



## ERA Study - Effectiveness of group arts therapies for diagnostically heterogeneous patients: Randomised controlled trial in mental health services.

### What is the ERA study?

ERA is comparing group arts therapies with group talking therapy to see if these therapies are effective for people with different types of mental illness. Service users will try one of two group therapies - arts or talking.

### What's involved for participants?

After informed consent has been taken, patients are asked to complete a questionnaire about their symptoms and if they meet the inclusion criteria (at least moderate symptoms), we ask them to select their preferred type of group arts therapy: music therapy, art therapy or dance movement therapy. Patients who do not meet the inclusion criteria, will receive a £10 voucher as a thank you for their time. Patients who meet the eligibility criteria will complete some more questionnaires, for which they will receive a further £10 voucher. Participants will then be randomly allocated into either their preferred arts therapy group or into group counselling. The group therapies are twice a week for 5 months.

Once the group sessions have ended, participants will be invited to attend 3 further meetings with a researcher to complete questionnaires (*post intervention, 6-month and 12-month follow up*) for which they will receive £20 on attendance of each. There is also an optional interview with a researcher to discuss their group therapy experience.

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Outpatient in secondary mental health care
- Motivation to attend group arts therapy or group counselling for 5 months
- Expression of preference for one of three forms of arts therapy
- 18 years of age and above
- Primary diagnosis of ICD-10: schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders (F2), mood disorders (F3) or anxiety and other nonpsychotic disorders (F4)
- Duration of current mental disorder of 6 months or longer
- At least moderate symptom level on BSI (this is assessed by the researcher when taking informed consent)
- Capacity to provide informed consent

#### Exclusion Criteria

- Primary diagnosis of organic mental disorder (F0), substance misuse (F1) or personality disorder (F6)
- Duration of current mental disorder <6 months (i.e. patients with short-term crises)
- Physical condition that prevents attendance of group arts therapies
- Insufficient command of English for communication with other group members and therapists

#### Randomisation

##### Group Arts Therapy (of participant's choice)

- \* Art Therapy
- \* Music Therapy or
- \* Dance Movement Therapy

- 5 months, twice per week (60-90 minutes)  
- Group of up to 10 people

##### Group Counselling

- Person-centred counselling  
- 5 months of twice per week (60-90minutes)  
- Group of up to 10 people

### What's involved for clinicians?

Clinicians who identify patients as being eligible to participate are invited to provide them with a brief summary of the study and obtain their consent to be contacted by a member of the study's research team, along with their preferred method of contact (telephone, email or letter) to be able to discuss the study further. **For more information, please contact the research assistants: Harmony Jiang [harmony.jiang1@nhs.net](mailto:harmony.jiang1@nhs.net) or Gonca Ramjaun [gonca.ramjaun@nhs.net](mailto:gonca.ramjaun@nhs.net)**