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Creative Arts Interventions for Trauma-Informed Youth Mental Health Support: A Systematic Review

George Adu Gyamfi

ABSTRACT

Despite increased awareness of youth mental health challenges, the available support systems remain inadequate to address the complex emotional and psychological consequences of trauma, especially in the context where access to professional mental health services is limited. Thus, this study adopted the systematic review approach to explore creative arts interventions for trauma-informed youth mental health support. The study adopted systematic review approach, consulting five (5) credible databases for the relevant literature. The search employed the Population, Exposure, and Outcome (PEO) tools, using relevant keywords and search terms. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) was used to select final sixteen (16) literature, which was used for the thematic analysis. Results showed that trauma exposure influence emotional regulation, cognitive development, social relationships, and psychological wellbeing among children and adolescents. Findings showed that diverse creative arts approaches are used to support trauma-informed youth mental health, including paint, slime, cardboard, and Play-Doh. Results showed that creative arts interventions are generally effective in improving emotional wellbeing, psychological adjustment, and trauma recovery among youths. The findings showed that there are diverse mechanisms explaining how creative arts interventions support trauma recovery among youths, including emotional regulation, self-awareness, and social connection and belonging. Findings showed that there are several challenges associated with the use of creative arts interventions for trauma-informed mental health challenges. The study concludes that trauma-related mental health illnesses among youths are associated with adverse experiences, violence, and social vulnerabilities they have had while growing up.

Keywords: Arts, creative arts, trauma, mental health, youths, trauma-informed mental health

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INTRODUCTION

Generally, the issue of mental health among young people has become a significant global challenge. This mental health issue is attached with experiences such as adverse childhood experience, abuse, violence, and social exclusion, which contribute to emotional distress, depression, and anxiety. These mental health issues are addressed through traditional mental health interventions, which focus on verbal communication and clinical approaches. However, it is difficult for some young people to express complex emotions and traumatic memories through the traditional intervention methods. Therefore, creative arts interventions have been gaining momentum as alternative approach to provide safe and responsive solution for trauma recovery and support. Creative arts interventions may enable young people to communicate their feelings, reconstruct personal narratives, and develop coping strategies.

Mental health encompasses a range of functionalities with respect to the cognitive and psychological wellbeing of an individual, which include mental, emotional, social, and behavioral functioning (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). The issue of mental health, just like physical health, occurs to different people from different categories regardless of age, location, conditions, and gender. Thus, it is an issue that should be given as much consideration as the physical wellbeing of an individual. However, it has been observed that it receives limited attention unlike the physical wellbeing of an individual (McCloughen et al., 2012). Good mental health in youths includes indicators such as timely achievement of development milestones, healthy social and emotional development, and effective regulatory and coping skills (Bitsko, 2022). There is no gainsaying in the fact that mentally healthy youths would function properly in every setting they found themselves, whether in their homes, schools, and communities, and vice-versa.

Mental health support is crucial in reducing the growing magnitude of mental illnesses. Moreover, it has been established that there is a significant relationship psychological and physical health, thus lack of mental health support or service is deplorable and may have serious consequences (Singh et al., 2022). Scholars (Berryman et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2014) have established that plethora of youths are faced with challenge regarding their mental health, with evidence showing that almost all teenagers in the United Kingdom (Pew Research Centre, 2015) while one in three (1 in 3) youths between the age of 18 and 25 are faced with mental health challenges in the United States (Mojtabai & Olfson, 2025). This establishes the growing concerns with respect to the resultant mental health implications that are spreading in the US. This could be as a result of the traumatic experiences that youths might have had, which can disrupt their anxiety, distress, and depression with ultimate negative influence on mental health.

US Department of Health and Human Services (2014) described trauma as a harmful and costly public health problem, which occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war, and other harmful experiences. It was stated further that trauma has no boundaries with respect gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, age, geography or sexual orientation. This emphasizes that youths are not immune to traumatic experiences, underscoring the need to understand their trauma-induced mental health. More importantly, there are an increasing number of youths with traumatic experiences, which disproportionately affects the growing number of minority youths. The particular minority youths are affected includes experiences from discrimination, family violence, community violence, natural and manmade disasters, immigration and acculturation stressors, historical/generational trauma (Pumariiega et al., 2022).

Jimoh and Omiyefa (2025) noted that trauma neuroscience can transform psychiatric treatment, which offers hope for improved mental health outcomes and long-term recovery for trauma survivors. Understanding trauma's impact on mental health requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates neuroscientific, psychological, and clinical perspectives to develop effective treatment interventions strategies (Sinha, 2016). Since this study seeks to adopt the systematic review approach to understand trauma-induced mental health support for the youths, interdisciplinary studies would be considered. Moreover, there has been an observed expansion in the understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to include complex trauma, development trauma, and intergenerational trauma, which shows that diversity in experiences that determine mental health outcomes of youths (Dugbartey, 2025). Without proper intervention strategies, all of these traumatic experiences as well as their attendant implications may not be addressed.

There are several intervention strategies that can be used to address mental health illnesses. Different scholars have recommended strategies such as adventurous physical activity (Clough et al., 2016), mobile health intervention (Bendtsen et al., 2020), employment (Drake & Wallach, 2020), and clinical arts (Jensen & Bonde, 2018). However, there is no comprehensive interventions strategies established for trauma-induced mental health challenges especially with respect to creative arts. Smriti et al. (2022) concluded that while creative and expressive art therapies (CATs) can help in de-stigmatization, there are limited or no evidence on drama therapy, music therapy, and dance movement therapy. It was established that majority on art therapy focused more on statistical significance on not the efficacy. This leaves unanswered questions on the effectiveness of creative arts interventions on mental health challenges. Meanwhile, trauma-induced mental health challenges among

youths can be addressed through creative arts interventions that provide emotional expression, psychological support, and healing.

Jensen and Bonde (2018) noted that there is a growing body of evidence on the use of creative arts as a tool for enhancing mental health wellbeing, suggesting that participatory arts activities and clinical arts are made more available in health and social facilities. The authors argued that such activities are non-medical interventions that promote both public health and wellbeing. Gillam (2018) buttressed that it is important for creative arts activities to be participatory in order to ensure that it becomes a vehicle not only for self-expression, but also for participation in groups and communities. This may help increase connectedness and social inclusion that would help alleviate emotional distress, depression, and anxiety. Cole et al. (2018) established that creative arts activities facilitating understanding and connecting to group members, highlighting that these activities are positive, effective, and helpful in processing grief and loss.

Despite increased awareness of youth mental health challenges, the available support systems remain inadequate to address the complex emotional and psychological consequences of trauma, especially in the context where access to professional mental health services is limited. While traditional mental health support may be effective, their accessibility remain low and largely unsuitable for all youths, especially those who struggle to express traumatic experiences verbally. Therefore, creative arts interventions like music, visual arts, drama, dance, and storytelling have gained attention as alternative approaches for trauma-induced mental health support among youths. These interventions provide opportunities for self-expression, social connection, and emotional expression among youths affected by trauma. It is against the foregoing this study seeks to examine creative arts as interventions for trauma-induced youth mental health support using a systematic review approach. Based on this, the findings of this study will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of trauma-informed mental illnesses among youths?
2. What are the approaches adopted for creative arts interventions for providing trauma-informed mental health support for youths?
3. What is the effectiveness of creative arts interventions on trauma-informed youth mental health?
4. What are the mechanisms through which creative arts interventions contribute to trauma-induced mental health support among youths?
5. What are the challenges associated with the use of creative arts interventions for trauma-informed mental health support among youths?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The systematic review approach was adopted in this study. The six generic steps recommended by Templier and Pare (2015) was adopted in the study, which include formulating the research questions, searching the extant literature, screening for inclusion, assessing the quality of primary studies, extracting data, and analyzing data to ascertain emerging themes. This study adopts qualitative systematic review, which is a method that seeks to analyze and synthesize findings from different qualitative studies (Grant & Booth 2009). Databases consulted for this study include MEDLINE, CINAHL Plus, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences. This approach facilitates fast and efficient access to the wide-ranging and up-to-date evidences as regards the impact of creative arts interventions on the mental state of youths.

The keywords and search terms are the words used to query the EBSCOhost Health Sciences Research Database. Using the appropriate keywords and search terms would enhance the chances of retrieving relevant literature. The search was carried out using the PEO (Population, Exposure, and Outcome) tool, which was systematically used to construct the keywords and search terms that are inherent in the research question. Since the sets of literature reviewed are qualitative research, PEO tool (See Table 1) was considered appropriate as against PICO which is designed to analyse quantitative research. Qualitative research method is used when researchers sought to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective.

Table 1: PEO table

PEO	Statements
Population	Young adults requiring mental health support
Exposure	Exposure to creative arts like dance, drama, music, and so on
Outcome	Depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem,
Research Question	What is the effectiveness of creative arts intervention on trauma-informed youth mental health support?

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2026)

Meanwhile, this review adopts Boolean operators to widen the search scope. Particularly, 'AND' and 'OR' were used to ascertain the combine relationship among the variables. There was purposeful omission of Boolean operator 'NOT' as such would eliminate the chances of getting the required literature from the keywords and search terms. Moreover, truncation sign (*) was used in the search strategies to suggest words that share the same base word but with different ending. This reduces the need for several searches that may be time-consuming (See Table 2). Using the PEO tool in the initial search inquiry produced a large number of results. Subsequently, inclusion and exclusion criteria were introduced, which appraise the search results to produce only the most relevant studies to the review. It was ensured that the series

of literature were published in English language. Moreover, the titles and abstracts of the literature were considered to see their relevance to the research question. This was done by considering the presence of keywords and search terms in the titles and abstracts.

Table 2: Search terms

Boolean Search Terms	Alternatives
Mental*	Mental health, mental illness, mental states, mental control
Depress*	Depressed, depression, depressing
Creative art*	Creative arts, creative activity
Anxi*	Anxiety, anxious
Addict*	Addiction, addictive

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2026)

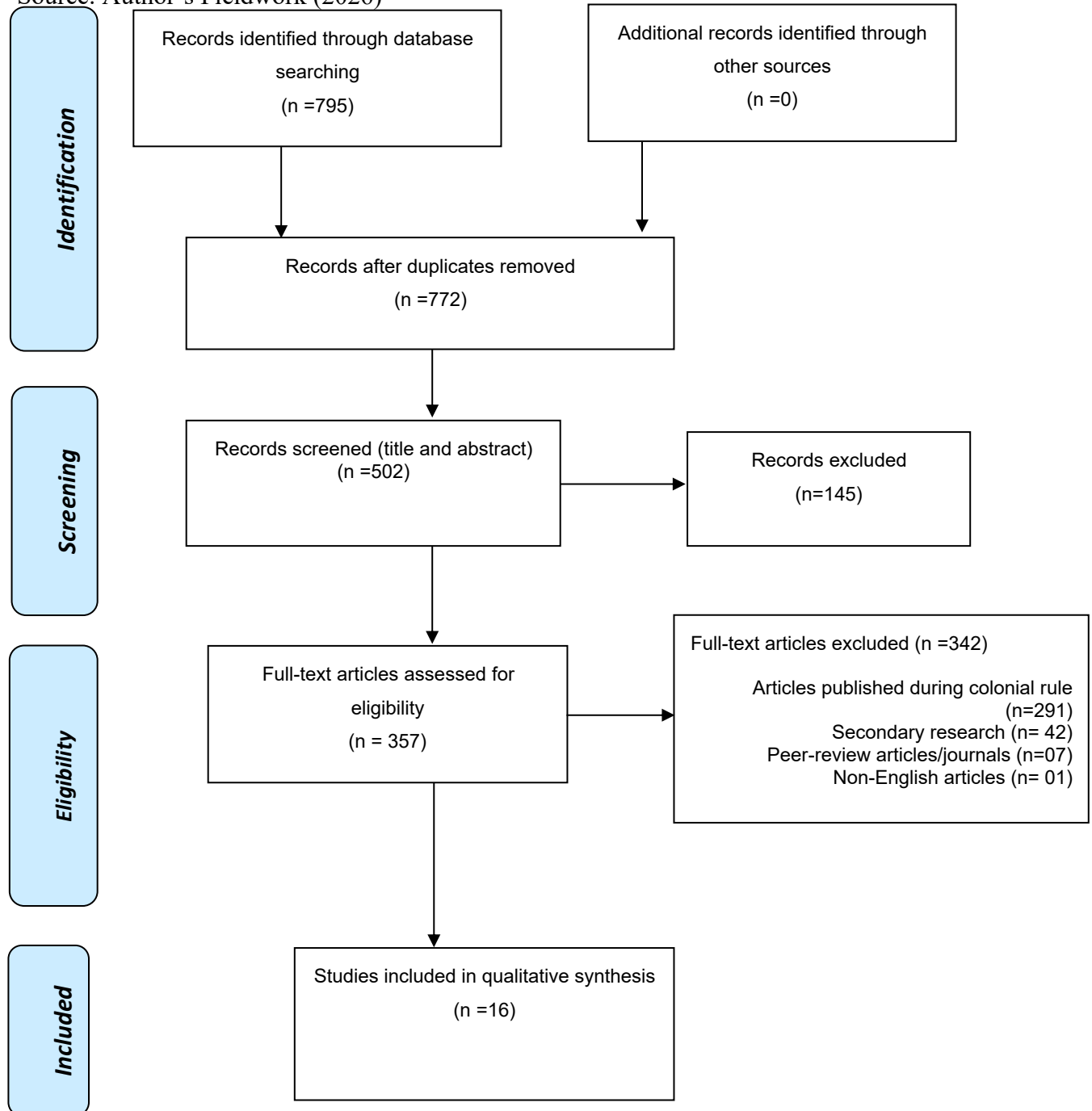


Figure 1: PRISMA diagram flow (Author's self-designed, 2026)

This study used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA). This is a framework designed to ensure structured and credible data collection in systematic reviews (Adeyemi et al., 2025), which is widely used for systematic reviews of literature. The framework has 27 items, which is categorized into identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The identification stage concerns literature search include the sources and databases consulted; screening stage concerns the evaluation of the abstracts and titles of the literature downloaded; eligibility stage concerns the examination of the final selected literature using the inclusion and exclusion criteria; and the inclusion stage indicates the final selected literature for the study. Having done all the above, the total number of full-texts that were remaining was thirty-five. However, this review focuses on only primary research. Therefore, the remaining sixteen (16) qualitative research articles were appropriate and fit to answer the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the research question one, which focused on the level of trauma-informed mental illnesses among youths, it was revealed that trauma exposure influence emotional regulation, cognitive development, social relationships, and psychological wellbeing among children and adolescents. Rahman et al. (2018) demonstrated that trauma experiences differ across demographic groups with ACEs being significant indicators of mental health illness among youths, revealing that trauma-related mental health illnesses require individualized assessment and intervention. Similarly, Sweeney et al. (2016) linked traumatic experiences with mental health illnesses among the youths, noting that conventional mental health systems may reluctantly re-traumatize survivors when trauma history is ignored. Effiom et al. (2021) revealed that traumatized children and adolescents often experience stigmatization, neglect, and exclusion, which intensifies psychological challenges and reduce their ability to participate in social environments.

On the research question two, which focused on the approaches adopted for creative arts interventions in providing support for youths with trauma-informed mental health, results showed that diverse creative arts approaches are used to support trauma-informed youth mental health. McGorrill (2023) showed that the use of sensory-based art therapy including materials such as paint, slime, Play-Doh, and cardboard to help children with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges process traumatic experiences. Carr (2024) highlighted expressive arts therapy as a complementary method for working for justice-involved youths who have experienced trauma, which enables emotional expression and supporting transformative healing. Shakoor et al. (2021) reported that using digitized creative arts platforms help in trauma recovery, combining artistic expression with emerging technologies.

Golden (2019) found art-based methods enabled disclosure and captured experiences that conventional approaches often fail to identify. Lapum et al. (2019) demonstrated that trauma hip-hop dance programme has potential of movement-based creativity as a therapeutic strategy.

On the research question three, which focuses on the effectiveness of creative arts interventions on trauma-informed youth mental health, findings revealed that creative arts interventions are generally effective in improving emotional wellbeing, psychological adjustment, and trauma recovery among youths. Schouten et al. (2019) found that trauma-driven art therapy contributed to emotional externalization, relaxation, reduced intrusive trauma memoirs, and increased confidence among youths experiencing post-traumatic stress diseases. Nielsen et al. (2019) reported that responsive art therapy helped adolescents express distress safely, with many participants showing that art performances improved their ability to connect their thoughts with emotions. Yuan (2025) revealed that art therapy reduced trauma symptoms among children and adolescents, which improves anxiety management, emotional awareness, confidence, and social connections. Lapum et al. (2019) observed improvement in trauma symptoms when youths participated in trauma-informed dance programmes.

Regarding the research question four, which focused on the mechanisms through which creative arts interventions contribute to trauma-informed mental health support, findings showed that there are diverse mechanisms explaining how creative arts interventions support trauma recovery among youths. Helmik (2023) found that therapeutic arts enabled participants to visually represent traumatic experiences while promoting empathy, peer support, and collective healing. Yuan (2025) demonstrated that art therapy assisted children in understanding their feelings, coping with anxiety, and managing stress responses, which are core of emotional regulation and self-awareness. Shakoore et al. (2021) revealed that arts-based interventions enhance self-confidence, social skills, relationships, problem-solving skills, and sense of belongings among adolescents, which strengthens social connection and belonging. Golden et al. (2024) showed that arts and culture-based strategies support youth mental health by prioritizing youth voices and allowing them to participate in defining their healing experiences.

On the research question five, which focused on the challenges associated with the use of creative arts interventions for trauma-informed mental health support among youths, the findings showed that there are several challenges affecting the implementation of creative arts interventions. Sweeney et al. (2016) showed that implementation of trauma-informed approaches remains uneven due to institutional limitations and inadequate adoption. Schouten

et al. (2019) revealed that there is a need for stronger empirical evidences to establish the effectiveness of trauma-informed art therapy. Golden et al. (2024) highlighted that the need for clear funding pathways, outcome measures, and sustainable models to support the adoption of arts-based youth mental health programmes. Golden (2019) revealed that while arts-based approaches improve trauma-sensitive engagement, interventions must consider cultural differences, youth identities, and contextual factors to avoid entrenching exclusion. Champine et al. (2022) showed that there is a challenge of the creative arts approaches gaining broader acceptance and commitment toward trauma-informed practices within communities and organizations.

Implications

The study has several implications for policy, practice, and theory. For instance, the study showed evidence that trauma exposure among youths is associated with anxiety, depression, emotional dysregulation, social exclusion, and other psychological challenges. Thus, policymakers should design policies that would strengthen trauma-informed frameworks that recognize the associated between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and youth mental health outcomes. The policies should prioritize early identification and trauma-responsive services for vulnerable youths. The findings support the need for agencies such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand funding streams for evidence-based creative arts programmes as complementary approaches within youth mental health services. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) should encourage more empirical studies on arts-based trauma interventions. Also, the U.S. Department of Education should promote trauma-informed school policies that incorporate creative expression programmes such as visual arts, music, dram, and movement-based activities as part of students' wellbeing initiatives.

The study findings suggest that practitioners should expand beyond traditional talk-based approaches and integrate diverse creative modalities such as art therapy, expressive arts, dance, storytelling, and digital creative activities. Mental health professionals should acquire skills and competencies on trauma-informed mental health in order to understand how trauma influences behavior, emotional responses, and social interactions. This would help enhance safety, choice, and youth empowerment. Both counselors and creative arts therapists should design interventions that allow youths to express emotions safely without forcing direct verbal disclosure of traumatic experiences. Educators should be trained to recognize trauma symptoms and collaborate with mental health professional to integrate creative activities into student support systems. The findings implied that practitioners should consider digital

creative interventions, using emerging technologies or tools for increased accessibility to support on trauma-informed mental health.

The findings contribute to theoretical discourses in trauma-informed mental health among youths. The study findings support trauma-informed theories that view mental health challenges as responses shaped by environmental experiences, relationships, and adverse events. The study assumes that traumatic experiences influence cognition, emotional regulation, identity formulation, and interpersonal relationships. The study suggests that creative arts interventions operate through mechanisms such as symbolic communication, emotional regulation, identity construction, empowerment, and social connection. The study contribute to resilience theory, demonstrating that creative arts can strengthen protective factors among youths exposed to trauma. The study findings support ecological perspectives of youth mental health by highlighting that trauma recovery does not occur at individual level only, but is influenced by families, schools, communities, and social systems.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that trauma-related mental health illnesses among youths are associated with adverse experiences, violence, and social vulnerabilities they have had while growing up. This highlighted that the ways children are treated could have negative implications on their mental health when they become youths. The study established that creative arts interventions, which include expressive arts, art therapy, dance, and digital creative approaches, provide effective trauma-informed strategies by enabling emotional expression, strengthening resilience, improving social relationships, and supporting psychological recovery. However, the successful implementation requires stronger evidence bases, institutional support, funding, culturally responsive designs, and improved integration into youth mental health systems.

APPENDIX I: DATA EXTRACTION TOOL

Research Title, Authors (et al. if more than 2 authors) Date	Aims and Objectives	Location of Study	Research Methodology	Population and Sample Size	Main Findings (approx. 100 words)	Implications for practice
On becoming trauma-informed: role of the adverse childhood experiences survey in tertiary child and adolescent mental health services and the association with standard measures of impairment and severity Rahman et al. (2018)	To examine Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey items by sex and by total scores by sex vs clinical measures of impairment to examine the clinical utility of the ACE survey as an index of trauma in a child and adolescent mental health care setting.	Alberta, Canada.	Descriptive, polychoric factor analysis and regression analyses were employed to analyze cross-sectional.	The population of the study comprises Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) with sample of 2833 and registration-linked data using past admissions (N = 10,400).	- Distinct ACE items emerged for males, females, and those with self-identified sex and for ACE total scores in regression analysis. In hierarchical regression analysis, the final models consisting of standard clinical measures and demographic and system variables (eg, repeated admissions) were associated with substantial ACE total score variance for females (44%) and males (38%). Inadequate sample size foreclosed on developing a reduced multivariable model for the self-identified sex group.	There are implications for clinical practice. For example, a child presenting with anxiety and a high ACE score likely requires treatment that is different from a child presenting with anxiety and an ACE score of zero.
Trauma-informed mental healthcare in the UK: What is it and how can	The study describes and explains trauma-informed approaches (TIAs)	The United Kingdom and the United States.	Qualitative research approach.	Fifteen (15) trauma survivors were interviewed for the study.	- There is strong and growing evidence of a link between trauma and mental health, as well as	The study describes an innovative approach to mental health service

we further its development? Sweeney et al. (2016)	to mental health.				evidence that the current mental health system can retraumatise trauma survivors. There is also emerging evidence that trauma-informed systems are effective and can benefit staff and trauma survivors. Whilst TIAs are spreading beyond the USA where they developed, they have made little impact in the UK.	provision that, it is argued, could have immense benefits for staff and service users alike.
Trauma-informed counselling towards ensuring mental wellbeing among children and adolescents. Effiom et al. (2021)	The study examined trauma-informed counseling towards ensuring mental wellbeing among children and adolescents.	Calabar, Nigeria.	Qualitative research approach.	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used for twelve (12) adolescents.	- This finding viewed trauma-informed counseling as appropriate within broad range of adequacies for social adaptation taken into account. Traumatized children and adolescents with sub mentality abnormality suffer discouragement, contempt and neglect from early age. They are emotionally and socially dwarfed as most of them cannot respond as adequately to instincts and stimulus as does the normal and un-	The study implied that it is a daunting task to the counselor to develop strategies that will help mainstream and integrate these trauma-induced disable mentally subnormal children and adolescents back into the functional society and help to clarify their ill-feelings towards stigmatization due to their conditions.

					traumatized children, thus leading to isolation, stigmatization and development of weakened mental health which tends to exclude these categories from social activities from early childhood.	
“What does it mean to be trauma-informed?”: A mixed-methods study of a trauma-informed community initiative Champine et al. (2022)	The study examined education and community partners’ experiences in PTICC and their understandings of what it means to become trauma-informed.	The United States.	Mixed-methods research approach.	The sample comprises 82 education and community partners.	- Focus groups with education ($n = 6$) and community ($n = 5$) partners found that participants regarded being “trauma-informed” as reframing one’s perspective, being more self-reflective, acquiring skills to respond more effectively to others who have experienced trauma, and having a sense of hope for the future. Findings also revealed perceived benefits of trauma training and challenges associated with getting others to buy-in to trauma-informed work.	Potential methodological considerations for future community-engaged research in building trauma-informed communities include the need to address ceiling effects, disaggregate data, and mitigate challenges associated with participant engagement.
Supporting youth mental health with arts-based	The study explore the potential for arts- and culture-	National representative data.	Qualitative research approach.	National representations.	- Four steps are suggested to address trauma-induced mental	Worldwide implementation of arts- and culture-

strategies: a global perspective Golden et al. (2024)	based strategies to help meet this challenge				health among the youths namely: (1) elevate and prioritize youth voice, (2) develop core outcome measures, (3) identify and analyze successful models around the globe, and (4) generate clear funding pathways for research and translational efforts.	based strategies to address youth mental health will provide critical resources to support the health, wellbeing and flourishing of countless youth across the globe.
The benefits of sensory exploration in art therapy with children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties through a trauma informed lens McGorrill (2023).	The study explores how trauma and adverse childhood experiences impact a child's cognitive and developmental capabilities and their role in how individuals engage with and process their art.	The United States.	The study is based on qualitative, arts-based research. Data was collected via note-taking, self-reflective journaling, and self-engagement of sensory-based art responses.		- The participants are children of various cultural backgrounds, demonstrating social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. These children were introduced to different sensory-based art materials during their weekly 45-minute art therapy groups over the course of six weeks. This method highlights the benefits of traditional and non-traditional therapeutic art materials such as paint, slime, Play-Doh, rice, and cardboard.	All materials were given through both structured and unstructured directives of exploration.
Innovation and equity in public health research: testing arts-based	Using design thinking, and drawing upon critical theory,	The United States.	All prototype-generated data (combined $n=126$) were	The sample population is 1682.	- Findings from the arts-based methods addressed 64 to 89 percent of the same variables as	It is hoped is that the findings—as well as the modeled process of innovating and

methods for trauma-informed, culturally-responsive inquiry Golden (2019)	hermeneutics, photovoice, and arts in health research, this study developed and tested three methodological prototypes for researching a potentially traumatizing topic (violence) among a vulnerable population (young women ages 11-21).		iteratively analyzed for documented experiences, needs, assets, and priorities related to violence. Four conventional violence-related surveys, administered among the three sample populations (combined $n=1862$), were also analyzed.		the surveys, while the surveys addressed only 36 to 49 percent of the arts-based data variables. The three prototypes juxtaposed needs with assets, accommodated expressive choice, and involved minimal researcher intrusion—rendering them trauma and culturally responsive. They also generated impactful insights inaccessible via surveys, such as unconventional definitions of violence. The prototypes aided disclosure (thus improving data), were time- and cost-effective, and offered significant potential for research reciprocity. As such, they offer promising models for continued methodological innovation in advancement of health equity.	prototyping methods—will support ongoing efforts to improve trauma responsiveness, cultural responsiveness, and the field's ability to challenge epistemological assumptions—all of which are required to advance public health and health equity.
Co-design and evaluation of a	This study contributes to	The United Kingdom.	This is an Accelerated	Public sector organizations or	- The findings showed that the adverse	Knowledge products include a website

youth-informed organizational tool to enhance trauma-informed practices in the UK public sector: a study protocol Hugh-Jones et al. (2024)	public sector capacity to work in trauma-informed ways with adolescents by co-designing and evaluating the implementation of a youth-informed organizational resource.		Experience-based Co-design (AEBCD) Study followed by pre-post evaluation.	services, and adolescents connected with them, will collaboratively reflect on lived experience data assembled through creative arts practice, alongside data from epidemiological national data sets.	childhood experiences of youths have impacts on adolescents' mental health. Collaboratively, priorities (touch points) for organizational responses were identified, and a low-burden resource was co-designed and offered for implementation and evaluation in diverse settings. The study provides insights into what adolescents and public sector organizations in the UK want from a TIA resource, the experience of services/organizations in implementing this and recommendations for resource development and implementation.	detailing the created resource and a youth-created film documenting the study process, the elements of the co-designed resource and experiences of implementation.
A trauma-informed socially just approach to working with juvenile justice-involved youth utilizing expressive arts	The study explores the history of the juvenile justice system (JJC), issues with the present-day model, and trauma-informed and	The United States.	Qualitative research approach.	The total of thirteen (13) youths was interviewed.	- The study highlights the injustice and inequity deeply embedded within the fabric of the JJS by examining the history of the system, the prevalence of trauma, and the most	As a proposed replacement for the more punitive approaches commonly used across the United States JJS, trauma-informed and

therapy Carr (2024)	transformative justice approaches to practice.				at-risk identities of involvement. Existing research and publications show that the JJS can be characterized by the presence of racial, ethnic, and gender disparities, and a prevalence of LGBTQIA2S+, disabled, and traumatized youth. Thus, already vulnerable populations face an increased risk of involvement with a pervasively inequitable system found to exacerbate trauma, financial strain, and oppression. - When considering the identities of youth, those in the LGBTQIA2S+ community are significantly more likely to report incidents of victimization. Although discussions of the identities most at risk of involvement with the JJS are imperative to the transformation of current	socially just approaches to practice were reviewed as a necessary complement to expressive arts therapy interventions.
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					practices, inadequate and voluntary reporting at the state and federal levels likely results in underreporting and further erasure of the lived experiences of marginalized populations. The lack of mandatory and uniform reporting processes of socioeconomic status, LGBTQIA2S+ self-identification, and disability diagnoses of JJIY results in the continuation of deepened inequities within the system. Moreover, the ability of each state to determine the reporting and treatment of youth involved with the system results in varied outcomes for youth depending upon geographical location.	
Creative arts and digital interventions: A discussion for prevention and recovery from	The study describes creative arts and digital interventions on youths' mental health.	The United States.	Qualitative research approach.	The study adopted Focus Group Discussion (FGD), including twenty-two (22) youths.	- Arts-based interventions show promise for recovery from trauma due to the creative and interactive elements, and such processes may	There is a growing shift to digital platforms and increased engagement with virtual realities for

mental health consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Shakoor et al. (2021)					be designed into digital interventions. - Being exposed to ACEs repeatedly may contribute to the development of maladaptive cognitive processing, whereby individuals internalize the belief that ACEs are stable, have negative consequences, and are attributable to themselves. This in turn contributes to the development of psychopathology such as depression. - Although ACEs affect people across ethnicity/race, neurodiversity and socioeconomic divides, the intersecting effects of such factors are key drivers of increased vulnerabilities. The frequency, types and experiences of ACEs are differentially distributed across these groups and associated with disproportionate burdens	therapeutic purposes. This is ever more pertinent due to the increased pressures NHS service provisions experience when providing care to young people who have experienced trauma, and especially so in the current climate of COVID-19 and limited capacity in health systems.
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					of trauma amongst some communities. - Evidence suggests that arts-based interventions improve sense of achievement, self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, conflict resolution, problem solving, relationships and sense of belonging amongst adolescents. Equally, these creative activities have been successful in improving mental health and illness recovery amongst adults.	
Expressing trauma through therapeutic art-based trauma-informed practice with/in a collective happening. Helmick (2023)	This study explores art making as a therapeutic arts- and trauma-informed practice in critical inquiry with others during the collective activity of a happening.	The United States.	Qualitative research approach.	A total of twelve youths were interviewed for the study.	- The study found therapeutic arts and trauma-informed practices successful in promoting critical inquiry, empathy, peer support, collaboration, and encouragement, while visually re-symbolizing our experiences of trauma. Based on this experience, the study implies that educators can utilize these methods to build an	The study concludes that educators can utilize these methods to build an empathetic and caring community that helps students and fellow teachers, as well as ourselves, in dealing with traumatic events.

					empathetic and caring community that helps students and fellow teachers, as well as ourselves, in dealing with traumatic events.	
Trauma-focused art therapy in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder: A pilot study. Schouten et al. (2019)	The pilot study was to test the acceptability, feasibility, and applicability of trauma-focused art therapy for adults with PTSD due to multiple and prolonged traumatization (patients with early childhood traumatization and refugees from different cultures)	The Netherlands.	Experimental research design.	The total number of participants is 21, including 12 dropouts and 9 who completed their treatments.	- Another objective was to identify the preliminary effectiveness of art therapy. Results showed willingness to participate and adherence to treatment of patients. Therapists considered trauma-focused art therapy feasible and applicable and patients reported beneficial effects, such as more relaxation, externalization of memories and emotions into artwork, less intrusive thoughts of traumatic experiences and more confidence in the future. The preliminary findings on PTSD symptom severity showed a decrease of symptoms in some participants, and an increase of symptoms in other participants.	Further research into the effectiveness of art therapy and PTSD is needed.

Evaluating the use of responsive art therapy in an inpatient child and adolescent mental health services unit. Nielsen et al. (2019)	The study described the use of responsive art therapy in an inpatient child and adolescent mental health services unit.	Australia	Descriptive survey research design.	A patient satisfaction questionnaire was developed to collect feedback from 46 adolescents. Images from therapy were photographed and collated looking for patterns across diagnoses and stages of treatment.	- Adolescents reported that art therapy helped them learn how to express themselves safely (80%) and understand how their thoughts related to their feelings (78%).	Responsive art therapy was a useful strategy to support the safe expression of distress and was seen as a positive experience by adolescents in inpatient mental health care.
Efficacy of transpersonal art intervention in mitigating relationship trauma-induced distress among young adults: A focus on inner peace. Mukhopadhaya and Sah (2024).	The study investigates how both positive and negative relationship memories affect young adults' ability to forgive and show resilience and their tendency toward neurotic behavior while using pre-intervention measurement methods.	Kolkata, India	Experimental research design.	The research selects ten college students aged 18 to 25 from Kolkata who are experiencing romantic problems as its methodological sample.	- Study results affirm some aspects of the anticipated positive effects but also demonstrate that neurotic behavior is more negatively affected when thinking positively about a previous romantic partner when compared to negative reflection. -	The effectiveness of Transpersonal Art Intervention proves major in increasing forgiveness and resilience and decreasing neurotic tendencies because this demonstrates its significant impact on post-heartbreak mental health care for affected individuals.
The effect of art	The study analyzed	The United	Qualitative	Qualitative	- The study showed	While art therapy has

therapy on childhood trauma. Yuan, A. (2025)	the impact of art therapy as an effective treatment for children to cope and recover from their trauma.	States	research design.	research design, wherein nineteen (19) youths were interviewed for the study.	that art therapy is an effective method to help reduce trauma symptoms and participants showed improvement in their anxiety and depressive symptoms. This form of therapy also taught children how to manage their emotions, cope with anxiety and stress, and understand and identify their feelings. This therapy was shown to build their confidence in themselves and was a positive outlet for expression. On an individual level, these children were able to use art therapy as a form of building social relationships and becoming more connected with their peers, counselors, and family.	indicated positive effects as a treatment for trauma, the present review highlights the need for more research in this area.
Sole expression: A trauma-informed dance intervention. Lapum et al. (2019)	The study discussed the development of Sole Expression, a trauma-informed hip-hop dance	Ontario, Canada.	Mixed-methods research approach.	. The study recruited 300 youth for the larger intervention. Participants are invited to	- The findings to date lead to cautious optimism, although not statistically significant because we are in the early stages of this 5-year	The impact of this research is its potential to not only expand trauma-informed treatments, but also the diffusion

	program for youth who have experienced abuse and/or exposure to violence.			complete a demographic questionnaire and a set of standardized, psychometric tools prior to and after the dance program.	project. There is evidence of improvement in some trauma symptoms, such as anxiety and depression. These improvements are more prominent for participants who began the program with higher scores of anxiety and depression based on the measures.	of hip-hop dance as a therapeutic complement and/or alternative to traditional cognitive behavioral treatments
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