

Calligraphy and Mental Health

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Agenda

- Henry Kao's research on Chinese calligraphy
- The brush as a tool for expression
- Important characters to keep in mind
- Tao calligraphy
- 2018 Study: Does Chinese calligraphy therapy reduce neuropsychiatric symptoms?
- 2022 Study: The effect of calligraphy as an art therapy intervention
- Summary



Henry Kao

- The University of Hong Kong professor
- Written four books on Chinese calligraphy
- Given over two-hundred scientific papers and conference presentations in English
- Research focuses on the neurobiology of calligraphy and its impact on humans
- Chinese calligraphy handwriting (CCH): A case of rehabilitative awakening of a coma patient after stroke
- Effect of calligraphy training on hyperarousal symptoms for childhood survivors of the 2008 China earthquakes
- Cognitive-Neural Effects of Brush Writing of Chinese Characters: Cortical Excitation of Theta Rhythm



Kao's Conclusions

- Engages our sensory and cognitive systems
 - Nervous system responds to these movements, providing immediate sensory feedback
- Character writing creates an intimate relationship that influences mental and physical well-being
- Heightened attention and concentration creates psychological slow down and relaxation
- Induces theta waves, which are associated with deep relaxation and meditation
- Can positively impact heart rate, skin temperature, and respiratory rate
- Calligraphy in any language can be healing



Using the Brush to Reflect

- Powerful tool for reflection and emotion expression
- Requires high attention and concentration, leading to relaxation and the integration of the mind and body
- Difficult to control your brush
 - Process can help people forget negative thoughts and start to heal
- Expressing ourselves creates a sense of freedom, especially when writing in a non-native language



Characters to Keep in Mind

松 (Sōng) - Relax/Let go

触 (Chù) - Engage/Make contact

息 (Xi) - Notice breathing

意 (Yì) - Flow with intention



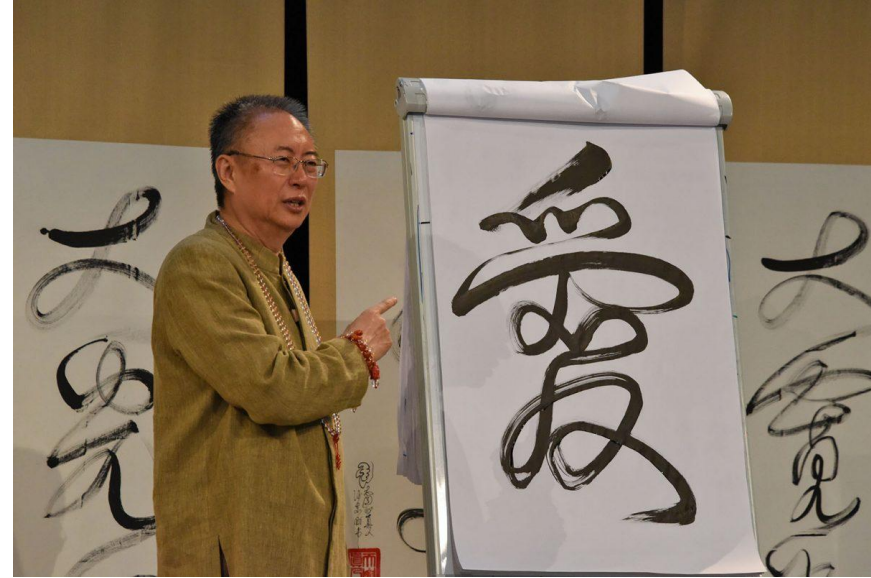
Tao Calligraphy

One-stroke calligraphy

Emphasizes unconditional love, forgiveness, harmony, and flourishing from the Tao Source

“The extraordinary healing art of Tao Calligraphy radiates out a heavenly frequency and vibration that can be harnessed by those connecting with this vibrational field to help them heal, rejuvenate, transform, and enlighten their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyzhsVOBbvY>



2018 Study: Does Chinese Calligraphy Therapy (CCT) Reduce Neuropsychiatric Symptoms?

- Kuan-Yu Chu, Chih-Yang Huang & Wen-Chen Ouyang
- Analyzed 21 articles
- CCT significantly reduced psychosis, anxiety, depression symptoms
- Significantly improved cognitive function and neurofeedback
- Significantly reduced the positive psychopathological expression of schizophrenia symptoms

Conclusion: “CCT exerts a curative effect on neuropsychiatric symptoms, but the evidence remains insufficient”



2022 Study: The Effect of Calligraphy as an Art Therapy Intervention

- Abdullah Sarman & Ulviye Günay
- Determine the effect of calligraphy on the anxiety and depression of 14-17 year old psychiatric patients
- 60-min calligraphy sessions for three weeks
- Significant difference between control group and calligraphy group's anxiety scores



Summary: Calligraphy as a Mindful Practice

- The intentional movement and concentration required in calligraphy foster a state of mindfulness
- Engaging in activities requiring focus can enhance mental clarity and reduce symptoms of anxiety
- Serves as a non-verbal mode of emotional expression, aiding in emotional regulation and mental health

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Thank You!

Sources

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