

Connections:



Mental Health, Art, Museums
& Critical Thinking

Presenter:
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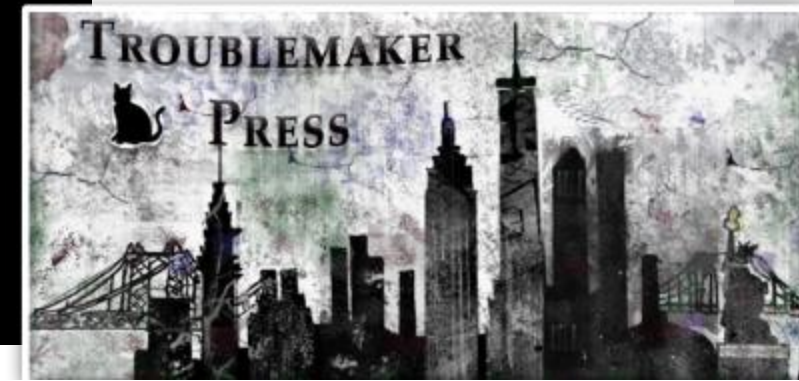
Welcome



Website:
troublemakerpress.com

Itinerary

- Mental Health Stats
 - Mental Health Language
 - Mental Health as a Human Right
 - Museums and Mental Health
 - Museums as a Teaching Tool
 - Art & Learning
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Catharsis
 - Credible Sources
 - Bringing it Together—Assignments
 - Using Questions
 - Observation
 - Prepping Students
 - Making Art
 - Conclusion
- ## Questions



Mental Health Facts & Resources

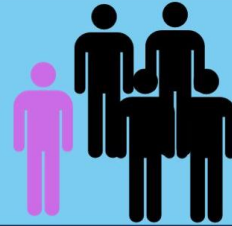


MENTAL HEALTH IN THE US

From the National Institute of Mental Health



1 IN 5 PERSONS LIVE WITH A MENTAL CONDITION (AMI) 51.9 MILLION (22.8% OF THE POPULATION)



MORE ARE YOUNG ADULTS 18-25 (33.7%) AMI IS HIGHEST AMONG THOSE IDENTIFYING AS BEING TWO OR MORE RACES

MORE WOMEN THAN MEN (27.2% TO 18.1)

IN 2021, AMONG THE 57.8 MILLION ADULTS WITH AMI, 26.5 MILLION (47.2%) RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR-- LESS THAN HALF



FEWER YOUNG ADULTS AGED 18-25 YEARS WITH AMI RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (44.6%) THAN ADULTS WITH AMI AGED 26-49 YEARS (48.1%) AND AGED 50 AND OLDER (47.4%)



From another study, 68.1% of Trans/Gender Diverse students described their mental health as being fair or poor (not about their identity, but about social factors)



Rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and use of mental health resources have all increased among U.S. college students.

Transgender/gender diverse (TGD) young people experience high rates of mental health concerns. [Not about being TGD] Students with disabilities were significantly more likely to self-report a negative mental health status (76.7%) than their non-disabled peers (58.9%).

National Institute of Mental Illness (NIMI), n.d. Also about Nonbinary people and college students: (Gross, et al, 2022) (Tordoff, et al, 2022) (Olson, 2016) (Matouk & Wald, 2022)

Person-First Language



Recommendations: Language Matters

- Person with mental illness/disability, rather than the “mentally ill/the disabled” (also person who is queer, person who is incarcerated, etc.)

- Why? This gives the person autonomy and dignity: we are more than our condition.

- Avoid insensitive terms (“crazy,” “insane,” “psycho,” “nuts,” “deranged”)

- If teaching about an artist, research the artist as they might not want to be identified as having a disability

- Good Resources:
- National Institute of Mental Health
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>
- NAMI
 - <https://www.nami.org/Home>



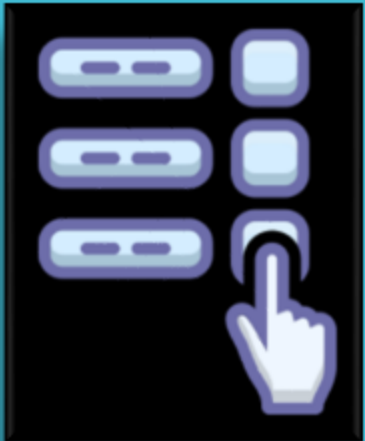
Connection: Mental Health as a Human Right



- The UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights Art. 25 declares people have the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being. This includes mental health, as per the American Psychiatric Association.
- A basic challenge to mental health is stigma and discrimination, which acts as a barrier to seeking treatment.
- This can be exacerbated by unhelpful and inaccurate tropes in film, TV, books, etc.
- COVID has also complicated mental health through stress, isolation, job loss.

Break!

Poll Question 1



- Have you recently seen a mischaracterization or negative portrayal of mental/emotional conditions in a fictional work? (Please name it if possible). You can just click on skip to avoid giving a name.

• <https://bit.ly/3Ql4tg5>

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Connection: Museums and Mental Health



- 2012 program in North Wales
- Art sessions for person w/mental health problems or stress
- Museum setting was “inspirational,” “calming,” “encouraged awareness of visual environment,” “connected past and present,” “connected with personal history/collective history” and humanity, with catharsis and perspective (Neal, 2015)
- 2019 in Canada
- Program with health centers offered free passes to museums
- Offset social isolation and improved physical and mental well-being (Royal Ontario Museum, 2018),
- Other studies have shown that museum are restorative (Packer, 2013)



Connection: Museums as a Teaching Tool



- From research and interviews:
- U.S.-based online National Museum for Mental Health Project (NMMHP, Piwko & Orlandi), research on exhibitions on mental health and mental illness: exhibitions appeared to have favorably impacted individual visitors' and communities' perceptions about mental health. Normalized topic/reduced stigmatization
- Professor Richard Sandell of the United Kingdom-based Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG): Museums are a useful source of education on social issues; are a “mirror” of society that provides a window into contemporary concerns; but museums still do not offer enough PWD representation
- 2008 program “Talking about...Disability and Art” provided an opportunity to have PWD observe and critique art in the context of disability, for other patrons to access
- Mind Matters, a traveling exhibit organized by the Science Museum of Minnesota in 2018 (created by Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre, in Vantaa, Finland) provided scientific info, a safe space, and interactive, family-friendly activities
- For art, Prof. Philip Yanos points to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam for the online interactive pages and exhibits that gives a more sensitive, complex, balanced presentation and education of Vincent's life and work.

Connection: Art & Learning

- Art can help in mental health learning
- Why? Art Connects to Us Emotionally
 - Art Museums are a safe space and restorative environment (Cuno, 2002)
 - Art has been shown to have a positive effect on the brain and on health overall
 - Increased blood flow, feelings of empathy, positiveness (Kawabata & Zeki, 2004).
 - Visits to museums seem to increase tolerance and historical empathy (Greens, et al, 2014)
 - This makes art a good teaching tool for mental health issues (and other social concerns)



Connection: Emotional Intelligence

THE NUMBER ONE BESTSELLER
DANIEL GOLEMAN

Emotional Intelligence

Why it can matter
more than IQ



Emotional intelligence is a critical thinking tool, the ability to be aware of and manage our emotions, to interact with the world around us (related to metacognition and mindfulness).

Tap into emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and metacognition through journaling and asking questions of one's self.

- Daniel Goleman's (2012) five areas of emotional intelligence:
 - Self-awareness
 - Self-management
 - Empathy
 - Motivation
 - Social skills.

Emotional Intelligence & Catharsis



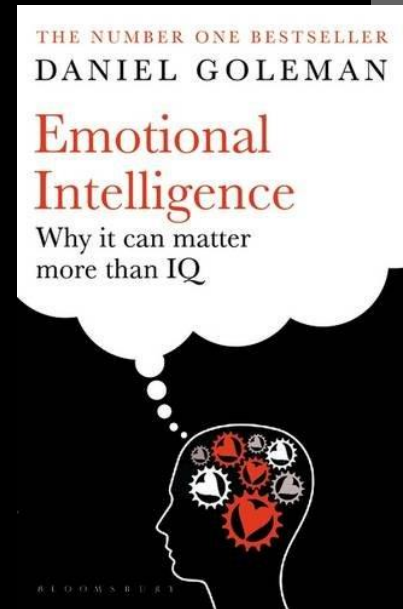
Cathartic: Symbolizing something that a person can connect to from their own life, such as a mental condition

Restorative: Aesthetically pleasing and positive



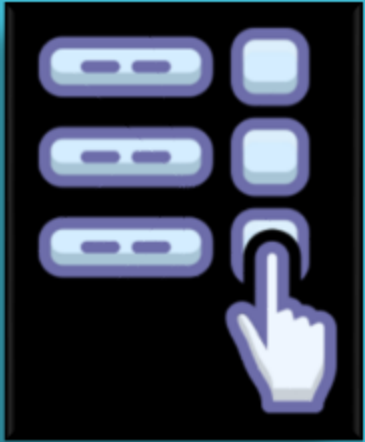
Dante Gabriel Rossetti - Pia de' Tolomei, (1868)

- Catharsis is finding an emotional connection
- Artworks have potential for this, as music has been found to be: mood regulation, and empathic feelings, caused, for example, by recollection of and reflection on past events.
- (Sachs, et al., 2015) (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010)



Break!

Poll Question 2



- Think of a creative work of any kind or person (artist, writer, movie character, musician, song, book, TV show) that, to you, demonstrates some aspect of emotional intelligence. Please name that work or person.
- <https://bit.ly/45MGuMo>

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Critical Thinking Credible Resources



Museums as a Credible Source

“... libraries and museums are considered honest purveyors of information and places for conversation on issues of local and national significance.” (Skorton, 2017)



Art, Museums, & Critical Thinking as Teaching Tools for Mental Health

[And for Mental
Health in General]

- Suggestion: Use museums as a teaching tool in your classes
- Explore mental health in the course if possible; the museum can be a credible resource
- This can also apply to topics on LGBTQIA+, immigrants, first generation students, and other circumstances
- Consider museums as a personal activity for improving mental health (cathartic and restorative environment)
- Encourage area museums and galleries to incorporate programs and exhibits in mental health (not just provide accessibility)



Some of NYC's Wonderful Museums (Not even counting galleries in Colleges)

• Art & History

- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Museum of Modern Art
- Whitney
- Brooklyn Museum
- Queens Museum
- Bronx Museum of the Arts
- Staten Island Museum
- The Morgan Library and Museum
- Studio Museum in Harlem
- The Guggenheim
- The Jewish Museum
- Museum of Jewish Heritage
- The Frick
- Fotografiska (Swedish)
- Museum of the Moving Image
- International Center of Photography Museum
- The New Museum
- El Museo del Barrio
- American Folk Art Museum
- New York Historical Society
- Museum of the City of New York
- Rubin Museum of Art
- National Museum of the American Indian
- Asia Society
- Korea Society
- Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art
- Museum of the Chinese in America
- The Drawing Center
- Ellis Island Museum of Immigration
- The Tenement Museum
- Fraunces Tavern Museum
- Neue Galerie
- Museum of American Illustration

Science

- American Museum of Natural History
- Intrepid Sea, Air, & Space Museum
- New York Hall of Science
- National Museum of Mathematics
- New York Aquarium
- South Street Seaport Museum

Design

- Museum of Arts & Design
- Cooper Hewitt
- Museum at FIT
- New York School of Interior Design
- Design Gallery



Recommendations for Creating Materials & Tours

Critical Thinking Tool: Use of Questions Why are questions good?



- Sets a framework
- Eases anxiety about visit/project
- Focuses attention
- Gets the listener involved and self-learning
- Helps set the objectives/learning outcomes

Develop a set of outcomes: Determine what you want to accomplish from the visit/experience/presentation. Those are your (flexible) set of learning outcomes.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII* (1923)

RECOMMEN



Open-Ended Questions

- What's going on in this work that speaks to mental health [or anxiety, perseverance, joy]?
- What can you describe in the work that reflects these ideas?
- What more can we find?
- What surprises you?



Question Examples for Observing Art



...And Connecting!

What comes to mind? How might you connect colors, shapes, and expressions to mental health topics?

What in this work might be considered Cathartic/Restorative?

Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII* (1923)

Critical Thinking Technique: Observation

Recommendations:
Slow-Looking

- We usually spend only seconds looking at a work
- This technique is to spend upwards of 5,10 minutes and more to observe
- The key is to step away at times, look away, and/or move your position—hit the refresh button of your mind

- Things to look for:
 - Mood and personality
 - Symbolism and feeling
 - Motion
 - Capturing time and space
 - Cultural and historical connections
 - Space and negative space
 - Technical dimensions

Create a task to go along with the observation
Look up facts!
Wall labels, online resources
(try Mental Floss, Atlas Obscura)



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII* (1923)



Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII* (1923)

The “Upside Down”

Consider the work upside down or flipped



Prepping Students for Museums



- For students:
- They may not have visited one before so need help and encouragement
- What access is available, what challenges may be present
- Costs, entrances, any available help

Making Artwork



Other Forms of Art

- For teachers – engagement may increase with use of other forms of art:
- Games
- Comic Books
- Graphic Novels
- Manga
- Anime
- Movies
- TV
- All of the above has learning points that can be applied to Humanities topics and other areas



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Completion & References



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Thanks to the Dean's Café
for hosting!

These materials are on my website
troublemakerpress.com

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