, since art is intrinsic in the prison setting to help alleviate destructive emotions such as depression, anxieties, fear and stress. The research indicates the effectiveness of art and its processes in the management of some psychological issues amongst inmates.

**Keywords:** Art Therapy, female inmates, prison, self-expression, stress



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### Public Interest Statement

This qualitative study assessed Art Therapy and its potentials in healing persons dealing with psychological challenges in the prison environment. It was discovered through this research that Art Therapy can be utilized, beyond the normal talk therapies, to aid in setting therapeutic grounds to address psychological issues among any population. The findings obtained from this study would help educate and inform the relevance of Art Therapy as uncensored tools for healing and self-expression. The study could as well educate the government of Ghana and the Ghana Prison Service to explore and integrate Art Therapy as part of its psychotherapies, in their efforts to manage unwanted psychological problems in an environment as the prison setup.

### Introduction

Art is used mostly in everyday life. The traditional, commonly known benefit of art and its products are mostly known to be for aesthetic purposes. The study into modern psychology investigates diverse ways art and its processes could be beneficial in other creative modes to curb certain emotional and psychological challenges faced by numerous groups of people. The WHO (2013) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The implication of this definition throws more light on the fact that, health outcomes, or changes in health could be seen as a result of an action, in this case, creative artistic activities intended to bring relief, remedy a problem, even prevent certain psychological challenges. There has been evidence that engagement with artistic activities, either as an observer of the creative efforts of others or as an initiator of one's own creative efforts, can enhance an individual's emotional and psychological well-being. Cryer (2016) explains art as a vehicle for the expression or communication of emotions and ideas.

Stress and depression, according to Stuckey et al., (2010), are part of the leading causes of certain cardiovascular diseases and certain chronic illnesses. Other studies reveal the effects of incarceration and the many negative psychological consequences it has on inmates (Kamoyo et al., 2015). The close confinement, loss of contact with family and loved ones, the general deprivation of a person's will and the austere conditions of a prison environment come along with waves of stressful episodes in incarcerated persons, according to (Osebe, 2012). Prolonged stress can inadvertently go a long way to affect inmates through insomnia, chronic body pains, loss of appetite and a general state of unwellness. This could in turn, take a toll on them, as they unconsciously adopt or ignite certain negative behavioural tendencies as aggressiveness, insulting, quarrelling and hopelessness. (Erickson, 2008) reports the rapid high rates of psychological problems women are exposed to in correctional settings. Art Therapy, a mode of psychotherapy has served as a creative intervention, over time, according

to research to have excellent effects in addressing a myriad of psychological challenges in harsh environments like the prison setup. It has proven to possess the power to help reduce negative emotions as stress, anxieties and depression in the austere prison atmosphere, provided a relaxed, friendly environment for catharsis and served as a powerful tool for effective communication. Inmates' abilities to express certain emotions are more often strictly restricted by both their prison settings and verbal prowess, thus, incarcerated individuals prove to be a perfect group of candidates for art and other creative therapy interventions (Eisdell, 2005; Ferszt et al., 2004; Young & Bemak, 1996).

Malchiodi (2007) explains art therapy as a broad field with no sole definition since it brings together the disciplines of art and therapy in a way that better the lives of people emotionally, mentally and physically through self-expression. However, in the context of this study, the use of art-based assessments without a strict context for art therapy session has been loosely referred to as art therapy. The paper therefore seeks to examine art as a non-verbal tool for communication and its therapeutic tendencies of through therapeutic activities, leading to effective self-expression and awareness in a creative, therapeutic manner.

## **Methods**

This study was driven by a qualitative research approach, while utilizing the descriptive research method. Utilizing the qualitative research approach offered the researchers the chance to see and understand the context within which respondents take decisions, act and generally respond to their environments. According to Kaplan & Maxwell (1994), 'it is often the case that human decisions and actions can only be understood in context – it is the context that helps to 'explain' why someone acted as they did. And this context (or multiple contexts) is best understood by talking to people.' The qualitative approach allowed the researchers to interact with inmates in their 'natural' habitats through consistent direct communication and observation. It served them uncensored, raw data on the actions and inactions of inmates and interactions with both fellow inmates and their supervisors. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) aver that 'the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified.'

## **Research Setting**

The study was undertaken in the Kumasi Female Prison in Ghana. The female prison is structurally attached to the male central prison, but was granted full autonomy in 1991. It consists four cells and housed about 46 inmates at the time of research, both convicts and remand prisoners. The Kumasi Female Prison has services like the counselling service, vocational and spiritual activities, all both engineered to provide both psychological interventions for the management of stress, depression and anxieties and other emotional

challenges and for the acquisition of skill set for while incarcerated and upon their release. However, it had been found that there were a limited number of qualified Counselors overwhelmed with the populace in the prisons making their work ineffective in terms of providing comprehensive programmes while the vocational training skills provided were inadequate due to lack of logistics (Aba Afari, Osei & Adu-Agyem, 2015; Dadzie, 2009).

### **Population**

The baseline study randomly sampled 34 out of 46 female prison inmates who had consented to participate in the research work. These inmates' ages ranged from 19 years to 60 years and had shown indications of levels of stress over a period of time, as indicated by the DASS, the stress questionnaire that was administered prior to any intervention.

### **Instrumentation**

Observation, interviews, questionnaire and art-based assessments were the data gathering tools. Observation was used to gather data on the various behaviors inmates show in their reactions to situations around them while interview sessions allowed researchers collect data on inmates' thoughts and feelings on issues. The DASS questionnaire developed by Lovibond & Lovibond, (1995) is a set of three self-report questionnaires that have been intended to measure three negative emotional conditions in any individual; depression, anxiety and stress. This was used to initially assess the stress levels of the inmates before the therapeutic intervention commenced. The Art Therapy interventions combined with a Solutions-Focused and Narrative Approach in Art Therapy, intended to provide a more relaxed platform for an uncensored release of pent up emotions in inmates and serve as a basis for therapy.

### **Art Therapy Intervention**

The Art Therapy intervention lasted three months, with at least twelve therapeutic sessions in all. Both structured and unstructured themes were used in these sessions. Studies have confirmed that Art Therapy offers prisoners a non-destructive, therapeutic release for their feelings of distress associated with the deprivation of prison life as well as states of mental health extending beyond the incarceration experience (Day and Onorato, 1989; Hall, 1997; Williams, 2003), hence its usage. The art making process was thus combined with solution-focused and narrative approach, using this technique as a therapeutic model for treatment.

Each session took approximately two hours, giving inmates enough time to express their feelings in their own unique ways since their actions and inactions were all pregnant with unique pent up desires, feelings and wishes. Besides, each session was ended with discussions of art works by each inmate. Inmates also explained their feelings and the impacts of the therapy exercise. Inmates were encouraged to freely express themselves through their

drawings since their artworks were not going to be compared therefore drawing proficiency was not of any concern, rather the process of introspection and healing. This approach was adapted to verify the theory made by Riley & Malchiodi (2004), that art therapy has been known, over the years, for its potential in pushing for a faster resolution of existing problems in persons than just verbal methods alone. The art therapeutic sessions had the following themes; "My happily ever after", "The thinking head", "Monsters" by Malchiodi (1998), "Colors that calm me and bring joy", "My pain in colors", "Anything you want to express", "My problem mountain - taking charge" and "Myself as a strong tree". Few works of two cases with pseudonyms, Akos and Esi, would be looked at for the purpose of this study.

### Akos

She is a thirty-five-year-old woman, who had been just sentenced three months earlier upon the beginning of the therapy sessions. She was one of the few inmates who had had the opportunity to attain a tertiary education and had a career before incarceration, hence, dealt poorly with the culture shock upon incarceration. She was a divorcee with two little children and complained of not receiving a lot of visits from family and friends because of distance. She experienced financial constraints from home, since she was the breadwinner. She was devastated thinking of her ailing mother who takes care of her children while imprisoned.



Plate 1: "My Happily Ever After" by Akos

#### Akos' explanation of works

This inmate, upon interview, expressed the joy she felt when she thought of her home and family she had left behind, at the same time, she could not stop thinking of their welfare because of her absence and her inability to help. In Plate 1, she explained that her old, weak, ailing mother, was depicted as the woman with the walking stick on the extreme right of her drawing, the two figures next to her method were her children running with arms raised, while the figure to the extreme left was herself and the object by her was a traveling bag. She explained that what will give her utmost joy is to be released to go back home to take care of her little children and her sick mother (signified by her traveling bag most probably). She

believed things would be better because she will be able to work, fend for her family, provide the education her children's need and care for her sick mother.

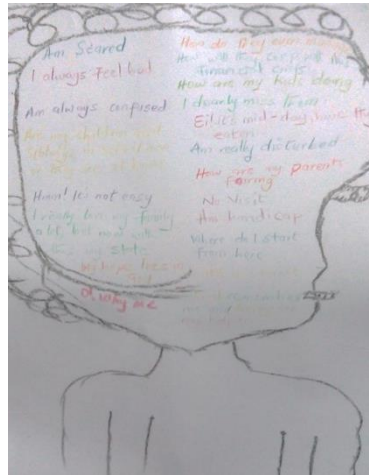


Plate 2: "The Thinking Head" by Akos

Plate 2 depicts a large sized head with an object placed in the mouth of the person. "Inside" this big head are written statements like "I'm scared", "are my children and siblings in school now or home?", "how will my family cope with this financial crisis?", "Ei, it's midday, have they eaten?", "no visit!", "I dearly miss them", "I'm handicap", "I'm really disturbed, how are my kids doing?", "I'm confused!", "Hmm, it's not easy", "Where do I start from?", "I really love and miss my family", "How are my parents faring?", "Oh!, why me?!", "My hope lies in God", "God, remember me and bring me my helper".

During the post drawing inquiry, this inmate admitted how confused and disturbed she was about her current status in life. She lamented about being under a lot of stress in the prison environment, but somehow, she could not freely talk about how she really felt for fear of not knowing whom to confide in and the fear that she would be tagged as complaining too much or mocked at as being frail. This is most probably shown with the words and statements written in the large head of her drawn figure; a sort of journaling her daily thoughts and the things that most stresses her out on a daily basis. Since she could not freely talk about her feelings, that may also be shown by the placing something on the mouth of the figure drawn in Plate 2. At the end of this session, Akos was very grateful and seemed relatively less burdened after journaling her emotions and being able to talk to someone about what she silently endured.





Plate 3: "Monsters" by Akos

This third image depicts a picture with two rectangular shaped "lines" placed horizontally intersecting with five similarly shaped "lines" vertically placed. In the middle of the crossed shapes, all coloured red, seemed to be a face with big gorging eyes and mouth shaped by zigzag lines also coloured in red. There were two almost shapes like triangles on top of the head. Around the entire picture are lines and shapes of different kinds and colours. Right beneath the picture, the inmate writes "Prison kakai", an Akan word which means "Monster prison. Somewhere in the middle or rather seeming that behind the red crossed bars, is a face with its features looking quite scary. The face has big gorging eyes, serrated teeth, and something that looks like big horns hovering behind the red crossed bars. which seem to depict lots of chaos."

Clarifying her Artwork, Akos explains the red intersecting shapes as the prison in which she finds herself. Prisons are always locked up, thus, hindering her freedom in the world. She depicted the bars with the colour red because, she says "red is one of the colours I hate most". She continues to state that prison was a monster (kakai) in itself and has ever been her biggest monster since she first entered its grips. It was a monster waiting to devour anyone who entered it and brought a lot of fear and stress and uncertainties in her life (depicted by the face with gorging eyes and serrated teeth). She explained the various shapes, lines and colours around her picture as the state of fear, confusion and stress that have controlled her life since incarceration. She ended by stating that she did not want prison life to have control over her life.

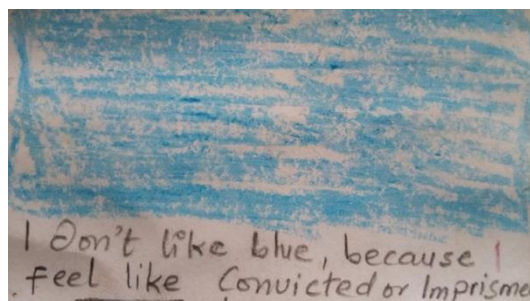


Plate 4: "My Pain in Colours" by Akos

Akos claimed that her pain was best depicted in blue. A simple but thought-provoking explanation as to why she would depict her pain with a blue colour, she explained that blue was the colour of the prisoners' uniform and since she was incarcerated, she has since developed some hatred for the colour blue. She stated that anytime she saw the blue colour, it made her uncomfortable and emotionally stressed. She added that upon her release, she was going to destroy any blue clothing she had ever had so as not to remember her ordeal in the prison as one who had ever been incarcerated.



Plate 5: "Anything You Want to Express" by Akos

Akos' illustration had a small blue house centered on her drawing paper. In the blue house was a female figure that looked like she was trapped and sad. However, a surprising revelation was noted when the therapist noticed that the house drawn by this inmate with the female figure crying in it had neither doors nor windows. This piqued the therapist's interest which was later followed by a series of questions. Upon an interview with this inmate, she explained that her artwork depicted a trapped or a confined woman who is confused and yearning to be rescued. She stands in the trapped blue house always wailing profusely, scratching the walls of the house until she is heard by just anyone outside the house. She explains the absence of doors and windows meaning that she cannot see a path of escape from the room. If there was an escape, she would have probably tried to escape.

She added that the woman inside the room represents her in every way. She is scared she will suffocate to death in that small blue room that, by her, represents the prison she is stuck in. This fear of suffocating to death has lingered since the start of her incarceration, because according to her, she suffers from asthma and sometimes fears she might die in prison since the cells are always stuffy. She went on to explain the last element in her drawing meaning the trapped blue house does not seem to represent enough damage. She reiterates that outside the house are a lot of problems hindering her release from prison and delaying a lot of processes, and so sometimes, she begins to feel that no one will ever hear her and come to her rescue.



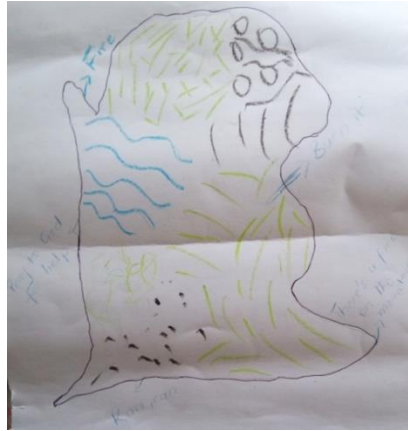


Plate 6: "My Problem Mountain - Taking Charge" by Akos

This erect looking piece of mass with ragged looking edges, with circles at the top right corner, lines running from the top left corner through the middle of the mountain and ending at the bottom right corner and with black dots on the bottom left corner, had statements like "fire", "there's a lot of fire on the mountain", "burn it", "run, run" and "pray to God for help". Was what she depicted as her mountain, the current problems she faced. She explained the circles and dots stood for huge stones and little stones and the lines for other undesirable materials that made up her mountain. she explained the 'fire' as what was currently happening in her life and how she felt about her that predicament. She described her problem as 'fire' and claimed she always felt heat under her skin and turned out mentally stressed always. At times, she wanted to run away from her problems if she could, just to avoid it or to burn it to ashes. She learned to turn to prayer and commit things into God's hands. This session offered ways to reason through proper ways of getting rid of the problem if possible or appropriate ways of coping with it if it was somewhat impossible to get rid of it totally.

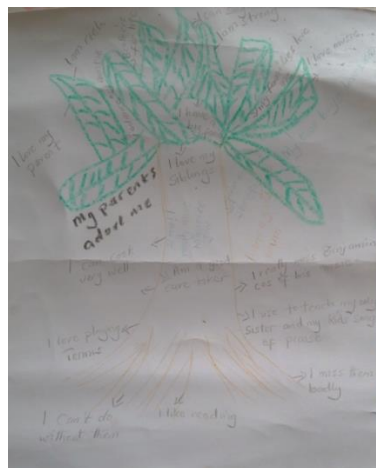


Plate 7: "Myself as a Strong Tree" for Case I

This artwork had a huge brown tree with many strong, firm and long looking roots underneath it. It had some healthy looking deep green leaves springing from it to every angle and some texts all over the tree. Akos noted that she depicted this image totally focusing on herself, her achievements, strengths, abilities and what made her unique from others. Some of the texts read 'I am strong', 'I have a big family', 'I can cook very well', 'My parents adore me', 'I love playing tennis', 'I can sing', 'My family loves me', 'I'm a good mum', 'My children love me', 'I'm a good caretaker', 'I love music', 'I like reading'. The therapy session offered her an opportunity to solely focus on her being a woman with a lot of abilities and uniqueness.

### Esi

Esi is a forty-four year old incarcerated woman who had been imprisoned about a year upon the start of therapy sessions. She had gained a high school education and was married with three children. Prior to her arrest, she was in trading with her husband who was also imprisoned and serving a sentence. She received visits once in a long while since they were both imprisoned and did not want their kids to see them in that state.



Plate 8: "My Happily Ever After" by Esi

Esi's first art piece showed five stick figures with joined hands with inscriptions "My dear husband" "me" and "My children" on the stick figures and underneath the drawing the inscriptions "My family" and "We are together We are happy". Explaining her work, Esi confessed how she missed her husband and children and hoped and prayed that they would be together soon. This she had depicted with the drawing of five figures whom she confirmed were her family holding one another's hand. She expounded on how her husband and her were both serving sentences in prison and how that had greatly affected their families, especially their three very young children. She lamented that she had not seen her children since her incarceration because she felt her children were too young to see her in that state. "Me, what will make me happy the most is to finally see my children again and carry them and see my husband out of prison, so that we will be happy again as a family". Although she

complained about the uncertainty of their career since they had been away for a long time, she stressed that her family was paramount at that moment and her job would be taken care of later.

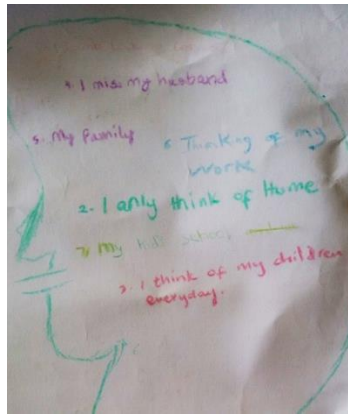


Plate 9: "The Thinking Head" by Esi

Inside the head were various inscriptions stating 'I miss my husband', 'my family', 'I want to know God more', 'I think of my children everyday', 'thinking of my work', 'I only think of home', and 'my kid's school'. The post drawing inquiry revealed that these inscriptions were exactly what she thought of ever since she had been imprisoned. She stated that she just could not stop thinking about her husband and children especially, and that if she had the chance, she would somehow be home, magically. Esi poured her frustrations out, which was therapeutic in itself since she complained it was very difficult for her to talk to anyone for the fear of it, and so she always bottled it up, smiled around pretending she was fine. She was grateful to have had the opportunity to talk and concluded that she was glad to have grown closer to God, since her incarceration, reading her Bible and attending worship services always, something that she hardly did.

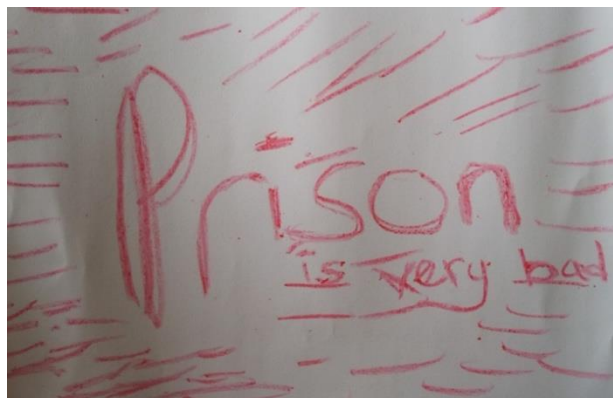


Plate 10: "Monsters" by Esi

This was an unusual illustration of the theme by this inmate. Initially, the assumption was that inmates would generally depict the usual image of a scary, bad looking image that created fear in people, but this inmate's interesting show of her 'monsters' was simple, direct and straight to the point – Prison. During the post drawing inquiry, she stated that if she could draw the whole prison and illustrate the stress and frustrations that come with it, she would have. Since she was not very good with art, she wanted to illustrate it plainly and simply as it was. She claimed that even though she drew her monster simply and did not look scary as was expected, the simple word, "Prison", was the greatest monster of all. The institution had tormented her both psychologically and physically and that made her wake up every day psychologically stressed. Finally, she confessed that prison was a monster she wished she could easily kill if she could.

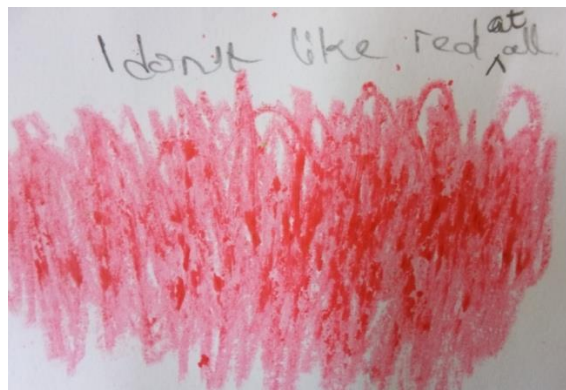


Plate 11: "My Pain in Colours" by Esi

Esi portrayed her abhorrence for the colour red as she showed a representation of a vigorous scribble. At the top of the illustration was the inscription "I don't like red at all". As she explained the picture, she intimated that the colour red was a type of colour she just could not stand, somehow, and would not wear the nicest clothes if they were red coloured. That was how much she loathed the colour red. Through the session, she said that the red colour, upon sight, somehow got her angry many times and sometimes she felt she acted a bit 'crazy' and made her very uncomfortable, something she could not explain. The intensity of the scribble probably showed the hatred that went with it.

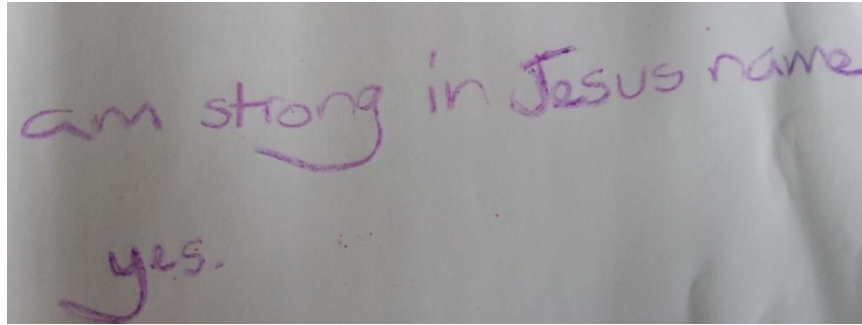


Plate 12: "Anything You Want to Express" for Case II

Esi showed early signs of progress as she executed her sixth therapy exercise with the theme 'Anything You Want to Express'. From her illustration, she seemed to have learned unique ways to cope and used a lot of religious coping in trying to reduce her stressful episodes. This image was a simple inscription that reads 'Am strong in Jesus' name. Yes'. When asked to explain, she said that though she had been under a lot of stress almost every day since she was imprisoned, God had somehow been her source of hope. She had grown closer to God and believed she was a strong person who would come out of her sentence stronger.



Plate 13: "My Problem Mountain" by Esi

Illustrating 'My Problem Mountain' (Plate 13), Esi's image portrayed a huge upright mountain drawn in a deep green color. The mountain had curves, especially descending from the left top side to the bottom left and had various undulating lines depicted in the same deep green colour found in the mountain. Around the image were the inscriptions 'Read Bible' and 'By Praying'. Upon some clarification from her, she admitted that though she would say her incarceration, together with her husband's, she missing her children and the financial instability was her 'problem mountain' at that moment, she had over time developed a coping strategy by reading her Bible always and praying to God. According to her, she felt much

calmer and that served as a distraction from her many worries that eventually stressed her out. She also believed that God would answer her prayers.



Plate 14: "Myself as a Strong Tree" by Esi

The end of the therapy session came with tasks which helped inmates focus on themselves as the strong people they were, rather than focusing on their predicaments and the stress that came with them. Esi's depiction of this theme titled 'Myself as a Strong Tree' showed a tall tree drawn and coloured green with branches of different colours with inscriptions such as 'my children', 'hardworking', 'my husband', 'my family', and 'asset to my family'. Her answers to the post drawing inquiry showed that each branch in her drawing represented a particular strength she had being a caring mother and wife to her children and husband respectively. She concluded that she had never really thought of these positive things about herself and many times, felt she was useless and hopeless with no higher education, no career and imprisoned, as she even thought of life after incarceration. She was excited about the exercise and was grateful she had found things she could be proud of about herself.

### Discussion

Malchiodi (2007) posits that a unique approach to art therapy is that it is a dynamic therapy, requiring one to participate in one's own treatment. This study confirms earlier statements about inmates' active participation in art therapy sessions proving to help them release pent up emotions (). The main themes that were noted after the first themed session was analyzed were themes such as family and freedom from prison. Almost all the inmates' drawings showed how they missed their families and their desire to be released from prison. The second session, "the thinking head" confirms the theory on the right brain/left brain theory and how this relates to mental health. The right brain communicates in images, usually symbolic and emotional, and can tell us what one actually feels, whereas the left brain which uses verbal communication, is analytical and critical suggesting to one what he thinks he feels. Thus, art



was best to offer the inmates the chance to get introspective and express the negative emotions that were mostly difficult to let out in order to synchronize the left and the right brains and leave them much healthier (Withrow, 2004). Some of the causes of the negative emotions they depicted ranged from incarceration, uncomfortable environment, through family and loved ones, to other problems like children, business, failing health and death.

It was noticed, however, that, key among these themes were the wellbeing of their loved ones, especially their children, husbands, jobs and stigma after release from prison. This is confirmed by Radosh, (2002), who states that female prison inmates express overwhelming concern about the welfare of their children while they are in prison and their ability to care for them when they are released. This observation was made in the execution of their artworks when it was realized that similar themes of their children and family were found running through their drawings.

The theme 'Monsters' inaudibly brought out the many silent, unexpressed emotions that stayed haunting these inmates, and thus contributed greatly to their stresses. It was interesting to learn of certain fears that introduced stress in the prisoners. Among the theme was mainly the loss of total freedom. Other themes that were discovered were also the fear of death of partners or loved ones at home, which they may not see again, fear of death because of an illness or two and the prison institution itself was confessed to be an ultimate 'monster' in their lives that scared them and changed their course in many ways. This finding confirms an earlier research finding which states that "drawings, collage making or other experiential activities have been used to help individuals identify sources of stress and somatic aspects of trauma reactions" (Malchiodi, 2001, 2008b; Steele & Raider, 2001).

The subsequent two sessions helped in exploring how the inmates generally reacted to colours and learnt of the various colours that affected them positively and negatively. Some were led to learn, for the first time, about certain colours they did not seem to agree with and also some that affected their moods by helping them to lighten up and be joyful. In fact, through the usage of colour, the inmates released a variety of moods and emotions they may not have been able to communicate verbally (Withrow, 2004). This session also helped in the understanding of the true emotions behind the choice of colours in the artworks of the inmates. The 'Anything You Want to Express' session was purposefully designed so that inmates would be free to express whatever they wanted to share without a specific directive. It was a necessary part of the healing process to spontaneously communicate one's true feeling void of any given topic to work on. Gussak (2007) affirms that art has the advantage of bypassing unconscious and conscious defenses, including pervasive dishonesty. Like most of the themes that were discovered across the directives, one major theme that was found in this session's execution was the effects that confinement has had on the inmates and the impact of parting with loved ones.

Another important theme that ran through was the burning desire to be set free from such an environment as the prison. Nearing the end of the session, the purpose of the two last sessions was for the inmates to identify their problems themselves and explore unique, creative ways within themselves to cope with the stresses that come as a result of their problems. Many inmates found unique strategies in handling the problem, when possible, but even more important, mapped out strategies in their reactions to stressful events or situations. 'Myself as a Strong Tree' proved to be a good ending as the session left inmates as strong people who were more than able to handle their individual situation and to cope with the stress they feel. Art has proven to be a non-verbal mode of communication, able to set the needed relaxed atmosphere in a prison setup, serving a platform to be heard and listened to, beyond words. Because the prison setting is more conducive to groups, there are advantages to art therapy in a group setting. These include instilling hope, interaction, universality, catharsis, and altruism (Malchiodi, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

This qualitative study investigated the communicative and healing potentials of expressive arts, and how these possess the power to set conversations for a therapeutic transformation in a highly psychologically troubled group of people as prison inmates. Art therapy proves to be a healing factor in addressing diverse destructive emotional states such as stress, depression and anxieties, even in a confined environment as the prison. It should therefore be incorporated into the regime of the inmates as an inexpensive way to relieve them of their stress and enable them to "voice" their frustrations within the medium of art in order to keep sane and avoid associated medical conditions. In the words of Pearson and Wilson (2009), "the construction of metaphor through art, becomes a language for activation of the change process – often offering ways to express the inexpressible".

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**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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