

Culture, Health and Wellbeing research: Evidence from Museums



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Why Museums?



*‘Through their therapeutic potential, museums have a means to social inclusion of individuals who are often overlooked by cultural institutions’
(Silverman 2002: 70).*

*“Museums and galleries have always served a number of purposes other than the evident one of enabling visitors to appreciate their collections of art and artefacts. They are a site for social interaction and for acquiring and conveying an air of cultural authority. They may provide a cool place on a hot day or a quiet retreat”
(Classen 2007: 897).*

Museums on Prescription: 3 year AHRC funded project (2014-2017)



Aim: to investigate the value of museum encounters in social prescribing

The research connects socially isolated, vulnerable and lonely older people, referred through local NHS and Local Authority Adult Social Care services, to partner museums in Central London and Kent.

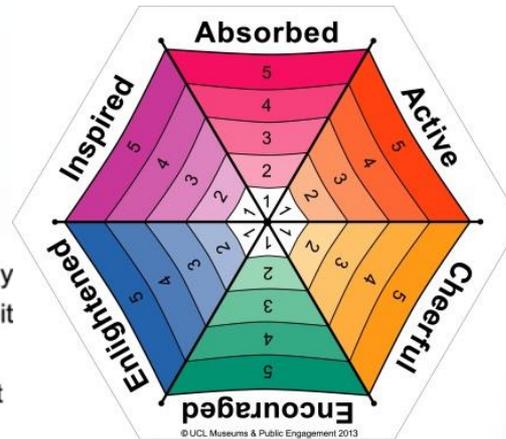
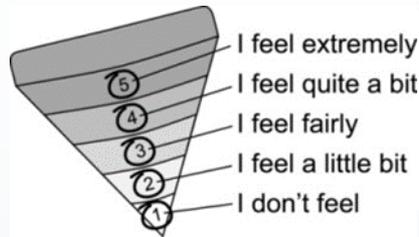
Participants

7 x 10-week courses in partner museums:

British Museum	male	13
	female	10
Beaney Museum	male	4
	female	12
Maidstone Museum	male	6
	female	12
Central St Martins	male	3
	female	8
Tunbridge Wells	male	9
	female	11
Postal Museum	male	1
	female	4
UCL Museums	male	7
	female	15
Total		115



Quantitative evaluation: Pre-test / Post-test



WEMWBS

Directions: Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please circle the number that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks.

Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking creatively	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5
Total	1	2	3	4	5

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) © David Hansen, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006. All rights reserved.

R-UCLA

Directions: Indicate how often you feel the way described in each of the following statements. Circle one number for each statement.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I feel in tune with the people around me.	1	2	3	4
I lack companionship.	1	2	3	4
There is no one I can turn to.	1	2	3	4
I do nothing alone.	1	2	3	4
I feel part of a group of friends.	1	2	3	4
There's a special someone who would miss me if I were gone.	1	2	3	4
I am no longer close to anyone.	1	2	3	4
My requests and wishes are not shared by others.	1	2	3	4
I am an outgoing person.	1	2	3	4
There are people I feel close to.	1	2	3	4
I feel left out.	1	2	3	4
My social relationships are superficial.	1	2	3	4
No one really knows me well.	1	2	3	4
I feel isolated from others.	1	2	3	4
I can find companionship when I want it.	1	2	3	4
There are people who really understand me.	1	2	3	4
I am unhappy being so withdrawn.	1	2	3	4
People are around me but not with me.	1	2	3	4
There are people I can talk to.	1	2	3	4
There are people I can turn to.	1	2	3	4

For office use only. The score is the sum of all items. Items marked (-) should be reversed before scoring.

Beginning, middle and end of 10 weeks:

- UCL Positive Wellbeing Umbrella - Older Adult
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
- Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale

3- and 6-month follow ups:

- Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
- Three-item Loneliness Scale (Short UCLA)

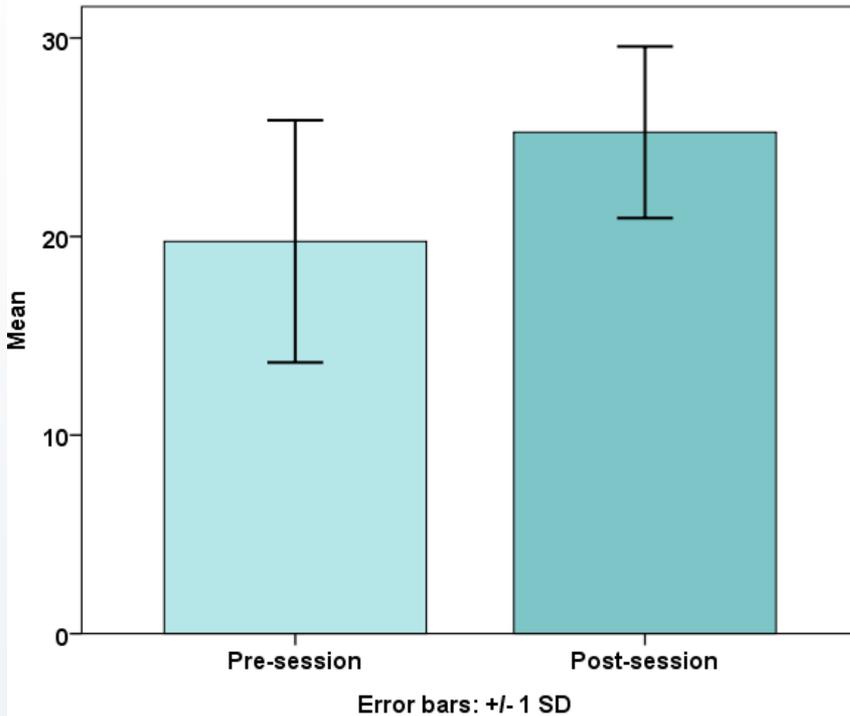
Qualitative thematic analysis

- Museum Passports (for participants)
- Facilitator Diaries
- Researcher Diaries
- End of programme participant interviews
- End of programme facilitator interviews
- Follow up interviews at 3, 6 and 12 months (where possible)
- Photos/videos

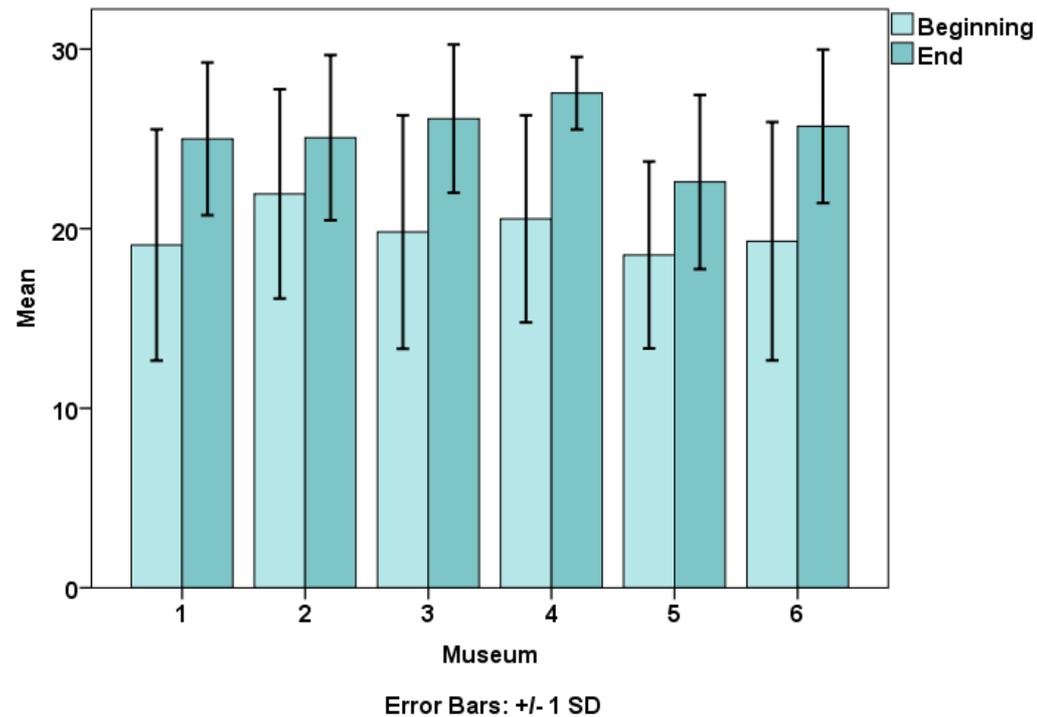


UCL Museum Wellbeing Measure

Psychological wellbeing (n=115; after 10 weeks)



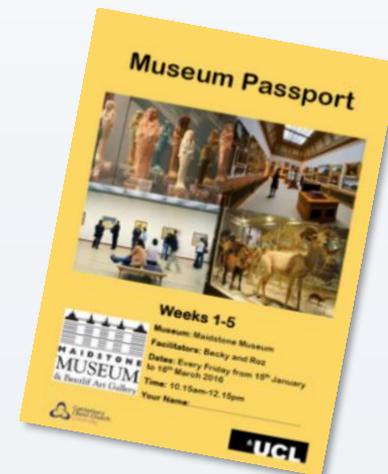
Mean scores for pooled museums



Mean scores for individual museums

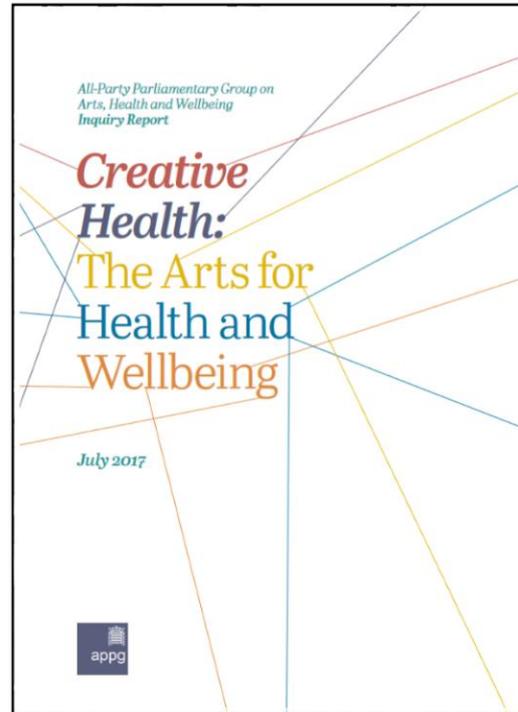
Main findings:

- Sense of belonging
- Improved quality of life
- Renewed interest in learning
- Acquisition of new skills
- Something to look forward to
- Increased social activity
- Increased creative activity
- Continued visits to museums
- Healthier lifestyle changes



*All-Party Parliamentary Group
on Arts, Health and Wellbeing*

Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing





National Alliance for Museums, Health & Wellbeing

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