

A Qualitative Exploration of Soothing Imagery and how Soothing Imagery Could be used as a Wellbeing Intervention for Adolescents.

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Objectives: Psychological literature has indicated that positive imagery can have a beneficial impact on mental health and should be considered in the treatment of psychological disorders. However, there is a lack of research exploring the potential therapeutic values of externally presented imagery, particularly in adolescent populations. This study aims to explore what is considered soothing when viewing externally presented imagery and how soothing imagery could be developed as a wellbeing tool to enhance positive affect and psychological wellbeing in adolescents.

Design: This project is based on Project Soothe in which a qualitative thematic analysis was used to analyse secondary data and focus group discussions.

Methods: Four focus groups, which included a total of 30 participants (73.3% female; aged 12-16 years) from two secondary schools, participated in the discussions. The focus groups were asked the same series of questions which explored externally presented soothing imagery.

Results: In response to the first research question, three themes emerged: positive memories and significant others; being able to immerse oneself in the image; positive emotions are enhanced. Two themes emerged in response to the second research question: positive feedback for the potential and beneficial use of soothing imagery as a wellbeing tool; negative feedback for the potential and beneficial use of soothing imagery as a wellbeing tool.

Conclusion: The findings represented the beneficial impact of soothing imagery which supports previous literature and emphasises the potential use of soothing imagery as a wellbeing intervention to improve affect and promote psychological well-being in adolescents.

Keywords: soothing; imagery; mental health; wellbeing; adolescence