



The Zambia Therapeutic Art Course: Improving the quality of mental health care in Zambia

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Background & aim

- ♣ In Zambia, the prevalence of mental disorders at 20 percent [1], with about 3 percent for severe mental disorders & the rest for mild to moderate disorders [2].
- ♣ Mental health services in Zambia are recognised as significantly under resourced, with little specialist provision at community level, services centralised to hospital facilities in Lusaka, low staffing levels & few treatment options.
- ♣ Ministry of Health & key training institutions acknowledge these challenges & have welcomed evidence-based psychosocial initiatives such as the ZTA Course.
- ♣ Zambia Therapeutic Art (ZTA), an NGO based in Scotland, UK, aims to improve mental health care by: designing, developing & delivering practice based training in the therapeutic use of art to health & social care staff; working to ensure its ongoing sustainability; continuous monitoring & evaluation & conducting research.
- ♣ The key focus is to improve communication between patient & staff through art to facilitate better understanding & support recovery [3, 4].

Methods

- ♣ The ZTA training course rapidly up-skills trainees by building on existing knowledge & skills.
- ♣ This practice based approach enables trainees to use therapeutic art skills independently as a new skill in their 'toolbox' & transfer their new skills & knowledge easily to their everyday work with patients.
- ♣ The course content is twenty hours, delivered in the workplace during work/study time over a period between 1 & 6 weeks to minimise the impact of withdrawing hospital staff from their work & reduce training delivery costs.
- ♣ The training is designed to be accessible for mental health professionals at all levels.



Figure 1. Making art work during a training session



Figure 2. A painting made during a training session

Results

- ♣ A training course, the Zambia Therapeutic Art course was developed in 2011 & since then has been delivered to mental health professionals & trainees in Zambia; Lusaka, Livingstone & Ndola.
- ♣ By 2019, seven (7) Zambian trainers had completed the two-stage certification process to become trainers themselves and have started to independently deliver the Zambia Therapeutic Art course.

Table 1. The ZTA Course

	Masters Students	Mental Health Professionals	Students in Pre-Service Training
Number Trained	65	99	127
Total			291



Figure 3. Three of our Zambian trainers



Figure 4. A training session in progress

Feedback from mental health professionals trained by ZTA

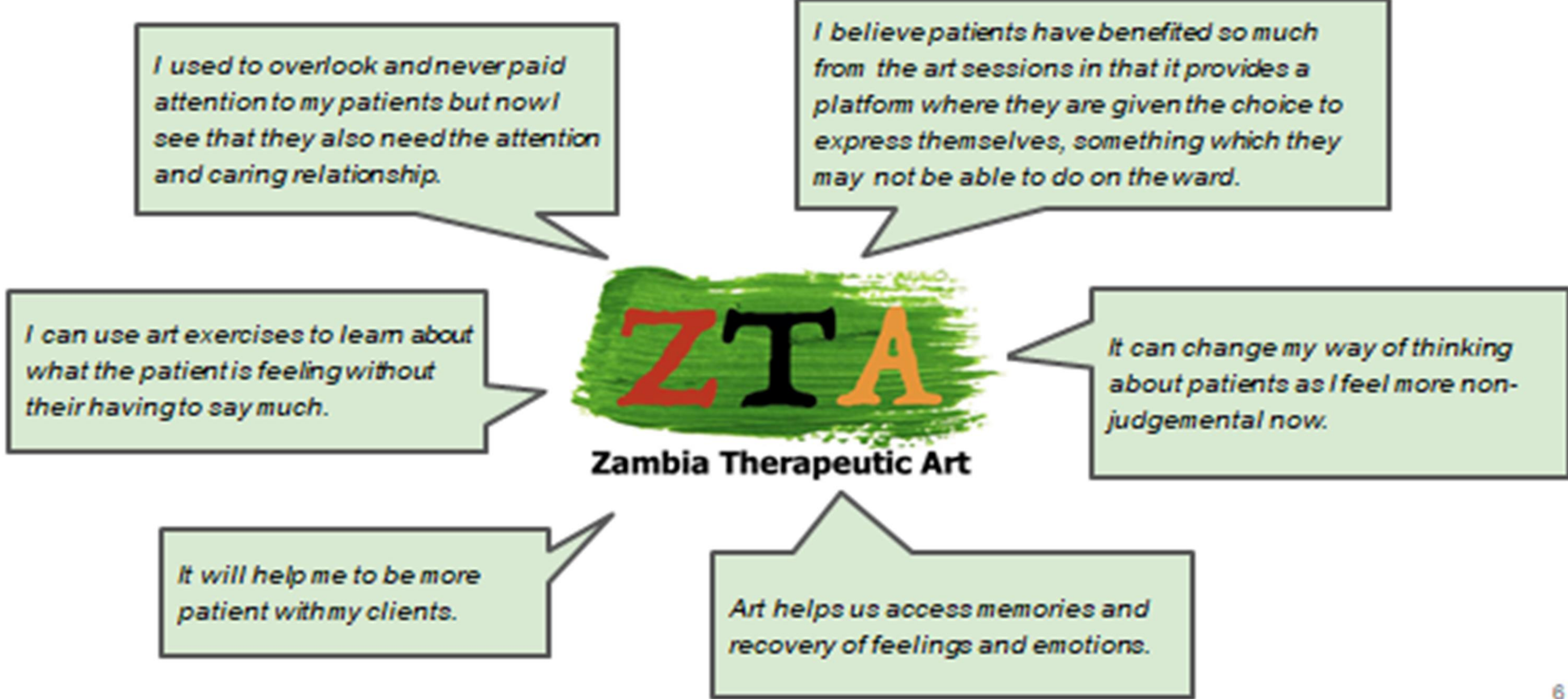
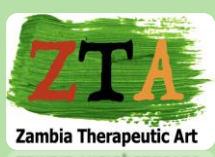


Figure 1. Feedback from participants about the ZTA course

Conclusion & Recommendations

- ♣ Enthusiasm for the ZTA course, based on its demonstrated potential for enhancing patient care, has led to a request by key stakeholders in Zambian Mental Health that the ZTA course be included in all pre-service curricula of mental health professionals & facilitate a sustainable training of trainers' model.
- ♣ The practice of therapeutic art by professionals at all care levels would significantly improve the quality of mental health patient care



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