MENTAL FLOURISHING

OVERVIEW

Mental flourishing refers to how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life, and independence). Mental flourishing is described as a dynamic state of internal balance and an actively-constructed positive resource, which allows individuals to feel good and use their abilities in alignment with universal values of society and of their respective cultures.

Figure 1 below identifies social, emotional and psychological signs of mental flourishing as well as characteristics of people high in mental flourishing. Figure 2 below identifies internal and external factors that facilitate mental flourishing.
**Arts engagement helps children and adolescents to gain confidence, connect with peers, and engage in prosocial acts.**

Among adolescents, arts engagement develops self-efficacy by fostering peer communication, sharing of artistic accomplishments, and exchanging feedback on peer or professional artwork in China.⁷ In adolescents with learning and mental health difficulties, creating visual art facilitates resilience by promoting peer connection, emotion-regulation, and prosocial behavior.⁸

**Arts engagement has a multitude of positive effects on adult well-being, ranging from mood regulation and stress reduction to personal empowerment.**

Among young adults, coloring reduces anxiety and negative mood, and also boosts perseverance, if there is freedom of artistic choice.⁹ In adults, visual art making in an open studio improves positive affect and self-efficacy¹⁰. Art-making also improves connectedness, emotion-regulation, meaning-making, sense of identity, and personal empowerment. As for receptive participation, art museum visits reduce self-reported stress as well as enhance positive emotions and engagement.

**Arts engagement helps older adults feel and perform better.**

In older adults, arts group participation is associated with higher positive affect, life satisfaction, purpose in life, and mastery.¹⁴ Interactive electronic art making promotes subjective health and well-being, social connectedness and intergenerational relationships, cognitive engagement, creativity, and self-expression.¹⁵ Museum-based social prescribing sessions improve older adults' feelings of being 'absorbed' and 'enlightened', 'encouraged', 'cheerful', and 'active'.¹⁶ Social prescribing also reduces doctor's visits and hospital admissions.¹³

**Regular cultural engagement reduces symptoms of depression as well as decreases risk of depression for a decade.**

Engaging in art-viewing and art-making can lessen symptoms of depression, including apathy.¹³ Cultural engagement through visiting museums, theater, and cinema decreases the risk of developing depression over the next 10 years in older adults by 32% if attended every few months and by 48% if attended at least once a month.¹⁷
REFERENCES

1. Ruggeri et al. (2020). Well-being is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries. Health Qual Life Outcomes
6. Mental Health Foundation. What is well-being, how can we measure it and how can we support people to improve it?. Mental Health Foundation

For further details on research articles, please visit: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1T1ud4-1lymXDuz4NP6OHkABx88u5y7qW?usp=drive_link