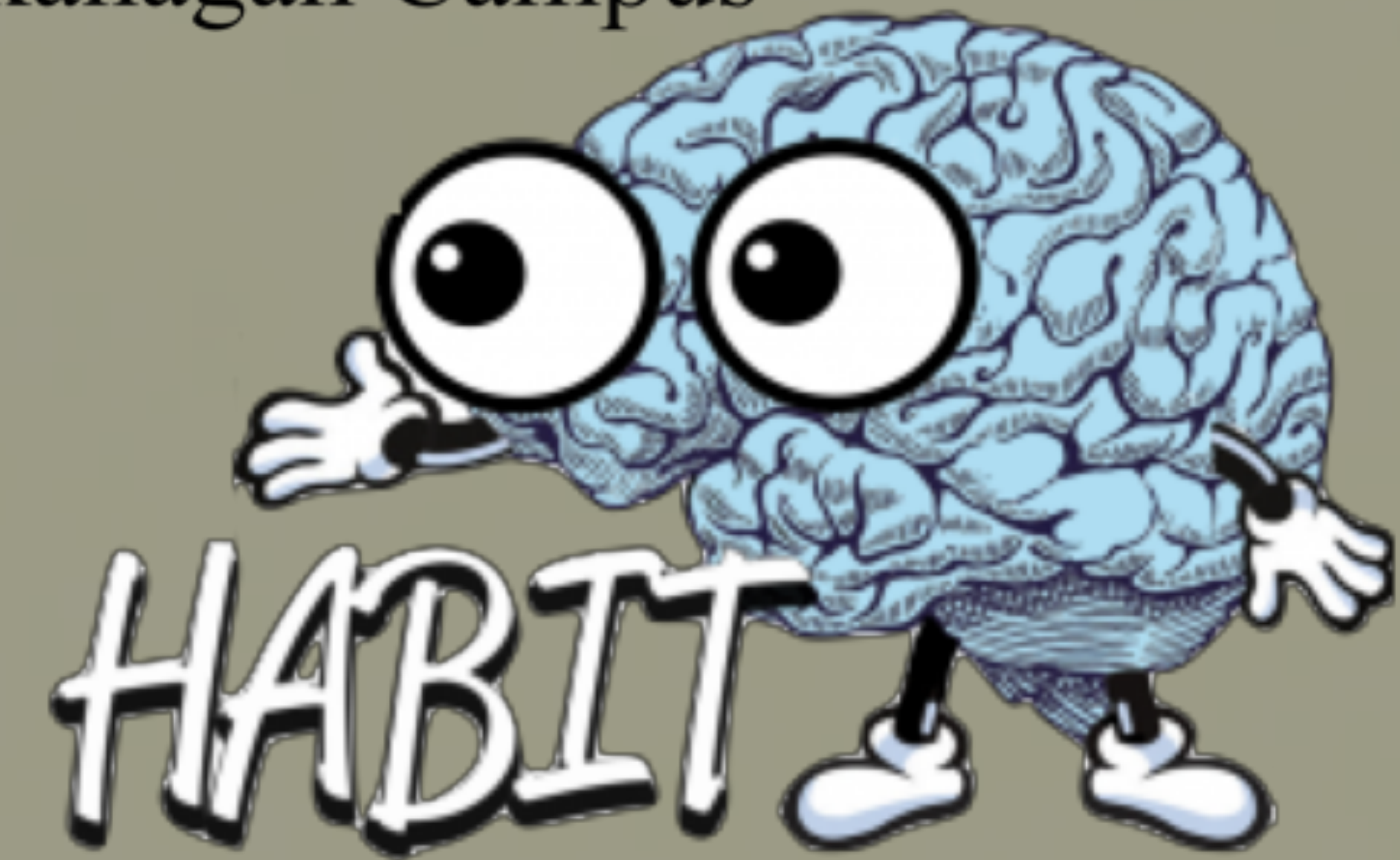




# Using Art Therapy-based Programs as a Tool of Prevention for at-risk Youth in the HABIT Curriculum

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## Introduction

In this project, there are two main forms of art therapy that will be used: drawing based art therapy and drama based education, both of which can be used to effectively assist in substance abuse prevention and for substance abuse treatment in youth and adolescents. Each of which has a different goal for application in the HABIT curriculum.

- The main goal of the *drawing based art therapy* is to use it as a debiasing technique for a younger audience.
- It will be implemented as a coping mechanism in a problem-focused coping lesson.
- At the same time, this form of art would avoid ego-depletion, which could affect how the overall program is interpreted by the audience.
- On the other hand, the main goal of the implementation of *drama based education* is to teach healthy coping mechanisms, stimulate awareness, communication, and community activities.
- It is a powerful tool for education and motivation that can incorporate a component of the emotional response to the informational content.
- The combination of emotion and information can encourage individual intentions to become more involved in family and community-based prevention activities.

## Methods

- This research was mainly focused on examining how drama-based education and drawing based art therapy can be used to prevent drug-seeking behaviors from further developing in later development stages.
- The information was gathered in a final literature review where distinct databases were used: PsychInfo and Google Scholar
- Both art programs have distinct course plans, for instance, one is based in a given script that examines what at-risk adolescents think about substance abuse, its consequences, and prevention.
- The problem-focused coping course plan design was mainly based on booklets created by the PREVENTURE program.



## Expected Results

There are several aspects that have to be considered when using Drama and art therapy. According to research, this form of therapy can:

- Strengthen adolescents' creative capacity which can lead to better problem-solving skills that contribute to more mature or healthy coping mechanisms (Langley,2006).
- For adolescents and youth, drama therapy is more interactive, community-based and has less verbal requirements compared to traditional semi-structured therapy or prevention program, thus appearing more attractive and interesting to adolescent and youth (Dutoon, 2008).
- Studies have indicated that programs that use art as a self-care and health-promoting practice can improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness, increase self-esteem and promote resilience (Schwan, Fallon, & Milne, 2018).
- Addition of arts could work to aim a change in existing emotional responses to attain reduction of unhealthy associations and distress relief, mainly because of how cognitions informally influence emotions (Wiley Handb. Art Ther., 2015).
- These types of programs can be an essential vehicle for engaging with and building upon young people's strengths and assets for proper social, cognitive and physical development (Schwan et al., 2018).

## Examples of Designs

### 1. De-Biasing techniques in Problem-Focused Coping strategy:

-When we feel down, stressed or excited, we tend to let negative feelings influence how we see things. We call these *hot thoughts!* It is important to identify them and try to not let your feelings influence your thoughts!

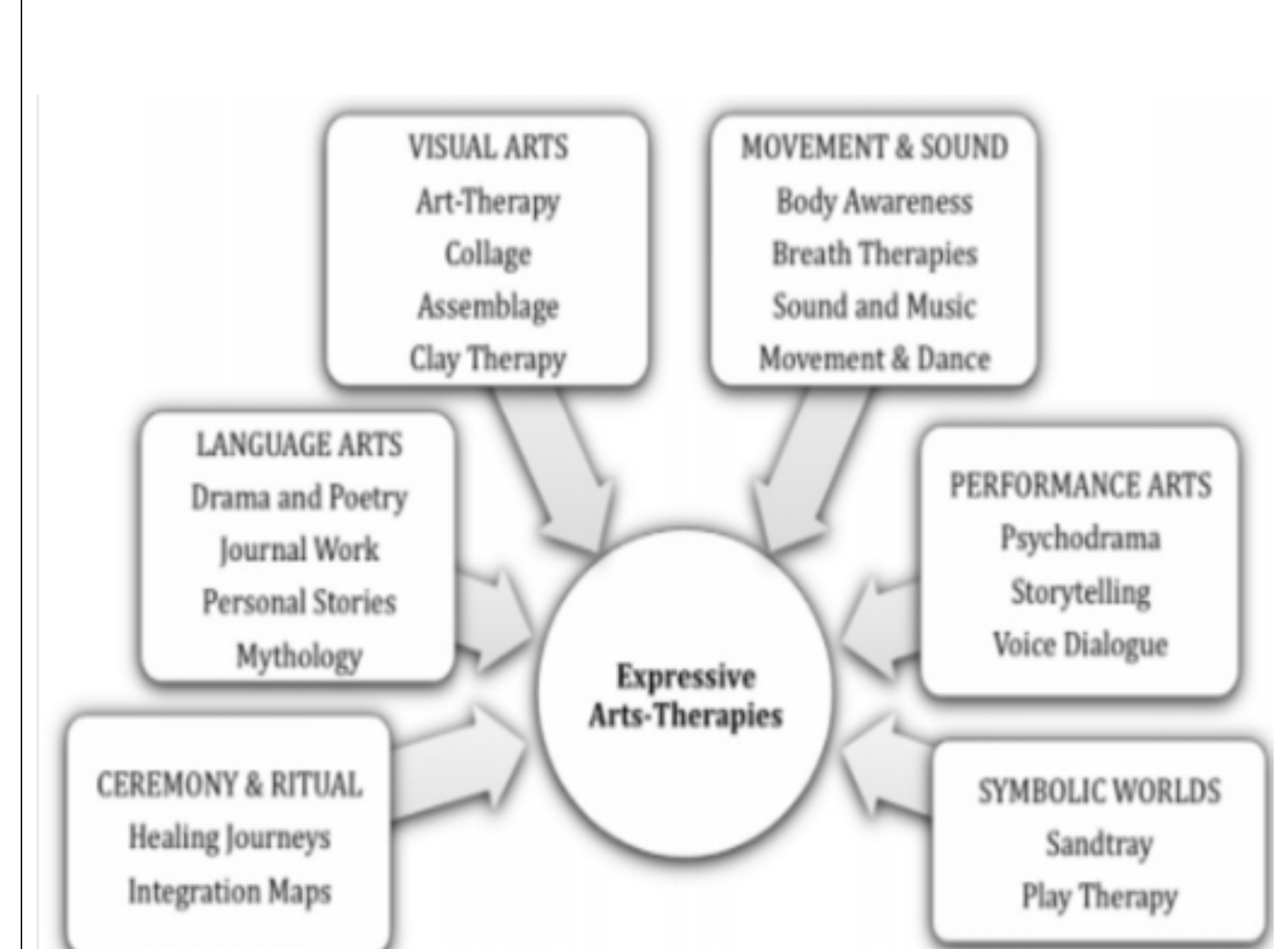
-*Instructions:* There are four main different types of hot thoughts to keep in mind: False conclusions, overgeneralizations, biased thinking, and internalization, each of which will have a scenario. Out of the four, choose one to create a comic strip where you would draw and describe how you would challenge the hot thought.

-*Scenario:* Taylor loves being part of the soccer team at school, but Taylor didn't play well today and because of that the other team scored. The hot thought is: "I didn't play well in the game today and let the team down. I should quit playing sports forever."



### 2. Drama Based Education and Movement Therapy:

-Read the following script and -Bill(an 8-grade student) walked to the bus stop with his friend, there are many other students at the bus stop are vaping or smoking while waiting for the bus. Luke (Bill's friend, another 8<sup>th</sup> grader) is trying to convince him to use the vape, and Bill is suspicious of the content of the vapor thus he rejected his friend's offer. After Bill went home, he asked his parents for advice in terms of vaping and smoking, he revealed his vulnerability of feeling left out by his peers, and his confusion of nicotine addiction. Later Bill went to the school counselor and the counselor showed him information on a web page that describes the content of the vapor, and pros and cons of vaping and smoking. The living drama left open-ended without any criticism of substance use issues to leave space for adolescents to engage critical thinking, and to reduce existing stigma about substance use.



(Damir & Renata, 2013)

## Course Plans

### 1. De-Biasing techniques in Problem-Focused Coping strategy:

- This technique will be used for the drawing based art therapy.
- The exercises are thoroughly explained in a booklet that will be given to the focus group.
- It will consist on an explanation of "what are hot thoughts?" and scenarios where the youth would focus in four cognitive distortions that relate to their everyday lives.
- The main goal of this mechanism is to use a comic book strip to challenge one of those distortions, which would main de-biasing tool.

### 2. Drama Based Education and Movement Therapy:

- The content of the script and the play portrayed scenes will be directly related to local and regional substance abuse problems.
- The following knowledge will be display in the script: and risk factors and protective factors throughout infancy to adolescents, risk factors are portrayed as parental substance abuse, peer pressure, lack of community and family support, and high-risk personality traits.
- This script is using a common substance use issue in the local community to help adolescents to answer their question about background information, helpful resources, and a healthy coping mechanism.
- Discussion and a questionnaire that examine audience's attitude and knowledge about substance abuse will be organized by a trained counselor and psychology students

## References

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