



Healing in the Arts: Impacts and Relationships

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Proposed Research

We plan to utilize research and performance arts feedback methods to better understand how HITA functions, why students choose to participate, and what is experienced during participation with HITA. Within this research we will work to study how HITA has impacted the way in which our participants view their trauma, if any participants have been inspired to utilize their art form to assist in healing outside of HITA, and how HITA has affected or changed relationships within the lives of our participants.

Introduction

Healing in the Arts was created from exploring a connection with social science education and performance (Thomas-Jackson, Munly, Sharp, & Hamel, 2018). Healing in the Arts (HITA) is an organization dedicated to raising awareness of trauma within our community and helping participants with their healing process. Writers, artists, dancers, actors, and singers are all encouraged to utilize their art form in telling their stories of trauma which include, but are not limited to, sexual assault, suicide, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and abuse. Often, we receive feedback from participants about how much this organization has assisted students in finding their voice, created a safe community in order for students to tell their story, and impacted their lives as a whole. Healing in the Arts wants to investigate these comments deeper, find similarities, and measure just how much our participants are impacted by utilizing art as a form of healing.

Sample Audience Survey Questions

The performance was effective for learning about various types of challenges/difficulties/traumas that people experience.

I would attend a performance like this again.

Methods

Our proposed research methods include a focus group/ talk back that takes place at the end of each show, interviews with former participants, and surveys completed by attendees.

Part 1: HITA started with in-person live shows and plans to return to the live format as allowed by local and state rules post pandemic. Each live show, attendees, are given a 10-Item 9-Point Likert Survey ranging from 1- *definitely no* to 9- *definitely yes* to rate the show experience, enjoyment, and help in learning about trauma and experiences. Virtual shows do not include these feedback for attendees.

Part 2: After both live or virtual shows, participants for that semester will be invited to participate in a talkback/focus group format. This talk balk/focus group will have guided questions focused on the impacts of participating, challenges of participating, and what it meant for their healing process.

Part 3: HITA has been having shows for five years, one each semester. Previous participants will be contacted for interviews. This will allow for the participant to reflect on their time in HITA and share what it meant to them and if there have been any long-term impacts from participating in the organization.

Sample Participant Focus Group Questions

In your own words, what does HITA stand for and mean to you?

Has Healing in the Arts impacted your life and if so, how?

Explain your healing process through HITA.

Has HITA impacted any of your personal relationships with friends and family?

Have any of your friends and family attend a HITA show? Did they share anything about their experience?

Conclusion

We have seen the impacts of HITA on not only those who participate in the show but family members and friends that attend as well. We are interested in digging deeper to find common trends about the impact of this organization. By exploring HITA and using our participants we will be able to help other schools and organizations create programs ,similar to HITA.



Sample Previous Participant Focus Questions

In your own words, what does HITA stand for and mean to you?

Did HITA impact your life in any way, did it have any influence on where you are now?

What was your experience in HITA like?

Did any of your friends and family attend a HITA show when you shared your personal story?

Why do you think HITA continues to impact so many people?

- **References:**

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