

# Why art and culture matters for mental health?

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According to [WHO:n scoping review](#) (2019)  
on *What is the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing?*

☐ Cultural participation supports

- ✓ Sensory activation
- ✓ Nurtures imagination
- ✓ Cognitive stimulation
- ✓ Evocation of emotion
- ✓ Aesthetic engagement
- ✓ Social interaction
- ✓ Physical activity

**“Arts and cultural participation not only as a methodology for management and treatment, but also for prevention (of mental health challenges), promotion of mental health and sustaining mental wellbeing.”**

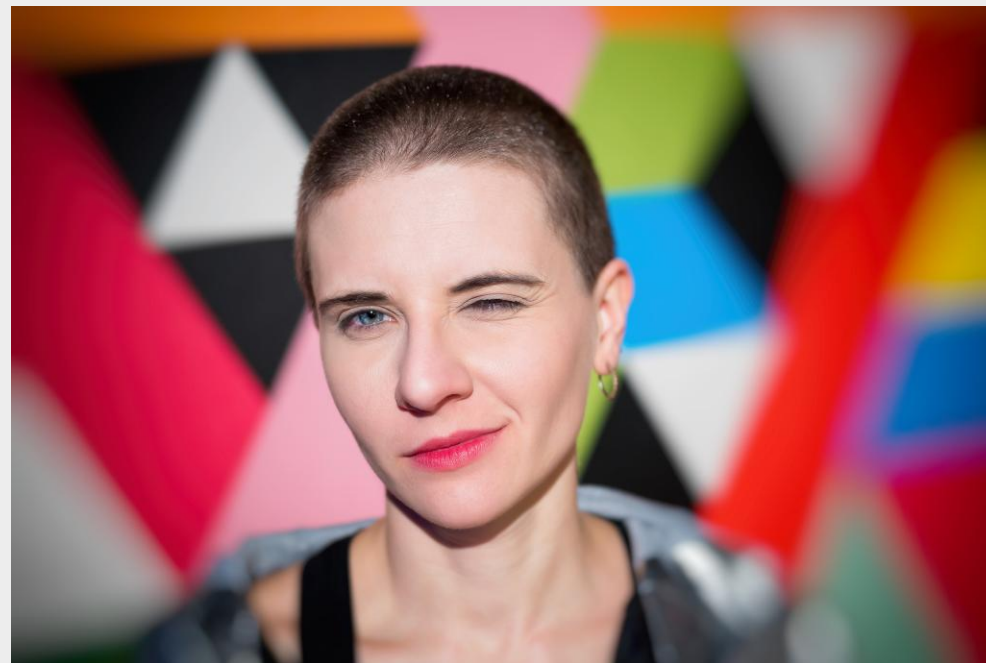
# Arts and cultural activities

- Foster mental health
- Better the mood
- Prevent or at least reduce negative feelings
- Support dealing with overwhelming feelings like stress
- Strengthen resilience
- Improve self-awareness and self-esteem



# Arts and cultural activities also

- Reduce loneliness
- Advance conflict resolution
- Reduce tension (i.e. among various social groups)
- Help reach out to marginalized communities of the society
- Reduce stigma (and assumptions)
- Strengthen cooperation, communication, interaction skills
- Foster the feeling of belonging



# MENTAL HEALTH ART WEEK ([MHAW](#))

- Nation wide, annual event during the last week of May
- ✓ To raise awareness on the positive and empowering impact of arts activities on mental wellbeing
- ✓ To offer low threshold access to cultural activities & events
- ✓ To try out creative methods in a safe environment
- ✓ To reduce stigma attached to mental health
- ✓ To foster interaction among diverse communities





# Mental Health Art Week themes over the years

- 2025: Coping skills & one step at a time
  - Together with the circus and dance sector
- 2024: Connections
  - Together with the symphony orchestras
- 2023: Feel your emotions
  - Together with the theatres
- 2022: Hope and courage
  - Together with the visual art galleries
- 2021: Online
  - Together with Finnish museums
- 2019: Together 4 Ever
- 2018: Strength in diversity
- 2017: Hope, joy and strength





# 2024 in a nutshell

- 210 events accross Finland
- 230 partner organizations
- 215 volunteers
- 17 000 participants
- tens of thousands of people thru social media



# Some feedback from participants

"this was the first time in my life I was in a concert hall listening to a symphony orchestra. I would not have guessed that i'd love it. I loved it. And I heard they sometimes have open doors for their rehearsals. I want to be back!"

"i felt connected for the first time after a long long time. The feeling that i am not alone... It feels like i've got stones removed from my guts"

"i used to dance when i was young. Than life happened... this was such an awakening for me, i remembered how much joy dancing brought me. I want to start dancing again."

"Usually I go to museums alone. But sharing this experience with others helped me see things i have not seen before."

"Thank you for organizing this. Hearing artists' own stories of coping with mental health challenges was very powerful. We need more open discussions. And the atmosphere was lovely, it was like being in a podcast studio."

[mieli.fi](https://mieli.fi)

How do you take care of your  
**cultural wellbeing?**

#connectingtune

**MH20  
AW24** mieli

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