

Evidence for the impact of arts and culture on health and wellbeing

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the **social
biobehavioural**
research group



WHO Collaborating
Centre for Arts & Health



Arts, health and wellbeing: a spectrum of activities



Arts therapies

- Targeted therapies in healthcare settings delivered by therapists/clinicians

Arts for health outcomes

- Artists and clinicians, working together towards a clinical aim

Arts for wellbeing

- Artists supporting peoples' wellbeing during illness or social challenges

Arts learning and outreach programmes

- Arts organisations reaching out to community or vulnerable groups

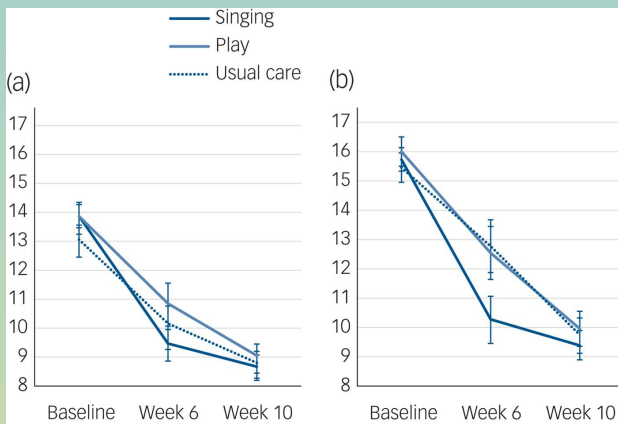
'General' arts engagement

- Arts and cultural experiences without any health or wellbeing aims

the social biobehavioural research group

Can targeted arts programmes support health outcomes?

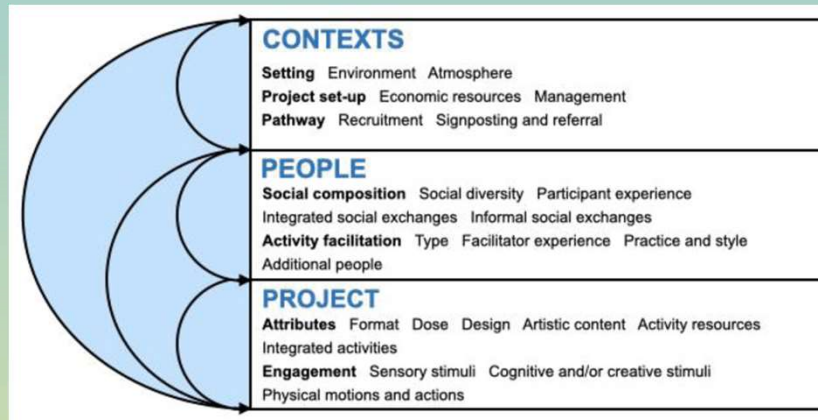
Clinical trials and implementation science



Fancourt, D., & Perkins, R. (2018). Effect of singing interventions on symptoms of postnatal depression: Three-arm randomised controlled trial. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 212(2), 119-121. doi:10.1192/bjp.2017.29

How and why do arts programmes benefit health?

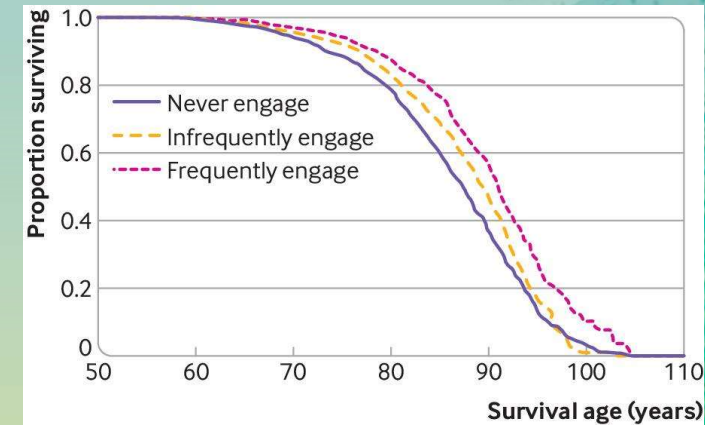
Complexity Science



Warran K, Burton A and Fancourt D. (2022) What are the active ingredients of 'arts in health' activities? Development of the INgredients iN ArTs in hEalth (INNATE) Framework. Wellcome Open Res 7.10 doi:10.12688/wellcomeopenres.17414.2

Is arts engagement linked to better long-term health & wellbeing?

Epidemiology and behavioural science

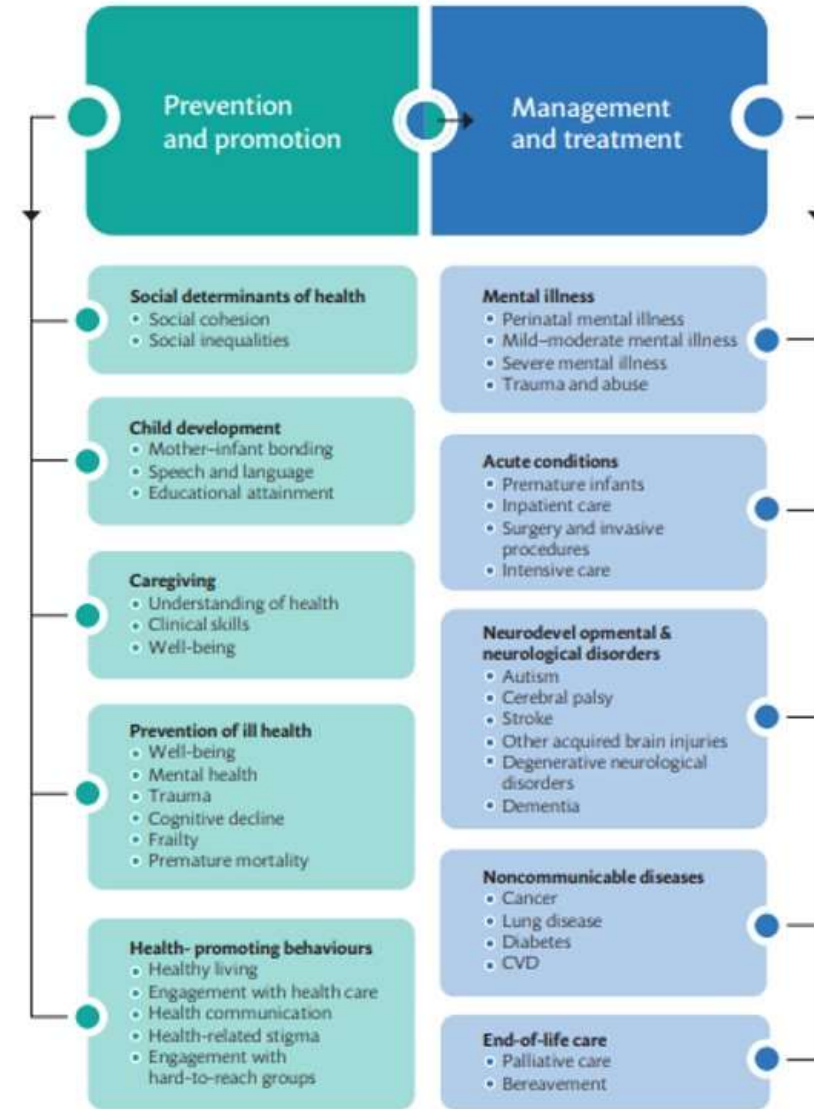


Fancourt D, Steptoe A. (2019) The art of life and death: 14-year follow-up analyses of associations between arts engagement and mortality in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. *BMJ*; 367 :l6377 doi:10.1136/bmj.l6377

Can targeted arts programmes support health outcomes?



Fancourt & Finn, 2019



Prevention & promotion

Management & treatment

Social determinants of health
i.e. social inequalities

Child development
i.e. mother-infant bonding

Health promoting behaviours
i.e. healthy living

Prevention of ill health
i.e. mental health

Caregiving
i.e. wellbeing in staff

Prevention &
promotion

Management &
treatment

**Mental
illness**

i.e. trauma
and abuse

**Acute
conditions**

i.e. premature
infants

**Neurological
disorders**

i.e. autism

**Non-
communicable
diseases**

i.e. cancer

**End of life
care**

i.e. Palliative
care

Spotlight: arts interventions for mental health



Drumming for mental health:

A 10-week programme of group drumming workshops for people accessing mental health services led to decreases in anxiety, and increases in wellbeing and social resilience for at least three months



Drumming for mental health:

Drumming also led to reductions in stress hormones, a shift from a pro-inflammatory state (associated with depression) to an anti-inflammatory state



Singing for people affected by cancer:

One hour of singing in a community choir can lead to mood improvements, decreased stress hormone levels, and increased activity of the immune system



Singing for postnatal depression (PND):

Engaging in a 10-week programme of group singing led to a faster reduction of symptoms of PND compared to mothers who received usual care on the NHS. They were also more bonded to their babies

In depth case study: Community singing groups for postnatal depression

- Postnatal depression affects at least 12% of new mothers in the UK
- Many women have difficulty accessing pharmacological and/or psychological interventions
- There is a need to identify alternative ways of supporting the mental health of new mothers



RCT with 134 mums experiencing PND allocated to one of three 10-week programme groups:

↓
group singing

↓
creative play

↓
routine care



(Fancourt & Perkins, 2018)

Case study: Effectiveness of singing groups

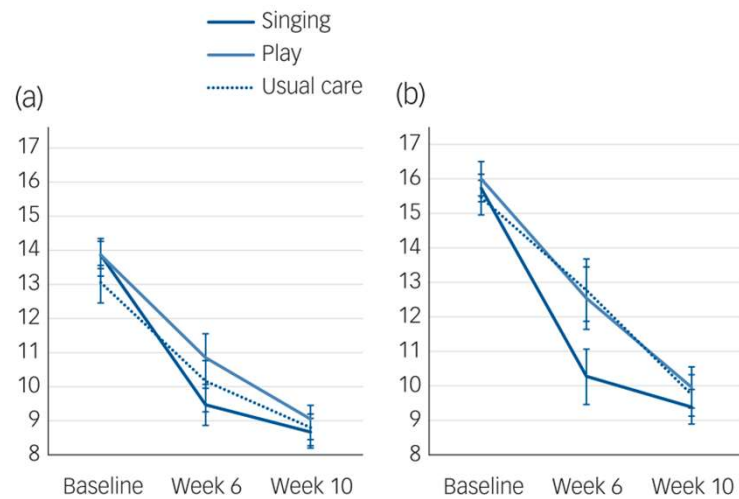


Fig. 1 Changes in depression from baseline to week 10. (a) Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) ≥ 10 and (b) EPDS ≥ 13 with standard error in singing, play and usual care groups.

Music and motherhood RCT



(Fancourt & Perkins, 2018)

Process evaluation

- 87.8% of mothers agreed the classes were well tailored to them and their babies v 66.7% in the play group
- Average attendance =7.2/10 singing sessions v 5.7/10 play group
- Face-to-face recruitment more successful than social media (97% v 3%)
- 13/134 (10%) withdrawal rate
- Challenges to delivery – space, fitting in sessions round baby's routines



Fancourt & Perkins 2019

Arts programme evaluations in progress



Online dance groups for children and young people experiencing anxiety



Social Prescribing for:

- 1. Children and young people on CAMHS waiting lists**
- 2. People living with severe mental illnesses**



Implementation and scale up of singing groups for women experiencing postnatal depression



Feasibility of theatre groups for people experiencing long COVID

How do arts programmes benefit health?

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Aesthetic engagement
Involvement of the imagination
Sensory activation
Evocation of emotion
Cognitive stimulation
Social interaction
Physical activity
Engagement w/ themes of health
Interaction w/ healthcare settings

WHAT

MECHANISMS OF ACTION

PSYCHOLOGICAL
e.g. enhanced self-efficacy, coping

PHYSIOLOGICAL
e.g. lower stress hormone response,
enhanced immune function

SOCIAL
e.g. reduced loneliness and isolation,
enhanced social support

BEHAVIOURAL
e.g. increased exercise, adoption of
healthier behaviours

HOW

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Prevention

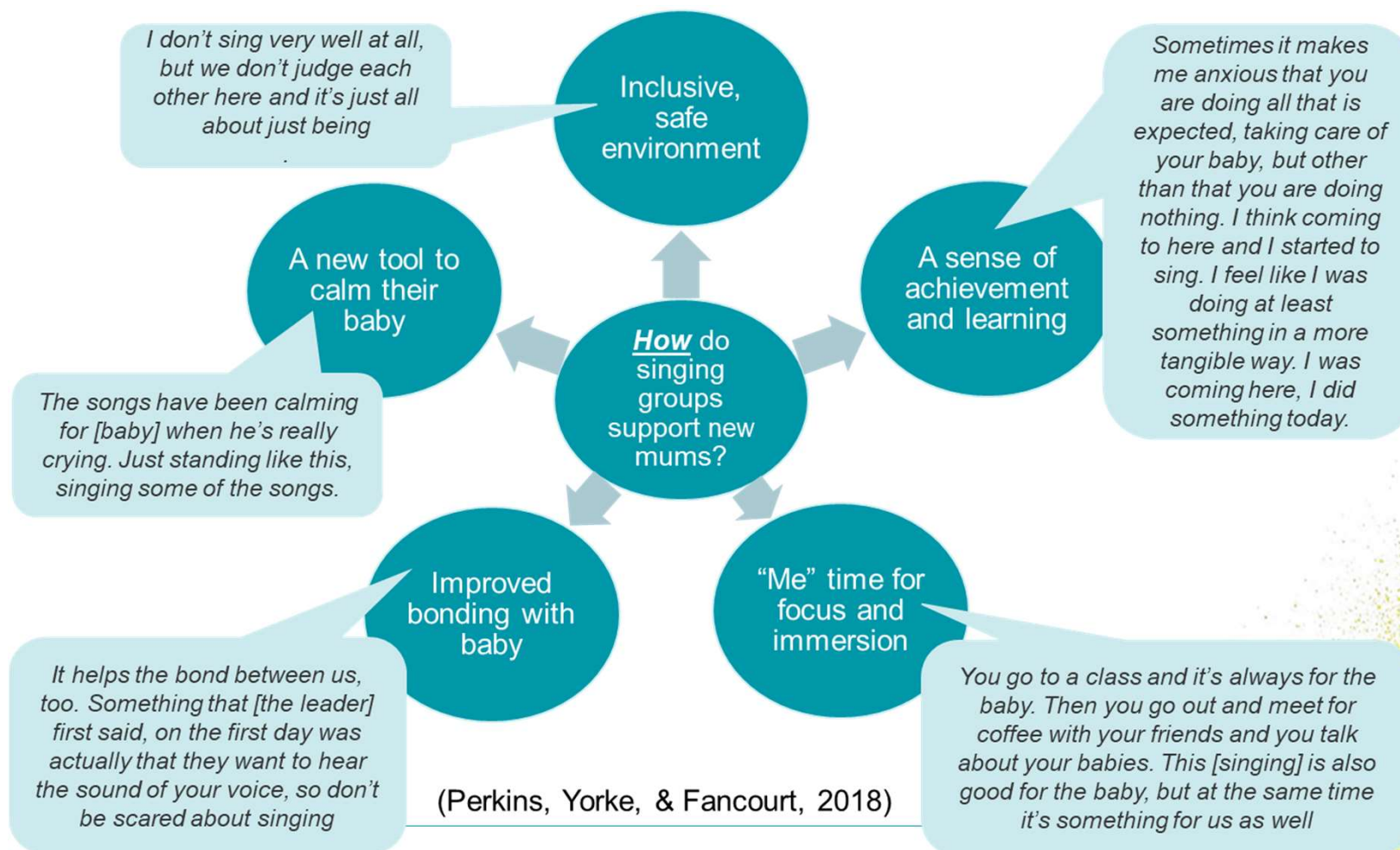
Management

Treatment

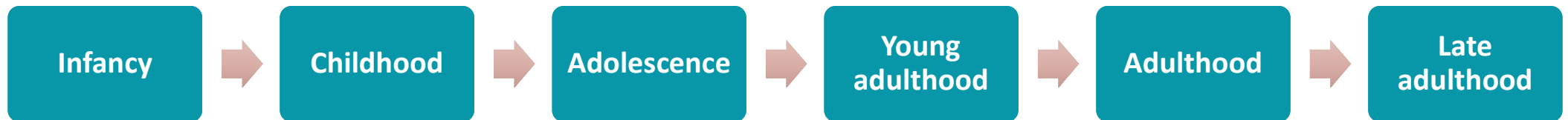
Health promotion

IMPACT

Case study: How do singing groups support new mums?



Is arts engagement linked to better long-term health & wellbeing?



UK

- British Birth Cohort Studies
- English Longitudinal Study of Ageing
- UK Household Longitudinal Study: Understanding Society
- Taking Part Survey (TPS).
- Great British Creativity Test
- Feel Good Test

USA

- General Social Survey
- Health and Retirement Study
- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
- National Education Longitudinal Study
- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health
- Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Is arts engagement linked to better long-term health & wellbeing?



Independent of their gender, ethnicity, parents' demographics (marital status, education level, employment status), **children** who participate in arts and cultural activities:

- Display less hyperactivity and inattention, and fewer antisocial or criminal behaviours.
- Have better prosocial behaviours, such as empathy or helping others.
- Are less likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, and use substances



Independent of demographics, socio-economic background, past medical history, past life experiences, and previous arts and cultural engagement, frequent arts participation and cultural attendance among adults:

- Were associated with better mental health (lower mental distress) and higher wellbeing (life satisfaction)
- Arts engagement was associated with greater ability to cope with mental health problems in everyday life



Regardless of socio-economic or demographic backgrounds, adults who participate in arts and cultural activities:

- Are more likely to have better cognitive reserve in later life
- Are less likely to develop dementia
- Have lower levels of frailty and chronic pain in older adulthood and experience less loneliness and depression, and better wellbeing
- Live longer

Support for Arts and Health Research in the UK and beyond!

Policy

- All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts and Health
- WHO European Region/Jameel Arts & Health Lab
- Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Culture for Health Project/European Union

Organisations

- Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance
- National Academy of Social Prescribing
- What Works Wellbeing
- National Centre for Creative Health
- Arts Councils

Funders

- British Academy
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Nuffield Foundation
- Prudence Trust
- Wellcome Trust

Academic

- UCL Social Biobehavioural Research Group/WHO CC Arts & Health
- Kings College London, Arts Health and Wellbeing Group
- University of Derby Research in Arts and Wellbeing Group
- Center for Arts in Medicine, University of Florida.
- MASC in Creative Health (UCL East)/ Arts Health Intensive

Area of action for Arts and Health

1. Increase and encourage arts engagement in schools
2. Strengthen links between clinical and community care
3. Normalise and facilitate arts and cultural engagement as part of daily life as a preventative public health strategy
4. Use the arts to reduce population health disparities
5. Prioritise the inclusion of arts and cultural engagement in survey and cohort studies to enrich our understanding



The Impact of Arts and Cultural Engagement on Population Health

Findings from Major Cohort Studies in the UK and USA
2017 – 2022



World Health Organization
European Region

Arts and health:
supporting the mental
well-being of forcibly
displaced people

Reports/ Briefings

INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY & HEALTH CARE

Arts, Culture & the Brain
A literature review and new
epidemiological analyses

January 2022

Dr Jessica K Bone & Dr Daisy Fancourt

LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

The Role of the Arts
during the COVID-19
Pandemic

31 August 2021

Alexandra Bradbury, Katy Warran, Dr Hei Wan Mak
& Dr Daisy Fancourt

HEALTH POLICY | VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2, E155-E160, FEBRUARY 2023

The arts in public health policy: progress and opportunities

Rosie Dow, MA * • Katy Warran, PhD * • Pilar Letrondo, MA • Daisy Fancourt, PhD • [Show footnotes](#)

Evidence Summary for Policy The role of arts in improving health & wellbeing

Report to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
April 2020

Dr Daisy Fancourt, Katy Warran & Henry Aughterson



September 2019

Intersectoral action:
the arts, health and
well-being

Sector brief on
Arts

Key resources and toolkits

the social biobehavioural research group

Research papers library →


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Training & development

Improving the quality of social biobehavioural research

We want to encourage the development of research in this field by building collaborative networks of researchers and key stakeholders and supporting the next generation of social biobehavioural researchers. Our work in this area is broad and encompasses leading networks and collaborating groups, publishing toolkits, and providing training and supervision.



- Networks and collaborating groups
- Training for Researchers and Practitioners
- Toolkits and resources

Arts Health Research Intensive

A week-long residential course to develop knowledge, skills and contacts in arts and health research



the social biobehavioural research group

Research papers library →

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Research papers library

Members of the Group have authored more than 200 papers
Search by keyword, or browse using the filters below.

Search by keyword, topic or author

And filter
Or set your filter first

Health topics | Life stage | Social topics | Programme area/s

Select Here | Select Here | Select Here | Select Here

SEARCH →

Next course: 13-17 May 2024, UK

The Arts Health Research Intensive training course provides a rich introduction to the evidence base around arts in health and fundamentals of evaluation and research. It

Useful links to find out more

Contact

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Email: sbbresearch@ucl.ac.uk

Twitter: @UCL_SBB

SHAPER programme

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/shaper>

Melodies for Mums

<https://breatheahr.org/programmes/melodies-for-mums/>

Stroke Odysseys

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/12/3/e057805.long>

<https://rosettalife.org/>

Dance for Parkinsons

<https://www.ballet.org.uk/project/dance-for-parkinsons/>