

University of Central Florida

STARS

High Impact Practices Student Showcase Fall
2023

High Impact Practices Student Showcase

Fall 2023

Brain Fitness Academy: Making Impacts

Ella Shams
el400368@ucf.edu

Susan Kampiyill
su375319@ucf.edu

Estefania Zamarripa
772674@ucf.edu

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/hip-2023fall>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Service Learning is brought to you for free and open access by the High Impact Practices Student Showcase at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in High Impact Practices Student Showcase Fall 2023 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Shams, Ella; Kampiyill, Susan; and Zamarripa, Estefania, "Brain Fitness Academy: Making Impacts" (2023). *High Impact Practices Student Showcase Fall 2023*. 11.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/hip-2023fall/11>

Abstract

Throughout the Fall, 2023 semester, we volunteered at Brain Fitness Academy (BFA). In doing so, we set out on a project to bring more creative arts into the classroom, as countless studies have shown that creative arts greatly help individuals with memory loss. During our time at Brain Fitness, we incorporated arts using a painting lesson in which members' moods greatly improved, members were engaged, and happy to be doing the activity. We explored how creative arts can truly help those with memory loss, in particular painting.

Relation to LEAD Scholars

Within our LEAD Scholars course, we have gone over the Social Change Model. The group values in the Social Change Model include collaboration and a common purpose. As a group, we enacted these values by collaborating to have members of BFA paint with the common purpose of seeing how this impacts their engagement, mood, esteem, and more.

The Outcome

After completing our "experiment" at BFA, we saw how well the members enjoyed creative arts. This cemented the idea that creative arts and memory loss have a strong relationship and can be used to stimulate minds and keep brains active. Overall, it is our goal to include more creative arts in Brain Fitness in the next few semesters to further encourage members to keep their brains active, engaged, and even having a better mood.



Figure 1.1

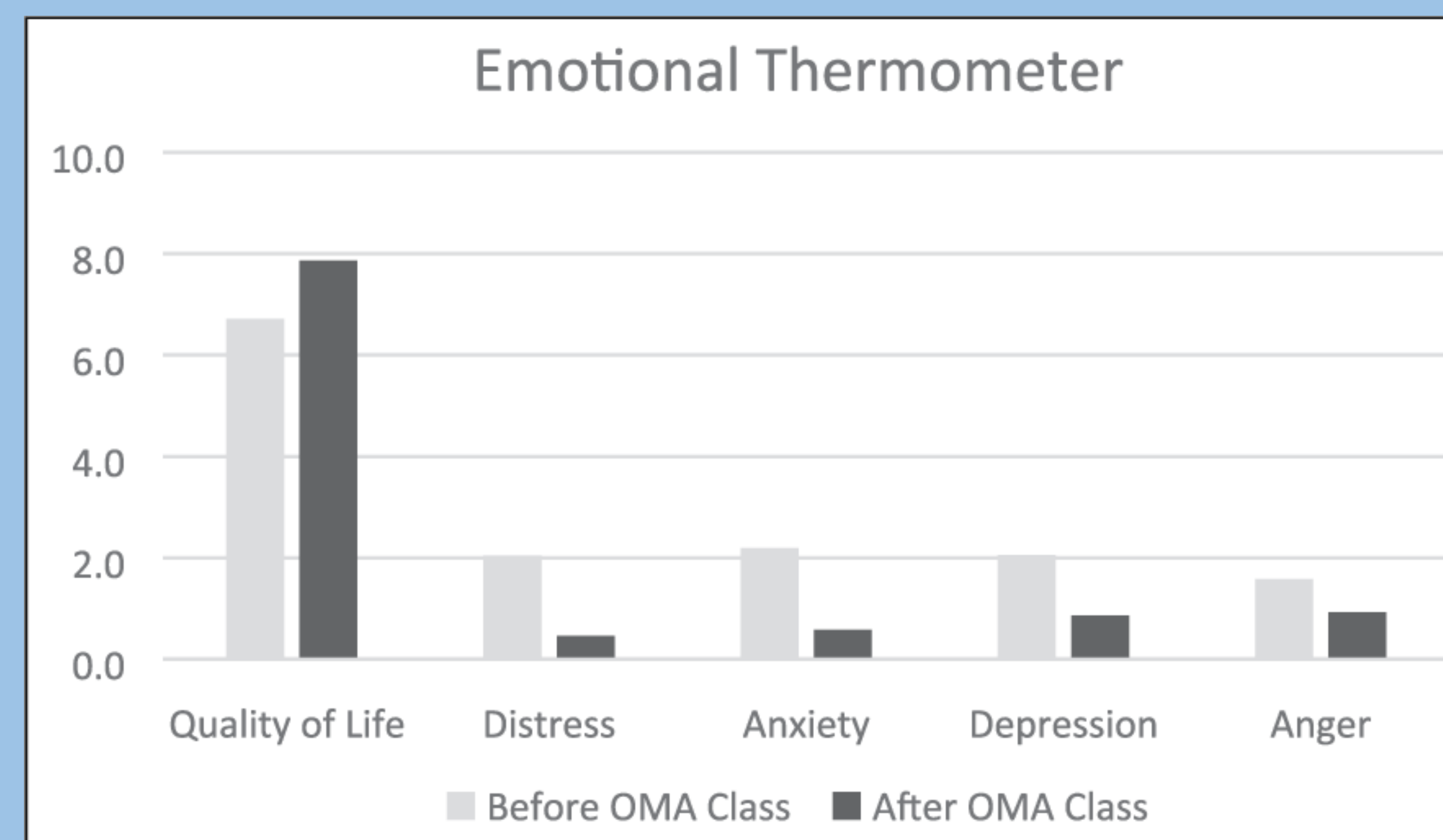


Figure 1.2

Caption Figures 1.1 and 1.2 are images of member's work.

Background: Creative Arts and Memory Loss

- For individuals with cognitive memory loss, mental activity is essential in keeping their brains active and healthy.
- 47.5 million people are currently living with dementia Emblad & Mukaetova-Ladinska, 2018).
- Keeping the brain active builds reserves of healthier brain cells and connections between them ("Mental Exercise and Dementia," n.d.).
- Engaging in creative activities enhances mood and improves cognitive functions (Emblad & Mukaetova-Ladinska, 2018).
- Art therapy is used as a tool for communication and can have a direct impact on mood, and overall quality of life.
- According to Emblad & Mukaetova-Ladinska (2018), a study done in which individuals with dementia participated in art courses were seen to have a drastically more positive mood as well as greater engagement, well-being, and concentration, memory, self-esteem, and even reduction in exit-seeking behavior. Overall, the patient's participation in the art course was seen to correlate with a better mood and help their overall cognitive memory loss.



The "Emotion Thermometer" chart explores individuals with dementia before and after Opening the Mind through Art (OMA) class. It is apparent art decreases strong emotions and helps quality of life (Levenberg et al., 2021).

Therefore, through research and the BFA project completed, it is apparent that individuals with memory loss can be positively affected by art.

Our recommendation is to include more art at Brain Fitness Academy to keep members consistently engaged and their moods high!

The Brain Fitness Project:

Brain Fitness Academy (BFA) has a main mission to "make a meaningful difference by stimulating minds, creating experiences, and optimizing the lives of individuals with memory challenges" (BFA, n.d.). To ensure their mission, Brain Fitness created a curriculum in which members with cognitive memory loss attend a class twice a week and participate. As a project, our group decided to take part in the class day to do a painting activity and see its impact on members.

Our first step was to get the materials in which Estefania was able to get canvases, paint, and paintbrushes. The idea to have members paint pumpkin patches, as it was Halloween, became our main goal.

In class, we had members follow along with a whiteboard to paint what they saw and create their own pumpkin patch. After observing members, it was evident that most members thoroughly engaged with the activities and were present.

References

- Brain Fitness Academy: About Us. Brain Fitness Academy. (n.d.). <https://brainfitnessacademy.org/about/>.
- Emblad, S., & Mukaetova-Ladinska, E. (2021, January 1). *Creative Art Therapy as a Non-Pharmacological Intervention for Dementia: A Systematic Review*. Journal of Alzheimer's Disease Reports. <https://doi.org/10.3233%2FADR-201002>.
- Levenberg, K., George, D.R., & Lokon, E.J. (2021). *Opening Minds through Art: A preliminary study evaluating the effects of a creative-expression program on persons living with dementia and their primary care partners*. *Dementia*, 20, 2412 - 2423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1471301221997290>.
- Mental Exercise and Dementia: Dementia Australia. Dementia Australia.(n.d.). https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/helpsheets/Helpsheet-DementiaQandA06-MentalExercise_english.pdf.