

Fear not: Creativity killed the Covid.

Flexible thinking and emotions in intellectual disability

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In a historical moment like the present one, characterized by a continuous flow of information and emotions, it becomes even more important to use flexible cognitive strategies that allow us to deal with change in a functional and adaptive way. An area of particular attention related to the pandemic concerns the emotional domain, which is often challenged due to quarantine and social isolation. This issue becomes even more critical for frail people, for example in the case of disability, for whom the deprivation of this area is problematic at a high level.

In collaboration with a social cooperative in the Milan area, after the first quarantine, we proposed a training program for users with intellectual disabilities (ID). We implemented a creative pathway aimed at supporting participants in understanding and regulating their emotions to prevent them to be overwhelmed during this difficult period. Therefore, we designed a weekly creative training that lasted 5 weeks and covered different emotional topics and experiences. Eight users, 3 women, and 6 men took part in the training. They were divided into two sub-groups and were aged between 22 and 51 years.

The results of the pre- and post-training assessments showed significant differences in emotional awareness and understanding. Also, our data revealed an impact on fear management, suggesting that the extension of similar programs could be useful for everyone facing negative emotions that strongly characterize the present context.

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