

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

## **The Art of Mind: The Arts on Improving Mental Health**

### **Introduction**

This campaign, “The Art of Mind”, is being created with the intent that art will be used as a tool to positively serve mental health. College students in particular are consistently stressed out with the ferocious amounts of work being assigned to them in addition to many other factors occurring outside of school: work, family, health, and many more. They are also constantly distracted by social media—a force withdrawing people from truly seeing the world around them.

Social pressure has become far too poisonous, beauty standards have become nearly impossible to achieve, and while social media connects us with more people than ever before, “...three in ten people in the United States had been clinically diagnosed with depression at a point in their lives in 2023. This is the highest rate since the question started being asked, up 10.6 percentage points from 2015” (Statista). Furthermore, “Americans are struggling with multiple external stressors that are out of their personal control, with 27% reporting that most days they are so stressed they cannot function, according to a poll conducted for the American Psychological Association” (APA). These vastly high numbers are the reason why today we must take advantage of healthy outlets, like art.

### **PLANNING**

#### **Goals and Levels of Success**

The objective of this campaign is to spread awareness regarding the positive impact the arts have on mental health issues like depression. Additionally, encouraging participation is an

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

essential goal—whether that is in music, various mediums of visual art, or immersing oneself in meditations involving music. This campaign will have two primary mediums operating: one via Instagram and the other will be a weekly event held on campus called “Art Open Mic Night”. I will know if I have achieved my ideal outcome if the Instagram account has 500+ followers, there are 75+ students present at Art Open Mic Nights, and if at the end of the event I receive at least 60% on the survey. This survey will be taken at the end of Open Mic Night and ask three questions: “What was the reason you decided to attend Open Mic Night?”, “What activities did you try out tonight?”, and “Do you feel Open Mic Night had a positive impact on your well-being?”. To obtain my expected outcome, I would need to see 300 followers on Instagram, at least 50 students at the weekly event, and 40% on the survey. At a bare minimum, the Instagram page would have 100 followers, 25 students in attendance, and 20% on the survey.

### **Target Audience**

My target audience is primarily OU students as college can be one of the most difficult encounters in someone’s life. Trying to balance school to fit one’s different needs and circumstances can become extremely complicated and that often leads to depression and anxiety in many college students. Within the OU student population, my primary audience would be students who live on campus. Seeing that this event would more than likely be hosted at night, they are the most likely to attend. Besides that demographic, students who live nearby, perhaps within Oakland County or nearby areas like Macomb County for instance, may decide to attend. More than anything else, any student on the campus that prioritizes mental health or deeply values self-improvement would be interested in this campaign/club. With that knowledge,

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

anyone who considers joining will be asked to fill out an anonymous form simply asking the reason why they would like to join, what experience they have with the arts if any, as well as what particular arts activities they would like to learn/participate in. By doing this, I will be able to adjust the activities offered accordingly and therefore target any messages particularly at those arts.

Also very importantly, the reason for joining the club which students submit on the form will more than likely follow a common theme: perhaps self-improvement, pulling oneself out of a depressive state, or boosting creativity. No matter the response, the similar themes I find between those forms must be addressed via social media posts. This all aligns well with the idea of coactive persuasion—meeting one’s audience in the middle by focusing on cooperating with them, having shared values, and an establishment of respect. In order to effectively communicate these social media messages, a caring tone must be demonstrated. One that makes people realize this club is a safe space; a place where everyone can spend time expressing their deep thoughts through art and without phones.

### **Situation**

A few constraints this campaign will face are the stigma that mental health carries, students’ busy schedules, students who view the arts as too ‘soft’ or ‘weak’, the already bombarding nature of social media content (students view so many social media messages in a matter of seconds), and finding a weekly location that allows students to engage in art and open mic for 2 hours. Fortunately, Gen Z and Millennials are prioritizing mental health more than the generations before them. According to the American Psychological Association, Gen Z is

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

“...more likely (37 percent), along with millennials (35 percent), to report they have received treatment or therapy from a mental health professional, compared with 26 percent of Gen Xers, 22 percent of baby boomers and 15 percent of older adults” (Bethune).

While the majority of this age group may have the right attitude toward seeking help, not everyone does. Therefore, it is still a threat to the campaign. Busy schedules are always a concern given that most students are working on top of going to school. In regards to social media, platforms such as Instagram are incredibly saturated with content that users scroll through quickly and the algorithm filters content to be shown to users in alignment with what they search most frequently. That can raise a problem in this campaign. Finally, I believe my biggest threat of all would be anyone who finds the arts are ‘weird’, ‘nerdy’, ‘soft’, ‘weak’, etc. To have that mindset surrounding this topic would immediately put someone off from joining.

## **MOBILIZATION**

### **Resources**

The people involved will be the most crucial element to this club and campaign. There must be people from different areas within the arts to demonstrate the various activities one can try at these meetings: musicians, visual artists (painting, drawing), writers, photographers, etc. There will be costs associated with that, mostly if it were to involve painting (brushes, paint, paper) or some other involved art form. Aside from that, there are no major costs being added by having an Instagram account for the club, so the people involved are the key element. In terms of funding, we will need no external organization support. According to Oakland University’s Student Activities Funding Board website, up to \$3500 can be utilized for student organizations

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

for both Fall and Winter semesters. That is more than enough for this club to function. If the club were to engage in fundraising efforts, students could present their artwork/crafts to be sold or engage in bake sales of some sort.

### **Research**

Art used as a tool for therapy or for calming effects is known to be extremely powerful for those suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Research was conducted by members of Parliament in the UK who cooperated with organizations like the Royal Society for Public Health and King's College London. One of their findings states, "Between 2012 and 2014, 87 percent of veterans who completed the programme saw a reduction in their PTSD symptoms and co-morbid anxiety and depression, anger and alcohol use, and this was maintained at their six-month follow-up" (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, p. 111). This information acknowledges an additional sector of mental health concerns that OU students may face. While there may not be many students who served in the armed forces, PTSD can be derived from other traumatic situations like witnessing a school shooting, having been a victim of rape and/or sexual assault, various forms of abuse and/or neglect, and more terrifying circumstances. Being able to ease the effects that PTSD presents would be an excellent initiative for this campaign to adapt.

College is a time in someone's life when they can become prone to mental health issues due to academic pressure, stressing over finances, lack of sleep, and the anxiety that comes with paving the way for their futures. A multitude of studies were coordinated by professionals in the fields of social work, psychiatry, and related fields which concluded that "All six projects

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

involved in the case studies provided arts activities specifically for people with mental health problems, and this was highly valued for the opportunity it gave to rebuild confidence through contact with peers who were seen as understanding, and for the mental health support available” (Secker et al. 36). Considering this research as a pairing to my campaign would ensure that all people regardless of the severity of their mental health challenges will show improvement while receiving arts-related involvement. The element of boosted self-confidence is one that can carry a student of any background a long way through college and their careers. Introducing the students to such practices can provide a healthy coping mechanism to use habitually.

To strengthen previous research presented, three experts residing in the Department of Educational Management in Iran performed studies with approximately 360 high school students regarding the arts’ impact on mental health. These specialists found that “The components of artistic intelligence have a significant impact on mental health, as a total of 57% of students' mental health is explained (predicted)” (Hasanpour, Jabbari, and Esmaeilnia Shirvani 171). To have over half of the students show advancement in their mental state is telling data which provides good reason to implement this campaign at Oakland University. If a smaller pool of people (that being high school) has shown this much of a boost, it would be greatly beneficial to give college students access to those opportunities. College contains a heavier workload than high school with more challenging content. One can infer the results to be seen from an inclusion of an arts involvement club would also produce astounding results like the ones derived from this research.

## **LEGITIMATION**

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

Legitimacy can be the key to a campaign skyrocketing in popularity. The smartest move for this campaign/club to receive an endorsement from would be the Counseling Center either from the Graham Health Center or the SEHS Counseling Center (School of Education and Human Services). To have either one of these on-campus organizations show their support and collaboration of the club itself would further boost credibility, but also the likelihood of students to join. Both entities have many professionals in psychology and mental health treatment in their facilities, so to get their support for this campaign would be absolutely ideal. Every student I have spoken to regarding the care they received at either office, I usually hear very positive feedback. If feedback happens to be negative, it's usually regarding a particular therapist that they saw, but receiving a different match afterwards usually solves the problem. Overall, both facilities have a great reputation that can leverage the success of this campaign.

## **PROMOTION**



Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

### **Identity**

The identity of “The Art of Mind” is one that integrates an aura of calmness with creativity. The logo displays several forms of art including dance, drawing, painting, and even a man admiring a flower. The design itself is rather simple. The two colors used are blue and green. Blue because it’s associated with tranquility, stability, and wisdom. Green because it is the color for mental health awareness, but also nature, growth, and prosperity. The logo can be viewed as Earth itself as the blue ring wraps around the different arts that fit inside of it. The slogan can be seen above the Earth-like emblem with the words “Happiness is Art”. I wanted to choose something that was simple as some of the most well-known slogans like “Just Do It”, “I’m Lovin’ It”, etc., are short and easy to remember. Also, by saying happiness IS art, there is a strong connection drawn between telling the audience that they will find that sense of satisfaction by participating in some form of art. I came up with the name for the club because I always hear different podcast episode titles like “The Art of Connectivity”, “The Art of Communication”, and so on, so I felt “The Art of Mind” made a lot of sense. It’s not only “The Art” in the sense that it’s some sort of psychological/philosophical discussion being had, but it’s also quite literally “Art” being performed.

### **Credibility**

In order to establish credibility and warmth with my audience, I will make sure to attend every Art of Mind Open Mic Night so I can connect with those in attendance. Through social media posts, storytelling will be a crucial component. I can share why I was so passionate to start

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

the student organization. For me, being a double major in Public Relations & Advertising and Piano Performance, I have a creative background.

Having always been associated with the arts in some way while managing large course loads (for instance, my current 23 credit semester), I will explain that the only way I am able to cope with such demanding tasks is by having various creative outlets—playing the piano, constantly listening to a variety of music in my free time, writing research papers regarding music and PR concepts, and even dabbling in poetry from time to time.

Every week via Instagram, I can also create content stating particular personal traits one may have and the art that may best align with that individual. That is a very on-trend tactic to implement, and would be popular to a Gen Z and Millennial audience. If there are others on the board of the organization, sharing their stories would also be important to include.

What may be the most important content of all would perhaps be anyone dealing with a very difficult mental health challenge that feels as though the Open Mic Nights have truly helped them (testimonials). Getting videos of those stories would likely push the club's profile out to more social media users than regular posts. As stated before, to collaborate with either one of the counseling centers would help the Art of Mind club immensely. Finally, informational posts of statistics like the ones shared before, help to establish credibility on the Instagram page.

### **Messaging**

The main message for this campaign is as follows: “Human beings are dynamic creatures. We crave social connection, intimacy, we laugh, we cry, we grieve, improve, decline, and so much more beyond that. With that knowledge, it is positively undeniable to say that above all, as

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

humans we struggle. Mental health is being brought to light significantly more as society progresses, but particularly in this ongoing technologically-advanced world of ours. With our minds being constantly stimulated, never-ending tasks to keep up with, and people to take care of, mental health should remain a priority. That is why today, we must take advantage of healthy stimulation, and that is art. Art is music—listening to music, creating music, studying music. Art is the key to turning our entire day around by listening to a particular song. Art is painting, drawing, sculpture, poetry, photography, and film. Art is anything in which humans have a means to create, and to create is to have passion. Passion and community and transcendence—that all lies within art, and art is the answer to fighting mental health issues.”

There are three persuasion strategies used in this paragraph that are all characteristics of sticky ideas: concrete, emotional, and unexpected. Concrete language is grounded in reality rather than abstraction. It is present in the first three sentences because I connect it to humans; to us and our experience, and making it sensory as well. I take the audience through the process of life itself. Moreover, those first few lines are emotional as well. We understand what it’s like to feel those emotions regularly and the audience may jump to a particular instance in their minds when they have strongly connected with those feelings. The element of unexpectedness is certainly present as well. In the beginning, I discuss social communication, how we as people crave talking to one another, and the shift from social aspects to art is rather unpredictable.

I chose three characteristics of sticky ideas as my persuading tactics because I feel the most important part of communicating a message to an audience is ensuring it will remain with them when you are no longer communicating. If particular words or phrases remain in someone’s

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

head, they continue to reflect on them, especially if that language is well-curated (which I believe this paragraph definitely is). Just like some presidential speeches in history stick in our minds like “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”, spoken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at his First Inaugural Address, cleverly selecting language magnifies the chance that it will be remembered.

### **Outlets**

In regards to outlets, I will be using Instagram as the sole social platform to promote the club/campaign. The reason I chose only Instagram and not TikTok is due to a recent notice in Instagram reels outperforming TikTok videos. On the club’s page, reels, a calming aesthetic, and short-form storytelling content would be valuable. There will be two surveys taken on Google Forms—one to take when joining the club and also one to fill out when leaving an Open Mic Night. Gathering data from those two forms will assist me in analyzing my audience and will tell me what type of content to post via social media. For example, if many individuals joined due to anxiety, posts will be created connecting to it. Similarly, if many individuals want to write poetry, that must be an activity that we are offering at Open Mic Night.

I also feel the campaign could heavily benefit from having a podcast if it expanded large enough to provide that. Having members share their positive experiences with their particular artistic hobbies would be the objective. The Open Mic Night will be the main weekly event to be hosted in a space like The Habitat. It is a visible space which sparks curiosity when students

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

walk past it and Instagram reels will be created and broadcasted to social media users. Once again, collaborating with one of the two counseling centers on campus would build the reputation of the Art of Mind club efficiently. Putting flyers up around various OU buildings would catch the attention of many individuals. Finally, taking advantage of student-run media outlets like WXOU and The Oakland Post could spread the message of this campaign quickly to OU students.

## **ACTIVATION**

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

### THE ART OF MIND TIME TABLE

	EVENT	GOAL	OUTLET
<b>WEEK 1</b>	Instagram post announcing the club’s mission & flyers posted around campus	Build awareness and establish a following	Instagram & In-Person
<b>WEEK 2</b>	Entrance survey (also taken at any point when students join)	Gather data on students’ interests & understanding my audience	Google Forms
<b>WEEK 3</b>	First hosting of Open Mic Night	Launch of artistic events & encouraging participation	In-Person (Promoted on Instagram)
<b>WEEK 3</b>	Connection with The Oakland Post & WXOU	Obtaining earned-media coverage regarding the club	Earned media (The Oakland Post & WXOU)
<b>WEEKLY UPKEEP</b>	Hosting weekly Open Mic Nights & story posts with polls	Connection with club audience & consistency	In-Person & Instagram
<b>WEEKLY UPKEEP</b>	Social media posts/reels with art, testimonials, & soothing content	Promoting the arts’ impact on mental health & creativity	Instagram
<b>MID-SEMESTER</b>	Collaboration with one of the Counseling Centers	To establish better credibility & expand audience	In-Person & Instagram
<b>END OF SEMESTER</b>	Showcase celebrating the end of the semester & survey (taken after any Open Mic Night)	Celebrating the arts, gathering data, & evaluation the campaign	In-Person & Google Forms

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

### Works Cited

APA. "More than a Quarter of U.S. Adults Say They're so Stressed They Can't Function."

*EurekaAlert!*, [www.eurekaalert.org/news-releases/968353](http://www.eurekaalert.org/news-releases/968353).

Bethune, Sophie. "Gen Z More Likely to Report Mental Health Concerns." *Monitor on*

*Psychology*, American Psychological Association, Jan. 2019,

[www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/gen-z](http://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/gen-z).

*Chart: U.S. Depression Rate Reached a New High in 2023 | Statista*,

[www.statista.com/chart/32997/share-of-us-respondents-diagnosed-with-depression/](http://www.statista.com/chart/32997/share-of-us-respondents-diagnosed-with-depression/).

Gordon-Nesbitt, Rebecca. "Creative health: The arts for health and wellbeing." (2017).

[https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/83579645/The\\_Arts\\_for\\_Health\\_and\\_Wellbeing\\_PublishedJuly2017\\_GREEN\\_VoR\\_CC\\_BY\\_NC\\_ND\\_.pdf](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/83579645/The_Arts_for_Health_and_Wellbeing_PublishedJuly2017_GREEN_VoR_CC_BY_NC_ND_.pdf).

Hasanpour, Masoumeh, et al. "The Effect of Artistic Intelligence Components on Student's Mental Health." *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*, vol. 3, no. 3, Sept. 2020, pp. 168–75,

<https://doi.org/10.52547/ijes.3.3.168>.

Magsamen, Susan, and Ivy Ross. *Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us*. Random House, 2023.

Maria Magnoli

Magnoli 15

Dr. Valerie Palmer-Mehta

COM 3200

7 April 2025

Secker, Jenny, et al. "Art for Mental Health's Sake." *ResearchGate*, unknown, July 2007,

[www.researchgate.net/profile/Suzanne-Hacking/publication/6126846\\_Art\\_for\\_mental\\_health](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Suzanne-Hacking/publication/6126846_Art_for_mental_health).