





# Design of an Emotion-Focused Painting Training Program and Evaluation of Its Effectiveness on Autism Symptoms in Children with High-Functioning Autism

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### Editor

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the second paragraph of the Introduction, the claim “One of the core challenges in ASD lies in deficits in emotional processing...” is theoretically sound; however, it would benefit from clearer linkage to intervention logic. Explicitly articulate how emotional processing deficits map onto the mechanisms targeted by painting-based interventions.

In the paragraph beginning “In recent years, there has been growing interest in the use of non-verbal and creative therapeutic approaches...”, the discussion of art therapy is largely descriptive. It would improve rigor to differentiate between expressive art therapy, structured art-based interventions, and occupational therapy-based art activities.

In the procedure paragraph, the description of instructional design stages is mentioned but not referenced (e.g., ADDIE model). Please specify the theoretical or instructional design framework explicitly.

In the Measures section, the use of only three subscales of GARS-3 (stereotyped behaviors, communication, and social interaction) requires justification. Explain why sensory and cognitive subscales were excluded, as this may affect construct validity.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph “Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of art therapy interventions...”, several claims are made regarding multidimensional benefits. However, these are presented cumulatively without critical evaluation. Please include effect sizes or methodological limitations of cited studies to avoid overgeneralization.

In the paragraph beginning “The integration of emotion-focused components into art therapy interventions...”, the concept of “emotion-focused” is not operationally defined. It is unclear whether the framework aligns with Greenberg’s Emotion-Focused Therapy or a more general emotional skills training model.

In the gap statement paragraph (“Despite the growing body of research...”), the identified gaps are valid but somewhat generic. The manuscript would benefit from explicitly positioning how this study uniquely addresses each gap (e.g., methodological rigor, cultural adaptation, longitudinal follow-up).

In the final paragraph of the Introduction, the sentence “Overall, the literature suggests that emotion-focused painting interventions...” is well synthesized, but it lacks a clear conceptual model. Consider adding a brief theoretical framework linking emotional processing, executive function, and behavioral outcomes.

In the Methods – Study Design and Participants section, the sentence “The present study was applied in terms of purpose and quasi-experimental in terms of method...” is conceptually unclear. The term “applied in terms of purpose” should be replaced with a more precise classification (e.g., applied research vs. basic research).

In the same section, the sampling method is described as purposive with random assignment. This introduces methodological tension. Please clarify whether sampling was non-probability but allocation was randomized, and discuss implications for external validity.

In the description “During the research process, none of the participants withdrew from the study...”, this is statistically unusual for a multi-session intervention with adolescents. Please clarify whether any attrition occurred and how adherence was monitored.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.