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ZENTANGLE CONGRESS

MENTAL HEALTH NURSING AND ZENTANGLE: EXPLORING NEW THERAPEUTIC HORIZONS

I would like to thank all the members of the organization for the opportunity to be here, because of how valuable it is for us to be able to share and make visible the work we do.

We will begin by talking about the patients we see, people diagnosed with Severe Personality Disorder, and then we will describe the benefits we see in these patients with the practice of Zentangle.

Personality is made up of a set of enduring patterns of feelings, thoughts and behaviors by which we are able to adapt effectively to our environment, have constructive perceptions of ourselves, and engage in health-promoting behaviors. People diagnosed with Personality Disorder have response patterns that differ from what is considered healthy for a person.

Among the Personality Disorders, Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is the most frequent and is characterized mainly by emotional instability, with abrupt changes and intense emotions; there is an alteration of the self-image, with a fragile identity, low self-esteem and rejection towards themselves; There is also an alteration of relationships with others as these are intense and unstable, and also present a high impulsivity that can lead the person to react explosively, producing a high risk of self-injurious behaviors.

Our goal in treatment is:

- First induce a change so that these people can create new, more functional behavior patterns.
- They can manage their emotions in a healthy and adapted way, so that they are not overwhelmed and overwhelmed by them. Finally, to be able to reduce the discomfort, suffering and anxiety they present.

Mental health nursing has the specific competencies for the care of these patients, taking an important active role in their comprehensive treatment. Independently coordinating different interventions to address specific problems. An example of this is the nursing intervention based on the Zentangle method.

We understand Zentangle as a means to be able to apply the nursing care plan, given the characteristics of the method and its similarity to techniques already used, such as mindfulness.

In terms of the Nursing Discipline and through the development of the Nursing Care Process (PAE) or Care Plan, with this intervention we seek to improve objectives such as Self-control of anxiety, Self-control of impulses, Coping with problems, Acceptance of the state of health or Improvement of self-esteem. Objectives that we detect in the nursing assessment of these patients.

The main objective we aim to improve is the self-control of anxiety, understanding Zentangle as a relaxation technique.

Patients have told us that this intervention helps to reduce their anxiety levels. They relate it to the ease of concentration that it provides them, facilitating to leave aside other thoughts, intrusive and persistent thoughts that often have a negative and exhausting load in this profile of patients. This fact provides great value at a therapeutic level to reduce anxiety in people with more resistance to benefit from more conventional relaxation techniques.

We also work on problem solving skills, frustration tolerance and acceptance of experiences through the "no mistake" rule. In the first sessions this rule is often seen as a difficulty, which can produce feelings of anger and frustration, because their perception is that they do make mistakes. As the sessions go by, they continue to make mistakes, but their perception changes from the frustration that arises at first, to relaxation and relief.

We transmit to them that if something can be changed we will look for alternatives to solve it; but if it is something that cannot be changed, what we can do is to accept what we have in the present in order to move forward. This way we block negative emotions and frustration that paralyzes and does not allow us to move forward. Improving the ability to act with awareness in times of crisis.

In people with mental health problems we encounter on a daily basis feelings such as guilt, hatred, anger, rejection towards themselves, because of their way of thinking or their past behaviors. It can be a key aspect in their treatment that they can come to adapt to something that, although it hurts or we do not like it, is part of us, but that does not mean that we can not make changes and move forward.

With the learning and acceptance of experiences that occurs with the practice of Zentangle® patients talk about decreasing the demand, allowing failures and not punishing themselves for it, as ways to reduce the guilt and suffering that these patients often present in their daily lives.

Another important aspect for the treatment of these patients is that it can improve self-esteem. Being a very accessible drawing technique, without expectations, they are often surprised by the results, seen in a positive and gratifying way. Fostering feelings of ability and self-confidence. Feelings that are reinforced with the passing of the sessions, with the improvement in the mastery of the technique and the development of creativity.

On the other hand, the ceremony facilitates the patients to focus on the present moment and get involved, giving structure and security. They themselves have described the environment as a comfortable, quiet, respectful place, a place to calm down. These perceptions are very important, since perceiving the space as safe is the basis for the realization of any group activity, whether creative and/or therapeutic.

During the group experience, feelings such as complicity, understanding, companionship or mutual support arise among the participants. For this type of patient, building and maintaining social relationships is particularly difficult, with a marked tendency to social isolation over time, hence the importance of perceiving positive feelings such as these, derived from social interactions.

A very important aspect to take into account, not only in these patients, is the need we all have, as human beings, to feel linked and connected to the environment. Emotional disengagement (i.e., feeling alone, misunderstood, alienated from others) is one of the main precipitants for suicide. One of the biggest problems we face in mental health care. Especially among people with BPD, who, according to recent studies, have a suicide rate 50 times higher than the general population.

Therefore, it is especially important to design group interventions in which patients can experience positive emotions in their relationships both with their peers and with the therapeutic team, in order to reduce the risk of suicide. T

The nursing intervention based on the Zentangle method is an activity that allows us to connect with patients in a more horizontal way, within the Transformation Paradigm in which we are immersed, being the protagonists of their own improvement process. And we simply accompany them as systemic nurses, encouraging their autonomy and participation in the process.

As we understand it, the practice of Zentangle can be useful in many people and in many other settings within mental health care, whether it is for the reduction of anxiety, the improvement of self-esteem or any of the other objectives mentioned. But for this it is important to increase the knowledge of its potential benefits, why, how, to whom and when; making research a key tool to evolve, expand its applications and improve care.