

Creative Expression Therapy for Adolescents with Emotional Challenges

Ms. Maolen Garcia Santos

HR Manager, HR Department

Abstract

This study aim to address the emotional challenges faced by adolescents.

1. INTRODUCTION

Creative expression therapy are increasingly recognized as effective therapeutic modalities for adolescents grappling with emotional challenges. In particular, these therapies provide unique avenues for self-expression, emotional processing, and personal growth, all of which are crucial during the formative years of adolescence. Thus, the significance of creative expression in therapy cannot be understated, as it serves as a vital component in helping young individuals navigate complex feelings.

This growing recognition of creative expression therapy highlights a shift in therapeutic practices, emphasizing the importance of creativity in addressing the emotional needs of adolescents. As traditional verbal therapies may fall short in reaching some young individuals, integrating these expressive modalities presents a promising alternative.

Moreover, engaging in various artistic activities—such as drawing, painting, or sculpting—allows adolescents to express their complex emotions visually. This creative process can lead to insights about their feelings and behaviors that they might struggle to verbalize. Consequently, as they engage in art-making, therapists facilitate discussions about the emotions tied to their creations, fostering deeper understanding and enhancing emotional regulation (Clearfork Academy, 2022a). This visual exploration can be especially beneficial for those who find it difficult to articulate their thoughts and feelings verbally.

The ability to visually articulate emotions not only empowers adolescents but also enhances their self-awareness. This dynamic process creates a supportive environment where therapists can guide them in unpacking their emotional complexities, ultimately facilitating personal growth and emotional healing.

Similarly, music serves as a powerful tool for emotional release. Activities such as songwriting, playing instruments, or simply listening to music help adolescents explore their emotions in a safe and supportive environment. For example, drumming can serve as a productive outlet for frustration or anger, while listening to calming music can effectively alleviate anxiety. Research indicates that music therapy can significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression among adolescents, further underscoring its therapeutic potential (Salokivi et al., 2023a).

By providing structured musical experiences, therapists can create a therapeutic space that promotes emotional exploration and healing. The use of music as an expressive outlet complements the visual arts, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of creativity in therapeutic practices.

Furthermore, both creative expression therapy contribute to the development of essential coping skills that adolescents can utilize beyond therapy sessions. Through creative activities, young individuals learn

new skills that enhance their self-esteem and confidence. As a result, this newfound confidence empowers them to face challenges more effectively. For instance, mastering an instrument or completing an art project can instill a sense of accomplishment and promote resilience (Clearfork Academy, 2022b). The acquisition of coping skills through creative expression not only builds resilience but also fosters a sense of agency in adolescents. This empowerment can be pivotal in their ability to manage stressors, thereby promoting healthier emotional outcomes.

In addition, these therapeutic modalities provide constructive outlets for managing stress and emotional turmoil. By engaging in creative expression, adolescents can process difficult emotions rather than resorting to maladaptive behaviors such as substance use or withdrawal (Li, 2022). Therefore, this constructive engagement is crucial, as it not only allows for emotional exploration but also encourages healthier coping mechanisms.

The shift from maladaptive behaviors to constructive creative expression highlights the potential of creative expression therapy as preventative measures. These modalities serve not just as treatments but as proactive strategies to foster emotional well-being among adolescents.

Moreover, creative expression therapy promotes social interaction among peers, which is vital for adolescents navigating emotional challenges. Group therapy sessions offer opportunities for teens to connect with others facing similar struggles. Thus, this shared experience fosters a sense of community and belonging, reducing feelings of isolation. Additionally, engaging in collaborative projects encourages teamwork and communication skills (Theraplatform, n.d. a). Creating art or music together allows adolescents to provide feedback to one another, enhancing their ability to give and receive support. Such interaction is essential for developing healthy relationships, a fundamental aspect of emotional well-being (Clearfork Academy, 2022c).

The communal aspects of creative expression therapy underscore the importance of social connections in the therapeutic process. By fostering peer relationships, these therapies not only address individual emotional needs but also cultivate a supportive network that is essential for healthy development during adolescence.

Importantly, the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the adolescent is further strengthened through creative activities. The non-threatening nature of creative expression allows for a more relaxed therapeutic environment, which facilitates open communication between the therapist and the adolescent. As a result, this openness makes it easier for the teen to share personal experiences and emotions (Bosgraaf et al., 2020). Furthermore, therapists can tailor activities based on individual interests in art or music, making therapy more engaging and relevant to each adolescent's experiences. This personalization fosters greater commitment to the therapeutic process (Salokivi et al., 2023b).

The enhanced therapeutic alliance through creative expression demonstrates the efficacy of personalization in therapy. By aligning therapeutic activities with individual interests, therapists can engage adolescents more effectively, leading to deeper emotional exploration and growth.

In the United States, creative expression therapy is increasingly integrated into mental health treatment programs, particularly for adolescents dealing with trauma, anxiety, and depression. These programs often involve activities such as drawing, painting, or sculpting to help teens express emotions that may be difficult to verbalize. Consequently, this form of non-verbal communication allows for deeper emotional exploration and insight, which is especially beneficial for those who have experienced trauma or have attachment issues (Clearfork Academy, 2022d).

The integration of creative expression therapy into mainstream mental health programs represents a

significant evolution in therapeutic approaches. This trend highlights the importance of addressing emotional challenges in a holistic manner that recognizes the diverse needs of adolescents.

Likewise, Scandinavian countries have embraced creative expression therapy within their healthcare systems as part of a holistic approach to adolescent mental health. In Norway, for instance, music therapy is frequently conducted in group settings where adolescents can share their experiences through music. This communal aspect helps build social connections while addressing individual emotional needs. Moreover, therapists often incorporate local musical traditions into sessions, making therapy culturally relevant and more engaging for adolescents. As a result, this connection fosters a sense of identity and belonging, thereby promoting emotional well-being (Voices, n.d.).

The cultural relevance of creative expression therapy in Scandinavian countries illustrates the adaptability of these modalities to local contexts. By integrating cultural elements, therapists can enhance engagement and efficacy, making the therapeutic process more relatable for adolescents.

Furthermore, in the UK, creative expression therapy are recognized as valuable tools within educational settings and mental health services. Many schools implement creative expression therapy programs to support students struggling with emotional challenges. Notably, these therapies offer an alternative means of communication for those who may be reluctant to engage in traditional counseling. Studies conducted in the UK have demonstrated that music therapy can enhance emotional skills and self-regulation among adolescents, making it a preferred choice for many therapists when working with this demographic (Salokivi et al., 2023c).

The implementation of creative expression therapy in educational settings underscores the growing recognition of mental health in schools. By providing alternative communication methods, these therapies ensure that all students have access to emotional support, which is essential for their overall well-being.

In Japan, the prevalence of creative expression therapy is also on the rise as part of mental health treatment for adolescents. Japanese therapists often integrate traditional arts into their therapeutic practices, helping adolescents connect with their cultural heritage while addressing emotional challenges. Moreover, music therapy has been shown to help adolescents manage emotions related to stress and anxiety effectively. The use of familiar songs can create a comforting atmosphere that encourages open expression (Theraplatform, n.d. b).

The incorporation of traditional arts in therapy in Japan highlights the role of cultural heritage in emotional healing. This approach not only enriches the therapeutic experience but also strengthens adolescents' connections to their cultural identity.

Overall, across various countries, creative expression therapy offer significant benefits for adolescents facing emotional challenges. By providing alternative means of expression, these therapies help young individuals navigate their emotions more effectively than traditional verbal therapy alone. As global awareness of mental health issues continues to grow, the integration of creative therapies into counseling practices represents a promising avenue for supporting adolescent well-being worldwide.

The empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of creative expression therapy reinforces their value in clinical settings. These findings encourage further research and implementation of these therapies in diverse contexts to maximize their potential benefits.

For example, in a study measuring the effectiveness of creative expression therapy, the Cronbach's Alpha for the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was reported as 0.787, indicating good reliability in measuring depression levels among adolescents receiving these therapies. Notably, the control group

showed no significant change, while the experimental group exhibited substantial improvements from pretest to post-test scores (Belski et al., 2021). In another instance, a meta-analysis involving 422 participants showed that art therapy significantly reduced anxiety symptoms, with a Standardized Mean Difference (SMD) of -1.42 (95% Confidence Interval: -2.33 to -0.51, $p < 0.002$). This indicates a strong effect size, suggesting that art therapy is effective in treating anxiety among children and adolescents (Gold et al., 2004).

In the Philippines, following natural disasters like Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in 2013, art therapy has been employed as a disaster response tool. Trained art therapists from various regions have worked in affected areas to help individuals process trauma and grief through creative expression, demonstrating the therapeutic potential of art in crisis situations. Moreover, the integration of local artistic practices into therapy helps make sessions more relatable and effective for Filipino adolescents. This cultural sensitivity enhances engagement and promotes healing through familiar mediums (Philstar, 2022a).

The application of art therapy in disaster recovery illustrates its versatility and effectiveness in addressing trauma. By incorporating local cultural elements, these therapies become more impactful, fostering resilience in communities facing emotional challenges.

Additionally, art therapy provides a non-verbal means for adolescents to express feelings that may be difficult to articulate. This is particularly beneficial for those who may feel uncomfortable with traditional talk therapies. Through the creative process, participants can develop coping mechanisms that help manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Specifically, the act of creating art allows adolescents to explore their emotions safely and constructively. Typically, sessions last about 50 minutes, during which clients engage in various art-making activities such as drawing, painting, or collage. This process not only fosters self-expression but also encourages reflection on personal experiences (Philstar, 2022b). The non-verbal nature of art therapy caters to adolescents' diverse communication styles, providing an essential outlet for those who may struggle with conventional forms of expression. This versatility underscores the importance of creative approaches in fostering emotional development.

Furthermore, St. Paul University Manila is home to the first music therapy center in the Philippines, providing services specifically for children and youth with disabilities. The center aims to raise public awareness about the benefits of music therapy and improve access to quality services through trained professionals in the field (St. Paul University, n.d.).

The establishment of dedicated music therapy centers reflects a growing commitment to enhancing mental health services for youth in the Philippines. By raising awareness and improving access, these initiatives can significantly impact the lives of vulnerable populations.

Additionally, the OMLP Center offers music therapy specifically designed for children with special needs, including those with ADHD and autism. Their programs focus on developing cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and motor skills through music (OMLP, n.d.).

Targeted music therapy programs for children with special needs highlight the importance of tailored interventions in addressing specific emotional and developmental challenges. This specialized approach enhances the effectiveness of therapeutic practices for diverse populations.

Music therapy has been shown to significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression among participants. Studies indicate that structured music interventions can lead to improvements in mood and emotional well-being, which are crucial for adolescents facing mental health challenges. Importantly, the long-term effects of music therapy on mental health in the Philippines include significant reductions in

anxiety and depression, enhanced emotional skills, improved social interactions, and sustained psychological well-being. As awareness of these benefits grows, music therapy is likely to become an increasingly integral part of mental health care for adolescents in the country (Rebechini, 2021).

The documented effectiveness of music therapy in reducing anxiety and depression reinforces its potential as a transformative intervention for adolescents. As mental health awareness continues to expand, the integration of music therapy into mainstream care is likely to yield significant benefits for youth.

Ultimately, creative expression therapy represent vital resources for adolescents dealing with emotional challenges across the globe. By fostering creativity, encouraging self-expression, and enhancing social interactions, these therapies provide invaluable support that can lead to healthier emotional development and improved mental health outcomes. As more communities recognize the benefits of these approaches, we can expect an expansion in their application and integration into mainstream mental health services, ultimately benefiting countless young individuals navigating the complexities of adolescence.

The global recognition of creative expression therapy as essential tools for emotional support underscores the need for continued advocacy and investment in these modalities. By prioritizing creative expression in therapeutic practices, we can empower adolescents to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Adolescents often face significant emotional challenges, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation, which can adversely affect their overall well-being and development. Traditional therapeutic approaches may not always resonate with this demographic, leading to a need for more engaging and effective interventions. Despite the growing recognition of creative expression therapy as beneficial modalities, there is still limited empirical evidence on their specific impacts on adolescents facing emotional difficulties. This study aims to investigate how creative expression therapy can effectively support emotional expression, enhance coping skills, and foster social connections among adolescents, thereby addressing the gap in existing literature and providing insights for counselors and mental health professionals.

Statement of the Objectives

This study aimed to investigate the benefits of creative expression therapy in counseling adolescents with emotional challenges. It sought to address the following questions:

1. To describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, and years of experience as guidance counselor.
2. To identify the emotional challenges adolescents have with during counseling sessions.
3. To explore the specific approaches counselors use to tailor creative expression therapy.
4. To compare adolescents' responses to creative expression therapy with their responses to traditional counseling methods.
5. To develop an action plan that enhances the use of creative expression therapy in counseling settings for adolescents dealing with emotional challenges.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in Psychoanalytic Theory, which was proposed by Sigmund Freud, and posits that unresolved conflicts and repressed emotions from early experiences significantly influence an individual's emotional well-being. By examining the benefits of creative expression therapy for

adolescents facing emotional challenges, this study highlights how these creative modalities provide non-verbal outlets for self-expression, allowing young individuals to access and articulate feelings that may be difficult to convey through traditional verbal therapy. In doing so, creative expression therapy can facilitate the exploration of unconscious thoughts and emotions, promote insight into personal struggles, and foster emotional regulation, ultimately contributing to healthier coping mechanisms and improved mental health outcomes during this critical developmental stage.

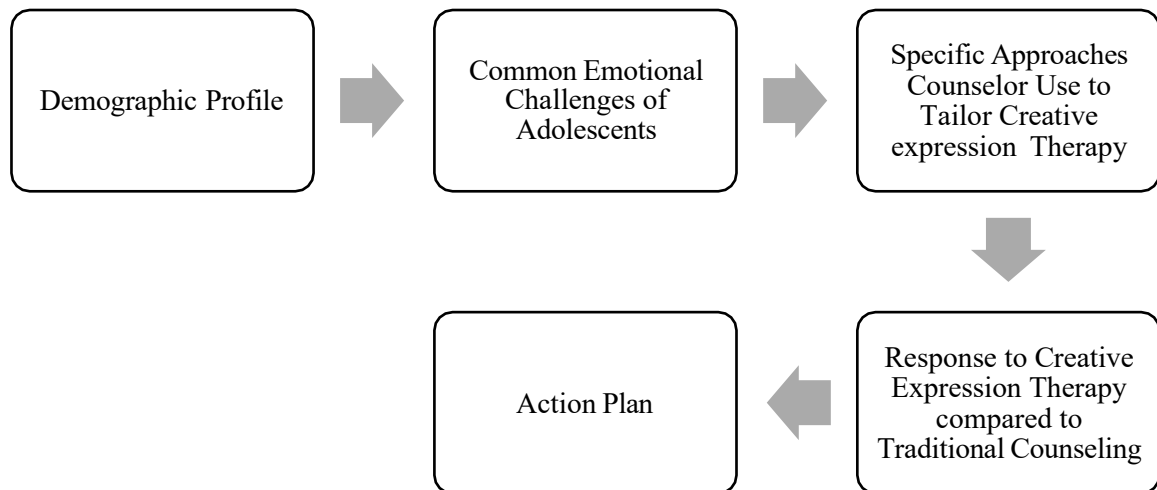


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the benefits of creative expression therapy in counseling adolescents with emotional challenges by systematically addressing key objectives. It began by describing the profile of the respondents, including their age, gender, and years of experience as guidance counselors, to establish a background for understanding their perspectives and practices. It then identified the specific emotional challenges that adolescents commonly faced during counseling sessions, providing insight into the difficulties that needed to be addressed. Furthermore, the study explored the various approaches that counselors used to tailor creative expression therapy, highlighting the different techniques and strategies they employed to support adolescents effectively. Additionally, it compared adolescents' responses to creative expression therapy with their reactions to traditional counseling methods, assessing differences in engagement, emotional expression, and overall effectiveness. This comparison helped determine whether creative expression therapy offered significant advantages over conventional counseling techniques. Finally, based on the findings, an action plan was developed to enhance the implementation of creative expression therapy in counseling settings, ensuring that adolescents struggling with emotional difficulties could benefit from a more effective and engaging therapeutic approach.

2. METHODS

This section outlines the methodological framework utilized in the study. It describes the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis techniques employed.

Research Design

This study employed an qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the effectiveness of creative expression therapy in addressing the emotional challenges faced by adolescents. The research involved guidance counselors who were asked to incorporate creative expression therapy techniques into their counseling sessions with adolescents. The counselors' implementation of these therapeutic modalities was observed, and the outcomes were assessed based on the emotional and psychological

progress of the adolescents involved. The study focused on the direct impact of the creative expression interventions on adolescents' emotional well-being. The research also explored the counselors' perspectives on the effectiveness of these approaches, examining their experiences with incorporating creative expression therapy into their practice. The goal was to gather insights into how creative expression therapy influenced adolescents' emotional challenges and to identify factors that enhanced or hindered the success of these interventions.

Research Locale

The research was conducted in various public and private schools within the Tarlac City Schools Division and the Division of Tarlac Province, specifically focusing on schools that utilized creative expression as therapeutic tools in counseling sessions for adolescents. These divisions were selected to provide a diverse sampling of student populations, counseling practices, and resource levels. In conducting the research at these locations, the study examined the different ways that creative expression was integrated into therapeutic practices, taking into account how variations in school resources, staff training, and student demographics influenced the implementation and outcomes of therapy sessions.

By gathering data from multiple settings, this study gained a broad understanding of the benefits and limitations of creative expression therapy in school counseling environments. Additionally, this setting provided insight into specific factors, such as community culture or accessibility of materials, that affected the success of these interventions, ultimately allowing for more tailored recommendations on how to optimize creative expression therapy for adolescents dealing with emotional challenges.

Research Participants

The respondents consisted of guidance counselors or their designates who had a minimum of two years of experience in counseling adolescents and were familiar with implementing creative expression therapy techniques in their sessions. A total of 10 guidance counselors and designates were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation based on age, gender, and years of experience. This diversity was important, as it allowed for a broader range of insights and experiences to be captured, ultimately enriching the qualitative data collected. By including counselors with varying backgrounds and levels of experience, the study aimed to uncover different perspectives on the challenges and successes of using creative expression therapy with adolescents, leading to a more nuanced understanding of its effectiveness in various contexts.

Research Instrument

This study utilized semi-structured interviews as the primary research instrument to gather in-depth qualitative data from guidance counselors regarding the use of creative expression therapy in adolescent counseling. The interview guide was designed to address the study's key objectives and ensure a comprehensive exploration of the research topic.

First, the interviews began by collecting information to describe the profile of the respondents, including their age, gender, and years of experience as guidance counselors. This demographic data provided context for understanding their perspectives and approaches in counseling.

Second, questions focused on identifying the emotional challenges adolescents faced during counseling sessions. Counselors were asked to describe the most common emotional difficulties experienced by adolescents, how these challenges manifested, and the factors contributing to them.

Third, the interview explored the specific approaches counselors used to tailor creative expression therapy. Participants discussed the techniques they employed, their rationale for using certain methods, and how they adapted creative expression therapy to fit the needs of different adolescents.

Fourth, the study examined adolescents' responses to creative expression therapy compared to traditional counseling methods. Counselors shared their observations on how adolescents engaged with creative expression therapy, the emotional and behavioral changes they noticed, and how these responses differed from those seen in conventional counseling approaches.

Finally, the interviews gathered insights to develop an action plan for enhancing the use of creative expression therapy in counseling settings. Counselors provided recommendations on improving the integration of creative expression therapy, including necessary resources, training needs, and strategies for optimizing its effectiveness for adolescents facing emotional challenges.

By utilizing semi-structured interviews, this study captured rich, detailed narratives from experienced counselors, allowing for a deeper understanding of the impact and implementation of creative expression therapy in adolescent counseling.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process commenced with obtaining the necessary approvals from both the Division Superintendent of the Tarlac City Schools Division and the Division of Tarlac Province. This step was crucial in ensuring compliance with institutional protocols and ethical standards while fostering a collaborative research environment. Upon securing these approvals, the researcher crafted personalized invitation letters that clearly outlined the study's objectives, the significance of the counselors' participation, and the measures in place to ensure confidentiality. These letters also included consent forms, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the rights of the respondents.

Once the outreach phase was completed, the researcher scheduled individual interviews with interested guidance counselors. To create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, the interviews were conducted in private settings within the schools, such as counseling offices or quiet meeting rooms. This environment was essential for encouraging open dialogue and allowing participants to share their insights freely. On the day of the interviews, the researcher arrived early to set up the audio recording equipment, ensuring it functioned properly to facilitate accurate transcription of the discussions.

Prior to initiating each interview, the researcher took the time to establish rapport with participants through casual conversation, which helped build trust and created a comfortable setting for discussing sensitive information. The semi-structured interview guide then steered the conversation, focusing on the counselors' experiences with adolescent emotional challenges and the effectiveness of creative expression therapy. Counselors were encouraged to share anecdotes and specific cases that illustrated their insights, providing rich qualitative data that captured the complexities of their experiences.

After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings to ensure that every detail of the counselors' responses was accurately captured. This transcription process included a thorough review to clarify and verify the content. By prioritizing ethical considerations throughout the data gathering process and valuing the counselors' perspectives, the research aimed to generate meaningful data that contributed to a deeper understanding of the role of creative expression therapy in enhancing adolescents' emotional well-being.

Thematic Analysis

The study was conducted through thematic analysis, a qualitative research method that focused on identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. This process began with a thorough reading of the transcriptions to gain an initial understanding of the content and the overarching themes present in the counselors' narratives. Each transcription was carefully reviewed multiple times, allowing the researcher to immerse themselves in the data and familiarize themselves with the

participants' experiences and insights regarding creative expression therapy.

Following this initial review, the researcher engaged in inductive coding, a process in which codes were developed directly from the data rather than relying on preconceived categories. This approach allowed for the emergence of themes grounded in the participants' actual words and experiences, ensuring that the analysis remained closely aligned with their perspectives. The researcher highlighted key phrases, sentences, and segments of text that resonated with the research questions, noting recurring ideas and concepts that emerged throughout the interviews. This phase was crucial for establishing a foundation upon which the broader themes were built.

Once the initial coding was complete, the next step involved grouping identified codes into broader themes that encapsulated the essence of the counselors' insights. This thematic organization facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the data, revealing patterns that reflected the benefits and challenges of implementing creative expression therapy with adolescents. During this stage, the researcher paid particular attention to how different themes intersected or related to one another, providing a richer context for the findings. The researcher also identified contrasting views and unique experiences that either challenged or enriched the overall narrative surrounding the effectiveness of these therapeutic modalities.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher engaged participants in a member-checking process. Participants were invited to review the findings and themes derived from their interviews, providing them with the opportunity to validate the researcher's interpretations. This step not only confirmed the accuracy of the data but also fostered a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants. By incorporating the counselors' feedback, the study ensured that the conclusions drawn genuinely reflected their lived experiences and insights, thereby enriching the overall quality and reliability of the research outcomes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are presented and interpreted in this section, based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews with guidance counselors. The results are analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying key patterns and themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Each theme is discussed in relation to the research objectives, providing insights into the effectiveness of creative expression therapy in addressing adolescents' emotional challenges. Additionally, the perspectives and experiences of counselors are examined to highlight the benefits, challenges, and practical considerations in implementing this therapeutic approach. The discussion also integrates relevant literature to support the interpretation of the findings and offer a broader understanding of the role of creative expression therapy in school counseling settings.

3.1. Profile of the Participants

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the participants, including their age, gender, and years of experience as guidance counselors.

Participant 1

The first participant is a 50-year-old female with 25 years of experience as a guidance counselor. She is working now in a public school. She initially earned a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education (BSED), which provided her with foundational knowledge of pedagogy and classroom management. Recognizing the importance of specialized training in counseling, she pursued a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, equipping her with the expertise to address the academic, emotional, and

psychological needs of students. Her extensive experience within the public school system demonstrates her deep commitment to her role, where she continues to contribute to the holistic development of learners over decades of service.

Participant 2

The second participant is a 43-year-old female guidance counselor with 16 years of experience in a private Catholic school, which also happens to be her alma mater. She holds a degree in Psychology, a Teacher Education Unit, and a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. She is also a Registered Psychometrician (RPm), enabling her to administer psychological tests and assessments. Her connection to her alma mater enriches her understanding of the school's culture and values, fostering a deeper relationship with her students. Her qualifications and years of service reflect her dedication to helping learners thrive academically, emotionally, and socially in a private school setting.

Participant 3

The third participant is a 31-year-old male guidance counselor with 7 years of experience in private schools. He holds a degree in Psychology and is a Registered Psychometrician (RPm), certified to administer and evaluate psychological assessments. Over the years, he has worked in two different private schools, giving him a wide range of experience and insight into diverse institutional practices. His academic background, combined with his professional experiences, allows him to provide effective guidance and support to students, adapting his approach to suit the needs of each school environment.

Participant 4

The fourth participant is a 45-year-old female with 13 years of experience as a guidance counselor in the public school system. Before transitioning to education, she worked in a government agency, where she likely gained a broader understanding of societal challenges and organizational structures. Upon joining the public school system, she was designated as a guidance counselor, a role she has excelled in through her dedication and qualifications. She holds a degree in Psychology, a Teacher Education Unit, and a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. She is also a Registered Psychometrician (RPm), enabling her to assess students' psychological well-being effectively. Additionally, she pursued a second Master's degree in Social Science, further enhancing her ability to address complex student needs. Her diverse career trajectory reflects a commitment to lifelong learning and providing comprehensive support to her students.

Participant 5

The fifth participant is a 31-year-old male with 9 years of experience as a guidance counselor in the public school system. He is a Bachelor's degree holder in Secondary Education (BSED) and has completed a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. Upon being hired, he was immediately designated as a guidance counselor, highlighting his readiness for the role and his capability in supporting students' academic and personal development. His focus on professional growth and his consistent service in the public school system demonstrate his dedication to fostering a positive school environment for his learners.

Participant 6

The sixth participant is a 28-year-old female who is at the beginning of her career as a guidance counselor, having worked for 3 years in a private school. She holds a degree in Psychology and is a Registered Psychometrician (RPm), qualifying her to administer and interpret psychological tests. This role marks her first experience as a guidance counselor, where she applies her academic training to assist students in their academic, social, and emotional development. As the youngest participant, she brings a

fresh perspective and enthusiasm to her role, contributing to her school's guidance program with a strong foundation in psychology.

Participant 7

The seventh participant is a 40-year-old female with 15 years of experience as a guidance counselor in both private and public school. She initially earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and later pursued a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling to enhance her qualifications. Over her years of service, she has developed expertise in handling a wide range of student issues, from academic challenges to personal and social concerns. Her extensive experience in the public school system underscores her ability to navigate the unique challenges of this environment while fostering the well-being and growth of her students.

Participant 8

The eighth participant is a 36-year-old male guidance counselor with 10 years of experience in both public and private school settings. He holds a degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. Additionally, he is a licensed teacher and a Registered Psychometrician (RPm). His varied career in both public and private institutions has allowed him to adapt to different organizational cultures and address diverse student needs effectively. His dual licensure and academic background enable him to provide a holistic approach to guidance, combining psychological expertise with practical teaching insights.

Participant 9

The ninth participant is a 48-year-old female with 20 years of experience as a guidance counselor in a private school. She holds a degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Counseling, and certifications in career counseling. Her role primarily involves guiding students in their academic and career choices, often with an international perspective due to the diverse cultural backgrounds of her learners.

Participant 10

The tenth participant is a 34-year-old male with 8 years of experience as a guidance counselor in a private school. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and is a Registered Psychometrician (RPm). Additionally, he is pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Psychology to further enhance his skills and expertise. His role primarily involves supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being, with a particular focus on mental health awareness and intervention.

The respondents in this study represent a group of guidance counselors, varying in age, experience, educational background, and institutional affiliation which enriches the analysis of their professional practices. Their ages range from 28 to 50 years with experience spanning from 3 to 25 years, reflecting a balance between seasoned professionals with extensive expertise and younger counselors bringing fresh perspectives. Most respondents hold degrees in Psychology, with additional qualifications such as Teacher Education Units, Master's degrees in Guidance and Counseling, and, in some cases, dual master's degrees, showcasing their commitment to professional growth.

Three are Registered Psychometricians (RPm), highlighting their capacity to conduct psychological assessments, while others bring valuable skills developed through alternative professional paths. Public school counselors navigate resource-limited environments, while private school counselors align their practices with institutional cultures, including religious affiliations, as seen in one respondent working in her alma mater, a private Catholic school. These career trajectories and contexts demonstrate the adaptability and dedication of guidance counselors, underscoring the critical role they play in addressing students' academic, emotional, and social needs.

Summary Table of Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Female	6	60.00
	Male	4	40.00
	Total	10	100.00
Age Group	20–29 years old	1	10.00
	30–39 years old	3	30.00
	40–49 years old	4	40.00
	50 and above	2	20.00
	Total	10	100.00
Years in Service	0–5 years	1	10.00
	6–10 years	3	30.00
	11–15 years	2	20.00
	16–20 years	2	20.00
	21 years and above	2	20.00
	Total	10	100.00

The demographic profile of the participants is presented in terms of sex, age group, and years in service. For sex, 6 participants are female, representing 60%, while 4 participants are male, representing 40%. In terms of age group, 1 participant (10%) is aged 20–29 years old, 3 participants (30.00%) are aged 30–39 years old, 4 participants (40%) are aged 40–49 years old, and 2 participants (20%) are aged 50 and above.

As for years in service, 1 participant (10%) has 0–5 years of experience, 3 participants (30%) have 6–10 years, 2 participants (20%) have 11–15 years, 2 participants (20%) have 16–20 years, and 2 participants (20%) have 21 years and above.

3.2. Emotional Challenges Adolescents have with During Counseling Sessions

Emotional challenges during counseling sessions refer to the difficulties or obstacles individuals, particularly adolescents, face in managing and expressing their emotions while engaging in therapeutic conversations.

Table 1. Emotional Challenges

Question: What emotional challenges do adolescents most commonly present with during counseling sessions?			
Participants ID	Key Points	Codes	Category
P50F25GCPub	Sa public school, ang madalas na emosyonal na problema ng mga estudyante ay ang takot na bumagsak sa klase. Marami sa kanila ang hindi sigurado sa kanilang kakayahan, at minsan naririnig ko silang umiiyak dahil pakiramdam nila hindi nila kayang maabot ang expectations ng pamilya nila. Bukod dito, maraming estudyante ang may mga	Fear of failure, lack of self- confidence, emotional distress from family issues.	Academic Pressure

	personal na pinagdadaan, tulad ng hindi magandang relasyon sa magulang, kawalan ng suporta, o epekto ng hiwalayan ng kanilang mga magulang. Ang mga ganitong problema ay nagpapabigat sa kanilang emosyonal na kalagayan		
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	habang sinusubukan nilang mag-focus sa pag-aaral.		
P43F16GCPriv	Sa private Catholic school, madalas na hamon ang mataas na expectations ng pamilya at school. Bukod dito, may mga estudyante rin akong nakikilala na may ADHD. Halimbawa, may isang estudyante na nagkaroon ng meltdown sa kalagitnaan ng klase dahil hindi niya makontrol ang frustration niya sa mahirap na activity. Kinailangan kong kausapin siya pagkatapos ng klase para kalmahin at ipaliwanag ang nararamdaman niya. Ang ganitong mga sitwasyon ay nangangailangan ng espesyal na atensyon at suporta, lalo na sa emotional regulation.	Performance anxiety, ADHD symptoms, inability to regulate emotions.	Neurological disorder
P31M7GCPriv	Sa private school, maraming estudyante ang lumalapit dahil sa pressure na maging magaling sa academics. May ilan na nagsabi na natatakot silang mag-fail dahil baka hindi matanggap ng pamilya nila. May iba naman na sobrang overwhelmed sa dami ng expectations—mula sa school, pamilya, at sarili nila. Minsan may mga kwento rin tungkol sa peer pressure, kung saan ang estudyante ay nahihirapan sumabay sa lifestyle ng mga kaibigan nila, lalo na kung may pagkakaiba sa financial status.	Pressure to excel, fear of disappointing others, peer dynamics, financial struggles.	Academic Pressure
P45F13GCPub	Sa public school, marami akong nakakausap na estudyante na nahihirapan sa kanilang emosyon dahil sa kahirapan sa bahay. May mga estudyanteng nalalampasan ang	Overburdened with responsibilities, economic stress, emotional toll from home life.	Economic Stress

	academic challenges nila, ngunit nahihirapan silang i-handle		
	ang mga sitwasyon tulad ng pagtulong sa pamilya habang nag-aaral. Karaniwan, kailangan nilang magtrabaho sa gabi o tumulong sa bahay, kaya't madalas silang emosyonal at stressed kapag kausap ko.		
P31M9GCPub	Bilang isang guidance counselor sa public school, madalas kong marinig mula sa mga estudyante ang kanilang mga insecurities. Halimbawa, may mga estudyante na nag-aalala sa kanilang physical appearance at natatakot na husgahan ng mga kaibigan. May ilan ding nagkukwento tungkol sa pagiging left out sa barkada o hindi makasabay sa mga kaibigan dahil sa personal na problema. Marami din sa kanila ang hindi alam kung paano i-handle ang pressure mula sa pamilya na maging magaling sa school.	Body image concerns, fear of rejection, difficulty in forming friendships.	Insecurities
P28F3GCPriv	Sa school na pinagtatrabahuhan ko, nakakapansin ako ng iba't ibang emotional challenges mula sa estudyante, kabilang na ang mga may ADHD. May isang pagkakataon na may estudyante akong kinailangang tawagin sa counseling office dahil natrigger siya sa klase nang mapagalitan siya ng teacher dahil hindi niya natapos ang activity sa oras. Sa counseling session, inexplore namin ang mga emotions niya at tinulungan siyang maintindihan na ang pagiging overwhelmed ay parte ng kanyang condition. Ibinigay ko rin ang ilang strategies para matulungan siyang maging kalmado sa mga ganitong sitwasyon.	Emotional outbursts, difficulty focusing, overwhelmed by academic demands.	Neurological disorder

P40F15GCPriv	Maraming estudyante ang bumabagsak dahil sa lack of motivation. Madalas nilang sabihin na wala silang nakikitang silbi ng pag-aaral dahil sa kahirapan ng buhay. Ang mga ito ay nagpapakita ng mababang self-esteem at kawalan ng support system.	Low self-esteem, lack of motivation, poor support system.	Academic Apathy
P36M10GCMix	May mga estudyante na nakakaranas ng social anxiety. May ilan na natatakot magsalita sa harap ng klase o kaya'y lumapit sa guro dahil sa takot na magkamali. Nakakaranas sila ng labis na pag-aalala at madalas umiwas sa mga sitwasyong nagpapakita ng kanilang kahinaan.	Social anxiety, fear of public speaking, avoidance behaviors.	Social Anxiety
P48F20GCPriv	There are students na nagkukwento tungkol sa epekto ng bullying. May ilan na ayaw nang pumasok dahil sa takot, habang ang iba naman ay nagkakaroon ng anger issues bilang reaksiyon sa mga karanasan nila. Ang bullying ay nagdudulot ng trauma sa maraming bata.	Bullying, trauma, anger issues.	Peer Conflicts
P34M8GCPriv	Napansin kong marami sa mga estudyante ang nagkakaroon ng trust issues sa mga tao sa paligid nila. May mga nagsasabi na natatakot silang magtiwala dahil sa mga naunang karanasan nila sa pamilya o mga kaibigan. Ang kawalan ng tiwala ay madalas na nagiging sanhi ng isolation at emotional distress.	Trust issues, fear of betrayal, emotional isolation.	Isolation

Overall Theme: Adolescents commonly face various emotional difficulties rooted in academic, social, familial, and personal factors.

Based on the interviews, the emotional challenges adolescents face during counseling sessions can be categorized into eight categories: Academic Pressure, Neurological Disorders, Economic Stress, Insecurities, Academic Apathy, Social Anxiety, Peer Conflicts, and Isolation. These categories highlight a wide range of struggles, from fear of failure and family expectations to bullying and social withdrawal. Despite their distinct nature, these challenges collectively underline the overall theme: adolescents commonly face various emotional difficulties rooted in academic, social, familial, and personal factors.

According to Springer (2024), academic pressure is a major contributor to emotional distress among adolescents, particularly in environments where academic success is highly prioritized. This pressure often results in self-doubt and overwhelming stress, leading to emotional struggles that manifest in counseling sessions. Rooney (n.d.) highlights that students with neurological disorders, such as ADHD, experience heightened frustration, emotional outbursts, and difficulty in self-regulation, particularly during adolescence when hormonal changes further intensify these challenges. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2024) reports that economic stress exacerbates mental health struggles, particularly for students in public schools who face financial burdens while trying to focus on their studies.

BMC Psychology (2024) emphasizes that insecurities related to body image and fear of rejection contribute to emotional distress, often leading to social withdrawal and difficulty in forming friendships. In line with this, Baker and Will (2024) note that academic apathy, characterized by a lack of motivation and low self-esteem, hinders students' engagement and learning, particularly when they lack a supportive environment. Ali and Joordens (2023) found that social anxiety frequently emerges in adolescence, making it a critical issue as students struggle with public speaking and avoidance behaviors that affect their academic and social experiences.

Further, StompOutBullying (n.d.) reports that approximately 20% of students experience bullying, with many cases going unreported. These peer conflicts result in trauma, anger issues, and emotional distress, significantly affecting students' sense of safety and well-being. Lastly, Psylaris (n.d.) explains that isolation often stems from trust issues and emotional withdrawal due to past negative experiences, leading to avoidance behaviors that further exacerbate feelings of loneliness and mental distress.

The data reveals distinct emotional challenges adolescents face during counseling sessions, with many struggles deeply intertwined with their academic, social, and familial environments.

One of the most prominent issues is academic pressure, where students feel burdened by high expectations from family and school, resulting in performance anxiety and fear of failure. One guidance counselor, P50F25GCPub, shared an emotional encounter with a student who broke down in tears after failing to meet her parents' expectations, illustrating the impact of such pressures can have. Another participant, P31M7GCPriv, noted how students often feel overwhelmed by the combination of school, family, and societal expectations, further intensifying their emotional struggles.

Neurological disorders, particularly ADHD, present additional challenges, as they often experience frustration, emotional dysregulation, and frequent outbursts. P43F16GCPriv recalled an instance where a student with ADHD had a meltdown during class due to frustration over a difficult task.

Economic stress also plays a role in shaping adolescents' emotional well-being. Many students in public schools bear financial responsibilities while trying to balance their studies. P45F13GCPub shared a case of a student who worked late nights to support his family, leaving him emotionally drained and struggling to focus on his studies. This example underscores how economic hardships deeply impact students' academic engagement and mental well-being.

Insecurities, such as body image concerns and fear of rejection, further contribute to emotional distress. These insecurities often lead to social withdrawal and self-isolation, making it difficult for students to form friendships. P31M9GCPub recounted a case where a student avoided social interactions due to insecurities about her appearance, leaving her emotionally distressed and isolated.

Similarly, academic apathy is observed in students who lack motivation due to low self-esteem and a lack of encouragement from their environment. P40F15GCPriv shared a story about a student who lost interest in education due to her family's financial struggles, leading to her complete disengagement from

academics.

Other emotional challenges include social anxiety, where students struggle with public speaking, fear of judgment, and avoidance behaviors. P36M10GCMix recounted helping a student who refused to participate in class presentations due to intense anxiety, reinforcing the prevalence and severity of this issue.

Peer conflicts, particularly bullying, create long-lasting emotional scars, often leading to trauma and anger issues. P48F20GCPriv described a student who refused to attend school after experiencing repeated bullying incidents, illustrating the deep psychological impact such experiences can leave.

Lastly, isolation remains a recurring challenge, with students expressing trust issues and emotional withdrawal due to past negative experiences. Trauma often results in avoidance behaviors, making it difficult for students to build meaningful relationships. P34M8GCPriv shared a case where a student avoided forming friendships due to fear of betrayal, highlighting how past experiences create emotional barriers.

The emotional challenges faced by adolescents are not just isolated struggles, they are deeply interconnected with their academic performance, social interactions, and mental well-being. Each story shared by the counselors paints a vivid and often heartbreaking picture of young lives burdened by fear, overwhelming pressure, and profound insecurities.

3.3. Creative Expression Therapy Approaches

Creative Expression Therapy Approaches refer to therapeutic methods that utilize creative activities and art forms as a means for individuals to explore, express, and process their emotions, thoughts, and experiences.

Table 2. Creative Expression Therapy Approaches

Question: What approaches do you use in tailoring creative expression therapy?			
Participants ID	Key Points	Codes	Category
P50F25GCPub	Mga estudyante ay madalas na takot bumagsak o hindi makamit ang expectations ng pamilya, ginagamit ko ang simple ngunit meaningful na creative interventions tulad ng art therapy. Halimbawa, pinapadrawing ko sila ng mga simbolo na nagrepresent ng kanilang takot at kung paano nila ito gustong malampasan. Isang beses, may estudyanteng gumuhit ng hagdan na hindi niya maakyat, at dito nagsimula ang usapan namin kung paano niya maabot ang goals niya nang dahan- dahan. Ang ganitong approach ay nagbibigay-daan para mailabas nila ang emosyon nila nang hindi nila kailangang magsalita agad.	Art therapy, symbolic representation, emotional expression.	Art Therapy

P43F16GCPriv	Mataas ang expectations sa mga estudyante, lalo na sa mga may ADHD, gumamit ako ng sensory- based activities tulad ng clay modeling o stress ball exercises. May isang pagkakataon na may estudyanteng hindi makontrol ang frustration niya sa mahirap na activity, kaya't pinagamit ko siya ng clay para ma-divert ang energy niya. Habang ginagawa niya ito, unti-unti siyang kumalma at napag-usapan namin ang nararamdaman niya. Ang ganitong approach ay nagbibigay sa kanila ng paraan para mag-release ng emotions habang natututo rin sila ng self-regulation strategies.	Sensory activities, ADHD management, self-regulation.	Sensory- Based Therapy
P31M7GCPriv	Maraming estudyante ang overwhelmed dahil sa academic pressure at expectations. Gumagamit ako ng journaling exercises para matulungan silang ma-process ang nararamdaman nila. Halimbawa, may estudyanteng ini-assign ko na magsulat ng mga bagay na nagpapasalamat siya araw-araw upang maibalik ang focus niya sa positive aspects ng buhay. Para naman sa mga mahilig sa visuals, pinapagawa ko sila ng "vision boards" na nagre-represent ng goals nila. Ang mga ganitong activities ay nakakatulong sa kanilang self- awareness at nagpapalakas ng resilience.	Journaling, positive focus, goal visualization.	Reflective Exercises
P45F13GCPub	May mga estudyante ang may responsibilidad sa pamilya, ginagamit ko ang storytelling at role- playing. Halimbawa, pinapagawa ko sila ng kuwento tungkol sa isang karakter na may parehong problema nila at kung paano nalampasan ng karakter na iyon ang kanyang mga hamon. May isang estudyante na	Storytelling, role-playing, perspective shifting.	Narrative Therapy

	gumamit ng kuwento tungkol sa isang batang tumutulong sa pamilya habang nagpupursige sa pag-aaral. Ang ganitong activities ay tumutulong sa kanila na makita ang kanilang sitwasyon mula sa ibang perspective at magbigay ng inspirasyon para magpatuloy.		
P31M9GCPub	May insecurities ang mga estudyante tungkol sa kanilang physical appearance at acceptance ng peers. Madalas akong gumamit ng group art activities, tulad ng paggawa ng murals, para maipakita nila ang collective strengths ng grupo. Isang beses, may estudyanteng nagsabi na ayaw niyang mag-participate dahil sa takot na ma-judge, pero kalaunan ay naging active siya dahil nakaramdam siya ng belongingness sa grupo. Ang ganitong interventions ay nakakatulong na mabuild ang kanilang self-esteem habang natututo silang mag-collaborate.	Group art, peer acceptance, self-esteem building.	Group Activities
P28F3GCPriv	Sa private school na pinagtatrabahuhan ko, ang mga estudyanteng may ADHD ay tinutulungan kong maglabas ng emosyon sa pamamagitan ng “emotional mapping.” Halimbawa, pinapadrawing ko sila ng isang lugar na nagre-represent ng kanilang nararamdaman—kalma man ito o magulo. May isang estudyante na nag-drawing ng gubat na maraming makikitid na daan, na sinasabi niyang sumisimbolo sa kanyang pagiging overwhelmed. Sa ganitong paraan, natutulungan ko siyang i- identify ang root ng kanyang emosyon at magbigay ng specific strategies para mag-calm down sa stressors niya.	Emotional mapping, visual representation, stress management.	Emotion-Focused Activities

P40F15GCPri	Ginagamit ko ang therapy para matulungan ang mga estudyante na may difficulty sa expressing emotions. Halimbawa, gumagamit kami ng role-play para i-act out ang mga challenging scenarios nila. Ang ganitong approach ay tumutulong sa kanila na maunawaan ang kanilang sitwasyon at maghanap ng solusyon.	Role-play, emotional exploration, problem- solving.	Narrative Therapy
P36M10GCMi x	storytelling at creative writing ang ginagamit ko para sa mga estudyanteng may trauma. Pinapagawa ko sila ng maikling kwento o tula kung saan inilalagay nila ang kanilang nararamdaman sa iba't ibang karakter. Ang ganitong activity ay nagbibigay daan para sa catharsis at self-discovery.	Storytelling, poetry, trauma healing.	Narrative Therapy
P48F20GCPri	umagamit ako ng dance or movement para sa mga estudyanteng may anxiety. Halimbawa, hinahayaan ko silang gumalaw nang malaya sa isang activity using music upang mailabas ang kanilang nararamdaman. Natutulungan nito ang kanilang self-expression at emotional regulation.	Dance, movement, anxiety management.	Music therapy
P34M8GCPri	Ginagamit ko ang collage-making bilang isang paraan para sa mga estudyanteng nahihirapang mag- verbalize ng kanilang nararamdaman. Halimbawa, pinapapili ko sila ng mga larawan mula sa magazine na sa tingin nila ay nagre-represent ng kanilang kasalukuyang emosyon. Ang ganitong aktibidad ay nakakatulong sa visual self-expression.	Collage-making, visual processing, emotional insight.	Visual Arts Therapy

Overall Theme: Safe and non-verbal ways to express feelings and experiences.

The creative expression therapy approaches used by counselors encompass a wide range of categories, including Art Therapy, Sensory-Based Therapy, Reflective Exercises, Narrative Therapy, Group Activities, Emotion-Focused Activities, Music Therapy, and Visual Arts Therapy. These methods employ diverse techniques, such as drawing, journaling, storytelling, role-playing, group art-making, emotional mapping, movement, and collage creation, to address the unique emotional and psychological needs of adolescents. Despite their varied forms, these approaches share a common purpose: to provide

safe and non-verbal ways for students to express and process their feelings and experiences, fostering self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience.

Research supports the use of art therapy for reducing stress and enhancing emotional regulation, particularly in adolescents dealing with academic pressures (Fitria et al., 2022). Furthermore, reflective writing enhances emotional well-being and promotes clarity, helping students process their emotions more effectively (Smyth & Pennebaker, 2022). In addition, narrative therapy is recognized for its ability to assist adolescents in reframing experiences and developing coping strategies (White & Epston, 2021). Similarly, group art activities have been found to enhance social interactions and reduce isolation, fostering a sense of belonging among participants (Kaimal et al., 2023). Moreover, emotion mapping, which visually represents emotions, helps improve self-awareness and coping mechanisms in adolescents (Gross et al., 2022). Additionally, music therapy has been shown to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation (American Music Therapy Association, 2023), while visual arts therapy encourages emotional processing and introspection (Malchiodi, 2020).

One of the key approaches in creative expression therapy is art therapy, which offers students a safe space to express emotions through symbolic representation. For example, P50F25GCPub uses drawing to help students externalize fears and explore their goals. In one case, a student overwhelmed by academic expectations drew an image of a staircase they felt unable to climb, which led to a meaningful discussion on breaking goals into manageable steps.

In addition to art therapy, sensory-based activities, such as clay modeling and stress ball exercises, help students manage frustration and ADHD symptoms. Specifically, P43F16GCPriv shared how a student struggling with frustration during a classroom activity found relief by molding clay, using the tactile experience to calm down and articulate emotions. This approach aligns with findings that sensory engagement can help improve emotional regulation and concentration.

Similarly, reflective practices, such as journaling and vision boards, provide structured outlets for students overwhelmed by academic pressure. In particular, P31M7GCPriv described how a gratitude journal helped a student shift focus toward positivity, fostering resilience. Furthermore, vision boards encouraged students to visualize their goals, redirecting their energy toward constructive outcomes.

Another effective method is narrative therapy, which employs storytelling and role-playing to help students reframe their experiences. For instance, P45F13GCPub shared how a student created a story about a character balancing family responsibilities with academic goals, inspiring perseverance. In the same way, P36M10GCMix used creative writing and poetry to help students dealing with trauma find catharsis and self-discovery.

Moreover, group-based approaches, such as collaborative mural painting, foster self-esteem and peer acceptance. According to P31M9GCPub, a mural project helped a hesitant student gradually become an active participant, enabling them to build self-confidence and social skills.

Additionally, emotion mapping is a valuable tool for students struggling to articulate complex feelings. For example, P28F3GCPriv guided a student to draw a tangled forest symbolizing their sense of overwhelm, which helped them identify specific stressors and create a plan to address them.

Likewise, music, dance, and movement therapy allow students with anxiety to express themselves and regulate emotions. P48F20GCPriv observed students moving freely to music during sessions, which helped them release pent-up emotions and regain a sense of control.

Furthermore, collage-making provides an expressive medium for students who struggle to verbalize their

emotions. In one instance, P34M8GCPPriv recounted how a student created a collage using magazine images to represent their emotional state, leading to deeper discussions about their inner experiences. Creative expression therapy encompasses diverse, non-verbal methods that allow adolescents to process emotions, address challenges, and foster personal growth. These approaches, as observed through counselor interviews, provide tailored solutions to students' unique emotional and psychological needs by incorporating art, movement, storytelling, and other creative mediums. These findings highlight the importance of creativity as a therapeutic tool in supporting adolescents' mental health and development.

3.4. Responses To Creative Expression Therapy With Their Responses To More Traditional Counseling Methods

Responses to Creative Expression Therapy With Their Responses to More Traditional Counseling Methods refers to the comparison of how adolescents react and engage with creative expression therapy techniques compared to traditional counseling approaches.

Table 3. Responses To Creative Expression Therapy With Their Responses To More Traditional Counseling Methods

Question: What are the Responses To Creative Expression Therapy With Their Responses To More Traditional Counseling Methods?			
Participants ID	Key Points	Codes	Category
P50F25GCPub	Sa public school, napansin kong mas receptive ang mga estudyante sa creative expression therapy kumpara sa traditional counseling methods. Halimbawa, sa traditional one-on- one sessions, hiram silang mag-open up tungkol sa kanilang mga takot at insecurities, pero kapag ginagamit ko ang art therapy tulad ng pagpapadrawing, mas nagiging expressive sila. Isang estudyante na tahimik at hindi masyadong nagkwekwento sa regular na session ang nagpakita ng kanyang takot sa isang drawing ng bundok na mahirap akyatin. Dahil dito, naging mas malalim ang usapan namin.	Art therapy, symbolic representation, expressive sharing.	Increased Emotional Expression
P43F16GCPPriv	Sa private Catholic school, maraming estudyante ang mabilis ma- overwhelm sa direct questioning na karaniwan sa traditional counseling. Kapag ginagamit ko ang creative methods tulad ng mood boards o music playlists, mas nagiging open sila. Isang estudyante na may ADHD ang nahirapan sa structured na approach ng traditional counseling, pero nang pinagawa ko siya ng playlist ng mga kantang nagre-	Music playlists, ADHD management, non-intimidating approach.	Enhanced Engagement

	reflect ng kanyang nararamdaman, mas naging madali para sa kanya na ipaliwanag ang kanyang emotions. Mas nagiging collaborative at less intimidating ang therapy kapag may creative element.		
P31M7GCPriv	Sa private school, napansin ko na ang mga estudyanteng mataas ang stress level ay hindi agad sumasagot	Journaling, storytelling,	Fostering Reflective Thinking
	sa mga tanong sa traditional sessions. Pero kapag ginagamit ko ang journaling exercises o storytelling techniques, nagiging mas engaged sila. Halimbawa, may isang estudyanteng hiram sumagot nang tanungin ko tungkol sa kanyang mga problema, pero nang pinagawa ko siya ng short story tungkol sa isang karakter na may parehong sitwasyon, nagawa niyang i-share ang mga bagay na hindi niya kayang sabihin nang direkta. Mas nagiging reflective ang responses nila sa creative expression therapy.	reflective engagement.	
P45F13GCPub	Sa public school, karamihan ng mga estudyante ay hiram magsalita tungkol sa kanilang personal na pinagdadaanan sa tradisyunal na paraan. Mas epektibo ang role- playing at storytelling sa ganitong sitwasyon. Halimbawa, isang estudyante na hindi masyadong sumasagot sa direct questioning ang naging mas participative nang pinagawa ko siya ng kuwento tungkol sa isang batang tumutulong sa pamilya habang nag-aaral. Sa creative expression therapy, mas nagiging relatable ang sessions para sa kanila dahil hindi nila nararamdaman ang pressure na magsabi agad ng kanilang nararamdaman.	Role-playing, relatable scenarios, participative approach.	Building Relatability and Participation
P31M9GCPub	Bilang guidance counselor sa public school, napansin ko na ang traditional methods tulad ng direct questioning ay madalas maging intimidating para sa mga estudyanteng insecure. Kapag creative	Group art, collaboration, self-esteem building.	Encouraging Group Connection

	activities ang ginagamit ko, tulad ng paggawa ng collaborative murals o crafts, mas naging relaxed sila at mas willing mag-share. Halimbawa, may estudyanteng hindi makapagsalita tungkol sa kanyang		
	insecurities sa itsura, pero nang gumawa kami ng mural tungkol sa self-love, unti-unti niyang naikwento ang nararamdaman niya. Creative expression therapy makes them feel less judged and more comfortable.		
P28F3GCPriv	Sa private school, ang traditional counseling methods ay epektibo para sa ilang estudyanteng mas verbal at direct, pero para sa mga may ADHD o anxiety, creative approaches ang mas nakakatulong. Halimbawa, isang estudyante na may ADHD ang hindi maka-focus sa structured session pero naging very engaged nang pinadrawing ko siya ng "emotional landscape." Sa ganitong paraan, mas naipahayag niya ang nararamdaman niya kaysa sa tradisyunal na tanungan. Creative expression therapy allows them to explore their emotions in a way that feels natural and non-threatening.	Emotional mapping, ADHD-focused approach, visual expression.	Visualizing Emotions for Clarity
P40F15GCPriv	Ang mga shy students ay hirap mag-verbalize ng kanilang emotions sa traditional sessions. Pero sa music therapy at dance activities, unti-unti nilang na-release ang kanilang nararamdaman at naging mas open sa pag-share pagkatapos ng activity.	Music therapy, non-verbal expression, emotional release.	Facilitating Emotional Release
P36M10GCMi x	ang mga estudyanteng may trauma ay hindi receptive sa traditional counseling methods dahil sa pagiging direct nito. Pero sa storytelling therapy, isang estudyante ang gumawa ng kwento tungkol sa isang character na na-bully at unti-unting nahanap ang confidence niya, na naging paraan para ma-process ang	Storytelling, trauma exploration, confidence building.	Facilitating Emotional Release

	kanyang trauma.		
P48F20GCPriv	maraming estudyante ang hindi verbal sa traditional counseling. Pero sa collage-making, mas naipahayag nila ang kanilang feelings sa pamamagitan ng pagpili ng mga	Collage-making, visual tools, accessibility	Enabling Non-Verbal Expression
	larawan kaysa magsalita. Isang estudyante ang naging mas open pagkatapos mag-collage tungkol sa kanyang emotions.		
P34M8GCPriv	ang younger students na reserved ay hiram mag-open sa structured counseling. Pero sa art therapy sessions, tulad ng painting, mas relaxed sila at nakapag-share ng kanilang emotions. Halimbawa, isang estudyante ang nagkwento ng nararamdaman niya matapos magpinta ng tungkol sa kanyang mood.	Art therapy, younger students, creative comfort.	Relaxing Emotional Barriers

Overall Theme: Creative expression therapy fosters deeper emotional engagement, comfort, and openness compared to traditional counseling methods

The responses to creative expression therapy compared to traditional counseling methods can be categorized into Increased Emotional Expression, Enhanced Engagement, Fostering Reflective Thinking, Building Relatability and Participation, Encouraging Group Connection, Visualizing Emotions for Clarity, Facilitating Emotional Release, Processing Trauma Through Stories, Enabling Non-Verbal Expression, and Relaxing Emotional Barriers. The overall theme reveals that creative expression therapy fosters deeper emotional engagement, comfort, and openness compared to traditional counseling methods.

Traditional one-on-one counseling often leaves students hesitant to share their emotions, making creative methods a more effective alternative. Research shows that art therapy provides adolescents with non-threatening ways to express their concerns, particularly when verbal communication feels too difficult or overwhelming (PMC, 2024).

Traditional one-on-one counseling sessions often leave students hesitant to share their emotions, making it difficult for them to open up. P50F25GCPub shared how a quiet student who struggled with verbal expression conveyed their fear of failure through a drawing of a steep mountain, which then led to a deeper discussion. Similarly, direct questioning in traditional counseling can be overwhelming, particularly for students with ADHD or anxiety.

For students who feel overwhelmed by direct questioning, expressive techniques like journaling and storytelling offer reflective alternatives. P31M7GCPriv highlighted how a student used a short story about a fictional character in a similar situation to explore and express personal struggles. Likewise, role-playing and storytelling allow students to connect with their emotions without the

pressure of direct inquiry. For instance, P45F13GCPub described how a student, who initially avoided answering direct questions, became more participative after crafting a story about balancing family and school responsibilities, fostering relatability and engagement.

Group-based activities further enhance emotional expression, particularly for students dealing with insecurities. P31M9GCPub recounted how a collaborative mural project focused on self-love encouraged insecure students to open up and feel supported by their peers. In contrast, structured traditional sessions may feel unnatural for students with ADHD or anxiety. Moreover, non-verbal approaches such as music and dance therapy help students who struggle to verbalize their emotions. P40F15GCPriv observed that shy students responded positively to movement activities, gradually releasing emotions and sharing experiences afterward. Similarly, storytelling is particularly effective for students who have experienced trauma and may find traditional counseling too direct. P36M10GCMix shared how a bullied student processed their trauma by writing a story about a character who gained confidence, making the experience more relatable and less distressing.

For students who are non-verbal or struggle with articulation, visual tools such as collage-making offer valuable ways to express emotions. P48F20GCPriv shared how a student who struggled with verbal communication during sessions used a visual collage to depict their feelings, leading to a meaningful conversation. Finally, younger and reserved students often struggle with the rigidity of traditional counseling methods. As observed by P34M8GCPriv, painting during art therapy allowed such students to relax and naturally share their emotions. One student, in particular, opened up for the first time after completing a painting that reflected their mood.

By combining the insights from these examples, it becomes evident that creative expression therapy not only enhances engagement but also provides more accessible, less intimidating avenues for adolescents to explore and process their emotions compared to traditional counseling methods. Through tailored, non-verbal, and creative approaches, counselors can create a more comfortable, expressive, and effective therapeutic environment that better meets the needs of adolescents.

3.5. Proposed Action Plan

This action plan was created to help address the various emotional challenges that adolescents face today. Issues such as academic pressure, social anxiety, isolation, and the effects of economic stress are addressed through the use of Creative Expression Therapy which provides students with a safe and creative way to express their thoughts and feelings.

Areas of Concern	Strategy	Activity	Means of Verification
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Academic Pressure	Stress Relief Through Art Journaling	Students will be given a paper to express their academic stress through drawing or writing. This will be done once a week during homeroom or guidance period. They can use colored pens, crayons, or pencils to draw scenes from their school life, emotions, or write short reflections. Sharing is optional, and outputs will be submitted to the teacher or counselor for weekly check-in.	Student journals, photos of sessions, attendance sheet
Neurological Disorder	Quiet Art Corner for Relaxation	A small, quiet space in the classroom or guidance office will be set up with calming art materials such as clay, coloring books, textured paper, and crayons. Students who feel overwhelmed or are diagnosed with neurological concerns may go to this area during breaks or with permission. A teacher or SPED personnel will assist and supervise as they engage in quiet art-making.	Photos of the setup, activity logbook, sample artworks
Economic Stress	Hope Collage Making	Using old magazines, newspapers, and recycled paper, students will create a collage that represents their dreams and goals in life. They will cut and paste meaningful images or words onto a sheet of paper and decorate it creatively. After making the collage, they will be encouraged to explain the meaning behind their work to a classmate or in small groups.	Completed collages, student reflections, photos of activity
Insecurities	Self-Portrait for Confidence	Students will be given paper and a mirror to draw themselves. They may choose a realistic or symbolic self-portrait and will include positive words, traits, or symbols that reflect their strengths. The teacher will encourage them to be proud of	Self-portrait drawings, classroom display photos, short written reflections

		who they are. Finished artworks will be posted on a “Confidence Wall” inside the classroom to build self-esteem.	
Academic Apathy	Creative Goal Mapping	Students will draw a visual map of their academic goals using symbols, arrows, drawings, and keywords. They will be asked to include what they want to achieve and the steps they will take to reach their goals. After presenting to a small group, the maps will be kept and revisited every grading period to track their progress.	Goal maps, progress monitoring sheets, photos of sharing sessions
Social Anxiety	Role-Playing Through Drama	Students will participate in short drama activities where they act out common school situations such as making friends or speaking in class. Sessions will start with warm-up games to ease tension. In pairs or groups, they will practice simple role-play scenarios and then perform in front of peers. Supportive feedback will be given to help build confidence.	Script printouts, photos of performances, peer feedback slips
Peer Conflicts	Wall of Unity Mural	Students will work in small groups to design and paint or draw a large mural that shows friendship, teamwork, and respect. Each group will be guided to divide roles fairly and collaborate peacefully. The mural will be displayed on a classroom wall or bulletin board. A short discussion will follow to reflect on what they learned about working with others.	Mural artwork, group reflection notes, photos of the finished mural
Isolation	Art Buddy Sessions	Students who are usually alone will be paired with a classmate to work on small art projects like making bookmarks, posters, or greeting cards. The activity promotes social interaction and	Buddy artworks, list of buddy pairs, photos of joint activity

		friendship. The pairs will be guided by the teacher, and their completed work will be displayed or submitted together.	
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study along with recommendations that aim to address the emotional challenges faced by adolescents. The suggestions provided are based on the results of the research and are intended to support schools, teachers, and counselors in promoting student well-being through creative and meaningful interventions.

Conclusion

Based on the finding, the following conclusions were made:

1. The participants include ten guidance counselors aged 28 to 50, with experience ranging from 3 to 25 years, working in both public and private schools. Their qualifications, such as degrees in Psychology, Master's in Guidance and Counseling, and RPN licensure, reflect their readiness to address adolescents' emotional needs.
2. Adolescents face emotional challenges such as fear of failure, economic stress, social anxiety, and bullying, which are often rooted in academic, familial, and social pressures
3. Approaches like art therapy, storytelling, journaling, and music therapy help adolescents express emotions in a safe and creative manner.
4. Students often find creative expression therapy more engaging and less intimidating than traditional counseling.
5. An action plan was proposed which focuses on equipping counselors with training, resources, and culturally relevant methods to enhance creative therapy sessions.

Recommendations

Based on the abovementioned conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Organize hands-on workshops for guidance counselors focusing on practical applications of creative expression therapy, such as art therapy, music therapy, and journaling. These workshops can be conducted at the local school district level or virtually, ensuring accessibility for all counselors, regardless of location.
2. Start integrating creative expression activities within existing counseling programs by introducing simple, low-cost methods like drawing, group storytelling, or journaling.
3. Establish a system for providing schools with the necessary materials, such as art supplies, journals, and access to music for therapy sessions. Schools can partner with local businesses or NGOs for donations, or seek government funding for resources to support these activities in counseling settings.
4. Organize community awareness events, such as parent-teacher meetings or workshops, to highlight the importance of creative therapies in adolescent development.
5. Implement the action plan.

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