



## Article

# The Ways of Overcoming the Impact of Graduation from School on the Mental State of Students and Their Parents: Counseling with a Social Worker to Solve Social and Psychological Problems

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**Abstract:** The study identifies and measures the emotional aspects affecting students' learning and motivation as well as their relationship with the social and psychological environment in their family. Solving emotional problems was also one of the goals. In total, 50 schoolchildren, 16 to 18 years of age, took part in the experiment. Their parents also participated in the study for family therapy sessions. The experiment was conducted at Ajman Private School, Ajman Emirate, Ajman, United Arab Emirates. Prior to the study, graduates took a series of questionnaires to measure their emotional state. During the experiment, respondents had conversations with a social worker and an art therapist once a week. During conversations, a social worker helped the students and their parents to understand the difficulties in their relationships and to come to compromises. In art therapy sessions, respondents expressed their negative emotions on the canvas using art materials. The study lasted four months. Also, at the middle and end of the experiment, respondents took a series of tests to measure their progress over time. The outcomes demonstrated not only the interrelation of family support and emotional state but also the effectiveness of the chosen methodology. The average score on the Beck Depression Inventory prior to the study was 6.8 out of 10 points. On the Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale, the average score was 7.4 points. According to the WAM test, the 'wellbeing' factor before the beginning of the experiment was equal to 4.9 points.

**Keywords:** art therapy; depression; emotional state of students; family therapy; social work



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## 1. Introduction

Graduation from high school is an important event in everyone's life. In addition to the positive emotions associated with graduation, there are quite a few difficulties faced by both students and their parents. Career choices, as well as the stress because of finals are among the challenges that graduates face. Some students develop depression and emotional exhaustion because of this. Therefore, the paper discusses a fairly pressing issue (Paterson 2021). Graduation from school opens many opportunities for students, including enrollment in university and college programs. However, most high school graduates face the problem of self-determination (Yu et al. 2018). This issue is also of great concern to their parents since it has to do with the fears regarding children's professional development. Some students select their career avenues under pressure from their parents (Guo et al. 2020) because it is very difficult to decide on a future occupation at such an early age. For many graduates, it is a very important choice and many are afraid of making a mistake. This problem also occurs in families where parents overcontrol their children, not giving them the opportunity to make their own choices (Wong and Lee 2017). In

addition, the graduate's encounter with a large number of worries and doubts becomes a significant problem. Just yesterday, his or her life was stable and unchanged while today such problematic issues have appeared in it as a change in the circle of communication, new acquaintances, financial instability, job search, and uncertainty in choosing the future path (Schriver and Teske 2020). Such ignorance creates strong psychological and emotional pressure on the child.

American scientists have proven that in the absence of an adequate response to the child's experience of severe stress caused by the end of school, the situation can worsen dramatically at the university. If the post-traumatic period goes unnoticed by the parents, the stress will then subside, but at the university it will explode with new force, mixed with emotions from physical and mental overstrain, a large volume of new information, and an increased sense of responsibility (Cho and Hayter 2020).

There are also situations where parents simply do not agree with the child's choice and put quite a lot of pressure on him or her. This reaction by parents is due to worries about their children's outlooks (Glatz and Buchanan 2023). Many students struggle with self-determination, since adolescents are interested in many things, and it is quite difficult to decide on the profession (Evangelista 2015). This gives rise to many anxious thoughts about the future, both among students and their parents. Anxiety among graduates usually concerns the upcoming exams, university admission, and career choice. Parents, on the other hand, are confronted with worries related to their children's enrollment in a university program (Rinaldi et al. 2017). In addition to the difficulties in choosing a major, adolescents may be upset by the change in environment and team: the familiar school classroom is replaced by the university's lecture hall. The rhythm of life and the surrounding people change (Lavrijsen et al. 2022). Such a change in scenery puts a certain amount of pressure on the mental state. Furthermore, not many people are ready to let their familiar school community go and they find it difficult to make new friends (Estrada et al. 2020). Those who go to university in another city or even another country also encounter certain difficulties. Many people find it difficult to move out of their homes because they have to become used to living independently without the proper support from their loved ones (Firmin 2019). Some students deliberately choose not to pursue higher education, for a number of reasons (unwillingness to attain higher education, family's financial problems, etc.), and they go to work immediately after graduation. Such developments also bring various psychological changes. This is due to the need to quickly reach emotional maturity and accept responsibility in providing and helping the family on an equal footing with parents (García-González et al. 2021). School graduates also often face the stress of preparing for and taking exams. Such stress occurs because of intense preparation for exams and can also be associated with excessive pressure from parents (Oh et al. 2022). Anxiety and stress arise from the admission procedure in the chosen university.

Anxiety or fear can be easily defined as nervousness caused by sad and stressful thoughts and actions and also by the idea that something bad will inevitably happen (Ates 2019). Fear is a universal emotion; it is a normal experience that an individual goes through at certain stages of life. Generally, this response that individuals express entails feelings of fear, insecurity, and confusion when they feel bad about the situation. But if the fear is constant and regular, we can then speak about the future leading to failure in personal life (Wu and Lee 2017). There are different types of anxiety based on how it manifests with school graduation: fear of missing the school community, fear of making new interpersonal connections, fear of communication (it has significantly strengthened after long-term distance education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic), and fear of being misunderstood or ashamed (de Brito Gomes Lima et al. 2017).

Insufficient scores during exams can be the main problem. In this context, chronic stress, burnout, and apathy can develop (Paralkar and Knutson 2021). Students need to work with a social worker to attain help with self-determination and to combat anxiety and stress. Conversations with a social worker can be taken either individually or with parents in a family therapy format (Northey and Rivett 2020). Family therapy sessions can

help to resolve conflicts within the family, help parents to get to know their children better, and reduce the psychological stress on them. For this reason, the emotional burden on adolescents is reduced, which makes them feel better about themselves. With understanding prevailing in the family, students have more freedom in choosing their careers (Pretorius et al. 2018). During these sessions, the social worker listens to both sides and helps to come to a common solution (Grünbaum 2018). Art therapy practices are conducted by means of catharsis through various types of art. During sessions, the participants' main task was to go through their own emotions and express them through art (drawing on a canvas, music-making, dance, acting, etc.). Attention should be also drawn to the fact that no one evaluates a person's talent; the main task is to release negative emotions (Leigh 2021). Cognitive therapy practices can also be used to help students psychologically. The method develops useful habits as well as strategies for dealing with emotional stress (breathing practices and various physical exercises). This technique helps to combat stress as well as teach students how to manage their time in order to better prepare for the finals (Manganelli et al. 2019). Because of the above, the problem tops the agenda. Since this topic is quite comprehensive, all possible factors affecting the mental state of students and their parents should be considered.

### 1.1. Literature Review

#### 1.1.1. The Problem of Graduation

Researchers from the University of North Carolina (U.S.) looked at the problem of graduation among emotionally unstable adolescents. The study discussed that students with emotional problems have average or poor academic achievements by the end of school and do not look into further opportunities. This is because children do not have the motivation to learn or any interest in everyday life. However, when undergoing psychotherapy sessions, students' academic achievements improved and ideas regarding further learning opportunities emerged (Mills and Sabornie 2022). Researchers from the University of Colorado (U.S.) studied the effects of the school graduates' social and emotional state on their academic achievements and opportunities. The experiment revealed that socially and emotionally stable students had better academic achievements and progress than their peers with lower mental state indicators. Researchers have also looked at two major problems that reduced stability of the emotional state: stress and lack of motivation. When these factors are minimized or eliminated, not only can academic achievements be improved but many opportunities for high school graduates can open up (Davis et al. 2014). Researchers from universities in Canada and the United States have also looked at the impact of emotional state on student development and achievements. Their study sought primarily to introduce social and emotional learning into the education system. With the inclusion of this practice in the school curriculum, an improvement in capacity and motivation among students has been observed, leading to increased academic achievements. Based on this, researchers made a conclusion regarding the need to focus on the students' mental disorders because they affect the level of learning and concentration. Supporting students in their aspirations is important as well (Oberle et al. 2016).

#### 1.1.2. Types of Graduation Stress Therapies

Researchers from universities in China studied the effects of academic stress and its regulation among adolescents. A survey was conducted among students regarding their emotional state before the exam. The findings suggested that as the exam's date approached, the negative emotional state among the students escalated. Emotional self-regulation among students had two vectors. Some suppressed their emotions, while others, on the contrary, experienced enhanced emotionality. Adolescents who resorted to suppression, according to the test outcome, had a more stable mental state. This suggests that not everyone can cope with stress to the same degree and might need to seek the help of psychologists (Sang et al. 2018).

As was concluded by scientists from the University of Missouri (U. S.), art therapy can be successfully used to improve psychological symptoms caused by stressful events (fear or depression) (Eum and Yim 2015). Art therapy used for this purpose can be explained as a method of correcting emotional states that has long been adopted by psychologists. With its help, one can correct one's own emotional state, relax, or focus on one or another work. When conducting art therapy, a person does not need to limit himself or herself to paper, pencils, and the use of traditional drawing methods. This method of correction is highly appreciated by specialists because it allows the patient to open up without violating his personal space and without asking any questions (Campbell et al. 2016). Art therapy can be of such types: art therapy in the narrow sense, namely painting, origami, etc.; music therapy, drama therapy, or dance and movement therapy; and bibliotherapy (tale therapy is one of its methods). Art therapy can be used as a method of coping with graduation anxiety by expressing hidden negative emotions and feeling freedom in such a way (Blomdahl et al. 2018).

Family psychotherapy is another method of helping a graduate to overcome hidden anxiety. It is a special type of interaction of a psychotherapist (or psychotherapists) with one or more family members aimed at correcting interpersonal relationships and eliminating emotional and behavioral disorders in the family. In family psychotherapy, the "client" for the family therapist is not the individual who is the reason for seeking help but the entire family (all its members). In the process of family psychotherapy, attention is focused on personality development in the family environment and in direct interaction with all members of the family system. Family psychotherapy is carried out in stages. At the first stage, work is carried out with a problematic member of the family, whose role is most often played by a child, the smallest and most defenseless, which makes it clear to parents that all is not well in the family; that the family needs help. In the second stage, parents and older family members are included in the work, gradually realizing their responsibility for the positive outcome of the therapy (Asen et al. 2018).

Researchers from the University of Melbourne, Australia, studied the effects of stress on high school and university students. Stress related to academic standards can adversely impact students' academic achievements and motivation. Researchers also believe that prolonged exposure to stress can lead to depression, anxiety disorders, and sleep disorders. These factors result in emotional exhaustion and lower academic achievements. To deal with the stressors, children and adolescents should be taught skills to cope with anxiety and stress. The researchers also concluded that the academic program causing stress should also be subject to correction (Pascoe et al. 2020). Researchers from universities in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia looked at the role of sources of social support for students. In the experiment, respondents were tested for the severity of depression. As it turned out, the students' emotions are quite strongly influenced by the social support from family and friends. The study suggested that students experiencing problems with relationships in the family or receiving insufficient support are more likely to suffer from depression and have lower levels of emotional state than their peers. As a result, the researchers concluded that the relationship within a family greatly affects the respondents' emotional state. As a consequence, this factor has a great influence on the motivation to learn and academic achievements (Alsubaie et al. 2019). In Punjab, India, researchers looked at the relationship between anxiety factors, commitment to a future profession, and social support for students. Learning is often associated with stress and anxiety. In this context, many students face emotional exhaustion. This factor reduces commitment to the future profession and decreases motivation to learn. Researchers concluded that students who received enough social support from their families coped with anxiety much better than their classmates. This implies that due to stable and positive relationships and support from loved ones, motivation for personal development in the profession also improves (Kautish et al. 2021).

The above also implies that the main social and psychological problems of school graduates are attributed to anxiety and depression. Attention should be drawn to the fact

that mutual understanding in the family and the support of loved ones play an important role in solving these problems. The need for psychotherapy at this period of personality development should also be taken into account.

### *1.2. Problem Statement*

The experiment was motivated by additional research into the effects of graduation on the mental state of students and their parents. The study was designed to identify and measure the emotional aspects affecting students' learning and motivation as well as their relationship to the social and psychological environment in the family. A total of 50 students participated in the experiment. The respondents' ages ranged from 16 to 18 years. The students' parents were also invited to undergo conversations with a social worker. Overall, 98 parents, aged from 36 to 45 years, participated in the study. The experiment was conducted at Ajman Private School (which was approved to conduct the study in it), Ajman Emirate, United Arab Emirates. The main objective of the study was to improve the respondents' emotions and to test the relationship of this factor to social wellbeing. The emotional state was assessed by a social worker.

## **2. Methods and Resources**

### *2.1. Research Design and Sample*

A simple random sampling study was conducted to assess the correlation of social and psychological factors on the emotional state of school graduates as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of special assistance. In total, 50 high school students participated in the experiment. The study itself involved simple random sampling using an online ad. The respondents were aged 16–18 years. Overall, 98 parents and guardians participated in the experiment involving conversations with a social worker who was a practitioner psychologist with 15 years of school-working experience. A social worker was appointed by a researcher in accordance with high school administration notices (age, experience, etc.). The study was conducted at Ajman University, Ajman, United Arab Emirates. The experiment resorted to a special set of techniques, which included family and art therapy to raise the emotional level and solve family conflicts of school graduates. Relevant questionnaires (Beck's Depression Inventory and Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale as well as the WAM test) were also used to check the results.

### *2.2. Experiment*

Prior to the experiment, respondents were required to take a series of tests (Beck Depression Inventory and Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale and the WAM questionnaire) pertaining to their emotional state. Students were tested using the Beck Depression Inventory (Erford et al. 2016). The test includes 21 questions to assess the severity of depression. According to the questionnaire, depression may be mild (no or minor depression), moderate (stable mild to moderate depression), or severe (major depression). The higher the number of points the respondent obtains in this test, the more severe the depression. This test was conducted in the presence of a psychologist from Ajman medical center. The results were also evaluated by another psychologist. The students also took the WAM test (Adams et al. 2016). The second test measured the wellbeing, activity, and mood. This questionnaire was also administered with involvement of the social worker who estimated all the results. Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale was the third questionnaire administered to students (Chao and Sung 2019). This test consists of 50 questions and shows a person's level of anxiety. The higher the score on this test, the more severe the anxiety. This questionnaire, as well as the previous ones, was completed in the presence of a social worker. Test scores were converted to a 10-point scale and calculated through the arithmetic mean of the entire sample. This method was chosen to simplify the calculations and to make the results clear. The experiment lasted six months. The respondents completed the questionnaires three times: the preliminary questionnaire before the study, the intermediate questionnaire after 3 months, and the final questionnaire at the end of the experiment. The research methodology itself

consisted of family conversations with a social worker and art therapy sessions (Bucciarelli 2016; Turns et al. 2019). During the sessions, the problems of relationships between children and their relatives were discussed. This practice emphasized the importance of parental support as well as finding compromises on issues important to the family (Fogarty et al. 2020). Sessions for each family were held once a week. The conversation with a social worker lasted one hour. The timing of the sessions was negotiated with respondents in advance. For comprehensive work with students and their parents, five social workers were involved. Art therapy was conducted solely for students. This strategy was used to reduce stress and anxiety among graduates. Art therapy sessions were conducted under the supervision of a social worker. There were no cases of students withdrawing from the sessions conducted. Parents did not attend them because they could have affected the students' openness during the sessions; however, they could become acquainted with their children's works after the end of each session. Classes included painting on canvas with oil paints, acrylic paints, watercolors, and pencils (respondent's choice). During sessions, the respondent chose the subject matter, materials, and colors for the drawing. This technique helped to reduce stress among students and to combat depression. The students' main task was to express their own emotions on the canvas (Potash et al. 2016). Classes were held in a special art studio (Clay Corner Studio). The facility's owner provided the room for art therapy classes free of charge. Sessions were conducted in groups of 10 persons each. Art therapy sessions took place once a week and lasted three hours. The timing was coordinated with the respondents and depended on school schedules and family conversations with a social worker.

### *2.3. Statistical Processing and Data Analysis*

The data from this experiment were analyzed using SPSS 26.0, a special statistical program. Visual interpretation of the outcomes was made with Microsoft Excel 2019.

### *2.4. Limitations*

The main limitation of this study was attributed to the simple random sampling. The emotional state of respondents is variable so its values did not have absolute accuracy. The intricacies in achieving absolute values were also due to the fact that the calculated data are presented as the group's arithmetic mean.

### *2.5. Ethical Issues*

All respondents were informed of the experiment's details verbally and in writing prior to the start of the experiment. The respondents signed their consent to participate in the study. As the respondents were under 18 years of age, the consent of their parents or guardians were also required. Parents were also given information about the experiment verbally and as signed forms. Parental consent to participate in family conversations with a social worker was also required. Such consents were obtained in writing.

The authors declare that the work is written with due consideration of ethical standards. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles approved by the Ethics Committee of Ajman University (Protocol No. 3 of 13 March 2021).

## **3. Results**

Prior to the experiment, respondents completed a series of questionnaires that measured their emotional state. The questionnaires included the WAM test (wellbeing, activity, and mood), the Beck's Depression Inventory, and the Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale. All results were converted to a 10-point system and calculated through the arithmetic mean. Following the preliminary test outcomes, the 'depression' criterion on the Beck Depression Inventory was equal to 6.8 points. Such a criterion shows the average severity of depression among respondents. This suggests that school graduates quite often develop depression from mild to severe, which is already a threat not only to mental health but also to physical health. On Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale, the anxiety factor, during the preliminary study

phase, amounted to 7.4 points. Such an outcome indicates an upper boundary of moderate anxiety and should be seen as the negative impact of several factors (problems in the family and school, an increased academic load, difficulties in communicating with classmates, etc.). Increased values of this factor can lead to insecurity and loss of motivation. Following the WAM test, the preliminary phase outcomes were also quite low. The ‘wellbeing’ criterion was 4.9 points. The ‘activity’ factor was equal to 5.2 points. ‘Mood’ scored 4.8 points in the preliminary phase. These indicators demonstrate a borderline emotional state between average and low levels. Table 1 shows the pre-test outcomes.

**Table 1.** Preliminary test outcomes for graduates.

Beck Depression Inventory		
Depression		6.8 points
Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale		
Anxiety disorder		7.4 points
WAM test		
Wellbeing		4.9 points
Activity		5.2 points
Mood		4.8 points

Three months after the beginning of the experiment, an intermediate test was conducted. According to the Beck Depression Inventory, the results dropped to an average score of 5.7 for the sample. Such an outcome implies an improvement in the indicator and a reduced depression among respondents. However, at the intermediate phase, the entire sample still has a moderate depression but there has been a decrease in the range of this level. According to Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale, the anxiety factor also fell to 6.1 points. Such an outcome suggested a reduced anxiety. The anxiety score is at a moderate level. In the intermediate phase, it fell only within the range but this also showcases a positive trend. Such a criterion as ‘wellbeing’ increased to 6.0 points. ‘Activity’ increased to 6.5 points. The ‘mood’ factor rose to 6.1 points. Progress is also evident on the WAM test. The respondents’ emotional state reached a stable moderate level during the intermediate measurement phase. Table 2 presents the outcomes of the intermediate test.

**Table 2.** Intermediate test outcomes for graduates.

Beck Depression Inventory		
Depression		5.7 points
Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale		
Anxiety disorder		6.1 points
WAM test		
Wellbeing		6.0 points
Activity		6.5 points
Mood		6.1 points

After three months, the final testing of the graduates took place. According to the Beck Depression Inventory, the score dropped to an average of 4.6 points. This implies a decrease in depression to a low level. The final test suggests that the severity of depression has moved from the moderate range to the mild range. Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale also showcased a decrease to 4.8 points. This suggests that the level of anxiety also fell to low levels and showcases the positive trend. This total also indicates a move from the moderate to the mild range. The ‘wellbeing’ factor increased to 7.5 out of a possible 10 points, according to the final test. ‘Activity’ increased to 8.1 points. The ‘mood’ criterion also increased to 7.6 points. The WAM test outcome also demonstrates a positive trend. At the time of the final test, the respondents’ emotional state had risen to the upper limit of

the moderate range and the ‘activity’ factor rose to the lower limit of the high level. Table 3 provides data on the final test outcome.

**Table 3.** Final test outcomes for graduates.

Beck Depression Inventory	
Depression	4.6 points
Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale	
Anxiety disorder	4.8 points
WAM test	
Wellbeing	7.5 points
Activity	8.1 points
Mood	7.6 points

Looking at the outcomes, a good case can be made about the effectiveness of this methodology of emotional support among graduates. Students’ mental states correlate with relationships within the family. Such conclusions can be drawn on the basis of a positive correlation between test outcomes and psychotherapy. Depression and anxiety tend to fall and the emotional state improves. Family and art therapies help students to cope with a number of mental problems.

#### 4. Discussion

Researchers at Ohio State University (U.S.) studied the effect of family therapy on the emotional state of children with depression and stress. With simple random sampling, researchers arranged joint psychotherapy sessions for school students and their parents. Students were also given omega-3 fatty acids. As a result, students’ stress levels significantly fell and depression went into remission (Fristad et al. 2019). A comparison of the U.S. researchers’ findings with this study suggests that family therapy is rather effectively applied for the solution of emotional problems among adolescents and has sufficient potential influence. The research has shown that according to Taylor’s Manifest Anxiety Scale, anxiety test data also showcased a decrease from 7.4 to 4.8 points. The difference was that this study did not use omega-3 fatty acids but resorted to art therapy instead as an additional input to address the problem.

Researchers from King’s College in London (UK) addressed the impact of family therapy in helping adolescents with eating disorders. A study with simple random sampling was conducted with adolescents (13 to 18 years old) and their parents. The respondents attended psychotherapy sessions under the guidance of a psychotherapist. Special attention during sessions was paid to the expansion of communication between family members and reduction in criticism from parents as well as reduction in adolescents’ perception of such criticism. The outcomes were quite strong and the majority of respondents at the end of the experiment experienced remission of their disorders and reduced stress levels (Stewart et al. 2015). Before comparing the study of British researchers with the results of this experiment, attention should be drawn to the fact that eating disorders are inextricably linked to stress. Also, many of them develop amid depression and stress. The similarity of the two studies comes from the fact that both of them resorted to almost identical psychological support methods. Furthermore, in both studies, the technique was used to resolve mental health problems. The differences were in the details of the problems’ context. In contrast to the experiment of London researchers, art therapy was used in this study in addition to family therapy. Researchers at the University of Rochester analyzed best practices for supporting adolescents with depression and suicidal tendencies. The study revealed that family therapy is the most effective technique for solving this problem. The researchers experimented with sessions for adolescents and their parents. During the sessions, a psychologist addressed various family problems faced by respondents. In turn, adolescents were taught resilience to stress and their parents were taught to accept their



own children and reduce criticism. The findings suggested the technique's effectiveness. At the end of the experiment, the severity of depression among respondents fell to a state of remission (Glenn et al. 2019). Comparison of the findings of the Rochester study with the outcomes of this experiment suggests that in both studies the method of family therapy showcased its effectiveness. In both cases, the severity of depression fell to a minimum. The only difference was that in this study, art therapy was used and the outcomes included an anxiety and mood scale. Researchers from Sweden addressed the art therapy's effect on people suffering from depression. According to experts, the primary task of this technique is to express the emotions during depression in the visual arts format. The experiment proved that people undergoing psychotherapy sessions with art cope better with depression than those who are not exposed to this technique. This implies that this technique is quite effective in combating depression (Blomdahl et al. 2016). This study also resorts to art therapy to combat depression, which demonstrates its effectiveness. The difference is that in this study, art therapy is coupled with family therapy. The findings not only show the severity of depression but also the mood scale. The anxiety level is also taken into account. Researchers from Istanbul University (Turkey) looked at the impact and effectiveness of art therapy on anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Refugee children from Syria participated in the study. First, the respondents' mental state was assessed using the depression and anxiety scales. After that, the group of children underwent art therapy sessions for five days. The findings suggest that all respondents demonstrated reduced levels of negative indicators of mental state, which corroborates the effectiveness of this technique (Ugurlu et al. 2016). In our research, the 'wellbeing' factor increased to 7.5 out of a possible 10 points according to the final test. 'Activity' increased to 8.1 points. The 'mood' criterion also increased to 7.6 points. The WAM test outcome also demonstrates a positive trend. At the time of the final test, the respondents' emotional state had risen to the upper limit of the moderate range and the 'activity' factor rose to the lower limit of the high level. A comparison of both studies suggests that art therapy helps to cope with negative emotional states, regardless of the trigger that led thereto. In both cases, the techniques showcased a fairly good result. The only difference is that in this study, art therapy was applied in combination with family therapy sessions.

The above suggests that both techniques, which were used in combination, are quite effective for achieving the goal. However, it pays to keep in mind that the study resorts to simple random sampling and all outcomes are presented through the groupwise arithmetic mean. Therefore, more research in this area might be needed to obtain more targeted data.

## 5. Conclusions

The experiment outcomes suggest that the combined use of the two techniques showcased good results and proved their effectiveness. The average score on the Beck Depression Inventory prior to the study was 6.8 out of 10 points. On the Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale, the average score was 7.4 points. According to the WAM test, the 'wellbeing' factor before the beginning of the experiment was equal to 4.9 points. 'Activity' was 5.2 out of 10 points and 'mood' was equal to 4.8 points. After completion of the experiment, the mean value on the Beck Depression Inventory fell to 4.6 points. The result on the Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale fell to 4.8 points. The WAM outcomes increased. The 'wellbeing' factor increased to 7.5 points. The 'activity' factor increased to 8.1 points. 'Mood' rose to 7.6 points. The findings suggest the relevance of psychological support and family therapy for graduates. However, it pays to keep in mind that the study was based on simple random sampling. Furthermore, all results were calculated through the arithmetic mean and do not claim to be absolutely accurate. The evaluation of the emotionality criterion is also variable because it is affected by many factors. This provides a perspective for further study of the issue. Additional tests may be needed to obtain more accurate results. The study also looked at the use of family and art therapy techniques to improve students' emotions and combat depression and anxiety disorders. The findings suggest the feasibility of these methods. In real-world contexts, these techniques can be implemented not only for high

school graduates but in general for high school students of all ages. These strategies are also worth applying to college and university students.

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