

ผลของโปรแกรมกลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่ร่วมกับศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัด ต่อความผาสุกทางใจและการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเองของผู้สูงอายุที่มีภาวะซึมเศร้า

Effects of the Four Noble Truths Group Therapy Program Incorporating Therapeutic Art on Psychological Well-Being and Self- Esteem of Older People with Depression

นิพนธ์ต้นฉบับ

Original Article

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อเปรียบเทียบความผาสุกทางใจและการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเองของผู้สูงอายุที่มีภาวะซึมเศร้าก่อนและหลังได้รับโปรแกรมกลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่ร่วมกับศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัด **วิธีการศึกษา:** การวิจัยเชิงทดลองแบบสุ่มและมีกลุ่มควบคุมนี้คัดเลือกผู้สูงอายุ 60 คนที่อายุ 60 ปีขึ้นไปในศูนย์พัฒนาการจัดสวัสดิการสังคมผู้สูงอายุจังหวัดปทุมธานี ที่มีภาวะซึมเศร้า กลุ่มตัวอย่างถูกสุ่มเข้ากลุ่มทดลองและกลุ่มควบคุม กลุ่มละ 30 คน กลุ่มทดลองได้รับโปรแกรมกลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่ร่วมกับศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัดมีระยะเวลา 4 สัปดาห์ มีกิจกรรม 10 ครั้ง แต่ละครั้งใช้เวลา 60 นาที กลุ่มทดลองเข้าร่วมโปรแกรมสัปดาห์ละ 3 ครั้ง กลุ่มควบคุมได้รับการดูแลตามปกติ เครื่องมือการวิจัยคือ 1) โปรแกรมกลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่ร่วมกับศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัด 2) แบบประเมินความผาสุกทางใจ และ 3) แบบประเมินการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเอง **ผลการศึกษา:** พบว่าคะแนนเฉลี่ยความผาสุกทางใจและการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเองของกลุ่มทดลองหลังการทดลองสูงกว่าก่อนการทดลองอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ (P -value < 0.001) และผลต่างของค่าเฉลี่ยคะแนนความผาสุกทางใจและการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเองของกลุ่มทดลองสูงกว่ากลุ่มควบคุมในระยะก่อนและหลังการทดลองอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ (P -value < 0.001) **สรุป:** โปรแกรมกลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่ร่วมกับศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัดสามารถเพิ่มความผาสุกทางใจและการเห็นคุณค่าในตนเองของผู้สูงอายุที่มีภาวะซึมเศร้าได้

คำสำคัญ: กลุ่มบำบัดตามหลักอริยสัจสี่, ศิลปะเพื่อการบำบัด, ความผาสุกทางใจ, การเห็นคุณค่าในตนเอง, ผู้สูงอายุที่มีภาวะซึมเศร้า

Abstract

Objective: To compare psychological well-being and self-esteem of the older people with depression before and after receiving the Four Noble Truths group therapy program with therapeutic arts. **Methods:** This randomized controlled study recruited 60 older people aged 60 years and older at Pathumthani Social Welfare Development Center, Thailand who were suffered from depression. Participants were randomized to the experimental and control groups, with 30 participants each. The experimental group attended 10 60-minute sessions, which were held three times per week, lasting four weeks. The control group received routine care. The research instruments were: 1) Four Noble Truths with therapeutic arts, 2) psychological well-being questionnaire, and 3) self-esteem questionnaire. **Results:** Mean score for Psychological well-being and self-esteem of the experimental group at post-test were significantly higher than pre-test (P -value < 0.001). Mean differences in psychological well-being and self-esteem of the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test was significantly higher than that of the control group (P -value < 0.001). **Conclusions:** Four Noble Truths group therapy program with therapeutic art could enhance psychological well-being and self-esteem of the older people with depression.

Keywords: Four Noble Truths, therapeutic art, psychological well-being, self-esteem, elderly with depression

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Introduction

Depression in the elderly patients could be associated with the loss of their social function, role and responsibility and/or being neglected. With their damaged self-esteem, the elderly are bored, desperate, hopeless, and depressed.¹ In the United States of America, 29% of the elderly Americans in the assisted living facilities experienced depression.¹ In Thailand, depression in elderly Thais had been increasing by 13.3% in 2020.² The elderly in assisted living facilities experienced depression more often than those community-dwelling elderly.³⁻⁵ Based on the survey by the Department of Mental

Health, Ministry of Public Health in 2020, among 97,329 community-dwelling elderly, stress was found in 0.8%, depression in 0.8%, and suicide ideation in 0.2%.² Psychological well-being is an indicator of good mental health. The elderly with a high psychological well-being are more likely to have self-acceptance, good attitude toward themselves, self-esteem, and capability to control or manage their life. They also have a purpose of living and acceptable interaction with others.⁶

Psychological well-being is a positive mental status that is related with personal growth and development. Psychological well-being consists of 6 dimensions of wellness namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.⁷ The elderly with psychological well-being could manage their negative thought and emotion effectively.⁸ Social skills, and positive thought and emotion are stemmed from self-esteem. Individuals with self-esteem could overcome obstacles and hardships in their life, accept any unfortunate events that bring disappointment or desperation, and maintain confidence, hope and courage which ultimately allow them to live happily.⁷ Self-esteem also has a positive relationship with proper self-care and health promoting behavior among the elderly.⁹ Individuals with self-esteem self-evaluate themselves positively. Individuals perceiving no attention or acceptance from others, or no success in their life would feel worthless, and proceed to develop depression.⁹⁻¹¹

Studies on psychological well-being among the elderly with depression have been limited. Most studies focus on psychological problems including depression, stress, and loneliness in the elderly. Studies on promoting psychological well-being of the elderly with depression could be helpful for psychiatric nurses to provide the help effectively. Based on psychological well-being concept of Ryff and Keyes⁷ and previous research, factors influencing psychological well-being in the elderly with depression include number of illnesses, perceived health status, capability to perform activities of daily living, perceived self-efficacy, and social support. Since Thai elderly are bonded with Buddhism, it is an excellent opportunity to have the teaching of Buddhism to promote self-care for the elderly with psychological problems.¹²

One of Buddhism concepts is the Four Noble Truths depicting that lives are surrounded by suffering or *Dhukka*. The four truths range from the origin or cause to the end of suffering namely the truth of suffering or suffering existence, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the end of suffering or the existence of the ways to its end, and the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering. Buddhism views being old as suffering and human could be free from this suffering of old age by following the teaching of Buddha.¹³ Since suffering of the elderly is both physical and psychological, the care for the elderly needs to be physically and psychologically balanced. Suffering in the elderly is stemmed from the unmet desire or need either in their

economic, household, hygiene, occupation, and affect and respect from others. The Four Noble Truth concept could then be applied in psychiatric nursing to promote psychological well-being in the elderly with depression.¹⁶

As one of the psychiatric therapy modalities, therapeutic art has been used to elevate mental status by creative art activities.¹⁴ The basis of therapeutic art is the utilization of fine art as a medium for expressing and releasing the individual's hidden emotion, feeling, conflict, desire, and complex.¹⁵ The goal of therapeutic art is the emphasis on the process of art creation, not the final art piece. At present, therapeutic art has been used for various purposes including releasing stress, alleviating suffering or problems, improving mental health, elevating moods, improving self-perception, enhancing self-esteem, and alleviating depression.^{16,17}

With the concern about the accumulating of psychological problem specifically psychological well-being and self-esteem in the elderly with depression and the benefit of following the Four Noble Truths and engaging in therapeutic art, there is a need for the examination of the benefit of the Four Noble Truths group therapy program incorporating therapeutic art on psychological well-being and self-esteem of the elderly with depression. The finding could be useful for psychiatric nurses to promote well-being in the elderly with depression.

Specifically, the study aimed to (1) compare psychological well-being score and self-esteem score of the elderly with depression before and after the Four Noble Truths with therapeutic art, and (2) compare psychological well-being score and self-esteem score of the elderly with depression between those who participated the program (i.e., test group) and those who did not (i.e., control group). In accordance with the study objectives, it was hypothesized that (1) scores of psychological well-being and self-esteem after the program in the test group were higher than those before the program, and (2) scores of psychological well-being and self-esteem after the program in the test group were higher than those in the control group.

This study was based on the Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and career development stating that individuals need to overcome obstacles to reach the next step of life.¹⁸ The psychosocial development and career development of the elderly is step 8 of the continuum which is considered the state of ego integrity versus despair. In this end-of-life stage, the elderly could feel nostalgic about their past life. If satisfied with their past life, the elderly would

perceive their past life as successful and satisfactory, and they are proud and courageous to face uncertainties in the future. On the other hand, if they perceive their life as worthless, unfulfilled, no pride, failing, suffering and disappointing, the elderly is more likely to fail to adjust, perceive the world and events negatively, and eventually progress to depression. The researcher applied the Erikson's theory with the Four Noble Truths¹⁹ to lead individuals to live the life by training with specific goals of psychological development.

As guided by Four Noble Truths, the first of the four steps was based on "the truth of suffering" which aimed to identify the problems of poor physical and psychological well-being (Dukkha). In the second step which was guided by "the truth of the cause of suffering" which aimed to identify the cause of such problems (Samudaya). The third step guided by "the truth of the end of suffering" aimed to identify ways or means to end such problems (Nirodha). In the last step guided by "the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering," individuals were guided to lay out the plan according to the ways or means previously identified to eliminate the cause of the problem (Magga). This Magga is also called the Eightfold Path for executing the plan to eliminate cause of suffering includes (1) the right view or right understanding (samma-ditthi), (2) the right thought (samma-sankappa), (3) the right speech (samma-vaca), (4) the right bodily action (samma-kammanta), (5) the right livelihood (samma-ajiva), (6) the right effort (samma-vayama), (7) the right mindfulness (samma-sati), and (8) the right concentration (samma-samadhi).

According to the four steps guided by the Four Noble Truths, understanding and cognition of the elderly was expected to improve, and peaceful mind and wisdom to develop. Thinking process guided by the Four Noble Truths was expected to help the elderly improve understanding and thinking needed for problem solving by identifying the problem, cause of problem, ways to eliminate the cause of the problem, and plan and execute the plan on ways to eliminate the cause of the problem. Along the whole process, the elderly could experience their attitude change which could lead to psychological well-being and self-esteem.

In this program, first these Buddhist participants were reminded about the Four Noble Truths which is the concept they are familiar with. The Four Noble Truths group therapy program incorporating therapeutic art developed by the researcher aimed to improve knowledge and cognitive function for the elderly. According to the Four Noble Truths,

the elderly was expected to ponder about suffering or Dhukka which refers to physical and mental discomfort. Such thinking involves the reflect on facts and internal suffering which could cultivate the concern for self-improvement. Samudaya or identifying the cause of such problems or suffering. In other words, the cause of the suffering is identified. The elderly was allowed to reflect on their past experiences. Based on Nirodha or the truth of the end of suffering, the elderly was encouraged to identify practical ways or means to end such problems or suffering. They were encouraged to set the clear goal and identify specific means to cope with internal suffering. Lastly, with Magga, the elderly was encouraged to lay out the plan to proceed to ways or means to eliminate the cause of the problem or suffering. In this program, the elderly was encouraged to work together in analysis of each of all steps.

After this reminder and discussion session, **10 activities** guided by the Four Noble Truths were carried out as follows. In the **first activity**, painting from the elderly's memory. They were instructed to think of certain suffering events they faced in the past, and how they encountered, managed or alleviated such sufferings according to the Four Noble Truths. For the suffering event that was coped with the most use of the Four Noble Truths, the participants were instructed to paint such event. The conversation between the researcher and the participants was carried on to help the elderly identify the cause, the means to end the cause, and the plan to execute the means to end the cause.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was an elderly person draw a picture of himself crying with his face down. He explained that he had a very difficult past. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, he was sad because he was not able to earn money to take care of his family. For Samudaya, the cause of such suffering was because he was laid off. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to apply for all jobs available. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were spend money for necessary things and with caution, and sometimes he needed to take food from the temple nearby to survive. This painting based on the Four Noble Truths also allowed the researcher to know, get acquainted, and build a relationship with the elderly. Sharing among group members was encouraged.

In the **second activity**, play dough or modeling clay was used to express the elderly's thought. They were encouraged to mold the clay into an object subconsciously representing their thought. For example, the elderly might mold a cat or a

dog which is an animal that needs care and affection to express their need of care and affection. They were encouraged to share their thought on their molded object. The process of clay molding also helped the elderly control their emotion, stay concentrated, become more relaxed, and feel prouder of themselves.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a female elderly molding a cate she had been taking care of and later the cat died. She now lived alone with nobody. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, she was sad because she missed her cat so much. For Samudaya, the cause of such sadness or suffering was the cat's death. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to be at the moment or be mindful. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were to let go, and to accept that everything comes and goes, human or animal, that nothing stays forever.

The **third activity** helped reflect the psychological complex of the elderly using the Four Noble Truths. Participants were guided to draw picture to reflect how they feel about their past life, either failure or things they expected in their life. They had an opportunity to examine their own feeling, to release their suffering with being alone and neglected. They were encouraged to cultivate positive thinking and manage their own emotions. With the Four Noble Truths, they were guided that if you have suffering, just try to find ways to end it, do not get stuck in such suffering doing nothing. They were told that nobody can change the past, so everyone needs to live in the moment. They were also encouraged to share with members of other groups.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a female elderly drawing a picture of mother, father and a child to represent a family that she could not live with anymore. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, she was suffered because she could not live with her child. For Samudaya, the cause of such suffering was she argued with her child everyday. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to be calm, to control her temper or anger. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were to accept things as they are even though she could not live with her child anymore.

In the **fourth activity**, paper folding was used to reflect the good thing the elderly had done in their past. They were guided how to understand their value or worth in the past, and wrote down such good things. They were instructed how to fold papers into shapes and objects. They were encouraged

to share their experiences as well as to forgive themselves, family members and everyone around them.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a male elderly folding a bird. He wrote on the bird's wings that his friend borrowed his money for 100,000 Baht but never gave him back. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, he was sad because he did not get good thing back when he did good thing. For Samudaya, the cause of such sadness or suffering was that his friend did not return the money. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to accept that such unfortunate thing might be the bad karma that he did to his friend. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were to let go, to forgive, to not hold the grudge or revenge, to think that nothing could be carried with when we die, but only good things we could leave behind for others to think about.

In the **fifth activity**, water coloring was used to release stress and pressure. The real emotion was expressed through coloring. Participants were encouraged to share with others in their group.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a male elderly water coloring his past life with his own grocery shop. He had his own money and was contempt with life. He lost his business and had nothing left. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, he was sad because he had nothing left. For Samudaya, the cause of such sadness or suffering was that his grocery shop was bankrupted. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to be mindful, be at the moment, and think that at least he could do thing he loved to do. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were to let go and to accept the nothings was permanent or certain.

In the **sixth activity**, picture frame, beads, and terrarium were used to depict good stories and good things to show happiness or even sadness. The elderly could choose what to do, i.e., picture frame, beads, or terrarium. These activities also helped them to concentrate and manage their own emotion. They were encouraged to share with others in their group.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a male elderly making a picture frame with the picture of his family members inside. The picture reminded him that he did not want to be the burden for his children. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, he was sad because he thought he was a burden to his children. For Samudaya, the cause of such sadness or suffering was that he was worried about his children who had little or no money. For Nirodha, the way to

end such suffering was to be mindful, be at the moment, and accept that things happened, and we could only do so much. Lastly, for Magga, the exact things to do were to let go, accept things, and believe in karma.

In the **seventh activity**, t-shirt painting was used to meditate, learn how to solve problem, control the colors, and be concentrated enough to control emotion while painting. They needed to plan before actual painting. If there were any mistakes or the painting did not go as planned, that should reflect that one could face both happiness and sadness like the painting. The elderly needed to be very focused, concentrated, mindful, and calm. They were encouraged to share with others in their group.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a female elderly painting herself on the t-shirt. She told story of herself that she was getting older every day. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, she was suffered because she was getting older. For Samudaya, the cause of such suffering was that she was slower in doing everything. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to be mindful, be at the moment, and train her hands not to be shaky. Lastly, for Magga, the exact thing to do was to let go, and accept her own declining state.

In the **eighth activity**, jigsaw was used to generate new aspects in the thinking, to recall the good memories, and to accept their self-esteem. The participants used jigsaws to create new pictures to reflect that once confronting obstacles or disappointments in life, they need to be mindful in solving the problems, to be able to think positively, and to forgive themselves. They were encouraged to share with others in their group.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a female elderly creating picture from jigsaws depicting a house with trees and a white cat in the house. She told the story of herself that she was sad and worthless. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, she was suffered because she was worthless with no capability. If she had a house, she would be happy. For Samudaya, the cause of such suffering was that she was not able to work to take care of herself. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to accept that living at the facility could allow her to be happy too. Lastly, for Magga, the exact thing to do was to let go, and admire the fact that she was lucky to have 3 meals every day.

In the **ninth activity**, scrape painting was used to concentrate, to solve problems, and to control the colors.

Scrape painting could bring satisfaction, inspiration, confidence, and self-esteem. They were encouraged to share with others in their group.

The example of using the Four Noble Truths with art was a female elderly painting a house with 4 members. She had two siblings. Her parents passed away. The analysis was as follows. For Dhukka, she was suffered because she missed her parents and did not want to be a burden for her sisters and nephews/nieces. For Samudaya, the cause of such suffering was that she thought she was the burden for her sister and nephews/nieces. For Nirodha, the way to end such suffering was to be accept that living in the facility was pleasant because she had a lot of friends and she could pray every day. Lastly, for Magga, the exact thing to do was to let go, accept that there was nothing much about life and everyone died eventually.

In the **tenth activity**, art exhibition was used to enhance the psychological well-being of these depressed elders. All pieces of art were displayed and thought and feeling were shared and discussed.

Therapeutic art uses art process and tool selection suitable individual elders to face with their problems. Art piece were created to express emotion, feeling, and conflict ground in the mental state when not possible to convey by words. In conclusion, the process of therapeutic art, not the art works, was emphasized. In this present research, the researcher incorporated concepts of the Four Noble Truths with therapeutic art for the elderly with mild-to-moderate depression to help alleviate emotional and mental problems, and enhance psychological well-being and self-esteem.

Methods

In this randomized, single-blinded, controlled trial, evaluators of the outcomes were not aware of the randomized interventions. Study population was the Thai elderly aged 60 years old or older living in assisted living facilities. Study sample was those residing in Pathumthani Elderly Social Welfare Development Center, which is in Pathumthani province, in the central Thailand. To be eligible, they had to be 60 years old or older, have a score of the Thai Geriatric Depression Scale (TGDS)^{2,3} at a low to moderate level (13 – 24 points), have psychological well-being at a low to moderate level (18 – 54 points), have a score of self-esteem at a low to moderate level (10 – 30 points), be able communicate in Thai

both reading and writing, have no visual or hearing problems, have no illnesses that could be problems for participation, be a Buddhist, and be willing to participate. Individuals with dementia, psychiatric problems including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, complications from their illnesses, or disability on the dominant hand were excluded.

The sample size estimation was based on change of the self-esteem score from a study on the effect of group art therapy program on depression and self-esteem in Thai older adults with depression.²⁰ Based on two-sample parallel design, superiority test, a type I error or 5% and a power of 80%, a 22 participants per group were needed.²¹ To compensate for a 30% attrition rate²², a total of 29 participants per group were required.²² Finally, a total of 30 participants per group were needed for proper parametric statistical analysis.

Sixty eligible participants were randomized to the Four Noble Truths group therapy with therapeutic art (test group) or the usual care (control group) by a randomization protocol. First the two interventions were assigned with number 1 or 2 using the computerized randomization. Each of 60 small pieces of paper with number 1 or 2 on (30 each) in an opaque box cardboard was drawn for each participant. The equal number of 30 participants for each group was achieved.

Research instruments

Research instruments were as follows. The first set was the Thai Geriatric Depression Scale (TGDS) which was based on the concept of Rosenberg.²³ The question was answered with a yes/no response with a score of 1 and 0 point, respectively. With a total of 30 items and respective 30 points, depression is categorized into no, low, moderate, and severe depression (0 – 12, 13 – 18, 19 – 24, and 25 – 30 points, respectively).

The **second set** was questions collecting demographic characteristics including age, gender, and illnesses. The **third set** was questions evaluating self-esteem. The original scale was developed by Rozenberg²⁴ to assess the thought, self-acceptance, confidence, satisfaction and self-respect. It was translated and modified to fit the Thai context.²⁵ Permission from the developers was granted. With a total of 10 questions, there were five positive and negative questions equally. The score of negative statements was reverse. With a total score of 10 – 40 points, self-esteem was classified as low, moderate,

and high level (10 – 20, 21 – 30, and 31 – 40 points, respectively).

The **fourth set** was questions evaluating psychological well-being which was originally developed by Ryff and Keyes.⁷ It was translated into Thai language and modified to fit the Thai context.²⁶ The questions asked about the elderly's perception, satisfaction and happiness in the elderly based on the 6 dimensions of psychological well-being of Ryff and Keyes.⁷ The scale contained 18 questions with 10 and 8 positive and negative statements, respectively. The response format was 4-point rating scale ranging from 1-totally not agreed to 4-totally agreed. The score of the negative statements was reverse. With a total score of 18 – 72 points, psychological well-being level was classified as low, moderate, and high (18 – 36, 37 – 54, and 55 – 72 points, respectively).

The written permission to the researcher to use all Thai versions of the psychosocial questionnaires mentioned above was granted by all Thai developers. All psychosocial questionnaires were tested for its reliability. A total of 30 individuals with characteristics comparable to the participants were used for the test. The Thai Geriatric Depression Scale (TGDS), the self-esteem scale, and the psychological well-being scale were found to have a high internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.93, 0.90, and 0.83, respectively.

The Four Noble Truth group therapy program with therapeutic art

The Four Noble Truths group therapy program with therapeutic art was developed based on the concept previously mentioned. Sessions of 60 – 90 minutes were held three times per week for 5 weeks. The program was examined for validity by three experts. All components were found with IOC of 0.67 to 1.00. The content was revised according to the recommendations from the experts. The program was tested with 10 elderly individuals with characteristics comparable to the participants and found that it was highly feasible.

Participant protection

The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee for Human Study of Srinakharinwirot University (approval number: SWUEC-191/2563F; approval date: November 4, 2020). The researcher contacted Pathumthani Elderly Social Welfare Development Center for the permission for study

conduct. Once permitted, the researcher approached the potential participants for participation. The researcher provided information about objective, process, and voluntary and anonymity nature of the study. Written informed consent was obtained before study conduct.

Experiment and data collection procedure

In the Four Noble Truths group therapy with therapeutic art (test group), the participants were divided into five groups of 6 each. Each of the 10 sessions was held for 60 minutes, three sessions per week. The total duration of the experiment was 4 weeks. The scheduled sessions were as follows. In the first week, sessions of activities 1 – 3, i.e., painting from memory, mental reflection through clay modeling, and mental complex reflection through picture, respectively, were held.

In the 2nd week, sessions of activities 4 – 6, i.e., paper folding, water coloring, and picture frame, beads, and terrarium, respectively, were held. In the 3rd week, sessions of activities 7 – 9, i.e., t-shirt painting, jigsaw, and scrape painting, respectively, were held.

In the 4th week, the 10th session took 120 minutes. Participants presented their art pieces to their study peers. The participants shared their thoughts and feelings on the process of creating each piece.

In the control group, participants were approached and provided with information similarly to those in the test group. They also provided the written informed consent before participation. They were assessed for depression, psychological well-being, and self-esteem before the study start. They were scheduled for the evaluation at week 5 of the study. They were allowed to live their usual life and were given the usual care for the elderly the Pathumthani Elderly Social Welfare Development Center.

Post intervention evaluation took place at week 5 of the study. Participants in both groups were assessed for psychological well-being and self-esteem. Participants in the control group were scheduled to participate in the Four Noble Truths group therapy program with therapeutic art.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics including mean with standard deviation (SD) and frequency with percentage were used to summarize demographic characteristics and study variables of the participants. Differences in demographic characteristics and study variables before the intervention were tested using

chi-square test or Fisher's exact test, as appropriate for categorical variable, and independent t test or Mann-Whitney U test as appropriate for continuous variables. For within-group differences, the scores of psychological well-being and self-esteem before and after the intervention in each group were compared using paired t test or Wilcoxon signed rank test as appropriate. For between-group comparisons, mean differences of the psychological well-being score before and after the program in the test and control groups were calculated and compared using independent t test or Mann-Whitney U test as appropriate. Mean differences of the self-esteem score were computed and compared in the same fashion. Statistical significance for all tests was set at a type I error of 5% (i.e., P -value < 0.05). All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software program version 20.0.

Results

Of the 30 participants in each group, no differences regarding each demographic characteristic were found. With the average age of 65.70 years old, both groups had comparable age, i.e., 66.70 years in the test group and 67.50 years in the control group. Proportions of participants receiving care for depression were 53.30% and 60.00%, respectively. Proportions of participants with underlying illnesses were 80.00% and 93.30%, respectively. Overall, there were 40.52% of participants with mild depression and 59.48% with moderate depression.

In the control group, mean score of psychological well-being after the program was significantly higher than that before the program (54.12 ± 4.55 and 18.43 ± 3.35 points, respectively, P -value < 0.001) (Table 2). Such significant improvement was also seen in the self-esteem score (31.25 ± 3.98 and 17.50 ± 3.23 points, respectively, P -value < 0.001). On the other hand, changes in psychological well-being and self-esteem in the control group did not reach any statistical significance.

For between-group differences, psychological well-being score in the test group increased by 35.69 ± 3.82 points after the program, while that in the control group increased only by 1.21 ± 2.07 points. This difference between the two groups was statistically significant (P -value < 0.001). Self-esteem score in the test group increased by 13.75 ± 3.22 points after the program, while that in the control group increased only by

0.60 ± 1.15 points. The difference was not statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 2 Scores of psychological well-being and self-esteem before and after the program in the two groups (N = 60).

Outcomes	Test group (n = 30)				Control group (n = 30)				P-value [†]
			Difference				Difference		
	Mean	SD	(after-before)	Mean	SD	(after-before)	Mean	SD	
Psychological well-being score									
Before program	18.43 ^a	3.35		18.02	3.30				
After program	54.12 ^a	4.55	35.69	19.23	3.06	3.82	1.21	2.07	< 0.001
P-value for within-group comparison [‡]	< 0.001				NS				
Self-esteem score									
Before program	17.50 ^b	3.23		17.42	??				
After program	31.25 ^b	3.98	13.75	18.02	??	3.22	0.60	1.15	< 0.001
P-value for within-group comparison [‡]	< 0.001				NS				

^a Level of psychological well-being: low, moderate, and high (18 – 36, 37 – 54, and 55 – 72 points, respectively).

^b Level of self-esteem: low, moderate, and high (10 – 20, 21 – 30, and 31 – 40 points, respectively).

[†] Between-group comparisons using independent t test.

[‡] Within-group comparisons using paired t test.

Discussions and Conclusion

In this randomized controlled trial, the Four Noble Truths group therapy program with the use of therapeutic art was found to improve psychological well-being and self-esteem among Thai elderly with depression in the living assisted facility. Such improvement in psychological well-being and self-esteem could be due to various reasons as follows.

Since psychological well-being score and self-esteem score in the test group were higher when compared with baseline scores, it could be because activities guided by Erikson's theory of psychosocial development¹⁸ in the state of ego integrity versus despair with the Four Noble Truth of Buddhism¹⁹ could be an effective intervention. Participation in the 10 sessions could be beneficial. This is because Buddhists usually had no chance to express what they believed. Therapeutic arts allowed them express their Buddhism beliefs. The program allowed them to reflect and recall the good and the bad which could further allow them to be more mindful, to think positively. Such reflection could also help them overcome suffering with mindfulness, free of obsession. These led to a decrease in depression, an increase in psychological well-being, and self-esteem. These findings are consistent with a study revealing that Buddhism Four Noble Truth based depression therapy could cure depression effectively.²⁷ Various kinds of medications, eg., walking medication, brathing meditation, and Vipassana meditation could enhance themindfulness. It is also consistent with a work showing that

the preventon of depression among those facing Covid-19 situation using the Four Noble Truth helped individuals understand changes in society, have less depression, and live with others with harmony.²⁸

It could be explained that therapeutic art guided by the Four Noble Truth helped the participants express what made them discomfortble both physically and psychologically, identify causes of the suffering, identify ways to solve the causes, and plan to proceed ways to solve the causes. Participants were allowed for developing knowledge and cognition. These elderly could therefore have calmness and wisdom since the process of Four Noble Truth helped them change their thinking to solve the problems. Along the process, their attitudes changed which further led to psychological well-being and self-esteem.²⁷ The interactions in the activities allowed them to interact with each other which could lead to relationship. Ways to solve problems arising in the process could enhance their self-esteem.^{2 8} Their happiness and contempt with life could help them free from suffering. Therapeutic arts alloed them to express and release their stress and tension which could lead to a good mental health, psychological well-being, and self-esteem.²⁷

The first activity of painting allowed them to be creative and release their tension, which ultimately led to psychological well-being once they could reflect their past.²⁹ The second activity of clay molding alloed for relaxation, emotional control, meditation and self-esteem. Being mindful could control the upset state of mind and result in proper behavioral expression.³⁰ The third activities of reflective painting also reflected what they valued in life, their failure and what they expected. This enhanced psychological well-being and self-esteem.³⁰ The fourth activity of paper folding with written positive life experience helped them understand value and meaning of life. The fifthe activity of water coloring helped them release stress and pressure while reflecting their true emotion. The sixth activity of building picture frame, beads, and terrarium helped them enjoy happiness. The seventh activity of t-shirt painting helped them focus and meditate which could lead to wisdom to solve the problems. The eighth activity of jigsaws allowed the elderly to see their own past life in new perspectives to create the good memories.^{30,31} The ninth activity of scrape painting allowed the participants to concentrate, control hard situation, solve problems, and ultimately build their own satisfaction, inspiration and confidence.³² The last activity of art exhibition enhanced the

elderly self-esteem.³² Our findings are consistent with a previous study revealing that therapeutic art helped reduced depression in the elderly in the elderly center in Chiangmai province.³³ Other studies also support that activities based on the concept of the Four Noble Truth helps individuals with depression to improve their psychological well-being and self-esteem.^{34,35}

The findings from the study could be applied in living assisted facilities in Thailand. It could also be applied in psychiatric hospitals, and general communities to improve psychological well-being and self-esteem among the elderly with depression.

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