



A Resource for Understanding and Measuring the Impact of Crafting on Health

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Acknowledgments

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Background & Purpose

Many researchers have published information about health outcomes related to crafting. The literature review we started in 2023 indicated that many of the published research studies focused on the effects of knitting, sewing, and other handicrafts, mostly as hobbies. Most studies included white people, women, older people, and people living in North America and Europe. A few studies focused on communities of color, a few studies included people with specific health conditions, and one study focused on people who had experienced community-level trauma (natural disaster). We continue to search for an increasingly diverse set of sources, and will update this resource periodically.

This resource:

- lists health outcomes that were intentionally studied and those that emerged in the studies;
- includes a list of methods or approaches used to study the relationship between crafting and health; and
- outlines some steps for getting started with research on crafting and health.

Makers and craft artists specifically may be interested in utilizing this resource to identify methods to better understand and share the health outcomes and impact related to your efforts in and with communities.

How does Crafting Affect Health?

**Understanding What
Research Says**



CRAFT & HEALTH

Illustrated Research Review

LAST UPDATED JAN '24

IDENTITY

- ACCOMPLISHMENT/ACHIEVEMENT - 24, 28, 33, 34, 36
- FULFILLMENT - 32
- PURPOSE - 21, 29, 36
- SELF-CONFIDENCE - 20, 24, 25
- CONTINUITY - 40, 45
- DISCOVERY - 12
- EFFICACY - 4, 31
- EXPRESSION - 1
- IMAGE - 38
- SENSE OF SELF - 11, 23, 31, 40, 44
- USEFULNESS - 5

PHYSICAL

- BODY REGULATION - 14, 33
- ENERGY - 31
- HEART RATE - 14
- PHYSICAL SKILLS - 26, 33
- TENSION - 1 (less)

EMOTIONS

- CALM - 5, 21, 44
- COMFORT - 18
- ENJOYMENT - 18, 37
- ESCAPE - 37
- HAPPINESS - 5, 20, 25, 29, 36, 41
- HOPE - 23, 25, 39
- PEACE - 20
- MOTIVATION - 4, 35
- PLEASURE - 18
- RELAX - 3, 5, 18, 20, 26, 27, 28, 29
- SATISFACTION - 21, 44
- STRESS RELEASE - 1, 30, 36, 43
- SPIRITUALITY - 4, 26
- TRUST - 20

HOW DOES CRAFTING AFFECT HEALTH?

PROCESSES

- ADHERING TO MED ADVICE - 7, 10
- AGENCY - 24
- CREATIVITY - 42
- CHALLENGE - 6, 18
- COGNITIVE THINKING - 6, 21, 26, 33, 41
- CONTROL - 4, 21
- COPING - 38
- EMPOWERMENT - 35, 36
- FLOW - 26
- GROWTH - 23, 33, 34, 37
- HEALING - 3, 4
- MANAGING LIFE EVENTS - 5
- MANAGING MENTAL HLTH COND. - 5
- MEMORY - 35
- RECOVERY - 23, 42
- SKILLS - 25

SOCIAL

- ACTIVISM - 13, 48
- BELONGING - 2, 5, 31, 36
- COMMUNITY MEANING - 40
- CONNECTEDNESS - 6, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 31
- CULTURAL - 3, 29, 33
- FAMILY SKILLS TRANSFER - 12
- INCLUSION - 25
- HISTORIC PRIDE - 3, 48
- JOY IN CONNECTION - 12, 29
- LONELINESS - 22, 24, 26, 41
- MAKING FRIENDS - 21
- ORG. CONNECTION - 21
- RELATEDNESS - 4, 29, 30, 31, 32, 37
- INTERACTIONS - 39, 43
- SUPPORT - 26

CONDITIONS

- ANXIETY - 4, 30 ↑ 20, 21
- DEPRESSION - 30
- PTSD (POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER) - 23
- SENSE OF WELL-BEING - 16, 29, 31
- SENSE OF SECURITY - 32

The health effects listed here were identified in research studies found through a literature review. Some studies asked about specific health effects and some studies asked people to share the effects they experienced.

Health Effects of Crafting Studied in Research Articles

Article citations are hyperlinked below.

Physical - What is happening to the body

Body regulation - [14](#), [33](#)

Energy - [31](#)

Heart rate - [14](#)

Physical skills - [26](#), [33](#)

Tension release - [1](#)

Affect - Emotional responses

Calm - [5](#), [21](#), [44](#)

Comfort - [18](#)

Enjoyment - [18](#), [37](#)

Escape - [37](#)

Happiness - [5](#), [20](#), [25](#), [29](#), [36](#), [41](#)

Hope - [23](#), [25](#), [39](#)

Peace - [20](#)

Motivation - [4](#), [35](#)

Pleasure - [18](#)

Relaxed - [3](#), [5](#), [18](#), [20](#), [26](#), [27](#), [28](#), [29](#)

Satisfaction - [21](#), [44](#)

Stress release - [1](#), [30](#), [36](#), [43](#)

Spirituality - [4](#), [26](#)

Trust - [20](#)

Identity - Related to self

Accomplishment/Achievement - [24](#), [28](#), [33](#), [34](#), [36](#)

Fulfillment - [32](#)

Purpose - [21](#), [29](#), [36](#)

(Self-)Confidence - [20](#), [24](#), [25](#), [31](#), [35](#)

Self-continuity - [4](#), [40](#)

Self-discovery - [12](#)

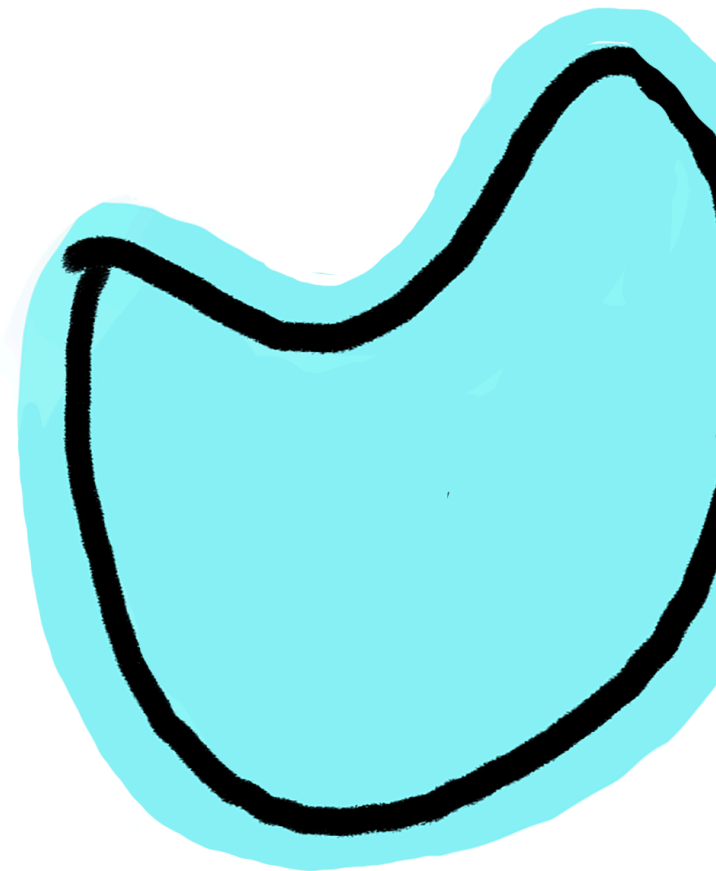
Self-efficacy - [4](#), [31](#)

Self-expression - [1](#)

Self-image - [38](#)

Sense of self - [11](#), [23](#), [31](#), [40](#), [44](#)

Usefulness - [5](#)



Psychological - Mental and emotional conditions

Anxiety - [30](#) (Increased - [20](#), [21](#))

Depression - [30](#)

PTSD - [23](#)

Sense of wellbeing - [16](#), [29](#), [31](#)

Sense of security - [32](#)

PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) - [20](#)

Processes - Active

Adhering to medical advice - [7](#), [19](#)

Agency - [24](#)

Creativity - [42](#)

Challenging - [6](#), [18](#)

Cognitive/Thinking - [6](#), [21](#), [26](#), [33](#), [41](#)

Control - [4](#), [21](#)

Coping - [38](#)

Empowerment - [35](#), [36](#)

Flow - [20](#)

Growth - [23](#), [33](#), [34](#), [37](#)

Healing - [3](#), [4](#)

Learning - [16](#), [22](#)

Managing difficult life events - [5](#)

Managing mental health conditions - [5](#)

Memory recall - [35](#)

Recovery - [23](#), [42](#)

Skillfulness - [25](#)

Social - With others

Activism - [13](#), [48](#)

Belonging - [2](#), [5](#), [31](#), [36](#)

Community meaning - [40](#)

Connectedness - [6](#), [20](#), [21](#), [23](#), [24](#), [26](#), [27](#), [31](#)

Culturally connected - [3](#), [29](#), [33](#)

Family skills transfer - [12](#)

Inclusion - [25](#)

Intergenerational history/pride - [3](#), [48](#)

Joy in connection - [12](#), [29](#)

Loneliness - [22](#), [24](#), [26](#), [41](#)

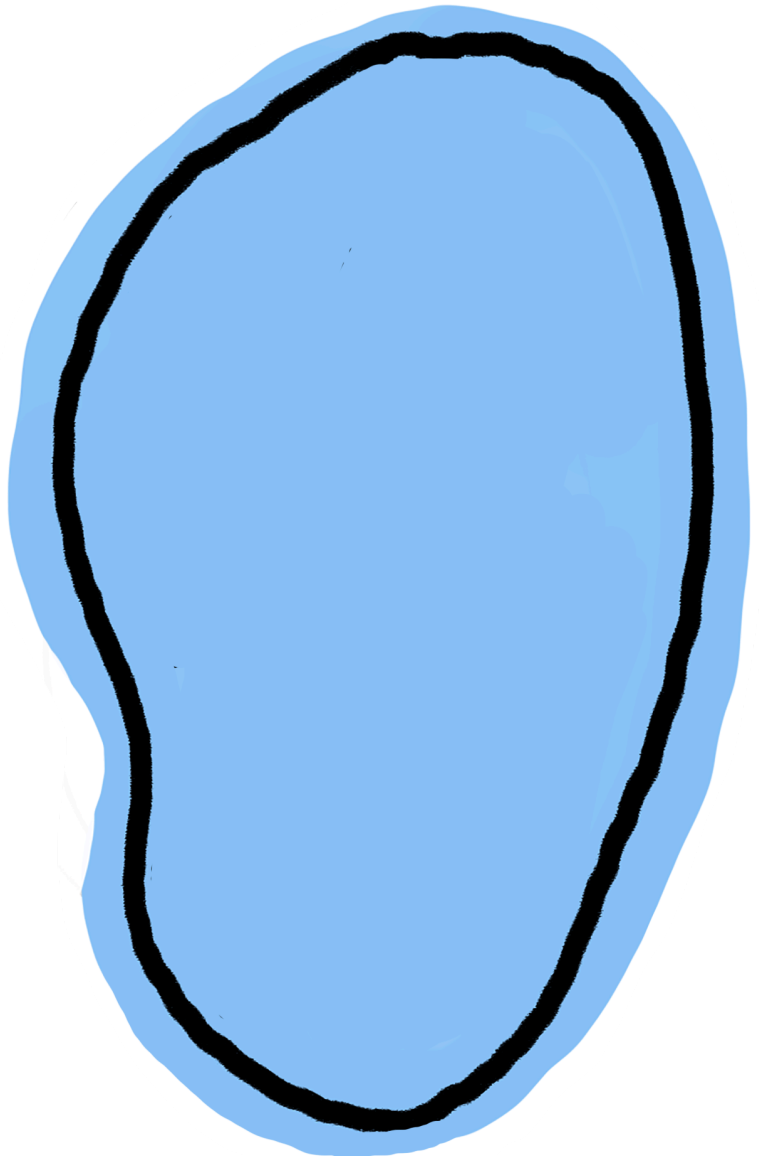
Making friends - [21](#)

Organizational connection - [21](#)

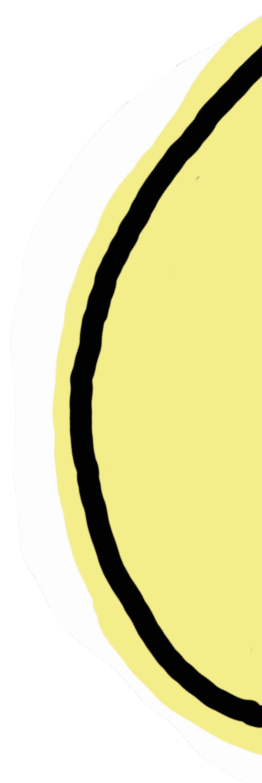
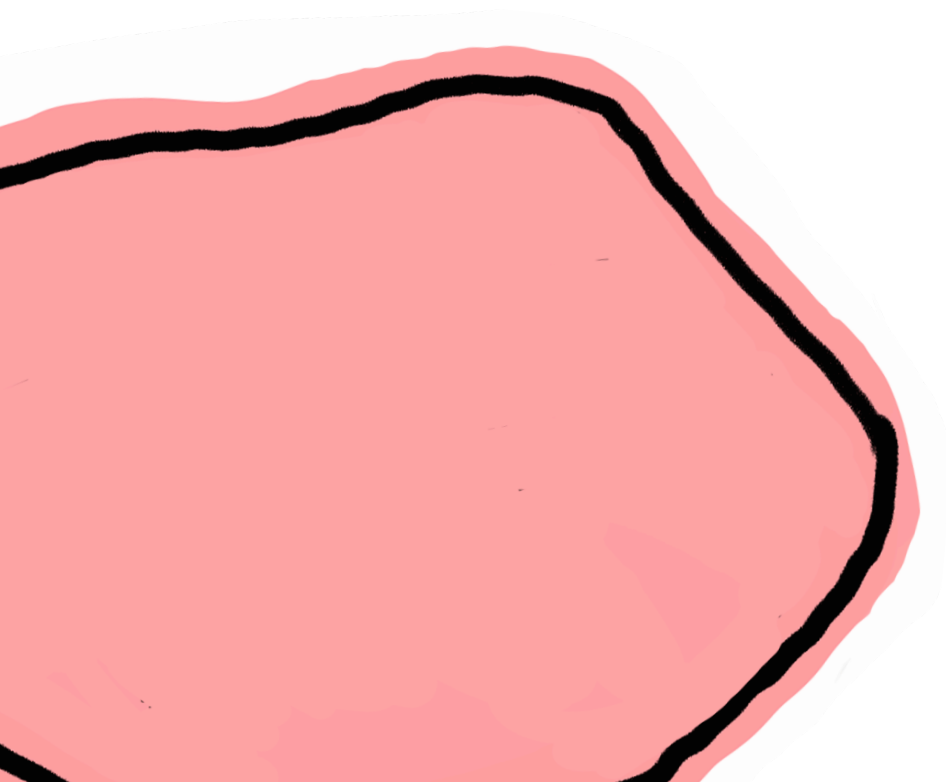
Relatedness/Relations - [4](#), [29](#), [30](#), [31](#), [32](#), [37](#)

Social interactions - [39](#), [43](#)

Social support - [26](#)



**How do
Researchers
Measure
Health Effects
of Crafting?**



Methods/Approaches Utilized in Research on Crafting and Health

Researchers collect information that is qualitative (comments/narratives) and quantitative (categories, yes/no, etc.). Sometimes they ask people about specific effects and sometimes they identify effects from what people share with them.

Method/Approach	Selected Study Authors
Case Study	Pöllänen
Field Visits	Jha
Filmed Tour of Craft Spaces	Grace
Focus Groups	Maidment
Individual Statements	Joseph
In-Person Questionnaire	Pearce
Interviews	Allain
Observations	Jha Myllys
Online Questionnaire/Survey	Riley Burns Lamont
Participant Observations	Jha
Pre-Post Questionnaires	Moore Swimmerton
Review of Social Media Posts	Mayne

Getting Started with Research

Ask yourself: Do I know or anticipate specific health effects of my crafting activity? OR Do I want to learn about what health effects this crafting activity has? OR BOTH?

Pick an approach/method: Based on whether you know what effects are of interest or not, how much time you have, what your skills are, and what feels best, you can choose one of the approaches/methods on the previous page or a different one.

Gather: Let people know that you are collecting information to help you better understand the health effects of crafting and how you will be using the information that you collect.

Analyze: Depending on the kind of information you gather, you may calculate percentages from responses to questions or find themes that emerge from comments or narratives.

Share: Create a document or presentation to share the information with people who participate, funders, supporters and more.

For more information or support, contact Ameena Batada at abatada@unca.edu.

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