



# Connections between Successful Aging and Mental Health among Older Adults: The Role of Artistic Leisure Activities

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## Successful Aging and Mental Health

Older adults who have a positive attitude toward their aging are less likely to be exposed to mental illnesses compared to those with a more negative attitude toward their own aging [1]. Achieving a positive outlook toward aging may be achieved by participating in leisure activities, which can reduce depression or anxiety. Given that a sense of isolation may result in mental health problems such as depression or anxiety [2], leisure activities can be an effective way to relieve depressive symptoms caused by disconnection from other people and to encourage older adults to develop a more positive perception toward aging.

The concept of successful aging, which focuses on positive perspectives on one's life, has been defined as life satisfaction, psychological resources such as autonomy and self-esteem, and good physical health [3]. Good health, physical activity, and the absence of depression are primary indicators that influence successful aging. In this context, engagement in productive activities enables older adults to achieve life satisfaction, ultimately leading to decreased depression [4,5].

## Artistic Leisure Activities and Mental Health

Leisure activities have been regarded as one of the best approaches to achieve successful aging and avoid mental health problems in later life. However, previous literature has mainly focused on leisure-time physical activities and has not distinguished between physical leisure activities and artistic leisure activities [6]. Some research has tried to divide leisure activities into organized group activities, informal social activities, and informal individual activities [7]; however, there is little work that concentrates on artistic leisure activities specifically.

Art therapy shares similarities with artistic leisure activities and has proven the effectiveness of art-related activities. Through engagement in artistic activities, older adults can reduce levels of depression by expressing their loss and grief, for example. Participation in art therapy among the elderly allows them to improve their mental health as well as chronic health conditions [8]. In addition, art therapy enables older adults to formulate their thoughts and feelings and encourage those with cognitive impairments to express their emo-

tions in a nonverbal communicative way, and these effects can result in improved psychological health [9]. Given that depression is a factor for the elderly to commit suicide and is regarded as an abnormal phenomenon of aging, it is important to engage in activities that may reduce depression among older adults, such as artistic leisure activities.

## Conclusion

It is critical to provide distinctions among leisure activities by focusing on artistic leisure activities in particular. The definition of artistic leisure activities refers to involvement in music or art, such as by visiting an art museum or gallery, learning a musical instrument, or making art or craft objects, rather than physical exercises. As older adults' physical abilities often reduce as they age, participation in artistic leisure activities, which do not require physical activities and have beneficial effects on mental health, should be encouraged to older adults to help them achieve successful aging, thereby making it possible to maintain a good quality of life and mental health in later life.

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