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Meaning of the Self-Healing Experience of Rural Older  
Adult Women Living Alone Participating in Humanities  
Convergence Therapy

인문융합치료 참여 농촌지역 여성 독거노인의  
자기치유 경험의 의미

Dokyung Kim

A dissertation submitted to the  
Humanities Therapy  
And the committee on graduate studies of  
INHA UNIVERSITY  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of  
DOCTOR OF LITERATURE

February 2024



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Advisor: Prof. Kim, Youngsoon

A DISSERTATION

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INHA UNIVERSITY

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entitled Meaning of the Self-healing Experience of Rural Older Adult Women Living Alone Participating in Humanities Convergence Therapy

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## ABSTRACT

# Meaning of the Self-Healing Experience of Rural Older Adult Women Living Alone Participating in Humanities Convergence Therapy

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This qualitative case study analyzes the meaning of the self-healing experience of participating in a well-aging program for rural older adult women living alone. The study aimed to design a well-aging program for rural older adult women living alone and analyze their experiences from a self-healing perspective. As participants explored their life narratives during the program, they were able to experience self-understanding, reflection, creative self-expression, self-narrative reconstruction, coexistence, and move toward self-healing.

Korea is rapidly becoming an aged society as the older adult population increases, leading to various discourses on old age. The discourse on old age focuses mainly on successful, active, productive, and creative aging, emphasizing how to lead a healthy, active and happy life in later years. While the various discourses on aging have contributed to a growing awareness of and response to aging, they are limited by their emphasis on objective criteria that exclude the subjective diversity of aging. Issues arising from aging are personal matters before they are societal ones. Issues related to aging are personal before they are social. While older adults are viewed as objects to be



protected from a social welfare perspective, from an existential perspective they are subjects who influence society through their unique life stories.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the meaning of self-healing experiences by reflecting on one's life and reframing narratives with special meanings in old age through a humanities convergence therapy program for aging. Humanities Convergence Therapy (HCT)<sup>1)</sup> is an attempt to explore and reconstruct the narratives of research participants by integrating different fields such as humanities, arts, psychology and counseling. In particular, HCT focuses on self-healing, with the counselee as the subject of healing. Self-healing in HCT is classified into four concepts. It is an internal process in which research participants look within themselves as subjects rather than objects of healing. It focuses on restoring individual uniqueness rather than emphasizing normality by universal criteria. It is also about experiencing catharsis through creative self-expression, reframing one's self-narrative, and returning to coexistence.

Based on these theoretical discussions, the researcher selected three rural older adults women living alone and analyzed their experiences of participating in the HCT program and the meaning of the experience as self-healing through a qualitative case study. Data were collected between November 2022 and April 2023. The program comprised 10 sessions, one to two weeks in length, each lasting 60–90 min, and the data collected included activity dialogues, activity artworks, researcher notes, observer notes, and informal interview transcripts produced during the program. Data analysis was conducted through an inductive process of open coding, categorizing and thematizing to analyze the experience of participating in HCT from a self-healing perspective.

The study results are described in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, which are divided into two areas—analyzing the design of the HCT program for well-aging

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1) HCT is a field of study that combines techniques from the humanities and art psychotherapy, and will be abbreviated as HCT in the following text.

and the meaning of the experience of participating in the program from the perspective of self-healing.

An analysis of the experience of participating in the well-aging HCT program revealed four categories of meaning: “self-understanding,” “expressing creativity,” “reframing self-narrative,” and “experiencing coexistence.”

First, “self-understanding” was achieved through verbal and non-verbal communication, including life reminiscence, relationship exploration, art therapy, and four-cut cartoons. The various humanistic approaches helped create an integrated self-understanding by recalling and expressing memories of the past and reinterpreting that time. Self-understanding is a preliminary step in the healing process and is the basis for self-narrative reconstruction. The core categories that led to self-understanding were “recalling the highs and lows of life,” and “recognizing women’s identity in patriarchy.” The subcategories that led to the core categories are as follows. Recalling the highs and lows of life refers to the rewards and joys of having children and the painful memories of being stuck. Recognizing women’s identity in patriarchy manifested as knowing care and patience as a virtue, lying on family approval and expectations, Limitations on education and career opportunities.

Second, “expressing creativity” led to self-healing by revealing unrevealed narratives through art and experiencing catharsis through creative self-expression. The core categories of expressing creativity are “sensory experience of art,” and “creative self-expression.” The subcategories that led to the core categories are as follows. The sensory experience of art refers to positive emotions from art and the meaning of life through nostalgia. Creative self-expression refers to lifelong desires elevated to art and inner desires reflected in artworks.

Third, integrative self-understanding and self-reflection enabled “reframing self-narratives.” Research participants experienced self-healing in the process of reframing and recreating their narratives. The core categories of reframing

self-narratives are “recovering one’s uniqueness,” and “narrative transformation and creation.” The subcategories that led to the core category are as follows. Restoring one’s uniqueness were Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency, Moving from a negative self-perception to a positive one. Further, narrative transformation and creation include integrating scattered memories and redefining life by discovering meaning.

Fourth, “Coexistence experience” is the experience of self-healing through coexistence, which is the core of HCT. By looking at themselves in an integrated way through the eyes of others and restoring the subject of balance and harmony, individuals can not only regain their subjectivity but also live an other-oriented life. The core themes of the coexistence experience are “community belonging and connection,” and “companionship with others.” The subcategories that led to the core categories are as follows. Community belonging and connection are emotional connection in mutual support and a life partner that gets you going. Companionship with others are passing on life’s wisdom and sharing and nurturing life together.

The significance of this study is as follows. First, it is significant that a program for well-aging in old age was prepared. Second, this study is essential because it is not a single intervention method but a convergence approach to humanities and arts through various fields. Third, this study summarized and theorized the concept of self-healing in HCT and examined the meaning of the experience of participating in the HCT program. Fourth, this study is significant in that it is an outreach program for psychological and welfare support provided to older adults living alone in areas that are socially marginalized and hard to reach.

Keywords: rural older adult women living alone, humanities convergence therapy, self-healing, qualitative case study.



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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1. Purpose of Research

From an anthropological standpoint, older adults occupy a precarious position at the intersection of life and death, respect and disregard, and subject and object (Ko et al., 2016). Older adults were esteemed as valuable repositories of experience and wisdom in agrarian societies, and aging was viewed as a natural and meaningful aspect of life. However, in contemporary times, fueled by scientific and technological advancements, older adults are often perceived as ineffectual and unproductive, and aging is increasingly regarded as a form of disease (Lee, 2023; Lim, 2021). Consequently, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified aging as a disease in 2018, transforming it from a natural life process to a subject of medical intervention (Lee, 2023).

The perception of aging as a disease risks categorizing aging as a defect or incapacity, and there's a danger that older adults will be perceived as incapable beings. In particular, older adults are increasingly seen as a burden on the younger generation, due to increased in state pensions and old-age benefits. This has led to intergenerational conflict, ageism and the marginalization of older adults (Ko et al., 2018; Kim, 2022; Lim, 2021). However, older adults in the coming super-aged society should not be marginalized or objectified as the mainstream of society. Therefore, we must reflect on the worldly perspective of aging and older adults. Given the inevitability of old age for everyone, it is crucial to understand and view older adults as subjects, not just objects.

More recently, gerontology has reflected on how previous research approached aging from a problematic perspective, which led to the



marginalization of older people. The field now emphasizes the humanity and subjectivity of older individuals (Choi, 2019; Kim, 2021). In the past, gerontological research has focused on successful, active, productive, and creative aging, exploring how older individuals can live healthy, vibrant, and happy lives (Beom, 2017). Discourses on aging are essential in raising awareness of aging and providing solutions. However, they have limitations in emphasizing objective aging criteria and excluding the aging process's uniqueness and diversity. Cruikshank (2016) criticized such discourses on aging for shifting the responsibility to the individual and objectifying aging regarding economic utility. Furthermore, she emphasized a humanistic gerontology which accepts aging as part of life and sees it as a subjective way and attitude of living (Cruikshank, 2016: 342-344). Humanistic gerontology criticizes traditional gerontology, which views older individuals as objects to be managed, and focuses on the diverse lives experienced by older individuals as subjects of life (Kim & Koo, 2019; Kim, 2022).<sup>2)</sup> Old age is a personal challenge before it's a societal issue. older adults are not just objects to be protected from a social welfare perspective, but agents with unique life stories that influence society from an existential-humanistic viewpoint (Kim, & Koo, 2019). Therefore, researchers aim to focus on aging, emphasizing self-realization and human dignity in old age (Jang, 2018; Kim, 2012; Kim, 2019).

Kim (2012) argued that “well-aging” is about recognizing oneself as a

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2) Humanistic gerontology is one of the leading theories that criticizes previous gerontological research for focusing solely on the socio-psychological characteristics of individuals in their 'micro interactions', without providing a framework to explain this from a macro perspective. Critical gerontology argues that while aging is an inevitable fate for all human beings, the content of aging as experienced varies according to race, class and gender. It looks at societal changes. Humanistic gerontology criticises traditional gerontological studies for neglecting the fundamental question of human existence. It emphasizes the understanding of human experience and raises objections to methodologies that pursue only scientific approaches to research. These scholars disagree with the perspective of viewing older adults as objects of management and argue that older adults should be approached and transformed into subjects of life (Kim & Koo, 2019: 109-111).



dignified being in old age, rediscovering oneself and realizing one's identity. Jang (2018) saw "well-aging" as actively accepting the physical and emotional changes that come with aging, and creating a period of better self-transformation. Kim et al (2019) defined it as healthy and graceful aging, humane aging and continuous growth. Kim et al (2022) saw old age as a journey to death and an extension of a new life. Specifically, aging is not described as overcoming or loss, but as human maturity, wisdom, integration and transcendence. Erickson (1968) emphasized ego integrity as a critical aspect of aging in later life. Ego integrity involves the acceptance and positive reconfiguration of past life experiences in order to perceive life as meaningful (Erickson, 1968). Specifically, it refers to achieving feelings such as "I have lived a happy and satisfying life." The reason for the emphasis on different discourses on aging and the autonomous and unique well-aging of older people is related to the rapid demographic phenomenon of population aging.

Korea will become an aged society in 2023, with 18.4% of its older adult population, and is expected to become a post-aged society<sup>3)</sup> by 2025. Furthermore, Korea is projected to become the fastest post-aged society among the organization's member countries for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Chu, 2021). The proportion of older adult households in Korea is projected to increase from 24.1% in 2022 to 49.8% in 2050, accounting for nearly half of all households (Department of Statistics, 2022). The median age is projected to increase from 45.0 years in 2022 to 62.2 years in 2070, with older adults becoming the demographic mainstream of society. As the population ages, it's worth noting that the proportion of the oldest old, those aged 85 and over, proliferates (Statistics Korea, 2022). Jeonnam (25.2%), Gyeongbuk (23.9%), Jeonbuk (23.3%), Gangwon (22.9%), Busan (21.6%),

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3) A post-aged society is defined as a society in which the population aged 65 and over constitutes more than 20% of the total population, according to the United Nations.



Chungnam (20.6%) and Chungbuk (20.0%) have already entered the post-age society based on 2023 data. Except for Sejong, every region is projected to become a post-aged society by 2028 (Ministry of Statistics, 2021).

Specifically, as the population aged 80 and above grows, the number of older adults living alone also increases. The number of older adults who have lost their spouses or have children but still live alone is projected to increase steadily to 3.35 million by 2037 and 4.07 million by 2047 (Department of Statistics, 2021; Han, & Seo, 2022). The increase in the number of older adults living alone often means an increase in poverty and suicide rates among older adults.<sup>4)</sup> They are also more likely to be isolated from the external environment due to low healthcare practices, poor quality of life and satisfaction with their living environment, and weakness in social networks (Kang, 2016; Kim & Kwak, 2022). This isolation can lead to psychological and emotional difficulties and expose them to risks such as suicide attempts, dementia, and cognitive decline (Kim & Kwak, 2022; Nam, Jang & Hong, 2021; Son et al., 2019). The growing number of elderly living alone is characterized by a concentration of women in rural areas, low income, and low education, with rural areas having a higher proportion of older adult women living alone than urban areas (Won & Lee, 2016; Joung, 2015).

Rural older adult women living alone (ROAWLA)<sup>5)</sup> have unique characteristics nested in the overlapping contexts of “women”, “rural” and “living alone”. ROAWLA lived in areas dominated by patriarchal culture and had limited rights and autonomy. Most saw housework, farming, and raising children as life responsibilities, which they perceived as rewarding and proud. However, they were not adequately respected within the family and were

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4) Comprehensive Support Center for older adults Living Alone.  
<http://www.1991-2129.or.kr/sub01/sub0101.do>

5) A rural area is an area outside of a city that is administratively located in a town, village, or county, or is primarily agricultural. rural older adult living alone are older adult women living alone without family in the above areas. rural older adult living alone (ROAWLA) is abbreviated as a research participant in this paper.



marginalized in exercising property rights (Choi, 2019; Kim, 2020).

In this context, ROAWLA tend to be less independent than other older adult groups and often rely on the social welfare system for support (Chun & Kim, 2020; Lee et al., 2021). In addition, rural older adult women have limited access to specialized medical and health care services due to poor transport facilities and difficulties in using public transport. This results in a higher prevalence of disease and a lower rate of health screening (Department of Statistics, 2021; Huh et al., 2022). Additionally, low subjective health assessments, health care practices, retirement planning and perceptions of social security, including the geographical distance of rural areas, contribute to the isolation and depression of older adults living alone (Kim et al., 2019). ROAWLA are in a worse situation regarding quality of life, especially in later life<sup>6)</sup> (Son, 2022; Department of Statistics, 2021). In rural areas, regional marginalization and poor health and well-being outcomes can lead to low access to social and cultural services, making it difficult to implement policies for aging and independent living in later life (Kim, 2022; Kim & Lee, 2021).

The need for policies and support for rural older adults living alone and older adult women who are more vulnerable has been highlighted and the issue has been discussed internationally at the United Nations World Assembly on aging (WAA)<sup>7)</sup>. At the first WAA in Vienna and the second in Madrid, Spain, the important topic of shifting the perception of older adults from passive and dependent to active and independent was addressed. WHO also emphasizes active aging, the pursuit of healthy and independent aging (WHO, 2022). These international perspectives form the basis of national aging policies and also influence policy debates and developments.

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6) The differentiation of the age of older adults began with Neugarten (1974) and Laslett (1987). The age of older adults can be divided into early, middle, and late stages or based on life-history homogeneity. In many studies, those aged 65 to under 75 are considered early stage older adults, and those aged 75 and above are considered late stage older adults (Nam et al., 2019).

7) United Nations (2021). (<https://un.org/en/conferences>)에서 Retrieved 19 March 2023)



Lee et al (2021) note the limitations of aging policies in focusing on welfare issues and economic support related to physical aging. They argue that older people should be recognized as active and independent agents rather than passive and dependent objects. Yuk et al (2017) emphasized that happiness in old age came from subjectivity and autonomy, and noted that social systems such as pensions could not provide adequate support for older adults in the future. Therefore, policies for older people need to focus on welfare and economic support and on helping individuals to live their lives in their own way. Even if the government increases welfare spending, expands facilities for older adults and provides socio-economic support, there are limits to the ability of older people to age well as agents of their own lives (Song et al. 2012). House referred to “adding life to the added life” (Han, 2019: 48). This means that as older individuals move into the mainstream of society, a new understanding of older people’s existence and identity is crucial (Han, 2019: 6). Quality of life in old age has more to do with internal satisfaction, meaningfulness and a sense of agency and autonomy than with external factors (McLaughlin, Connell & Heeringa, 2010). Therefore, improving inner quality of life in old age requires an integrated understanding of life, restoring identity in old age, accepting aging, reconstructing values about old age, and a positive view of life (Song et al., 2012).

Therefore, this study focuses on how older adults reflect on and reconstruct their past lives to regain agency in old age. HCT is an approach that seeks balance and harmony of the subject through narrative exploration and reconstruction. Moreover, it is a self-adjusting method that reconstructs the narrative based on self-understanding and reflection and finds the subject of harmony. Here, self-understanding and self-reflection are essential to rebuilding the narratives that have held you back in the past. HCT integrates narrative, a fundamental element of the humanities, with a variety of psychotherapeutic methods and media to explore and reconstruct one’s



narrative by expressing oneself, becoming conscious of unconscious desires and repressed feelings (Kim & Chae, 2019; Kim, 2022; Kim et al., 2022). The reconstructed narrative provides a therapeutic catharsis for the counselee and a new perspective from which to view life in an integrated manner (Kim et al., 2022).

HCT is an approach that emphasizes the meaning of self-care and healing, as it aims to find the subject of harmony through self-adjustment and restore it to its original state (Kwon, 2014; Kim et al., 2022). HCT seeks self-healing by viewing the counselee as the subject of healing, and this self-healing can be described in four aspects (Kim & Kim, 2023b). First, The counselee is the subject of self-reflection and self-healing. In this process, the counselee can discover and interpret their values. Second, it is an acknowledgment of uniqueness that is excluded by the emphasis on normality. It involves learning, reframing, and healing the subjectivity and uniqueness of individuals oppressed and discriminated against within social, cultural, and political systems. Third, it is a cathartic experience through creative expression. It allows individuals to reveal their and discover their true selves through symbolic artistic expression. Fourth, it aims to restore coexistence. Coexistence aims to achieve inner harmony and balance in body, mind and spirit, including outer adaptation and coexistence in relationships and environments (Kim, 2017; Kim et al., 2022).

Research on aging and self-healing in old age has primarily focused on conceptual studies, literature reviews, clinical cases and correlates of effectiveness, with a relative lack of practical program research. Program research is limited to effectiveness studies of forest healing program, Buddhist healing program, and integrative therapies (Jung et al., 2016; Kim & Koo, 2019; Lee & An, 2013). It has been suggested that there is a need to develop specific program for “well-aging” and research a diverse population of older adults (Kim, 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Im & Yoon, 2019). Furthermore, while discussions of aging in the past have focused on successful, active, productive





and creative aging, viewing aging as a problem and older individuals as objects to be protected and managed, there has been a recent shift toward emphasizing the diversity of life in old age and the agency of older people (Kim & Koo, 2019: 109–111; Kim, 2022: 9). Finally, programs for well-aging and self-care in old age require an approach that integrates the humanities, arts, and appropriate media. The challenges faced in old age are a combination of physical, psychological and social factors, and interventions must consider the humanities, the arts and psychotherapy, which can integrate cognitive, emotional and behavioral exploration, reflection, and action (Choi, 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to design an HCT program for aging. The program will be applied to ROAWLA, and their experiences will be analyzed from a self-healing perspective. The HCT well-aging program approaches the unique subjectivity and agency of aging. It reconstructs the opposing narratives of ROAWLA by applying various fields such as humanities, arts and psychotherapy. Ultimately, through their self-healing experiences, this study aims to establish a theory and practice of self-healing in HCT.

## 2. Research Questions

This study aims to design the HCT program for well-aging in ROAWLA, and to explore the meaning of the experience of participating in the program from the self-healing perspective of HCT. HCT is an approach that converges the humanities, the arts, and psychotherapy with a focus on narrative, a fundamental element of the humanities, and aims to change the narrative of one's life by uncovering and reframing narratives that have caused difficulties in later life through the process of reflecting on one's life. It will provide in-depth information about the unique characteristics of specific cohorts in



their historical, cultural, and regional contexts, and suggest possibilities for empowered self-healing in later life. Therefore, this study aims to design a program as a self-care practice for marginalized older adults living alone in rural areas and explore the meaning of the experience of participating in the program from a self-healing perspective. The research questions set in this study were:

**Research Question 1:** What is the design of the HCT program for the well-aging of ROAWLA?

**Research Question 2:** What is the meaning of the participation experience of the ROAWLA in an HCT program from a self-healing perspective?

The content of the research related to each research question is described below. Research Question 1 explores the design of the HCT program for the aging of ROAWLA. Research Question 2 analyzes the meaning of the experience of participating in the ROAWLA HCT program from a self-healing perspective. In addressing the two research questions, the study is organized as follows.

Chapter 1 describes the need and purpose of the study, the research questions and content, previous research and the motivation of the study. Chapter 2 deals with understanding ROAWLA and aging well. Moreover, by discussing HCT and self-healing, we discussed how HCT is related to self-healing in old age. Chapter 3 adopted a qualitative case study to examine the experience and meaning of participation in the HCT program of ROAWLA from a self-healing perspective, explaining why the research method was suitable for solving the research problem and describing the research participants, data collection and analysis, and research ethics. Chapter 4 describes the design of the HCT program for the “well-aging” of ROAWLA, including the outline of the program, the design steps, goals, and contents.

Chapter 5 analyzed the meaning of the experience of participating in the HCT program for ROAWLA from a self-healing perspective. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the discussion and suggestions based on the findings.

### 3. Literature Review

Various discourses, such as successful, productive, active and creative aging, provide idealized expectations and concepts of aging. However, aging is associated with maintaining physical and social functioning and subjective well-being, happiness, and satisfaction (Hong & Ju, 2021; Kim, 2021). These subjective factors depend on the individual's subjective interpretation (Hong & Ju, 2021; Ju & Hyun, 2016). Self-healing is also a subjective activity in self-care for self-problem-solving. This study aims to design a HCT program for ROAWLA and to examine the meaning of the experience of participating in the program from the perspective of self-healing.

First, previous research on “well-aging” and self-healing in old age can be divided into three categories, educational, humanities, arts, and natural healing. First, the educational aspect is a position that emphasizes growth and change through lifelong learning among older people. They emphasize the need for lifelong education and define older adults as everyday learners who continuously explore endless possibilities through learning so that they can age well on their own (Han, 2006; Im & Youn, 2019; Jang, 2016; Kim, 2021; Kim & Kim, 2010). In particular, Kim (2021) explored well-aging integrated into the lives of five Korean intellectuals and recommended the need for educational programs to address the well-aging philosophies of de-bordering, immersion, insight, religiosity, inquisitiveness, and proactivity found in their lives. Kim, N. (2021), Kim and Ahn (2020) and Min (2018) dealt with improving the quality of life in old age through cultural arts education. Kim and Kim (2010) referred to



the need to expand and deepen national language education with a focus on older adult literacy, and Han (2006) referred to the need for digital education in old age to make use of information and the diverse resources of the local community. Thus, they emphasize the need to focus on educational activities in areas of interest (literature, art, philosophy, digital etc.) as a way of life that tries to accept the period of old age as a time of change, rather than a time of acceptance and adaptation.

Second, the humanities and arts focus on the diverse lives experienced by older adults and are approached through subjective interpretations of old age. The enjoyment of humanities and arts in old age transforms an individual's perspective on life through self-reflection and creative self-expression (Kim, 2020: 33), recognizing self-identity (Kim, 2007: 54), and improving self awareness and self-respect (Kim, 2010: 84). Specifically, the approach is based on the appreciation of poetry, novels, and discourses as elements of literature. Further, through various reflections on one's life issues and shifts in perspective in the process of constructing one's story (Kim, 2014; Kim & Ko, 2019; Kim, 2023; Lee, 2018; Lim, 2011; Yuk et al., 2017), a philosophical perspective on the existence of old age and the phenomenon of older adult alienation (Cho, 2022; Lee, 2018), a lifelong narrative approach that answers and reconfigures who we are in old age (Cho, 2019; Kim, 2021; Lee, 2023), an approach through art creation and activities (Choi & Choi, 2014; Kim, 2020; Kim & Park, 2017; Kim, 2020; Lee & Sim, 2022), and healing approaches through physical activities such as dance, yoga, and qigong practices (Bok, 2023; Cho, 2014; Choi & Lee, 2019; Kim, Lee, & Bak, 2014; Park, 2014; Yoo, 2015).

Third, there is the aspect of natural healing. Natural healing is an approach that believes that the body can heal itself and tries to maintain and restore its health by developing and using this ability to the maximum (Choi, 2020). In referencing at the specific literature, the approach is through forest healing,



which involves walking around, appreciating the landscape and smelling the scents (Choi & Ahn, 2015; Hong, 2019; Kim & Koo, 2019; Kim, Kwon & Choi, 2016; Kim, Shin & Lee, 2017), approaches through orchids and gardening (Han, 2021; Jung, 2019; Chung & Kang, 2019; Kwon & Lee, 2019; Lee & Hong, 2023; Park et al., 2021), aromatherapy approach (An, Kim & Kim, 2014; Hwang & Lee, 2011; Jeong & Lee, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2005; Lee & Jeong, 2010).

The following implications were drawn from the above research trends.

First, research on well-aging and self-healing in old age must be expanded and implemented. Previous studies on healthy aging include the concept of healthy aging (Jang, 2016; Kim, 2012; Kim et al., 2021), the perception of healthy aging (Kim et al., 2022; Yoon, 2016), and the search for the meaning of healthy aging in old age (Im & Yoon, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2020; Kim, 2021). In addition, research on self-healing has focused on the meaning of self-healing experiences (Kim, 2014; Kim, 2020; Park, 2014), the correlation and effectiveness of natural healing (Choi & Lee, 2018; Kim, Lee, & Baek, 2014; Yoo, 2015). Other self-healing programs include research by Kim & Koo (2019) on the efficacy of forest healing programs, a case study by Lee & An (2013) on Buddhist healing programs, and attempts at integrative therapy-based healing approaches by Jeong et al. (2016). However, notable lack of specific programmatic research is dedicated to “well-aging.” Thus, there is a need to develop well-aging programs as concrete practices aimed at uncovering the meaning of life and reframing life narratives (Im & Youn, 2019; Kim, 2021; Kim et al., 2022)

Second, we must emphasize the importance of subjectivity and self-care in old age. Historically, discussions on old age were mainly limited to older adults as objects of protection and care and approached from the perspective of social and institutional problems. However, recent discussions on old age focus on the diversity of life experienced in old age, and humanistic gerontology is expanding to emphasize the subjectivity of older adults (Kim & Koo, 2019:



109-111; Kim, 2022: 9). Lee et al (2021) believe that older adults should not be perceived as passive and dependent, but as active and independent subjects. Additionally, self-care is emphasized in policies for Customized Care Services for older adults, which emphasizes the proactivity and subjectivity of older adults. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize older adults as subjects, not objects, and to pay attention to their subjective life experiences regarding well-being and self-healing in old age.

Third, there is a need to apply convergence in the design of programs for well-being and self-healing in old age. Programs for well-being have mostly been educational including health education through physical activities, games, and acupuncture (Kim, Park & Jin, 2019), dance education (Yun, Oh & Lee, 2021), and oral medicine (Kim, Kim & Ahn, 2023). Programs on self-healing have been conducted through Buddhism and meditation (Ko, 2020; Lee, 2014), philosophical counseling (Kang, 2012; Kang, 2019; Kwon, 2014), literature and writing (Kim, 2017; Park, 2013; Sung, 2019; Jang, 2016), art and art therapy (Moon & Chun, 2022; Shin & lee, 2016; Lee, 2015; Choi & Won, 2021; Hwang, 2018), but research on self-healing from an interdisciplinary perspective is lacking. Gil (2017) found that by incorporating various elements such as music, art, rhythm, cognitive games, and interaction, the program helped older adults recover lost abilities and memories and rebuild interpersonal relationships. Choi (2019) emphasized that integrating and using different fields and media of the humanities and the arts that are appropriate for the individual in designing programs for well-being and self-healing in old age is necessary.

Therefore, this study focuses on the subjectivity and self-care of older adults that humanistic gerontology emphasizes rather than the object of care in older adults. Moreover, based on the concepts and discourses of “well-aging” and self-healing in older adults discussed above, this study aims to design and apply a HCT program for aging with a practical approach. Finally, to deepen our understanding of the self-healing experience in HCT,

we will summarize the concept of self-healing in HCT and reveal the meaning of self-healing in HCT.

#### 4. Research Background

British gerontologist D.B. Bromley argues in his book *Psychology of Aging*, that a quarter of our lives is spent growing up, leaving the remaining three-quarters for growing old. Thus, achieving good aging is of utmost importance. Although everyone seeks wellness as they age, not everyone experiences it.

This researcher's interest in aging began with watching my parents age. The researcher's mother was a retired teacher and active painter, but in her mid-60s she suffered a sudden attack of sepsis and had to have parts of her hands and feet amputated. This experience gave the researcher a deeper understanding and insight into life in old age. Until then, for the family, the issue of old age had been someone else's problem in the distant future, but through the mother's life, it became a direct and subjective experience for the researcher. This has led researchers to focus on older adults' experiences, emotions, and thoughts during aging.

What does it mean to maintain human dignity? My mother's transformative experience taught me the importance of autonomy and agency for individuals. Human dignity is not based on one's high abilities and status, but on the ability to perform essential functions such as standing, walking and eating. According to Humanitude, standing on oneself is crucial in old age because it is fundamental to being human (Gineste & Marescotti, 2019: 136-139). When a person lacks fingers or has undergone amputations of legs below the knees, walking, standing, and eating on one's own cannot be assumed. Personal experience has led me to appreciate the degree of autonomy and agency the



ability to grip a fork with one's finger joints affords. Mother's life as a person with a disability expanded my understanding of the other that I had not previously realized. This led me to pursue a Master's Degree in Art Therapy. During my studies, I participated in eight sessions of group art therapy with my mother, experiencing that restoring self-identity and agency can transform lives, even more than lost bodily functions. Before the counseling, she spent most of her time lying down in her room, but her sitting time increased, and she started to do rehabilitation exercises consistently. This resulted from her regaining control of her life, independent of her body's functions. It was this experience that first motivated me to study old age.

Second, the researcher was motivated by participating in a program for ROAWLA in the process of designing an HCT program through graduate classes. While participating in the program, I was reminded of my mother-in-law and mother in the stories of research participants, and I naturally reflected on myself. They were all someone's daughter-in-law, child, wife, mother, and mother-in-law. Their life stories were like mirrors that reflected me and made me reflect. Research participants' life stories gave me a vivid understanding of the culture of that time. They allowed me to reflect and reconstruct my life narrative and understand my parent's lives. Therefore, the day after I met with the research participants, I would call my parents to say hello, stop by and see them for a few minutes, and listen to their stories of how they raised three children while working full-time. Listening to mom's stories, similar to how I would listen to the research participants, brought us closer together.

“Well-aging” in later life looks different and has its unique meaning. All human beings have a limited amount of time to live, but as long as they are given subjectivity and autonomy, they can have unlimited possibilities. I hope that the dignity and independence of older adults will be restored through HCT for “well-aging” in old age, and I hope that the HCT program will be



used as self-healing.



## Chapter 2 Theoretical Background

### 1. Well-Aging of Rural Older Adult Women Living Alone

#### 1.1. Understanding of Rural Older Adult Women Living Alone

##### 1.1.1. Characteristics of Rural Older Adult Women Living Alone

The older generation in Korea, especially those aged 80 and above, has experienced Compressed modernization amidst rapid economic development, and political upheavals and turmoil, including liberation from Japanese occupation, ideological conflicts during the Cold War, the Korean War, the division of North and South Korea, pro-democracy protests, and candlelight demonstrations. They have experienced tremendous changes in a single lifetime. Socio-culturally, for example, they moved from an agrarian to an industrial to a high-tech scientific society, from an extended family to a nuclear family, and from communal to individualistic (Choi, Jung & Lee, 2018). This study focused on ROAWLA who are marginalized and peripheralized in the midst of rapid modernization and patriarchal culture.

The proportion of older adults living alone is higher in rural areas than in urban areas, and it is concentrated in Jeonbuk, Jeonnam, Gyeongbuk, and Gangwon (Statistics Korea, 2021). According to the Ministry of Health and Welfare's data on older adults women living alone (2020), 9.7 % of older adult men and 27.4 % of older adult women were more than three times as many women as men. Furthermore, the proportion of ROAWLA is about 68% of rural older adults living alone. These statistics suggest that the life expectancy of older adult women (86.5 years) is higher than that of older adult men (80.5 years) (Statistics Korea, 2023), and a higher proportion of older adult women



than older adult men live alone without remarrying after widowhood (Kim & Park, 2000; Song, 2019). ROAWLA has unique characteristics of being rural, women, and living alone compared to others who share the same cohort (Joung, 2015; Song, 2015). The following article explains their sociocultural, relationship, economic, and health characteristics.

First, socio-culturally, rural areas are deeply rooted in a patriarchal culture under the influence of Confucianism (Kim, 2007: 12). Consequently, women tend to be deprived of educational opportunities and excluded from further education and employment in a man's dominance of the society (Jang, 2013; Jeon, Jang & Jung, 2013; Lee, 2015; Park, 2012; Shin & Kim, 2014). Recent statistics also show that the illiteracy rate among older adults is 7.7% in urban areas, but more than three times higher at 26.7% in rural areas, and that older adult women are more likely to be illiterate than older adult men. The rate is higher among older adults aged 80 and over (Statistics Korea, 2022). This is due to several factors, including a lack of education and economic difficulties, as well as a patriarchal culture. Therefore, rather than living as independent and subjective beings, the rural older adult women live their lives with the identity of daughter-in-law, wife, and mother, evaluating their lives through their children's successes and failures and experiencing feelings of reward or loss (Kwak, Park & Kim, 2018; Lee, 2015). Consequently, they succeeded in "de-farming" their children, but they could not expect to live with them in their old age and became a burden (Choi, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2016).

Second, from a relational perspective, ROAWLA is more likely to interact with friends and neighbors, but less likely to interact with their children (Huh et al., 2022; Kim, 2021). Most of their children have migrated to cities for education and employment, and ROAWLA has become more dependent on their neighbors and friends due to the lack of agricultural labour. Relationships with neighbors and friends are essential in maintaining social ties



and are an indispensable resource for ROAWLA. The number of neighbors and friends and the frequency of contact are related to depressive tendencies in ROAWLA and are closely linked to mental health (Kim, 2015; Kim, 2018).

However, relationships with children are also crucial for ROAWLA to enjoy high life satisfaction and happiness. Chun and Kim (2021) indicated that meeting friends and neighbors and participating in social activities were helpful in mediating depression among ROAWLA. Nonetheless, those close relationships with children were a more important resource for stress relief and maintaining mental health. Ha (2021) reports that the altruism of ROAWLA in helping their children is one of the pleasures of old age. In conclusion, close relationships with children, neighbors, friends and relatives are closely related to ROAWLA's quality of life.

Third, from an economic perspective, ROAWLA are less likely to have higher education than men and less likely to have stable, high-paying jobs (Kwon & Jang, 2022). Consequently, women earn less than men in total income and are less satisfied with their economic status (Huh et al., 2022). In addition, it is analyzed that the death of a husband leads to a decrease in income, which increases ROAWLA poverty. Among low-income older adults living alone, 13.6% of women receive the National Basic Livelihood compared to 9.2% of men, and their vulnerability increases with age (Lee & Lee, 2018; Shin & Kim, 2014). Rural older adult women are often unable to enforce property rights due to their primary responsibility of caring for the household and not participating in economic activities, and they become economically vulnerable after the death of their husbands. Therefore, ROAWLA are even more financially vulnerable without family support than men. These social and cultural factors result in women experiencing more poverty and economic hardship. Pearce (1978) mentions the "feminization of Poverty," noting that poverty has become a women's issue since the 1970s. In particular, the feminization of poverty is severe serious in rural areas than in urban areas.

Fourth, in terms of health, ROAWLA suffer from more chronic diseases than their men's peers and are less satisfied with their health status (Huh et al., 2022: 256). They also have less access to specialized medical services due to difficulties in accessing transport, with nearly half of rural older adult women reporting that they “have not visited a hospital in a year despite illness due to transport difficulties” (Huh et al., 2022: 256), demonstrating the poor quality of medical care. This suggests that the lack of health and welfare facilities in rural areas, transport accessibility issues, and lack of crisis preparedness capabilities may present blind spots in the welfare of older adults. In particular, older adults may be more exposed to these risks in later life (Son, 2022). Accordingly, Hwang et al (2019) found significant differences in health and welfare services satisfaction between rural and urban areas.

Regarding mental health, both rural and urban older adult women living alone have higher levels of loneliness, alienation, and depression (Jeon & Kim, 2021; Kim, 2018). Some studies have reported higher levels of depression among rural and live-alone older adults (Jang & Hur, 2022; Jeong, 2017; Kim, Lee & Jung, 2015; Seo & Lee, 2016; Yeom, 2013), and some studies have reported higher levels of loneliness and depression among urban older adults (Park, Park, & Son, 2020; Park, 2023). The differences in findings by place of residence may be due to the causes of depression and loneliness. Simultaneously, rural women living alone experienced stress and depression based on social capital, housing environment, number of friends, neighbors and acquaintances, and community satisfaction. Urban women living alone reported economic reciprocity, continuing education, exercise, and frequent of visits with friends as significant predictors (Kim, 2015, 2018; An, 2023). However, both groups had significantly higher levels of depression and loneliness, indicating vulnerability in mental health regardless of where they live. The number of ROAWLA with these characteristics is steadily increasing, and the number and proportion of total older adults living alone is also growing



(Statistics Korea, 2022). Korea's older adult care policy has changed significantly over the past decade, with a growing awareness that the family, government, and society should take responsibility for the difficulties and situations of rural older adult women living alone, and a change in perspective from viewing older adults as objects of care to subjects of care.

### 1.1.2. State and future direction of older adults policy

The United Nations World Assembly on Ageing (WAA) was the first to discuss policies specifically designed to help older adults. The first WAA was held in Vienna (1982) and the second in Madrid (2002). The first WAA aimed to strengthen the capacity of governments and civil society to respond to population aging and to meet the potential capacity and independence needs of older persons. While this is significant as the first international document on policies and programs to address population aging, it failed to provide actionable goals, including specific timelines for their achievement. Subsequently, the Second WAA held in Madrid, Spain, emphasized the transformation of older persons as active and independent actors rather than passive and dependent objects of aging society policies. This international policy direction for older adults has influenced Korea's policy for older adults. Korea is also enacting and changing its policies for older adults in line with this policy direction.

Korea's older adult care policy began with the Elderly Welfare Act of 1981, followed in 2003 by the establishing of the Presidential Council on Aging and Social Integration Planning Group, an advisory body to the presidential office. This was followed by establishing the Commission on Ageing and Future Society in 2004, the Framework Law on Low Birth in an Ageing Society in 2005, and the first Basic Plan for Low Fertility and Population Aging in 2006, with policies to be implemented every five years. Along with these medium-



and long-term policies, the government introduced long-term care insurance for older adults in 2008, followed by comprehensive services for older adults and home-based support services for older adults for those who were excluded from the scope of long-term care insurance for older adults (Chon & Lee, 2022). Since then, the duplication and fragmentation of the transfer system and changes to the grading system for long-term care insurance have raised the need to reorganize the geriatric care system. Specifically, the government introduced community integrated care as a national policy agenda in 2019, abolishing and consolidating six services for those out of grade in 2020 to implement the policy of adaptive care for older adults. (Choi, 2010; Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2021; Song, 2015; Yang, 2019). This shift in older adult policy is based on a paradigm shift in how old age is viewed. Early policies for older adults, with their negative perspective on old age, perceived older adults as passive entities in need of care. However, more recently, there has been a shift towards policies that view older adults as subjective and independent entities capable of self-care to improve their quality of life.

Looking at the recent significant policies for older adults, “community care” and “customized care service for older adults” are the most representative. First, community care is a locally-led social service that provides integrated services tailored to the needs and circumstances of residents, including healthcare, medical treatment, nursing care, and support for independent living so that older adults can live a healthy old age where they live (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2019). The 2020 National Survey on Older Koreans also found that 83.8% of respondents reported living at home, and 6 out of 10 want to continue living at home even if their health deteriorates. Their mobility becomes impaired (Lee et al., 2021). Community care is a policy that aims to improve the lives of residents by providing the care services they need in the community, with the vision of an inclusive

nation where everyone can live a healthy life wherever they live. Aging in place is influenced by an individual's physical, psychological, social, and environmental factors and depends on a society's policies (Kim, 2022).

However, compared to urban areas, rural areas have difficulties in integrated care due to the small number of individuals in the geographical area and the low level and accessibility of medical and social facilities (Kim & Lee, 2022). Local governments lack autonomy, have difficulty sustaining pioneering projects, and lack integrated participation of public and private organizations (Lee & Park, 2022). Additionally, ROAWLA has low prevalence rates, subjective health status, income, and satisfaction with welfare services, and have different needs in overall areas such as healthcare, welfare services, and primary living conditions, which limit the application of policies (Hwang et al., 2019).

The Customized Care Service for Older Adults is a preventive policy for healthy aging and entry into high-cost care that aims to provide care based on individual needs and support healthy aging. The core of the policy is to help older adults improve their quality of life by strengthening their self-care abilities, assessing their resources and strengths, and providing detailed information on how to establish a service plan (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2021). Self-care is the most basic human need and can be described as all activities undertaken to maintain and improve one's physical, mental, and social health. Specifically, it attempts to support independent living by focusing on older adults' resilience, coping, and adaptability (Lee, 2017; Wiles et al., 2012).

However, in the implementation of the service, self-care was mainly focused on maintaining and improving physical function, and mental healthcare was not explicitly supported. Chon and Lee (2022) and Kim (2021) pointed out that customized care services for older adults are essential because they are a social intervention. Nonetheless, there are limitations in the implementation of





the service, such as it is tailored to urban areas, which are the main cities. In rural areas, there is a lack of personnel to provide the service and problems in the implementation of the service, such as problems in finding beneficiaries. For ROAWLA, there are difficulties in accessing services due to transport inconvenience, financial challenges, and lack of transport facilities (Jung et al., 2013; Kim, 2020). Therefore, specific approaches are needed to strengthen the self-care capacity of older adults in areas where health and welfare facilities are scarce and inaccessible, such as rural areas (Kim, 2020; Van Citters & Bartels, 2004). Additionally, reflecting the characteristics of rural areas, it is necessary to support older adults in living in the community and improving their quality of life by strengthening community-based self-care capacity (Kim, 2017).

Yuk et al (2017) emphasized that happiness in old age is based on autonomy, not passivity and dependence on others. Lee et al (2021) also stress the responsibility of older adults toward vulnerable groups, such as women and rural older adults. Further, they stressed that older adults should not be treated as passive and dependent objects but as active and independent subjects. Kim (2021) suggests that it is necessary to help older adults explore their strengths, such as overcoming, courage, gratitude, hope, humor, kindness, persistence, and spirituality. Moreover, it is essential to help them develop the positive aspects of their lives, such as their ability to find what they can do and to cooperate and interact with others, rather than their current loss of function and vulnerability. This is based on quality of life and the desire to make meaningful use of life (Han et al., 2019). Therefore, society has recognized older adults as objects of care and approached them through welfare and economic support policies. It is necessary to acknowledge them as subjective human beings who can develop and grow positively and approach them from a humanistic perspective that helps them view and use their lives meaningfully.



Aging is part of the continuous process of life, a rite of passage experienced by all humans. In this process, older adults experience aging. Thus, their attitudes and responses to aging matter most (Kim, 2012). In the following chapter, we will examine various discourses of aging as a response to aging and well-being as a unique and subjective discourse of aging.

## 1.2. Well-Aging of Old age

### 1.2.1. Discourses of old age and aging

Aging is the natural process by which humans are born and grow old. In the past, prolonging life was the primary goal of humans. However, nowadays, there is a trend to pursue a healthy and happy life based on humanity, not just a long life. Health is not just the absence of disease but a general state of well-being. In the past, aging was viewed negatively as degeneration, loss, and disease (Kim & Kim, 2016).

Nevertheless, with the increasing number of older adults, aging has begun to be viewed as a natural life course (McLaughlin et al., 2010). Contemporary gerontological research emphasizes the importance of subjective aging, viewing the aging process as a phenomenon that varies according to an individual's physiological, psychological, and social circumstances. This perspective attempts to understand aging in an individual-centered way, focusing on the positive rather than the negative and exploring the potential for development and growth in later life. The term “amotility” reflects this zeitgeist, rejecting conventional values about aging and emphasizing the humanity of older individuals in the face of social prejudices about age (Mayer, 2013).

Human dignity in old age is closely related to the concept of well-being. Well-being refers to happiness, comfort, and welfare and is oriented toward a healthy and happy life (Jeon, 2005; Ju, 2015). Among the concepts of



well-being, this study focuses on subjective well-being<sup>8)</sup>. Jeong (2022) argues that we should accept aging as natural. We should consider dealing with it from a subjective perspective through self-reflection. Diener explained subjective well-being as the result of cognitive and affective evaluations of life. Cognitive evaluation refers to overall satisfaction with life, while affective evaluation includes positive and negative emotions (Diener et al., 2003). As subjective well-being can depend on specific social, cultural, and environmental contexts, it is essential to consider how an individual views and deals with aging concerning the perceived subjective well-being of their social and cultural environment.

In gerontology, aging has emerged as an important issue across the human lifespan, and various discourses on aging have been discussed. These include anti-aging, successful, productive, active, creative, and well-aging. While these terms share a common goal of well-being in later life, their attitudes and approaches to aging differ. Anti-aging views the aging process negatively and strongly intends to slow physical aging, whereas successful aging is characterized by low morbidity, high physical and mental functioning, and active life (Lee & Song, 2015; Rowe & Khan, 2007). Productive aging is a stance that emphasizes participation in socially productive activities and economic value. It includes all activities that produce goods and services or develop capabilities, such as older individuals' participation in work, volunteering, and caring for family members (Caro, Bass, & Chen, 1993). Active aging seeks to optimize opportunities for health, participation, and safety. Creative aging rejects binary interpretations of aging and recognizes the life course as an opportunity for achievement and dreams. Each of these

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8) In 2011, the OECD launched the Your Better Life Index (BLI), based on the Stiglitz Report (2009). The index is a concept proposed by Joseph E. Stiglitz and is a way of measuring people's happiness that emphasizes quality of life and sustainability rather than GDP. The BLI consists of two domains, 11 dimensions and 22 indicators, where subjective well-being is an important part of the overall index (Kim, Hyung-Il, & Yoo, Seung-Ho, 2015).



different aging discourses offers a way of understanding and coping with aging and can be seen as an attempt to pursue development and growth in later life.

These various discourses on aging are significant because they have increased awareness of aging, identified its constituent elements, and provided ways to cope with it. However, they are limited by emphasizing criteria such as success, production, activity, and creativity, leading to the perception of unsuccessful aging when these are not achieved (Glass, 2003). Jung (2022) notes that anti-aging and successful aging require physical support from others, while productive and active aging relies on external resources and policies to support economic activity. Additionally, Jeong (2019) points out that creative aging is limited by its focus on arts education. These perspectives call for a broader understanding and a more inclusive approach to aging.

A growing academic debate has moved away from the traditional negative view of aging in recent years. Instead, it reinterprets old age as a natural part of the life course and accepts it as a development process. This approach focuses on the subjective interpretation and reconstruction of the experience of aging. It aims to integrate the negative elements of aging with the positive aspects of potential for development and growth. The concept of well-aging emphasizes a healthy aging process that accepts and positively views the changes of old age and highlights the individual as a subjectivity in finding meaning and growth in old age.

### **1.2.2 Characteristics and understanding of “well-aging”**

Although well-being is used in different discourses on aging, the concept is mainly emphasized in terms of subjective well-being. This view of “well-aging” relies on the individual’s assessment rather than the judgment of others and can be seen as having unique characteristics based on



emotional state and quality of life (Kim, 2019; Jung, 2022). Therefore, aging encompasses many aspects of older adults' lives (Kim et al., 2021; Kim & Kim, 2020). From a subjective perspective, it emphasizes a proactive lifestyle and attitude toward aging and seeking positive change (Jang, 2018). It also emphasizes self-fulfillment and human dignity, giving meaning to the humanity of old age (Kim, 2012).

The concept of “well-aging” can be found in ancient literature. Cicero's collection of essays, *De Senectute*, presents the idea of “good aging.” Cicero argued that aging does not have to be miserable but instead can be enriched by the accumulation of experience and wisdom, just as wine tastes better over time (Cicero, 2016: 76). This implies that turning a negative perspective into a positive one and discovering the meaning and enjoyment of life are linked to the essence of well-aging. Carstensen also likened the gentle aging process of wine to old age and emphasized the positive aspects of old age, such as increased patience and perseverance and better empathy and acceptance of the feelings of others (Carstensen, 1992). To create meaning in aging, Carlsen proposed the concepts of significance, wellness, and meaning-making, emphasizing narrative transformation, acceptance of the past, and creation of meaning in life (Carlsen, 1991). Vaillant and Mukamal (2001) expanded the concept of aging to include three dimensions of change and development, not just decline, loss, change, and the meaning of positive development and maturation (Vaillant & Mukamal, 2001). Thus, well-being can be understood as a universal human need.

Research on “well-aging” has been active since the early 2000s. Kim et al (2021) systematically analyzed the literature by synthesizing various scholars' definitions of “well-aging.” This study builds on the work of Kim et al (2021) and further reviews new literature published up to September 2023 to reinterpret and summarize the concept of “well-aging” from the perspective of subjective well-being. Well-aging can be summarized as acceptance of



aging, maintaining dignity by finding meaning in life, having a positive outlook on the future, and seeking continuous development and growth.

First, “well-aging” means acceptance of aging. It is interpreted as an attitudinal value that includes accepting fate, patience with suffering, and resilience (Shim, 2015). Therefore, older adults must recognize aging as a natural life process and accept reduced autonomy, initiative, intimacy, and productivity as natural (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Kim (2012) describes it as a lifestyle and attitude of accepting “old age” for what it is and recognizing old age as a time of positive self-transformation. An (2013) describes “well-aging” as a process of acceptance of aging at the individual level, which involves the natural acceptance of oneself, others, and even death. Ju and Hyun (2016) defined “well-aging” as having satisfaction and positive emotions about changes in life’s biological, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects. They considered accepting age-related changes, experiencing satisfaction and positive emotions, and pursuing personal growth and development as the core of “well-aging.” Jang (2018) and Han (2018) also interpreted “well-aging” as positive self-change that is perceived as growing old beautifully and actively embracing it. Kim et al. (2021) and Kim et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of natural acceptance of age-related changes experienced due to aging. These studies emphasize age-related changes in the self, changes in relationships and roles, and an accepting attitude towards death as the first step to well-aging.

Specifically, an essential aspect of “well-aging” in later life is valuing and accepting the life that has been lived while accepting the reality that life cannot be lived again. The areas of acceptance in old age vary from person to person. Notwithstanding, they include relationships with family and friends, social achievements, painful or humiliating events, important life decisions, and approaching death (Havighurst et al., 1972). For Korean older adults, in particular, family relationships are the primary object and theme of



acceptance, which is confirmed through the affirmation of regret, reward, and strength in life (Lee, 1997). When accepting past life and death is achieved, older adults can feel satisfied with their present life and have a positive outlook based on a harmonized view of past, current, and future (Erickson et al., 1998; Miller, 1981).

Second, “well-aging” is about individuals finding meaning in their lives and maintaining human dignity. Individuals are generally motivated to give meaning to their lives (Frankl, 1963/1980; Reker, Peacock & Wong, 1987) and develop future selves by understanding and reinterpreting their life narratives and creating new meaning (McAdams, 2001). Old age, in particular, is when individuals experience multiple losses and prepare for physical decline and death, making the meaning of life even more critical (Wong, 2010). Thus, the meaning of life is formed through the transformation and reconstruction of subjective narratives rather than objective facts. Therefore, “well-aging” is about finding personal meaning in life by viewing the aging process positively, without being bound by external standards or social pressure, and maintaining one’s self-worth, autonomy, and humanity.

Kim (2012) considers old age as a period of self-completion in life, based on the reflections of the Joseon Dynasty scholar Jang Hyun-kwang, and defines well-aging as dignified old age for self-completion. Erickson interpreted the acquisition of integrality through old age wisdom and self-completion as a defense mechanism against the potential hopelessness of old age. This can be described as mythologizing the past, a pseudo-integration in which meaning is found through positive reframing of one’s story (Erickson et al., 1998). Jeon et al. (2013) refer to this as “life reassessment” and believe that systematically reframing adverse events helps to integrate them into a meaningful life. Kwon (2021) defines it as “postmortem narrative reconstruction” and understands it through Lacan’s analyst discourse as a reconstruction process to dismantle repressed discourses, reveal pleasures, and integrate the subject. He



understood the wounds of the past as “stigma” and reconstructed their meaning as “stigmata” by adding a sign of pleasure to the narrative of the wound. Lee (2023) uses Ricoeur’s mimesis theory to explain this, emphasizing stage II of mimesis theory, the stage of constructing the story’s plot. This stage is a process of shifting self-understanding away from dependence on others and recreating a new story based on self-standards. “Life reassessment,” “postmortem narrative reconstruction,” and “Mimesis II” are processes of creating a new story of oneself as a transformation beyond a transition in perception and perspective. These processes can be understood as maintaining one’s identity in old age and making life worthwhile and creative (Carlsen, 1991: 136-140).

Third, “well-aging” can be interpreted as a positive view of the future and focusing on personal development and growth. Shin (2013: 341) points out that the absence of soul growth in old age can lead to the meaninglessness of an older adult’s existence, emphasizing that the moment an elder reveals wisdom and the depth of their soul, their life can be perceived as worthwhile. According to Erikson and Erikson, wisdom is derived from the Greek words *veda*, meaning “to see” and “to know,” and *enki*, meaning “to hear” (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Wisdom refers to understanding things and phenomena through observation and listening and having insight into the past and the future. According to Adelt (2003: 275-324), wisdom consists of three main components: cognition, reflection, and emotion. Cognition is a deep understanding of life, the ability to see problems from a broad perspective and to consider different possibilities. Reflection is the ability to examine phenomena and events from different perspectives through self-reflection and to learn and grow from past experiences. Emotion has deep empathy and compassion for others, improving interactions and strengthening a communal perspective. Altogether, these factors form wisdom, which can be used to develop a positive outlook on life.





Cicero considered old age to be a time when one acquires a positive capacity to understand each stage of life and to give it an integrative meaning despite the decline in activity, physical weakness, loss of pleasure, and the approach of death (Cicero, 2016: 29). Erickson also recommends accepting the changes of old age positively and dealing with them lightheartedly and flexibly. In discussing the final stages of her life with her husband Erickson, Joan Erickson proposed the concept of “transcendence in old age,” whereby the negative elements experienced in old age are transformed into positive developments (Erickson & Erickson, 1998). This emphasized transcendence as a shift in perspective that goes beyond retrospective despair about late life and prevents loss of ability and disintegration in daily living, regardless of previous satisfaction with life (An, 2015). Gerontologist Agronin has also argued that individuals can positively integrate their lives through knowledge, judgment, empathy, creativity, and insight, which are positive traits that continue to develop with age (Agronin, 2018: 81).

Ha (2018) defined well-being in old age as maintaining a passion for life and pursuing rewarding activities. This approach includes pursuing personal life goals and meaningful activities in old age, living in harmony with and actively participating in society. Im and Yoon (2019) emphasize agency in old age and see the pursuit of growth and change through awareness of finite existence and a positive self-view as key to well-being. Kang and Yun (2020) emphasized aging in health and style, growing old while retaining one’s humanity, as a critical element of well-aging. Kim and Kim (2020) interpreted well-being as living freely and harmoniously as a way of life. Kim (2020) argued that positive choices can be made by changing perceptions of aging as a growth process rather than simply growing old. Kim (2021) analyzed the lives of five representative Korean intellectuals and interpreted good aging as the pursuit of development and growth in old age through immersion, insight,



religiosity, inquiry, and positivity. These perspectives can be seen to emphasize maintaining a passion for life in old age, pursuing meaningful goals, intellectual curiosity and a deep search for meaning, and development and growth in religious dimensions.

It is important to note that the whole picture of “well-aging” begins with understanding and accepting all the changes that come with age. Havighurst points out that accepting the various changes that occur in the second half of life as a natural process rather than a problem provides insight into a new world (Havighurst, 1968). This perspective helps to reframe external perceptions of aging and old age and to rediscover life’s meaning. This is important in restoring dignity in old age. If we neglect the dignity of old age, it can cause significant damage. Finally, it is essential to recognize that there is a positive view of life for growth and development even in old age.

Therefore, it is essential to identify and apply a straightforward approach to well-being in later life in an aging society. In particular, the concept of well-aging takes on special significance in the context of the lack of external support and the decline in activity experienced by women living alone in rural areas. Later life has different characteristics from earlier life and faces several challenges and changes in physical, social, psychological, and cultural aspects. Physically, individuals in their 70s experience a gradual decline in health, while health decline tends to accelerate in the 80s and beyond (Newman et al., 1991). Especially noteworthy is the decline in social support networks and the experience of marginalization and Isolation in cultural background experienced by ROAWLA. Women who lived through the Japanese occupation and the Korean War experienced marginalization as women by patriarchal values, which is an essential factor in facing changes and challenges as they age. Therefore, well-aging programs for ROAWLA should focus on their subjective and autonomous interpretations of life rather than on objective success factors. This program should focus on the individual’s



response to change and adaptation as a central issue and support them in enhancing their subjectivity in old age. In particular, continue living a dignified life through self-understanding, finding meaning in life, and a positive outlook on the future.

## 2. Humanities Convergence Therapy and Self-Healing

### 2.1. Well-aging and Humanities Convergence Therapy

#### 2.1.1. A humanistic approach to well-aging

Humanities is the study of humanity, exploring the unique capacities of human existence, culture, values, and spirit (Choi, 2010). Through self-reflection and inner resistance, humanities comprehensively addresses a wide range of aspects of human life and, as a cultural and liberal discipline, promotes human life enrichment (Park, 2017). Park (2009) defined humanities as a discipline of reflective intellectual activity and exploration of humanity to discover one's identity. The humanities, which include literature, history, philosophy, and the arts, seek a deeper understanding of humanity through works in these fields and philosophical, historical, and anthropological works. The humanities are distinguished from the social and natural sciences by their content and methods: the former deal with factual and material attributes and values, while the latter explore the spiritual. The humanities approach to "well-aging" explores humanity's values and spiritual qualities.

"Well-aging" in old age is an individual, subjective process that involves self-understanding, finding meaning in life, and a positive view of the future. However, the natural and social sciences have primarily focused on causal and policy approaches to aging and its phenomena, overlooking the diverse and



phenomenal aspects of aging that are difficult to express in language. The value of aging cannot be assessed solely from a biological or material perspective. Based on this recognition of the problem, humanistic approaches that seek to interpret and express the unique meaning of aging from an ontological perspective are garnering attention as a critical view and reaction to existing gerontology (Cho, 2023; Kim & Koo, 2019; Kim, 2023).

Humanistic gerontology focuses on the diversity of life experiences in old age, considers older people as subjects of life, and emphasizes reflection at the individual level. This approach can be regarded as an effort to deeply analyze the unique life experiences of older people in their social and cultural contexts (Kim & Koo, 2019). The study of old age through a humanistic approach spans several interdisciplinary fields, including literature, philosophy, and the arts. In literature, the meaning of old age has been explored through various genres. Song (2018) draws on the theories of Kikero and Montaigne, including “Sleeping Beauty” (1961/2009) by Yasunari Kawabata and “Memories of My Sad Whores” (2004) by Gabriel García Márquez, analyzes the meaning and aspirations of old age. Kim and Ko (2019) analyze the comic book “Navillera” (2017) from the perspective of humanistic gerontology, emphasizing the “narrative of becoming” that symbolizes self-realization in old age. Cho (2023) proposed a life humanities to reconstruct identity and restore subjectivity in the lives of older adults. Kim (2023) and Eom (2021) explored the identity of old age and the possibility of humanistic gerontology through Park Wan-seo’s literature.

In philosophy, various theories of Eastern and Western philosophers have been used to illuminate and interpret the lives of older adults from an ontological perspective. In Eastern philosophy, Kim (2012) analyzes the lives of older adults by focusing on the reflections of Jang Hyun-kwang of Yecheon, and Lee (2013, 2015) develops the philosophy of old age through the theories of Nangye(蘭溪), Wu-am(尤庵), and Tzu-kye(退溪). They all focus on



self-reflection, self-fulfillment, and the recovery of one's true nature. Jin (2019, 2021) also emphasizes the concept of familiarity from years of experience (老熟) through self-reflection and maturity in old age, while Hong (2023) explores the meaning and value of transcending old age from a Confucian perspective.

In Western philosophy, Kim (2022) analyzed the true meaning of finite human life and death from an ontological perspective encompassing biological and mental perspectives through Hegel's concept of antithesis. Cho (2016) examined the implications of Levinas's philosophy for old age by focusing on the passive identity of humans due to the limitations of the body and suggesting a practical relationship with others, and Cho (2017, 2019, 2020, 2022) emphasized the process of accepting and interpreting life in old age based on Ricoeur's narrative identity. Thus, the study of "well-aging" in old age through philosophy is approached from the perspective of self-reflection, the practice of otherness, and self-completion.

In the arts, "well-aging" is a process of reframing personal narratives through various media and experiences. This field includes photography, art, music, and theatre, which play a role in positive changes in older adults' lives. Kim and Huh (2018) studied photography education's positive impact on rural residents' lives. Won (2019) explored how using picture books for humanities and arts education for older people contributes to lifelong education, self-affirmation, and integration. Han (2019) explored the meaning of old age existence in the posthuman era through the works of Cicero and Rembrandt. Lee and Park (2020) analyzed how active seniors' motivation to learn cultural arts education affects their social participation and successful aging and highlighted the need for program development. Choi and Lee (2020) presented an approach to well-being in later life through the Museum of Art cultural education. Oh (2021) reported how humanities-art programs contribute to self-reflection, self-development, fulfillment, and happiness. Lee (2023)



discusses the realization of positivity and agency in old age through older adult theatre artists and old-age drama.

The humanities and the arts are the study of human consciousness and emotions in depth. While humanistic interest in aging has been studied in various fields, researchers have only recently begun to accept aging as a natural process and emphasize the subjectivity and autonomy of older adults rather than as a problem. There is a lack of discussion about programs and educational policies that can restore the positivity and agency of older adults from an ontological perspective. In this context, there is a need for policy discussions and the development of programs to promote the subjectivity, positivity, and autonomy of older adults. Further, Yuk et al. (2017) pointed to the need for active intervention through the convergence of humanities and arts and the diversification of media.

### **2.1.2. Humanities Convergence Therapy for Well-aging**

HCT results from a collaborative study by professors and researchers at Inha University's Department of Humanities Therapy, analyzing more than 200 qualitative studies and clinical cases of counseling (Kim et al., 2022). Through qualitative research using storytelling in the initial study, theories for HCT were created, such as the interaction between the HCT therapist and counselee, organizing questions for subjective storytelling, and how to handle emotions during in-depth interviews (Kim et al., 2022).

The word “cure” in HCT is derived from the Greek word “therapeia,” which means to return to the original state and refers to the restoration of health in a holistic sense (R. Beekes, 2010). This means that symptoms are not seen as a problem to be fixed or treated but as a dimension of being to be uncovered or integrated. This perspective moves away from the conventional disease model of disease=symptom=medicine and focuses on



asking why the person has lost harmony and balance in their life, finding the cause, and exploring ways to restore it. HCT does not simply look at the symptoms and problems of disease but comprehensively examines the inner dynamic process of an individual's entire life history in response to all environments, including social environments such as geography, work environment, stress levels, and working hours.

In the totality of human life, there is always an Other in some form in the psychological representation of an individual. It is challenging to solve personal or self-problems without the other. The problem of the self is always considered concerning the other. Humans try to mediate conflict situations and maintain a state of equilibrium, and the concept of coexistence emerges from this process. Coexistence is a social interaction that involves conflict, competition, cooperation, and exchange, and it includes intra-individual coexistence, interpersonal coexistence, and coexistence with nature (Kim et al., 2022). A person's mind, immune system, and endocrine system have a sense of connection to a greater whole, and being fully present in the present moment through positive emotions such as thankfulness and compassion can lead to healing (Cho, 2012). Humans cannot exist in isolation and experience internal conflict through interactions with others. These conflicts can be with oneself, others, or events. Humans coexist through dynamic interactions with others, society, and the world. Therefore, empathy, understanding, communication, cooperation, and solidarity are necessary to achieve coexistence, and HCT is a healing approach to self-care that aims for this coexistence.

HCT regards restoring and healing internal and external balance through coexistence as restoring humanity (Kim et al., 2022). To restore humanity, HCT places the humanities at the center of therapy. The humanities are a comprehensive study of human society and have a practical aspect that seeks solutions to human problems by exploring humans and human experience (Kim



et al., 2022; Kim, 2013). The humanities are effective in managing human psychology and emotions in that they serve a self-care and healing function by providing self-awareness through inner reflection when humans experience difficulties in life (Kim et al., 2022). Kim (2013) states that the healing function of the humanities enables awareness of human limitations and suffering, search for meaning in experience, insight into the myriad paradoxes of life, concern for marginalized others, expansion of memory and correction of distorted memories, stimulation of courage to take risks, criticism of untruths, concern for a just life, efforts to contrast or harmonize the new with the old, and expression of the desire to enjoy life. Therefore, the humanities play a role in exploring various aspects of old age that are not included in existing studies of old age from the perspectives of history, philosophy, literature, art, and religion and in helping individuals acquire a unique self-identity in old age as subjects rather than objects of life (Kim & Koo, 2019).

The focus of HCT is on the living life story of the individual. Gerontologist Randall sees aging as a narrative process of exploring personal identity, in which individuals create their own unique story that encompasses past, present, and future (Randall, 2009). Freeman also defines old age as a “preeminent narrative stage” in which the story is constructed as a narrative, an individual’s framework of perception of life as it is told, not as it is lived or experienced (Freeman, 1997: 394). Narrative functions as a fundamental principle for understanding human life, and it is through stories that we construct the self (MacIntyre, 1985), relate to others, view the human and natural world, and make sense of the world and history. The narrative is the primary mode of thought for understanding and organizing human experience and constructing knowledge. Bruner saw narrative as the primary means by which humans make sense of the world and emphasized different ways of reading the world (Bruner, 1986). Polkinghorne describes narrative as





a structure that organizes a series of events into a finished story and gives meaning to each event (Polkinghorne, 1988). Clandinin & Connelly suggested that narratives function as a framework for revealing connections between events over a long period, providing temporal continuity to otherwise discontinuous experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Narrative is a fluid thought-form through which humans organize experience and construct knowledge. Hegel emphasized that the individual's unique subjectivity and interaction with others can lead to true reality, the "I" Genuine self-understanding can be achieved through self-awareness and self-awareness of others (Shin & Lee, 2016). In life history research, Bruner and Rosenthal viewed life in three dimensions, particularly on narrated life. Mandelbaum viewed the dimensions of life in terms of transitions and adaptations, with what is transitioned and how it is adapted as vital for the acquisition of subjectivity. The approach to life history aims to understand and reconcile with the past and to reconstruct life stories (Randall, 2009: 34). In response, McAdams states that "nothing in our life story is final. Things can always change" (McAdams, 13: 278).

The psychoanalyst Freud saw the key to the talking cure in the reconstruction of post-transactional dialogue, which not only provides emotional catharsis but also helps to transform the narrative of suffering into a positive one through self-narrative reconstruction, and believed that therapy begins at the moment of speaking (Freud, 1991/2022). The hermeneutician Gadamer also argued that through confronting and overcoming pain and suffering (*verwinden*), healing is experienced by reinterpreting events and constructing alternative narratives (Gadamer, 2005). Narrative reconstruction integrates subjective self-awareness with the self-understanding gained from the other, which is vital for HCT in old age.

Language becomes an essential tool in the therapeutic process as a primary mediator in the healing process (Kim et al., 2022). Heidegger described



language as “the house of being,” while Wittgenstein portrayed it as “a form of life” (Heidegger, 1977). From this perspective, language reflects the speaker’s natural world and functions therapeutically by expanding and reconfiguring it in time and space to construct alternative narratives (Kim et al., 2022; Byun, 2012). However, narratives can be understood through language as a symbol and the meaning behind the symbol. This means we can access authentic narratives through language and non-verbal communication, such as movement, music, and art.

HCT integrates a variety of humanities and arts-based psychotherapeutic techniques to explore significant events in the participant’s life through time, space, and person. The counselor may work with the participant to explore, understand, and attempt to reconstruct non-verbal narratives (Kim et al., 2022). Various therapeutic techniques, such as art therapy, music therapy, movement therapy, drama therapy, film and video therapy, and narrative therapy, combine the self-reflective elements of the humanities with the creativity of the arts to create new narratives. The power of literature and the arts lies in their creativity through narrative reconstruction. According to Connelly, narrative, like poetry, goes beyond the limits of linguistic universality. Ricoeur also emphasized that the power of narrative lies in its metaphorical capacity and the possibility of moving from one truth to multiple truths (Jung, 2002). Guattari and Deleuze also emphasized the shift from a scientific to an artistic paradigm because art seeks uniqueness rather than universality and emphasizes new expressions and forms that cross social and cultural boundaries (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). HCT therapists connect with the artistic paradigm by affirming to counselees that it is OK not to be universal and encouraging them to claim their uniqueness.

HCT begins by exploring how society, cultural and value discourses, and personal circumstances have shaped the counselee’s life. In this process, the counselor develops a deep understanding of the counselee’s socio-cultural



background and offers empathy and support for psychological and emotional issues, promoting freedom from negative perceptions that have made life challenging. As the discourse formed by the world and the other is deconstructed, the uniqueness of the counselee can be revealed. It is a process of discovering the distinct worth of the individual and restoring the uniqueness of existence. Rogers sees this process as potentiality, and Guattari emphasizes the aspect of subjectivity.

The HCT therapist supports the counselee in reframing their narrative, and the counselee becomes the subject of the therapy. The HCT therapist is not a direct problem solver but a facilitator who removes obstacles in front of the counselee. They act as a facilitator to help the counselee gain insight into their situation while maintaining a non-interfering position, excluding attitudes such as advice, instruction, analysis, challenge, and persuasion (Jeong, 1993). In his narrative therapy work, White also sees the counselor as a questioner, helping the counselee find solutions to their problems. HCT, like Rogers and White, considers the counselor to be a listener, facilitator, and mentor.

In HCT, a counselee is a person whose uniqueness and subjectivity are suppressed by the universal view of the world and others, and they are coexisting beings who suffer from the loss of balance and harmony in their lives. Therefore, HCT is a process of finding the balance of existence and achieving coexistence by discovering the unique subjectivity of the counselee's existence and restoring the broken balance in the relationship with self, others, nature, and God. In this process, the counselee and the HCT therapist are intersubjective beings and become co-authors of a narrative reconstruction for problem-solving. Intercultural communication skills are essential in this process, as human consciousness can never exist in isolation but is constantly in dialogue with other consciousnesses in the process of consciousness creation (Bakhtin, 1981).

HCT is committed to two values: agency and coexistence, which are not



opposites but complementary. In a state of coexistence, where subjective individuals coexist in a state of recognition of each other's uniqueness, coexistence is based on a mutuality that recognizes the uniqueness of existence without violating subjectivity. Husserl and Lacan argue that subjectivity can only be achieved through coexistence in a state of uniqueness, where the self and the other relate to each other in first-person coexistence in a state of uniqueness (Husserl, 2011; Lacan, 2008). This intersubjectivity means that individuals can freely express and demand their feelings and thoughts. (Kim et al., 2022: 83). When an intersubjective counselor communicates with a counselee as an intersubjective being, the counselee can discover their own identity and subjectivity and feel present. The counselee can find their identity and subjectivity and feel a sense of being. The acts of empathy, support, and resistance in the interaction contribute to the transformation and reconstruction of the self-narrative. Therefore, self-healing in integrative therapy is realized when both the counselee and the integrative counselor work together as an intersubjective coexistence of the counselee and counselor as a mutual subject.

## 2.2. Self-Healing of the Humanities Convergence Therapy

### 2.2.1. Concepts of self-healing

The word heal comes from the Old English word *hāl*, which means “wholeness” or “whole”. Thus, healing is not simply the disappearance of a cause of suffering but the process by which a being becomes whole. Heal is often interpreted as “make whole” and includes the concept of “restoring to original purity or integrity” (Kim, 2013).

Generally, treatment is a process of intervention to identify the symptoms and causes of illness. In contrast, healing is a process of wholeness that



focuses on the integrated restoration and transformation of body, mind, and spirit. Healing focuses on tapping into an individual's inner resources and self-regulatory abilities, exploring the meaning and purpose of life, and promoting psychological and emotional well-being. The process emphasizes self-determination and self-insight over directive counseling. In this context, it is important to distinguish “self-therapy” from “auto therapy.” Self-healing is solving or treating problems independently, without professional or external help. It includes overcoming difficulties through self-observation, self-analysis, self-guidance, and self-correction. HCT, on the other hand, is closer to the category of self-healing, with the counselor acting as a mentor and supporting the counselee's self-healing.

In this section, we will discuss various scholars' approaches to self-healing and approach self-healing from an integrative perspective. Different scholars pursue different concepts of self-healing.

Jung saw the whole psyche, including the conscious and unconscious, as the central psychological structure and emphasized the ability to be “self” (Jung, 1916/2021). Self is an integral part of individual psychological development and self-fulfillment. Jung saw self-healing as a way for individuals to connect with their true selves, source, and reality by paying attention to the universal symbols and archetypes contained in their inner experience and unconscious.

Hawkins believed that there were levels of consciousness that humans could reach as “true self” and “true me.” He saw self-healing as possible when levels of consciousness change by letting go of negative energy (Hawkins, 2020). He argued that by allowing go of negative emotions, one becomes free of them, and as one moves up the scale of the map of consciousness, one's view of self and life becomes increasingly positive. One eventually achieves inner stability (Hawkins, 2020).

Seligman also argued that true healing is not about fixing faults but bringing out the best in individuals (Seligman, 2009). Peterson and Seligman identified



six virtues (wisdom, courage, compassion, justice, righteousness, temperance, and transcendence) and twenty-four corresponding strengths as elements of self-actualization. They explained self-healing is about finding and strengthening one's unique resources (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Kabat-Zin describes self-healing as a process of changing one's perspective on life. A life perspective is altered by discovering one's "wholeness," an experience that is possible through constantly exploring one's true self (Kabat-Zin, 2017). He emphasizes that cultivating the strength of the mind to see pain as it is, without falling prey to the mind's tendency to change from moment to moment, is crucial to the healing process of gaining the wisdom to recognize the distinction between body and mind, and the wisdom to know cause and effect (Ahn, 2010).

Achenbach emphasizes the importance of the individual's unique life and experiences and unique interpretation of personal problems (Achenbach, 1997: 9-15). To overcome the disconnection between an individual's real life and the philosophical dialogue and self-reflection to approach their problems holistically.

James was the founder of individualistic psychology, which emphasized the centrality of the individual and the uniqueness of individual consciousness. He argued for the centrality of the individual and the uniqueness of individual consciousness. Further, James saw the inwardly desiring self and the outwardly interacting self. He emphasized the importance of reframing and interpreting the "I" in terms of a holistic understanding of the self as it interacts with the external world. (James, 1890).

Heidegger understood the self as the core of being and existence and understood the self to be formed concerning other beings. (Heidegger, 1927/2016). He emphasized the notion of Dasein, which is the sense of being in the world. Dasein is the ability to determine and interpret for oneself who one is and how one exists. Nietzsche goes even further, aiming for the



superhuman. Beyond dualistic fiction and the comfort of dualistic fiction and imagination, he sought to transform himself into a healthy and robust being by overcoming himself (Kwon, 2014).

Nietzsche's vision of humanity is overcoming meaningless suffering, rejecting pessimistic philosophy, and constantly overcoming oneself through philosophical self-affirmation (Nietzsche, 2004). It is a process of transforming oneself with the will to live. It is the transformation of oneself with the will to live, overcoming the socially defined self and becoming a superhuman by overcoming the inherent self—superhuman. In Nietzsche's philosophy, each person's unique experience and individuality is also essential. Each person's unique experience and individuality are also crucial in Nietzsche's philosophy and are seen as the key to self-discovery and self-realization in each person's life.

Self-healing is a process based on a deep understanding of oneself and the world and requires a multifaceted approach and interpretation. Self-understanding is a core step in self-healing because it is vital to have an integrated picture of your story from the beginning to the end of your life. In this process, personal interpretations, including the accounts of others, play an essential role. Interactions with other co-authors of their behavior and stories shape an individual's life. Therefore, self-healing is a process of discovering and transforming one's wholeness and uniqueness based on active self-awareness and self-understanding integration through interactions with others.

Scholars have developed interpretations and approaches to self-healing based on their theoretical backgrounds. This study aims to explore the meaning of self-healing through the experience of participating in an HCT program for the "well-aging" of ROAWLA. It is necessary to clearly define the concept of self-healing based on the theory of HCT. Therefore, Kim and Kim (2023b) derived the idea of self-healing in humanities convergence therapy through a



literature review and focus group discussion (FGD) with a group of humanities convergence therapy experts.

### 2.2.2. Self-Healing in Humanities Convergence Therapy

If we look at the concept of self-healing in humanities convergence therapy derived from the FGDs, the following four concepts can be implied. They include 1) looking into oneself, 2) restoring unique existence, 3) moving towards coexistence, and 4) restoring sensory artistry and imagination.

First, self-healing in humanities convergence therapy involves research participants looking within themselves. Humanities convergence therapy is an internal process in which the research participant achieves self-healing (Kim et al., 2022). In the paradigm of modernist counseling, research participants became objects rather than subjects by privileging specific experts with universal, scientifically analyzed knowledge. HCT is a postmodern counseling paradigm in which the research participant is the subject of the counseling process and can examine the problems in one's life and adapt and recover through reflection. As entities striving for self-completion through the self-actualizing tendency (Rogers, 2007), humans can reconstruct distorted narratives through self-reflection and progress toward self-healing (Rogers, 2007).

Rather than relying on objective, professional knowledge, the counselor helps the participant to discover and interpret new values within their subjective and unique narrative (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Precisely, the counselor reconstructs the narrative by paying attention to the specificity and uniqueness of the participant. Narrative reconstruction is not simply a description of being but of the possibility of becoming. Furthermore, it actively reveals, expresses, and creates that possibility (Park, 2006). The counselor helps the counselee discover the distorted and marginalized self and





narrative within the universal and objective social and cultural discourse and the specific theories of the expert and to be liberated from repressed perceptions and free (Foucault, 1975).

Second, self-healing in HCT is about reclaiming the value of the uniqueness of the minority by emphasizing the universal rather than viewing the uniqueness of the minority as abnormal. This perspective extends beyond human-centered and third-generation research participant-centered counseling to fourth-generation multicultural and fifth-generation social justice counseling. The research participant's self-healing is linked not only to the personal context but also to the social, cultural, and political context. Similar to the multicultural social justice counseling paradigm, it acknowledges participants' intersecting and complex identities and recognizes their social, cultural, and political uniqueness (Kim & Kim, 2023b). It also acknowledges the social and cultural value systems that oppress participants and considers elements of discrimination to understand and construct narratives. Therefore, intercultural communication is necessary for humanities-integrated care (Kim et al., 2022). Intercultural communication is recognizing and communicating the uniqueness and diversity of countries, regions, generations, and individual differences; understanding and accepting cultural perspectives and values; and consulting and adapting to facilitate communication (Kim et al., 2022). In this way, the counselor can recognize the subjectivity and uniqueness of social, cultural, political, and generational beings and help them to fulfill their potential.

Third, self-healing in HCT involves recovering imagination and creativity (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Creative self-expression is not only through language but also through non-verbal communication. Heidegger refers to language as the "house of being" and metaphorically states that "poetry listens to the sound of being and lets it inhabit itself" (Park, 2017). However, there is a limitation in that one cannot fully express oneself through language alone. In response, Spinoza and M. Merleau-Ponty valued non-verbal communication as



an entity beyond language and sought to approach reality through the experience of the body rather than language.<sup>9)</sup>

HCT is a discipline that approaches the reality of life behind the symbols of human life and uses various humanities and arts as well as language to understand and explore the self of the counselee. Therefore, the counselee can use the humanities and arts to explore and express their self-understanding, experiences, desires, imagination, and creativity to reconstruct a new narrative. The process of rebuilding or creating a narrative is seen by In garden of receptive aesthetics as a “gap” that needs to be filled with meaning by the viewer interpreting the work and by Barth as a “punctum”<sup>10)</sup>, an alien something that breaks the familiar context (Yun, 2022: 31).

The humanities and arts expand an individual’s fixed ideas and prejudices, enable empathy with new worlds and others, reveal the uniqueness of the individual as distinct from others, and produce a variety of meanings (Deleuze, 2004). The senses, not reason, allow us to perceive differences as they are. The senses make it possible to perceive differences in events, to move from one category to another, from one level to another (Deleuze, 2019). This process of meaning-making is not a simple reproduction of life but a process of self-revelation, a method of human self-creation, or, to borrow a phrase from Klee, “Art is not the re-presentation of the visible, but the making visible of the invisible” (Kim, 2013). Creativity in the humanities and arts is therapeutic because it awakens personal potential, alleviates negative emotions

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9) Merleau-Ponty argues that “words are truly gestures, and words contain their own meaning, just as gestures contain their own meaning” (Merleau-Ponty 1945), interpreting the revealing gesture, the gesture itself, as the object of expression, the meaning of the result, the act. From this perspective, the body can be understood as a medium for understanding and projecting the world and the meaning of thought itself. (Lee, 2021)

10) Barthes talks about the punctum as a contrast to the studium. In contrast to the presupposed and codified context of the studium, the punctum is something foreign that breaks the familiar context (Barthes, 1999; cited in Yun, 2022).



(Malchiodi, 2008), and frees the emotions to create new perceptions and behaviors that lead to a new sense of direction (Bloch & Crouch, 1985). Bachelard emphasized the shift in thinking from fact to imagination. Therefore, the creativity and imagination of counselees through art as self-healing allows them to reproduce narratives as another layer of meaning of existence, leading to self-healing (Kim & Kim, 2023b).

Fourth, self-healing in HCT means restoring coexistence (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Coexistence refers to a mutually intersubjective relationship that recognizes the uniqueness of individuals but does not invade each other's subjectivity (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Husserl and Lacan argued that subjectivity is formed by the presence of the first person in the relationship between the individual and the other (Hussel, 2011; Lacan, 2008). Intersubjectivity develops when individuals are free to express and demand their thoughts and feelings (Kim et al., 2022: 83). Therefore, when the counselee and the HCT therapist respect each other as inter-subjective beings, the counselee's subjectivity is strengthened, and their presence is acknowledged. In this process, the HCT therapist and counselee share the self-healing experience by participating in the HCT program as co-existing partners.

In general counseling, the coexistence of counselor and counselee is called rapport, which means more than just intimacy, but a mutual penetration into each other's lives. An essential attitude for the counselor is non-judgment, respect for the diversity and uniqueness of the participants, and respect for their right to self-determination and autonomy. The counselor's attitude becomes a medium for facilitating the participant's narrative reconstruction and creativity. Human consciousness can never be complete and exist in isolation; it is in constant dialogue with other consciousnesses in generating and creating its consciousness (Bakhtin, 1981). When we look back on our lives, we do not simply identify past events but reflect on how we see ourselves from the perspective of others, constructing connections between



events and the meanings they reveal. Thus, in his carnival theory, Bakhtin emphasized dialogue as a social interaction between subjects. He understood being as interaction and believed that individuals exist for others, through others, and for themselves (Kim et al., 2022). This means individual existence and subjectivity can be formed and developed through relationships and interactions. Specifically, individuals can recover and develop themselves through interaction and dialogue with others, which is possible in communal relationships. Therefore, the self-recovery of existence is the recovery of coexistence.

### 3. Summary

Korean society is entering an ultra-aged society faster than expected, and measures are being actively discussed. In particular, the number of older adults is increasing rapidly. The number of older adults living alone is also growing, and they are concentrated among women in rural areas and with low income and low education (Joung, 2015). As the number of vulnerable older adult groups increases, policies for older adults have been discussed internationally through the World Assembly on Aging (WAA). Through the two WAAs held in Vienna and Madrid, specific policies have been discussed to strengthen the capacity of governments and civil society, meet the potential capabilities and independence needs of older people, and enhance their independence and agency in later life. In line with this international direction, Korea has been implementing policies for older adults focusing on welfare and economic support, including integrated community care and specialized care services for older adults. However, its limitations have been pointed out, as the rapid growth of the older adult population has led to instability in the national and old-age pensions (Shin et al., 2021). Additionally, various



discourses such as successful aging, productive aging, active aging, and creative aging that respond to the aging of older adults are significant in that they have provided standards and measures for aging. Nonetheless, many voices of reflection have othered aging as a defect or incapacity, leading to illusions and negative perceptions that old age can be avoided by unifying it into a single category (Kim, 2023).

In recent years, self-care has been emphasized in older adult policy and gerontology as preventive care to prevent entry into social care, and humanistic gerontology has emerged from an ontological perspective. Humanistic gerontology critiques conventional gerontology, which sees older adults as objects of social protection or care and focuses on the diversity of life in old age, which cannot be homogenized. Humanistic gerontology reflects on the problems of old age at the individual level before the social level and considers older individuals as subjects of life. From the perspective of humanistic gerontology, the researcher focused on well-being in old age. Although well-being is used interchangeably in various discourses on aging, it emphasizes the interpretation of human life rather than the physical, social, and functional aspects. It can be seen as accepting aging, maintaining dignity in old age, finding positive meaning, and pursuing development and growth. The study of aging through a humanistic approach to “well-aging” in old age has been carried out in various interdisciplinary fields such as literature, philosophy, and the arts. However, there is a lack of practical research on the concepts and factors of well-being and humanistic approaches to “well-aging” through programs, mainly literature reviews and case studies.

Therefore, this study aims to apply the HCT program for ROAWLA among the increasing number of older adults living alone. HCT is a method that combines various psychotherapeutic techniques from the humanities and arts, focusing on narrative, which is an essential element of the humanities (Kim et al., 2022). It aims to explore the counselee’s life and reconstruct the narrative,



making it difficult (Kim et al., 2022). This process deconstructs the narratives of society, culture, values, and individual circumstances that have influenced the counselee's life and helps them discover their uniqueness and value. It is a therapeutic rather than curative approach that positions the counselee as the subject of therapy. The counselor's role is to help the counselee explore and reconstruct the narrative and to ask questions. Therefore, the counselee's therapy experience results from self-healing through the counselee's exploration and reconstruction of the narrative. The discussion of self-healing is approached in various ways by various disciplines and scholars, and in this study, to examine the experiences of counselees from a perspective of self-healing based on the theory of HCT, the concept of self-healing in HCT was derived using FGDs with a group of HCT experts. Self-healing in the HCT can be explained from four perspectives: self-inquiry, recovery of unique existence, recovery of sensory artistry and imagination, and recovery of coexistence (Kim & Kim, 2023b) and the four perspectives of self-healing in HCT provide a foundation for analyzing and interpreting HCT cases.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 1. Research Design

#### 1.1. Qualitative case studies

This study was designed as a qualitative case study to examine the experience of participating in HCT among ROAWLA. Qualitative research seeks to contextualize, reconstruct, and interpret phenomena in the lives of research participants by focusing on the complexity and meaning of stories from the researcher's or research participant's perspective, as opposed to the universal, objective viewpoint that quantitative research seeks (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Ryu et al., 2018). This approach is based on an exploration of the human inner being, an effort to understand the full range of human experience, and an understanding of others (Mcleod, 2011: 9). Human reality does not exist in a discrete form independent of human existence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), but is as diverse as human existence (Kim, 2016). It is a process of understanding and reframing the diversity of stories reframed by participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). It is a process in which researchers and participants co-create knowledge and understanding through an interactive dialogue (Bruner, 2011). Qualitative research focuses more on the content of the research than on the research process. It allows for flexibility in adjusting the focus, materials, and direction of the research as it progresses (Kim, 2016).

Therefore, this study is a qualitative study of the experience of participating in HCT among ROAWLA. This qualitative study adopted the open coding method to analyze and interpret the meaning between cases to examine the experience of participating in HCT from a self-healing perspective. A qualitative case study is an experiential inquiry that describes and analyzes a



bounded system such as an individual, program, group, place, and situation (Kim et al., 2018). A qualitative case study focuses on a particular problem, event, program, or phenomenon to understand how it unfolds and provides a framework for observing and interpreting the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). A qualitative case study also provides a perspective on how particular groups cope with particular challenges, and explores a single or bounded system over time using various in-depth materials (Creswell, 2015; Shaw, 1978). Therefore, this study utilizes multiple data sources as the program progresses to analyze the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988) and resolve questions about why and how the phenomenon occurs. Additionally, describing the nature of the phenomenon revealed by the case in depth provides readers with an experiential understanding of the case. It enables them to expand their own experiences related to the case (Ryu et al., 2018).

A qualitative case study method was used in this study to explore the meaning of self-healing experiences with HCT among ROAWLA for the following reasons.

First, a qualitative case study explores one or more cases over time within a bounded system of time and place (Creswell, 2015). In this study, the spatial boundary of the rural area, the thematic boundary of the experience of participating in HCT, and the temporal boundary of the duration of the program were set for the same subject, ROAWLA. Second, according to Yin (2003), it is essential for a qualitative case study to accurately identify the core of the research problem (Sung, 2021). As the research question of this study focuses on “how and why the experience of participating in the HCT program among ROAWLA changed from a self-healing perspective,” it is suitable for a case study. Third, the ultimate purpose of qualitative research is not to test theories but to discover hidden phenomena or objects with an inductive nature (Kim et al., 2018). Furthermore, a qualitative case study is deductive and can characterize, describe, and explain events through single or



multiple cases to test a particular theory or hypothesis.

This study designed a program based on the hypothesis that an HCT program incorporating various art psychotherapy techniques centered on life history narratives would contribute to the “well-aging” of ROAWLA. Then, by adopting a multiple-case design to analyze the meaning of the participation experience from a self-healing perspective and to identify common meanings, this study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the self-healing experience through HCT.

## 1.2. Research procedure

The research procedure of this study is as follows. It comprised five stages: (1) preparation, (2) program implementation, (3) data collection, (4) data analysis, and (5) report writing. The details of the research procedure are as follows Table 1.

Table 1: *Research Procedures*

Procedures	Contents of Research Procedures
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research topic selection</li> <li>• Program Design: Qualitative Case Study</li> <li>• Designing a humanities convergence program for well-being</li> <li>• Program evaluation and validation through FGI</li> <li>• IRB confirmation</li> </ul>
Program implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-interview: Explanation of the program and agreement</li> <li>• Conducting humanities convergence therapy programs for the well-being</li> </ul>
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure a variety of data sources</li> <li>• Building a database</li> </ul>
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-case analysis: analyzing individual narratives</li> <li>• Case-to-case analysis: investigating cases from a self-help perspective</li> </ul>
Report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derive program meaning</li> <li>• Implications and future research directions</li> </ul>

This study followed the research procedure as shown in Table 1. First, a consensus team was formed in the preparation stage to design the program according to the consensus qualitative research procedure around the research topic. The relevant literature and previous studies were analyzed, and the program was designed by the expert FGI to verify and evaluate. The whole process of program design was carried out under the supervision of mentors and supervisors. As the final step to implementing the program, we requested the Institutional Review Board of Inha University to review this study's research ethics and safety. We received the final approval in November 2022 (approval number: 210222-11A).

Second, in the program implementation stage, I selected the OO region of Gangwon, a rural area with many older adults living alone. I recruited participants who met the participant selection requirements using purposive sampling. Five individuals were selected as the study participants, but two dropped out for health reasons, and the final study consisted of three participants. The program lasted four months, from November 2022 to March 2023.

Third, the data collection phase. This study collected data mainly through program recordings, activity works, and observation notes as counselors visited OO areas in Gangwon-do and attempted to collect various data sources such as researcher's notes, informal interview data, and field notes from attending village events. In qualitative research, data collection included participants' narratives, behaviors, and expressions during the research process. The collected data was organized by the researcher and grouped into images, documents, and audio. A set of file numbers was assigned such that the researcher could easily use the data (Oh, 2019).

Fourth, in the data analysis and interpretation phase, the data analysis focused on self-healing in HCT, examined the participation experience, and categorized the meaning through open coding. The analysis sought to identify



the meanings of the cases by coding, categorizing, and thermalizing the collected data (Ryu et al., 2018). The researcher first coded the meanings of the individual case experiences and categorized them by grouping similar codes. The final categories were then thematized from the perspective of self-healing in HCT. A qualitative data analysis system, Bluebird 2.0, was used to analyze the content of each case.

Fifth, in the report writing stage, the report was revised with comments from peers, mentors, and supervisors through ongoing seminars and classes on qualitative research methods. This study aims to design the HCT program for the well-aging of ROAWLA and to derive the meaning of their experiences from a self-healing perspective. Accordingly, research Questions 1 and 2 were set, and the results of the research questions are described in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively. The discussion of the findings and suggestions are presented in Chapter 6.

## 2. Research Participants

The research participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) living in a rural area with a large population of older adults living alone, (2) living alone due to bereavement or voluntary reasons, and (3) wishing to participate in the HCT program for “well-aging.” This study recruited research participants who met the above selection criteria using purposive sampling. The researcher searched the literature for areas where many older adults lived alone and recruited people who wanted to participate in the HCT program for well-aging among ROAWLA in OO, Gangwon-do, one of the areas. The study aimed to develop a non-clinical program for “well-aging” in old age. Five participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the program after the purpose of the study, methods of participation, and compensation

were fully explained and selected. This qualitative case study analyzes the meaning of the research participants' experience participating in the HCT program from a self-healing perspective. Five participants were considered suitable for a qualitative case study. However, one in five participants withdrew from the program after five sessions because she felt unable to continue with the program due to prolonged sitting due to frequent surgery or difficulty with activities, and another was admitted to a nursing home after the sixth session due to cognitive issues. The final number of research participants in the study was three, and the information of research participants is as follows: Table 2.

Table 2: *Information of Research Participants*

	Age	Solitary period	Reasons for living alone	Local residence period	Number of children	Residence before marriage
A	78	3 years	Nursing home admission	38 years	2 individuals	Gangwon
B	82	7 years	Widowhood	59 years	3 individuals	Gangwon
C	82	23 years	Widowhood	60 years	2 individuals	Seoul

Participant A (herein referred to as A) is a 78-year-old ROAWLA who has lived in her current neighborhood for 38 years. She applied for the program after a friend in her community told her about it. During the lean season from late November to March, rural residents spend most of their time at home or in the community, and A wanted to make the most of her time with an on-site well-aging program. The researcher visited her before the session to inform her about the program process and to obtain her consent form. The researcher met A at a local community center. It was the first time she had met the researcher, but she greeted them by saying, “Are you the one OO referred?” The researcher introduced herself and said hello. A began to tell her story.



A is 78 years old and has a husband and two sons. She has lived in her current neighborhood for 38 years. The sons are now separated, and her husband has been living alone in a nursing home for three years after suffering a brain hemorrhage. A was born as a “bereaved child” because her father died before she was born. His biological father died when he was 42, unable to use his hands because his stomach was filled with water. His mother remarried and had a son; he lived with his sister and half-brother. A recalled her relationship with her stepfather and half-brother, who loved her more than her biological mother and sister, who disapproved of her.

A has battled cancer twice since her marriage and suffered through 10 years of caring for her husband after he collapsed with a brain hemorrhage. A’s husband was hardworking and capable of earning a living, but he was also a shoehorn, strict and violent with their children, and A had a difficult time during their marriage. A lives with her shoemaker husband and saves money by doing odd jobs, such as working in a traditional Korean sweet factory, to give to her children when needed. Two bouts of cancer and her husband’s illness have left her with a meager income, but she has found it rewarding to provide for and support her children, even if it means sacrificing what she wears and eats. She continues to farm and do household work for her two children and grandchildren and considers it a rewarding part of her life. The counselor listened attentively, and as A’s story drew to a close, she casually explained the program’s content and timetable. The researcher listened intently and casually introduced the program’s content and timeline toward the end of A’s story. This short 30-minute meeting allowed the researcher to form a rapport with A before the next day’s first session.

Participant B (herein referred to as B) was met at her house. B’s house was recently renovated and was modern, clean, and stylish. Her eldest son had built the house after the destruction of an older home, and she showed me the various items and objects in her house. As B could not sit in a chair for



long periods due to her physical limitations and poor eyesight made it difficult for her to communicate about objects, the researcher could recognize that the program needed to consider these circumstances.

B is 82 years old and has lived in the same neighborhood since marriage. She met, dated, and married her husband when he was staying with her family while he was at university. B's husband was the eldest of eight children, and after her marriage, she lived with her grandmother-in-law, parents-in-law, and siblings, for a total of 13 family members. The youngest sibling was 7 years old when she married, so she cared for her siblings. She did not know how to do anything when she married, so she learned from her sisters-in-law and mother-in-law. B has been widowed for eight years and has three children, a son, a daughter, and a son, who are separated and live at a distance but still visit frequently and have a close relationship. The children cared for their mother as if to compensate for her hardships. The eldest son kept an eye on his mother's health, sending her frequent packages to ensure she didn't run out of food, snacks, or nutritional supplements. The younger son also lived closest to his mother and became her hands and feet, taking care of her medical appointments, household tasks, and fieldwork. She has a caregiver who visits to help with cleaning, laundry, and simple household tasks. Nonetheless, my youngest son cared for every house detail before the caregiver arrived. Her daughter was also out of town, but she visited her mom's house at least once or twice a month to spend time with her and her brothers.

B spends a lot of time with her children, but most of her time is spent with her sister-in-law and neighbors in the town. On Saturdays, they usually go to the steam bath together, and on Sundays, they go to church together and then have lunch in town or go to her sister-in-law's house to eat together. The two sisters-in-law, who have lived near their parents-in-law since their marriage, have lived together like sisters for half their lives.



The researcher first met participant C (herein referred to as C) at B's house. C was born and lived in Jeollanamdo, but when her father died at a young age and her mother sold the land and home, she moved with her family to Seoul. Her mother raised her five siblings by running a small business and renting out rooms to Korean war refugees, but it was not easy for her mother to make a living and raise her five siblings on her own. Therefore, C worked as a factory worker and nursing assistant from a young age to help support the family. Her relationship with her husband began when she was a nursing assistant in a clinic and met him as a guest.

C's father-in-law was wealthy in the town and had no worries about money. C was loved by her husband and by her parents-in-law. When C met her husband in her early 20s, she moved down to live near her parents-in-law, dating her husband and working in a shop. B said she didn't feel anxious when she and her husband did not get married immediately because they were working non-stop and had to wait a while to have a traditional wedding. One day, however, C lost her second son in an accident while he was playing in the local pond. When the pond froze in winter, the children in the town used to skate on the pond in front of her house. That day, the child fell into a small hole in the pond and died. In addition, her eldest son lost his eyesight in an accident at work, and her husband died in a car accident. The painful events in her life—the loss of her second son, who passed on at a young age, an accident that blinded her eldest son, and the death of her husband—gave her a sense of understanding and acceptance of the suffering of others. Thus, C said that the most critical thing in a relationship is to love someone with all your heart and accept them as they are.

C had worked non-stop all her life, even in Seoul, where she had fled after losing her second son in a sudden accident. She took underwear and rubber gloves from her sister's husband's factory and sold them in Namdaemun Market with her younger brother and his wife. When she returned to her



parents-in-law, she continued to work as a rice farmer, field farmer, and representative of a Korean traditional sweet factory. Even after her husband died suddenly in an accident, A installed an automatic pumping system to irrigate more than 5,000 square meters of rice fields automatically. She continues to work five days a week in a potato bread factory and farms both fields and paddies. C considered the work a rewarding and blessed part of her life. Therefore, the researcher arranged for program sessions to be scheduled at weekends to accommodate C's schedule.

### 3. Data collection and analysis

#### 3.1. Data collection

The data for this study were collected from November 20, 2022, to March 31, 2023, when three participants in the OO region of Gangwondo received 10 sessions of an HCT program for well-aging, held once or twice a week for 60–90 min per session. In addition to the sessions, informal interviews collected at village community meetings and village events during the program were included. After obtaining consent from participants through a pre-program interview, the researcher collected activity dialogues, activities artworks, research and reflection notes, observer notes, and informal interview transcripts made during the program. The content of the data collection in this study is presented in the following Table 3.



Table 3: *The contents of the data collection*

Description	
Activity conversations	Conversations between researchers and participants
Activity artworks	An artwork that represents your life story
Research and reflection notes	Researchers' research notes and reflection
Observer's notes	Observer's participation journal
Informal interviews	Data collected at community meetings and village events outside of consultations

Five types of research data were collected, as shown in Table 3—first, activity dialogues. During the ten sessions of the program, the dialogues between the researcher and the research participants were recorded, including the research participants' descriptions of the activity artworks and the conversations between the researcher and the research participants.

Second, the activity artworks. Artistic activities are a vital healing process that can express and heal the psychology of research participants, enriching the stories of research participants and serving as a medium for self-understanding and emotional expression by projecting the inner psychology that was not revealed and hidden (Yun, 2022).

Third, research and reflection notes. After the research activities, the researcher kept a self-reflective journal focusing on the events and impressions during the sessions and carefully reflected on the research activities and her attitude and behavior as a researcher through the notes (Jung & Kim, 2017). The contents of the research and reflection notes were comprehensively observed and recorded, ranging from the meeting with the participants to the development of the program, the participant's attitudes and expressions in the program, and the characteristics of the activity works (Oh, 2019).



Fourth, observation notes were kept by the counselor who served as a secondary counselor during the sessions to record the researcher's interactions with the research participants and any changes in the research participants' behaviors, facial expressions, and emotions that the researcher might have missed.

Fifth, informal interviews—in addition to conducting sessions, the researcher also attends village community meetings, Christmas, New Year, and other events for older adults in the town. The researcher takes notes and records the conversations with the participants.

### 3.2. Data analysis

Through the collection of various source materials, 388 A4 sheets of transcribed dialogue during the program, 36 A4 sheets of researcher's notes after the program, 21 activity pieces and informal interview notes, 10 A4 sheets were collected.

The analysis process comprises open coding, categorizing, and themalizing. The primary analysis is a case-by-case analysis involving open coding to code and categorizes significant contents while reading the data (Bae, 2018). The researcher used Bluebird 2.0, a qualitative research analysis system, to update and read the data for each session, naming and coding meaningful units of meaning. Key expressions, metaphors, and repeated keywords from participants were called and recorded.

The secondary analysis is the categorization stage, in which similar data are grouped into categories and named through an inductive process using open coding. The researcher collected cases of similar self-healing experiences from the ten session cases of the three research participants and called them by looking for commonalities or characteristics among the matching cases. Categorization is a more abstract task than open coding and is a process of



identifying and revealing the meaning of the cases (Ryu et al., 2018). Once the categories were formed, an iterative comparative analysis of the above data was conducted until the attributes of the subcategories were formed (Jung, 2016). Thus far, the process of iterative comparative analysis has the characteristics of an inductive process, but the process of category confirmation is deductive (Merriam, 1998). By rechecking the primary data, the researchers could find areas that required revision of the already constructed categories (Jung, 2016).

The third analysis was based on case-to-case analysis and was thematicized by analyzing the meaning of the cases regarding HCT self-healing. Thematization is the researcher's interpretation, which involves the researcher's creativity and presents the system of meaning created by the researcher using the data to help the reader understand the researcher's understanding based on the theory (Wolcott, 1994).

#### 4. Ethical Considerations

This study is a qualitative study of rural older adult women living alone, and ethical aspects such as differences were considered. The rural older adult women living alone are a socially vulnerable group. From this perspective, the ethical consideration of this study is essential.

Therefore, in October 2022, the researcher requested a review according to the standards of Inha University's Institutional Review Board, describing the purpose and necessity of the research, the method of selecting research participants, research procedures, risks and rewards of the research, voluntary participation and freedom to withdraw, confidentiality, data storage, and disposal. After the review process, the final approval was received on 11 November 2022; the approval number was 210222-11A. After the review, a



preliminary interview was conducted to provide orientation for the program. The researcher thoroughly explained the purpose and content of the study to the participants and obtained their written consent. The informed consent form and research participation agreement are required by the Institutional Review Board of Inha University and include the purpose and necessity of the research, research procedures, information about the researcher, risks and rewards involved in the study, voluntary participation, and freedom to withdraw, data storage and disposal, and confidentiality. The conversations during the program were recorded after the participants' consent, and they were again informed about using the recorded materials in future research. The recordings were transcribed into Korean and Word files, and pseudonyms or symbols were used in the transcripts and records to avoid revealing the research participants' personal information. Personal information was also changed to pseudonyms or symbols in the materials provided to the supervisor and peer review process. Participant data used by the researcher was password-protected and used only on the researcher's laptop. Additionally, the research and related materials were stored safely in a personal cabinet to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the research participants per the Bioethics Act, which requires storage for three years from the end of the study.

In collecting and analyzing the research data, peer review was conducted to strengthen the sensitivity of the data (Lee, 2016) and to ensure the validity of coding and data classification. Peer review is a method of requesting a group of peers who are knowledgeable about the research topic, research methods, and related fields and who are judged to be able to provide their opinions on the research to review the research analyzes and findings during the research process (Ryu et al., 2018). The researcher presented the progress of the thesis in the courses “Multicultural Convergence Qualitative Research Methodology” and “Understanding Humanities Convergence Therapy” in



2022 and “counseling and Practice in Multicultural Families” in 2023 and received reviews from doctoral research students and doctoral mentors to ensure the validity of the research. Moreover, the researcher developed the thesis by receiving review and guidance on the program design of the research process, data collection, analysis process, and content according to the program through regular classes of Dissertation Guidance I and II by the supervisor.

A member check process was conducted to provide feedback and confirm the contents of the session to each research participant to check whether the researcher’s interpretation and meaning inference of the collected research data is consistent with the research participants’ responses through interviews. The member check method is a method that pursues the accuracy of research by asking for the views of research participants in the process of analyzing data and presenting results (Han, 2021). In this study, rural older adult women read the documents and retold the meeting contents due to the difficulty of checking. They checked whether the meaning of the research participants’ expressions and descriptions were correct, whether their opinions were not distorted, and whether they were interpreted correctly.

Furthermore, a triangulation method was conducted to compare and verify various data to ensure that the data collection and analysis were unbiased and faithful to the researcher. To this end, the cross-validation process with different sources, materials, and research methods was embedded within the study (Cuba & Lincoln, 2005). To understand the cases, the researcher cross-validated the collected activity dialogues, activity artifacts, researcher notes and reflections, observer notes, and informal interviews.

Finally, the researcher was competent as a qualitative researcher and made efforts to increase the credibility of this study. The researcher has made the following efforts to enhance the credibility of this study. In May 2022, Inha University Institutional Review Board In May 2022, the researcher completed

the regular training of Inha University's Institutional Review Board and participated in five qualitative research methodology camps and intensive courses from 2021 to 2023. I participated in qualitative research methodology camps and in-depth courses to learn the basics of qualitative research and research ethics as a researcher. The researcher wrote three articles to study HCT for older adults. The researcher received clinical training on research methods, participatory observation and in-depth interviews, and qualitative research analysis and published seven articles. The professor's supervisor trained the researcher as a qualitative researcher by writing 10 articles during the degree.



## Chapter 4 HCT program design for well aging

### 1. Program Overview and Goals

#### 1.1. Program Overview

The HCT for Well-aging program targets well-aging in ROAWLA. With the increasing number of older adults, especially older adults women living alone, self-care is emphasized, and in line with the purpose of personalized care services for older adults, ROAWLA needs a wellness approach to strengthen self-care. Therefore, through the HCT program, which combines humanities and arts for well-being in old age, the researcher aims to help people discover the meaning of life by reflecting on their past lives, understanding themselves and reframing narratives that have made their lives difficult. Through this, it is expected that they will discover their dignity and value as human beings and achieve a positive future outlook.

The well-aging HCT program was conducted for three ROAWLA, November 2022–April 2023, once or twice a week, ten sessions of 90 minutes, at home and in the community. Sessions 1 to 4 were conducted in the form of individual sessions in the individual's house for in-depth life and relationship exploration, and sessions 5 to 10 were conducted in the form of group sessions where it was easier for participants to open up and express their mutual experiences. The study was conducted on older adult women living alone in a specific area, and there was no difficulty in conducting individual and group sessions at the same time because the participants lived close to each other and had already established relationships. Before conducting the HCT program, an orientation session was held for the participants to understand the research purpose, content and process of the program through

a preliminary visit, and the researcher then explained the program schedule and rules, and completed a research participation agreement form.

The HCT program was conducted by the researcher and the researcher recorded all the program processes and transcribed the recordings after each session to identify anything that could not be observed during the program. The researcher checked the whole process of the program through supervision by the supervisor, reviews by the HCT supervisor and the peer group.

## 1.2. Program Goals and Engagement Strategies

The goal of the HCT program is well-aging in old age. In order to approach well-aging in old age, it is necessary to understand oneself, find meaning in life and have a positive outlook on the future, as shown in the theoretical discussion. Therefore, the goals and intervention strategies of the HCT program for well-aging in old age are as follows Figure 1.

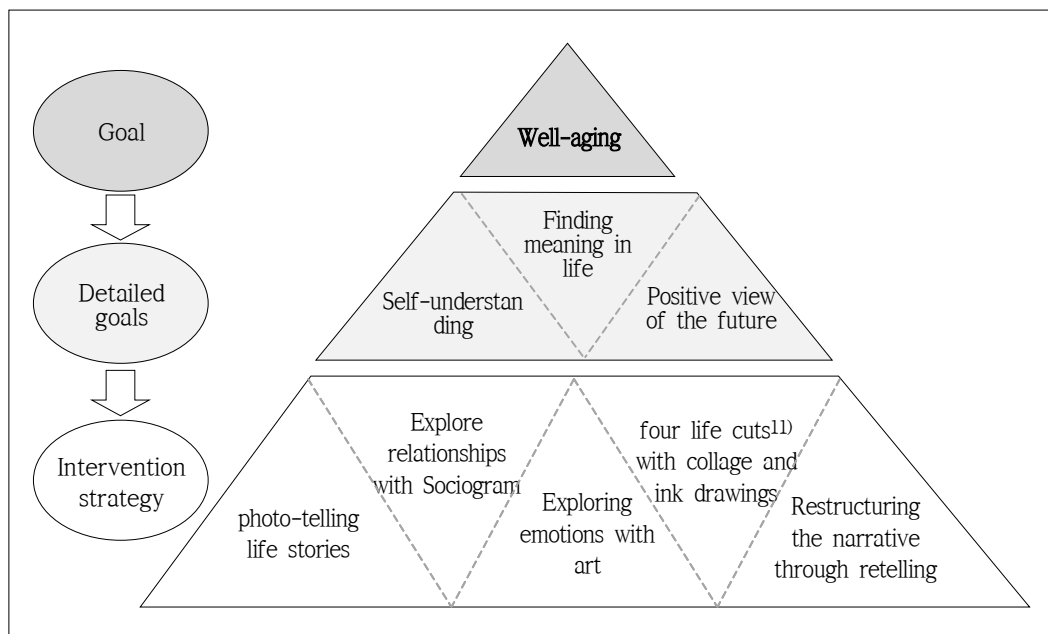


Figure 1: HCT Program Goals and Intervention Strategies for Well-Aging





The intervention strategy, based on the program’s goals and objectives, was designed to be sequential, overlapping, and integrated with steps to reconstruct the narrative to enable self-understanding, finding meaning in life, and a positive view of the future. Specific details are as follows.

First, life history exploration through photo-telling explores the main narrative of one’s life, life highs and lows, and life transition events, and sociogram exploration of original and current family relationships explores relationship dynamics such as intimacy, needs, and repression, and promotes self-understanding. Second, the exploration of life’s major emotions through art and the construction of life’s four cuts through collage and ink drawings promote the discovery of life’s meaning and the reconstruction of narratives. Third, the integrative understanding and narrative reconstruction of life through retelling provides a positive view of life in old age and promotes growth and development. The goal of the HCT program for well-aging is as follows Table 4.

Table 4: *The goal of the HCT program for well-aging*

Stages	Sessions	Goals
Early	1~4	Rapport building, Self-understanding through life history and relationship exploration
Mid	5~8	Finding desire and meaning of life through emotional exploration
Late	9~10	Restructuring the narrative and creating a positive view of the future through retelling

The early stage is one to four sessions designed to build rapport between the researcher, research participants and research participants and to achieve self-understanding through the exploration of their lives and relationships. In

11) Four Life Cuts uses four-cut comics to compose key scenes from the participants' lives through a variety of media and approaches, including collage and ink drawings.



order to reduce discomfort in the program and build a sense of trust between the researcher and the participants, a stable environment was created to allow them to tell their stories and explore their life narratives in a supportive environment. It is important to establish a sense of trust between members in the first step of the program, and this sense of trust can predict later program outcomes (Park, 1998).

The Mid stage is five to eight sessions and aims to express major emotions and discover the meaning of life based on self-understanding through exploration of early life history and relationships. The researcher helped participants to experience catharsis by expressing various emotions and constructing their life stories, integrating unconscious and conscious aspects of their lives, deconstructing negative narratives and discovering the meaning of life from a new perspective.

The late stage is the nine to ten sessions that provide an integrated reflection on the previous sessions and aim to identify changes in the participant's narrative and help the researcher to retell the participant's story and reconstruct the participant's narrative in an interactive dialogue between the participant and the researcher. The researcher helped the participant to take a positive view of their life as an agent of their own narrative reconstruction.

In order to achieve this goal, this study set up six intervention strategies, as follows First, photo-telling with photographs. Looking at and talking about photographs helps people to reflect on their past lives, to make unconscious memories conscious and to look at their lives from a present perspective. Second, a sociogram using puppets is an easy way to visually represent the dynamics of a relationship, such as the intimacy of the relationship and the desires and repressions within the relationship, through the distance and direction between the puppets, and to bring out the narrative of the relationship. Third, through the use of paintings, collages and ink drawings,



the four cuts of life reveal hidden emotions and desires through image projection, helping viewers to explore their unrecognized depths and discover the meaning of life. Fourth, retelling is the most essential point in the program, a process of rebuilding and restructuring the life narrative. In this session participants work on redefining their narrative. In this session, participants work to redefine their narrative. In previous sessions, participants have realized that joy and sadness coexist in an event, that frustration and success coexist, and that their feelings toward an event change depending on their interpretation, and in this session they continue to reinterpret their narrative.

## 2. Program Design

### 2.1. Program design process

In order to design ROAWLA's HCT program for well-aging, a research team of five experts was organized to determine the specific program content through a consensual qualitative research process and to establish the program through an evaluation. This study followed the four-step research procedure proposed by Hill et al. (2016). The four steps are: Start ⇨ Case Analysis ⇨ Cross Analysis ⇨ Writing.

In the first stage, the “start” stage, the research topic and research object were determined, and a research team consisting of a consensus team and advisors was established. The research team consisted of five experts, three to four consensus teams, and two supervisors to design the HCT program for ROAWLA.


In the second stage, the “case analysis” stage, the designated teams conducted previous research in their specific fields and designed the details of

the program in terms of domains and core ideas based on the previous research. The final outcome was reviewed by a supervisor through a consensus process with the consensus team.

In the third stage, “cross-analysis” stage, domain teams met regularly to share and cross-validate programs within and across teams. Finally, a group of experts and supervisors reviewed and confirmed the program.

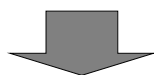
Finally, in the fourth stage, the “writing” stage, we delivered the program to six experts in advance to increase the validity and reliability of the program, and conducted a focus group interview (FGI) to evaluate the program. Based on the results, the program was finalized. The contents are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Program design steps

		Start
Step 1	Research topic selection	Well-aging HCT program for ROAWLA
	Building a research team	Selecting participants for research using purposive sampling ① five experts: experts in humanities and psychotherapy ② 2~3 consensus team members: PhD students involved in each field ③ 2 supervisors: 2 professors who are supervisors of the HCT
		
		Case analysis
Step 2	Building domains	① Previous research in each field ② Select session topics based on prior research by a consensus team
	Identify core ideas	① Designing program details ② Confirm topics and program details for each field with supervisors ③ Revise program topics and details based on feedback from supervisors



Step 3	Cross-analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>① Meet regularly to share and cross-validate program content in each field</li> <li>② Confirmation of cross-analysis by the supervisor</li> <li>③ Revise the cross-analysis based on the supervisor's comments</li> <li>④ FGI for evaluation of the HCT program for the well-aging</li> </ul>



Step 4	Writing
	Final program design

### 2.1.1. Step 1: Start

The first step of the program is to determine the research topic and form a research team. The research topic is a qualitative study of the experience of participating in HCT program for ROAWLA. To approach well-aging, we used photo-telling for life memories, sociogram for exploring relationships, art for exploring emotions, four cuts of major life events and life re-telling. The contents are as follows Table 6.

Table 6: *Program design Step 1*

Start	
Research topic selection	HCT program for ROAWLA's well-aging
Research team setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 experts: a purposive sample of experts in the fields of life history/relationship exploration/art therapy/four life cuts/retelling</li> <li>• 2~3 consensus team members: PhD students involved in each field</li> <li>• 2 supervisors: 2 professors who are supervisors of HCT</li> </ul>

Regarding the composition of the research team in Table IV-3 above, the details of the program’s approach and rationale are shown in the following Table 7.

Table 7: *Approach and rationale for HCT program*

Approach		Rationale
1	photo-telling with Life reminiscences	Life reminiscence has been shown to be effective for well-aging in old age by helping people to recognize that life is on a continuous line (Nam, Park, & Kim, 2011), to integrate fragmented memories of past lives (Bohlmeijer, 2007), and to integrate and reinterpret memories through a process of reframing the whole life (Webster, Bohlmeijer, & Westerhof, 2010)
2	Exploring relationships with Sociogram	Sociogram show the positions that individuals occupy in their interactions with others and their relative importance (Kim et al., 2013). they can help us identify and reframe problematic narratives by exploring relational dynamics
3	Exploring emotions with arts	Participants viewed masterpieces from the local Park Soo-geun Museum of Art, projecting their unconscious onto the paintings, experiencing dynamics, expressing emotions and reframing narratives through creative artistic activity
4	Four life cuts	Four cuts of Major Life are four representations of significant life events. Use magazine collage and ink drawings, media and techniques appropriate for older adults, to create the four cuts. This is an effective approach to revealing the unconscious and self-reflection, reframing the narrative
5	re-telling	Helping to integrate narratives and retell life stories that have been interpreted as painful, allowing for a positive view of life



Step 1 in Table 7 explores life comprehensively by exploring the entire life narrative. Step 2 uses a puppet sociogram to access life-defining events in exploring relationships around the original and current family. Step 3 is explored and integrated by using a narrative art therapy approach to express repressed self-emotions and explore unexplored life narratives by recalling feelings associated with key events. Step 4 involves reflecting on the overall narrative, relationships and emotions of their lives and reframing their life images into four comic strips to reflect on their past lives, discover important meanings and facilitate narrative reconstruction. Finally, through the life retelling process, the researcher and research participant work together to illuminate and reconstruct the life story in a new light through retrospection, and to help the participant achieve self-acceptance, find meaning in life, and develop a positive view of the future.

Based on the goals of each step, a research team was organized to develop detailed program content and media selection. The research team consisted of one expert for each step and two to three members of the consensus team. The five experts are experts in the humanities, counseling, and psychotherapy, as well as graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the theory and practice of HCT. The five experts were selected through purposive sampling of individuals with experience using the step-by-step approach and who are recognized as experts. Each of the five was a Ph.D. and Ph.D. candidate with experience in life history, Lacanian analytic discourse, art psychotherapy, and art therapy and HCT. They were responsible for leading the study and consensus process of the step-by-step approach. The other members of the consensus team were graduate students in the same program and were selected on the basis of their interest and research experience in the field. Information on the five experts is provided in Table 8.

Table 8: *Information of the five experts*

Step	No	Fields of research	Age	Years of experience	Fields of study
1	A	Life history	50s	15 years	Narrative Literature
2	B	Lacanian analyst discourse	50s	10 years	Psychoanalysis, Lacan
3	C	Masterpiece art therapy	50s	5 years	Empathy, Masterpiece Art Therapy
4	D	Art psychotherapy	40s	10 years	Multicultural Art Psychotherapy
5	E	HCT	40s	5 years	Art Therapy, HCT

According to the expert information of each stage in Table 8, A is a Ph.D. in literature, an expert in narrative and life history research, and has written many relevant books and articles. A has published a book of life story interviews focusing on the lives of older adult women in-laws and conducts qualitative interview research on the lives of migrants. B has a Ph.D. in Lacanian Analytic Discourse Based Life Reminiscence Therapy, is an expert in Transactional Analysis, and has published research and books based on Lacanian theory. In this study, he approached the exploration of relationships through puppet sociogram of original and current families. C is an artist with 20 years experience and an art therapist with 5 years experience in art therapy and a Ph.D. in literature. She has published books and articles on masterpiece art therapy and continues to do research in this area. D is an art psychotherapist with 10 years of experience and has various clinical experiences in art psychotherapy in counseling centers. In her clinical practice as an art psychotherapist, she has used the arts of movement, art and music in an integrative way, and has been responsible for sessions on the four cuts comic from drama therapy. E has been an art therapist specializing in HCT



for 5 years, is a member of the \*\*psychological counseling center, and has experience in art therapy and HCT. E is trained as an art therapist in various art media such as collage, ink, various papers and paint and was responsible for the session on retelling.

### 2.1.2. Step 2: Case Analysis

The second stage is the case analysis stage, which determines the topic areas for each session and the detailed content and media of the programs accordingly. Theme development is the composition of the theme and content of the session based on previous studies and research in each area. Developing Core Concepts refines the theme and content of the session and selects the necessary media and tools. The content is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: *Program design step 2*

Case Analysis	
Topics Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous research in each field</li> <li>• Choose session topics based on previous research</li> </ul>
Key concepts Derivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design program details based on session topics</li> <li>• Check topics and program details with supervisors</li> <li>• Based on supervisor comments, revise program topics and details</li> </ul>

Table 9, the team analyzed previous studies and met to agree on the topic and details of the sessions and use of media. The content derived from the case analysis is shown in Table 10.



Table 10: Program design step 2: Case analysis content

Session	Field	Topic	Program details	Activities and media
1	Photo telling Life History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the research aim and process</li> <li>• Life narrative research</li> </ul>	<p>An introduction to the purpose and process of the study</p> <p>Narrative research on the whole life from childhood to old age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind them to bring photos</li> <li>• Keeping an observation diary</li> <li>• Record informed consent</li> <li>Take photos of the site</li> </ul>
2			<p>Researching the Korean War, in-laws, and narratives in relation to your life today</p>	
3	Explore relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring your birth family</li> <li>• Exploring relationship dynamics</li> </ul>	<p>Exploring the repression, taboos, pleasures and desires experienced through parents and siblings</p> <p>How did I react to the order of my parents and siblings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociogram: distance and face direction of father, mother and siblings around ‘I’ through family puppets, storytelling</li> <li>- Here is the research participant. What is the distance between you and (OOO)?</li> <li>- Is OOO facing you or is his back to you?</li> </ul>
4			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring your immediate family</li> <li>• Exploring relationship dynamics</li> </ul> <p>Exploring the repression, taboos, pleasures and desires experienced through husbands and siblings</p> <p>How did I react to the order of my husband and children?</p>	
5	Exploring emotions with masterpiece of art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring emotions through masterpiece appreciation</li> </ul>	<p>analyze narratives about positive emotions in artwork and expressions (joyful, rewarding, happy, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose four paintings of positive emotions</li> <li>• What do you think of when you look at this masterpiece?</li> <li>• Which of these masterpieces makes you feel the most happy and joyful? Why did</li> </ul>



				you choose that masterpiece? When do you usually feel those feelings? Have you ever felt those feelings?
6		and expression • Storytelling about emotion	analyze narratives about negative emotions in artworks and expressions (angry, lonely)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose four paintings of negative emotions.</li> <li>• What do you think of when you see these paintings?</li> <li>• Which of these masterpieces makes you feel the saddest or sickest? Why did you choose this masterpiece? When do you usually feel those emotions? Have you ever felt those emotions?</li> </ul>
7	Four life cuts	Composing the four cuts of a lifetime Storytelling	Two lifetimes you'd like to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Moments in my life I want to change' Think and draw 2 cuts</li> <li>• Express what you would do/change if you could go back</li> <li>• Talk to someone you'd like to meet when you return (speech bubbles, thought clouds)</li> </ul>
8			Two of your happiest life moments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The happiest time of my life' Think and draw 2 cuts</li> <li>• Talk to people you've been with in happy moments (speech bubbles, thought clouds)</li> <li>• What do you want to tell the people who were there with you?</li> </ul>
9	Retelling	Life re-telling - Life retelling with four life cuts - Reframing life narratives	Interview with the scene I wish I hadn't drawn in addition to the four life cuts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The story of a drawing that didn't make it into a four life cut, but could have</li> <li>• Why are the four cuts of your life more important than this scene?</li> </ul>
10			Retelling your life story. Finding a space to display the artwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retelling of interactions between researcher and research participants about their lives</li> <li>• Creation of a certificate of award</li> </ul>



Based on the case analyses in Table 10 above, life history interviews using photo-telling, included in the program guide, building rapport and understanding life history narratives. Through life history storytelling, researchers explore the unique life stories of research participants by examining the context of time, culture, and society. Research participants are informed in advance about the use of photographs and are given the opportunity to prepare them. An important theme in the exploration of relationships is the examination of the relationship dynamics between the original family and the current family. It explores the repressions and taboos, the pleasures and satisfactions experienced in relationships, the understanding of life stories through defining events, and the process of self-acceptance and understanding through reflection. Exploring emotions through the use of masterpieces aims to explore positive and negative emotions formed around life-defining events, and to discover new self-knowledge beyond self-understanding through activities that creatively express unexpressed needs and emotions. To this end, we have selected masterpieces that have been used to explore positive and negative emotions based on previous research. four life cuts is the step of constructing the meaning of life based on the previous sessions conducted. Through this step, the researcher and research participants together could reconstruct and integrate narratives that have not been integrated and discover the meaning of life. The details are “two cuts of lives I would change” and “two cuts of the happiest lives” to discover the unique values that are important to each person. Finally, life retelling is a retelling of the researcher’s and research participant’s work together. This allows the researcher and research participant to discover the meaning of the research participant’s life story and to look forward to a positive future.

### 2.1.3. Step 3: Cross-analysis

Step 3 was the stage of cross-analysis, and regular presentations and feedback were given in the theory and practice classes of HCT. The program was revised and supplemented through cross-validation, where the program content was shared and experts, consensus teams, and supervisors gathered to ask questions and collect opinions. Finally, a FGI with five experts in HCT was conducted to evaluate the revised and supplemented draft program. The contents are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: *Program design step 3*

Cross-analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-analysis through regular meetings to share, question and discuss program content in each field</li> <li>• Confirming cross-analyzes with supervisors</li> <li>• Revising content based on supervisors input</li> <li>• Conducting FGI for final evaluation of the program</li> </ul>

As shown in Table 11, the regular meetings were held seven times in one semester, with relevant content shared on an hourly basis and a continuous process of consensus and validation. The programs supplemented and modified by consensus and validation were evaluated and validated by FGI with a group of experts in each field. The content is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: *Program design step 3: Cross-analysis content*

Fields (Sessions)	Comments and evaluations
photo-telling life histories (S 1, 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use photos and albums from participants' homes for photo-telling</li> <li>• Use photo narrative boards, make photo albums.</li> <li>• When conducting life history interviews, the researcher should take into account the fluidity of the field and observe and record the situation before, during and after the interview by taking photographs of the process and details of the village landscape.</li> <li>• The researcher should maintain a non-judgmental and</li> </ul>



	<p>non-exclusive attitude during the interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When counseling older people, repetition by the participants is important.</li> <li>• It is important for the researcher to be patient and willing to accept that sessions may take longer than expected.</li> <li>• The researcher should focus and explore relevant themes with the aim of reframing narratives related to well aging.</li> </ul>
<p>Sociogram: Explore relationships (S 3, 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two sessions are insufficient for life history exploration, but three or four sessions will allow for deeper exploration based on life history.</li> <li>• Explore the meaning of the relationship from the current perspective</li> <li>• It is important to understand the social context of the participants and approach the relationship through documentation of local characteristics and fieldwork.</li> </ul>
<p>Exploring emotions based on masterpieces (S 5, 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The selection of masterpieces should take into account the characteristics of the research participants, such as rural, women and older adult, and their ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds.</li> <li>• Preference surveys should be used to select the masterpiece, or the masterpiece should be constructed from previous research.</li> <li>• Emotion research should focus on current feelings, as positive/negative is too dichotomous an approach.</li> <li>• The researcher acts as a mentor to help participants reflect without judgement.</li> </ul>
<p>Four Life Cuts (S 7, 8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Life Cuts should use age-friendly media and techniques (consider the use of oriental painting, ink, etc.) to focus on narrative exploration.</li> <li>• Summarising the life story is more important than the technique.</li> <li>• Four-cut compositions can also be facilitated by framing, books, and boxed collages.</li> <li>• Adding dialogue can be a rewarding task</li> </ul>
<p>Life retelling (S 9, 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life retelling is the stage where the researcher and participant co-create the story and requires storytelling skills on the part of the researcher.</li> <li>• Need to have an approach to effective retelling (e.g. winning an award, being on the cover of a magazine)</li> </ul>



The final program was completed by reflecting the cross-analysis in Table 12. First, the application points are as follows. The life history interviews were conducted using a photo album so that the participants could see the photos they had prepared at a glance. Although there were opinions that the number of sessions and time were insufficient for exploring relationships through sociogram using puppets, the stories can be continued in the next session, and longer sessions may be difficult for counseling older adults, so it is conducted in two sessions and additional interviews are conducted as needed. Exploring emotions through masterpieces does not divide positive and negative emotions, but explores major emotions related to the main narrative of life, and explores emotions through visiting the Park Soo-geun Museum of Art. This is because the materials and landscapes of Park's art are related to the context of the research participant's life and are suitable for recalling and revealing memories and emotions. The four life cuts of the research participant were constructed using collage techniques and ink drawings, which are easy to draw, considering that the research participant was an older adult and not easy to draw.

## **2.2. Program progression process and content**

### **2.2.1. Program progression process by session**

In this study, each session was divided into four phases: introduction and activity explanation, art activity, sharing, and wrap-up, with a time allocation of 15 minutes for introduction and activity explanation, 40 minutes for art activity, 30 minutes for sharing, and 5 minutes for wrap-up. This is shown in Figure 2 below.

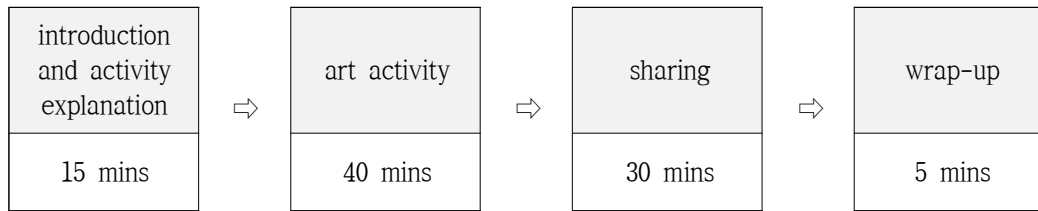


Figure 2: Program progression process by session of HCT

First, in the introduction and activity explanation step, the participants shared their daily routines, personal affairs, current health and mood, and explained the activities of the session. Since most of the participants were new to humanities and arts activities, we explained the process of the activities, how to use the tools and media, and showed examples to create an atmosphere in which they could participate in the activities.

Second, in the activity step of each session, the research participants shared their feelings after doing activities that fit the theme of each session, such as life interviews through photo-telling, relationship exploration through sociogram with puppets, emotional exploration through masterpieces, and four life cuts through collage and ink paint. Life interviews through photo-telling in the first and second sessions focused on open-ended questions about life events related to life's highs and lows, allowing research participants to naturally construct and explore their life stories. The third and fourth sessions of relationship exploration through puppet sociogram explored the intimacy of relationships between original and current families, focusing on relationship dynamics such as needs, repression, and frustration. The fifth and sixth sessions of emotional exploration using masterpieces focused on the emotions felt in the major life events and relationships of the previous sessions, allowing the research participants to freely express the events and emotions experienced and to express their latent needs. In the seventh and eighth sessions, four life cuts were encouraged to express major life events, relationships, and emotions





through free association by creating three-dimensional collages using magazines and inked book drawings. As all the participants were older adult women and had difficulties in using activity tools and media, the researcher supported them in their activities and helped them to express their feelings.

Third, in the sharing step, the research participants explained their activities and artworks and retold them through the researcher's feedback. During the sharing process, the space was tidied up to focus on the sharing, the artworks were placed in one place and talked about, and any distractions from the interaction between the research participants and the researcher were removed. The researcher provided a space for the narrative to be explored, expanded, and reconstructed through interactive dialogue between research participant and researcher, and between research participant and research participant.

Fourth, the wrap-up step summarized the overall content of each session's activities, guided the content of the next session, and set the schedule. As a door-to-door program, the schedule was flexible according to participants' schedules, and we tried to conduct each session in one to two weeks.

### **2.2.2. The content and meaning of each session**

The content and meaning of the programs are as follows. The first step is the "induction," which explores relationship building and life storytelling through photo-telling based on life memories. The first and second sessions were conducted in the research participants' homes, using photos on the wall or in their possession to conduct life history interviews. A life history interview is a process of reflecting on one's life to enhance self-understanding by recalling meaningful past experiences (Quackenbush & Barnett, 1995). Life reminiscence helps people to recognize that life is on a continuum (Nam, Park, & Kim, 2011), to integrate fragmented life memories



from the past (Bohlmeijer, 2007), to reconstruct past experiences in a meaningful way, and to give new and significant meaning to life (Butler, 1963). Therefore, life reminiscence is an effective way to support self-integration in old age (Webster, Bohlmeijer, & Westerhof, 2010). Therefore, research participants naturally used photo-telling to conduct life history interviews by selecting meaningful photos or organizing disorganized photos into albums.

The second step, to explore relationships, the researchers conducted sociogram using puppets. Sociogram were developed by Moreno and show the positions individuals take in their interactions with others and the relative importance of these positions (Kim et al., 2013). The third and fourth sessions took place in a local community space and were divided into original and current families to explore the relational dynamics of oppression, taboos, desires, pleasures, and satisfactions between members to explore narratives of the problem and possibilities for reinterpretation.

The third step is the “expression” step, which uses masterpieces to explore and express the research participants’ inner and primary emotions, and to explore the narratives associated with the expressed emotions. Through the process of viewing a masterpiece, the viewer’s unconscious is projected onto the painting and a dynamic is created that leads to self-reflection and re-examination through a new awareness of the emotions and feelings expressed on the surface (Yun, 2022). In the fifth session, after visiting and viewing the “Park Soo-geun Museum of Art of Art,” the participants explored their own lives reflected in Park’s paintings and made box collages using images of Park’s artworks. In the 6th session, they shared their stories reflected in the paintings with their group members and creatively expressed their feelings by mixing colors on a handy coat with woodrock. Through this process, they identified new sensations and emotions, explored the narratives they contained, and attempted to reconstruct them.



The fourth step was the “interpretation” step, where the four life cuts were applied to form the four major life cuts. Considering that the research participant was an older adult woman living alone, we used a three-dimensional magazine collage, which was easy to express, and a picture book, which was painted with ink and pastels. Through this process, the main narrative of her life was reconstructed around the memories.

The fifth step was one of integration, and retelling was a process of coming to terms with the past by organizing and reinterpreting the narratives synthesized in the previous sessions, allowing for a positive outlook on one’s life through the process of narrative reconstruction. To this end, the ninth session is a session in which the work done in the previous sessions is presented and discussed, and the tenth session is a session in which the content of the narrative reconstruction, composed through interactive dialogue between the researcher and the research participant, is put into a listing format and concluded by retelling.

### **3. HCT Program for Well-Aging**

This study followed a qualitative consensus research process to design the program. The HCT program for well aging, as agreed upon by the expert group and consensus team and finally designed by the FGI evaluation, is shown in the following Table 13.

Table 13: *HCT Program for Well-Aging*

S	S	Field	Goal	Program Content	Activity
Introduce	1	Life Reminiscence	Exploring life stories through photo-telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the purpose and process of the research</li> <li>• A narrative research study across the life span from childhood to old age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reminders to bring photos</li> <li>- Informed consent for research and recording</li> <li>- Writing observation journals</li> <li>- Taking field photographs</li> </ul>
	2			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research narratives by exploring specific events in your life in a personal and historical approach and relating them to your current life.</li> </ul>	
Exploration	3	Explore relationships	Explore relationships focused on birth family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the repression, taboos, pleasures, and satisfaction experienced through parents and siblings</li> <li>• How did I respond to the order of my parents and siblings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sociogram: Exploring relationship narratives through family puppets, observing the distance and facial direction of father, mother and siblings, focused on me.</li> </ul>
	4			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring Repressed Taboos, Pleasures, and Desire Satisfaction Experienced Through Husbands and Children</li> <li>• How did I respond to the order of my husband and children?</li> </ul>	



Expression	5	Masterpiece Painting Art Therapy	Explore introspection through masterpieces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit Park Sugeun Museum of Art and collage with Park's paintings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visiting the Park Soo Geun Museum of Art(centered on the digital pavilion)</li> <li>- Collage of the paintings of Park Soo-geun</li> </ul>
	6		Exploring emotions in masterpieces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share stories and express emotions with colors and handkerchiefs after viewing a masterpiece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- View a variety of masterpieces and select one to express your own story and emotional exploration as reflected in the masterpiece.</li> </ul>
Reframing	7	Four life cuts	The main stories of life in four cuts narrative reframing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create happy moments with 2 cuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a three-dimensional collage of happy moments in your life</li> </ul>
	8			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create meaningful moments in life with 2 cuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make an ink picture book of life's meaningful moments</li> </ul>
Integration	9	Life retelling	Integration life narratives with retelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retelling your narrative with 4 life shots</li> <li>• Reframing stories with new meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Telling the Four Cuts of Life in a favourite order</li> <li>- Discovering the meaning and significance of the Four Cuts of Life</li> </ul>
	10			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize the researcher's and participant's interactive narrative and deliver it to certificate of award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a certificate of award with a life story</li> <li>- Sharing reflections on the activity</li> </ul>



## 4. Summary

This HCT program is for the well-aging of ROAWLA and the program was constructed using the consensual qualitative research process. The consensus qualitative process is a method of constructing a program through a consensus team of five experts, a consensus team, and supervisors to reach consensus on all steps of literature review and program construction to increase the reliability of the program.

The HCT program for ROAWLA's well-aging is designed in five steps. Step 1 is a comprehensive understanding of life by exploring life narratives. Step 2 is a sociogram using puppets to access life-defining events by exploring relationships between original and current families. Step 3 is a masterpiece art therapy approach to explore and integrate repressed self-expression and hidden life narratives by recalling emotions associated with major life events. Step 4 involves reflecting on the entire life narrative, relationships, and emotions, and reframing life images into four life slices to reflect on the past, discover important meanings, and facilitate narrative reconstruction. Finally, Step 4 is a life retelling approach in which the researcher and research participant work together to illuminate and organize the narrative in a new perspective through retelling, leading to self-acceptance, discovery of life meaning, and a positive view of the future.

With these incremental goals, a research team was formed to select detailed content and media. The five experts were experts in life history interviewing, Lacanian analyst discourse, masterpiece art therapy, art psychotherapy, and HCT. A consensus team of two or three graduate students worked together to review the literature and design the program. The consensus team then met to cross-validate the program's tiered goals and intervention strategies according to the detailed goals and finalized them with the supervisors. The FGI was then conducted to evaluate the program, resulting in the final



program.

The first and second sessions were life history interviews using photo-telling to explore the participant's life history in terms of time, space, and events. The purpose of the life history interview is to achieve an integrated self-understanding of the research participants. The third and fourth sessions are relationship explorations using sociogram to explore the problematic narratives that serve as a cognitive framework for the research participant's life through personal pain, pleasure, desire, oppression, taboo, loss, etc. that have emerged in the major life events centered on the research participant's original and current families. This exploration is necessary to reconstruct the problematic narrative into a healing narrative. The fifth and sixth sessions are about exploring and expressing feelings about the people, events, space and time associated with the major life narratives in the previous sessions, which can be cathartic by revealing hidden needs and desires. The seventh and eighth sessions are the Four Life Cuts, where you can look back on the previous sessions to summarize and organize your life, reframing the meaning of life and the narrative. Using the techniques of art psychotherapy, the research participant's unconscious is made conscious and new meanings are created through the imagination and symbolism of art, so that the unique self that has been suppressed and lost by society and culture can be recovered. Finally, the ninth and tenth sessions are retellings in which the research participants and others interact to reconstruct their own narratives. Through this process, the individual's uniqueness and subjectivity is restored and a new sense of self is created.



## Chapter 5 The Meaning of Self-Healing Experiences through HCT

This research explores the experiences of ROAWLA who participated in the HCT program aimed at well aging from a self-healing perspective. As mentioned in the previous theoretical discussion, well aging is closely related to an individual's subjective interpretation, and HCT involves a process of interpretation in which the counselee subjectively reconstructs the narrative of his or her life. Therefore, the HCT approach to well aging is a healing approach that restores the broken balance of existence by exploring and reframing one's own narrative that makes life difficult. Therefore, the researcher analyzed the meaning of the research participants' experiences based on the four perspectives of the HCT concept of self-healing derived by Kim and Kim (2023b) through literature review and experts FGD: looking into oneself, restoring unique existence, moving towards coexistence and restoring sensory artistry and imagination.

For this purpose, the researcher analyzed each research participant's narrative by analyzing the content of the transcripts of activity conversations, activity works, research and reflection notes, observer notes, and informal interviews to derive meaning from the self-healing perspective of HCT. The researcher derived themes by reading the transcripts for each session, coding similar content, and categorizing the coded content.

The meanings of self-healing experiences of ROAWLA were categorized into four main. The four main themes were: self-understanding, expressing creativity, reframing self-narratives, and experiencing coexistence. The core themes were: recalling the highs and lows of life, recognizing women's identity in patriarchy, sensory experience of art, creative self-expression, recovering one's uniqueness, narrative transformation and creation, community belonging



and connection, and companionship with others. The meanings of the self-healing experiences of ROAWLA who participated in HCT are shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14: *The meaning of self-healing in the HCT experience*

main themes	core themes	sub themes
Self-understanding	Recalling the highs and lows of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reward and joy of life through children</li> <li>• The painful memories of life left behind</li> </ul>
	Recognizing women's identity in patriarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing care and patience as a virtue</li> <li>• Lying on family approval and expectations</li> <li>• Limitations on education and career opportunities</li> </ul>
Expressing creativity	Sensory experience of art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive emotions from art</li> <li>• The meaning of life through nostalgia</li> </ul>
	Creative self-expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong desires elevated to art</li> <li>• Inner desires reflected in artwork</li> </ul>
Reframing self-narratives	Recovering one's uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency</li> <li>• Moving from a negative self-perception to a positive one</li> </ul>
	Narrative transformation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating scattered memories</li> <li>• Redefining life by discovering meaning</li> </ul>
Experiencing coexistence	Community belonging and connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional connection in mutual support</li> <li>• A life partner that gets you going</li> </ul>
	Companionship with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing on life's wisdom</li> <li>• Sharing and nurturing life together</li> </ul>

## 1. Self-Understanding

According to Ricoeur’s perspective, self-understanding is achieved through one’s life stories, where an individual’s experiences (past, present, and future) are intricately intertwined. Past memories and emotions have a significant impact on the formation of current values and personality (Kim et al., 2018). This process involves discovering the narrative that weaves through one’s life, while understanding the underlying cognitive systems and lifestyles. Narrative plays a key role in human life, shaping our present by connecting to past experiences and influencing our future by integrating consciousness and unconsciousness. It enables a dialogue with the past, provides insights to predict and plan for the future, and shapes our present situation (Lee, 2004; Lee, 2005; MacIntyre, 1985).

In practical applications, participants engaged in image-based activities such as photo-telling, masterpiece art therapy, collage, and four life cuts to access and bring past memories and emotions into the present. These activities helped participants recognize the narratives that make up their lives, enabling them to address feelings of meaninglessness and explore new life directions. They also confronted events that had either been consciously forgotten or unconsciously repressed. The impact of these activities on the participants’ self-understanding is detailed in Table 15.

Table 15: *Self-understanding contents*

Core themes	Sub themes
Recalling the highs and lows of life	· The reward and joy of life through children
	· the painful memories of life left behind
Recognizing women’s identity in patriarchy	· Caring and patience as virtues
	· A life dependent on family recognition and expectations
	· Limited educational and career opportunities.



## **1.1. Recalling the highs and lows of life**

A life story is a record of the highs and lows of a person's life, including important people, events, and places. Photography, in particular, is an important way for people to remember and celebrate their lives. In particular, older research participants with memory loss often have difficulty recalling past life stories, and photography is an effective way to recall and reminisce about life stories (Park, 2016). Photo-telling is a combination of photography and storytelling, and through photo-telling, participants experienced emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and pleasure associated with photographs. Photographs contain realism and history, allowing participants to easily and deeply understand why they chose to do what they did in the past and the emotions associated with it (Park, & Kim, 2018). In addition, by exploring the relationship between the original family and the current family, important memories related to the characters were recalled and interpreted from the current perspective. The use of art, such as masterpieces, collages, and four life cuts, helped to free the emotions to reflect and reveal the unspoken unconscious, allowing for an integrated recollection of life. In terms of self-understanding, the memory of life's ups and downs emerged as the rewards and joys of life through children and the painful memories of life left behind.

### **1.1.1. The reward and joy of life through children**

For all participants, the most rewarding and joyful experiences in their lives were related to their children. A felt rewarded and joyful when she looked at pictures of her younger son, who was conscripted and is now a police officer. She lived with her husband, a shoemaker, who didn't spend much money. So she saved money by doing odd jobs, baking and working in



a factory to give her children money when they needed it. When her younger son wanted to go to an institute or needed money to prepare for a job, she would send him the money she had saved without her husband's knowledge. She also sent money to her older son without her husband's knowledge. Despite her two bouts with cancer and caring for her husband's illness, she found it rewarding to fulfill her children's needs and take care of them, even if it meant sacrificing what she wore and saving what she ate. Even now, she feels the reward and joy of life through her son, who recognizes her hard work, which includes farming and making food for her children.

"My younger son asked me to send him to an institute when he was young. It used to cost 150,000 won. So she said, "Do it! I'll do it!" I did everything he asked. He didn't struggle. I gave the older one a lot of money without his father's knowing." (A, supplementary interviews of 3rd and 4th session)

"He's just not spending the money... So I said, "I'll pay for it, don't tell your father. I'll put 3.5 million won in your bank account." He loved it so much that he still remembers it. He knows how hard my mom worked." (A, 1st session)

"When my children got married, I kept boiling all the soup and sending it to them... Seaweed soup is good because I boil it with salt like this... One by one. Oh, and I send them minced chili peppers, so it's good... I still make seaweed soup and kimchi. Because I do that, even now my daughter-in-law's father says, 'Good luck to your mother-in-law! Who else does that?' (A, 4th session).

B looked at her eldest son's photo and university diploma and was proud of him for saving his own money, studying on his own, and going to a top university in Seoul. She felt rewarded and joyful when her children grew up and lived far away in Seoul and Daejeon, visiting her every month or so, taking care of their own food, clothes, and medical care.



"I'm proud of my eldest son for transferring to a university on his own... I told him to just go to a nearby national university... It's expensive with a public official salary... Then he didn't go, he went to the military, and then he went to OO University (a famous private university in Seoul). He went by himself and earned money... He did it himself." ( B, 1st session)

"My children come often, sometimes once a month, sometimes once a week, and since their father died, the three of them haven't missed a week. They take turns, all three of them together. It's been seven years since my husband died, and they're doing really well." (B, 1st session)

C felt rewarded and delighted by the expressions of service and love she saw in her children's health and daily care for each other. Her daughter regularly brought her make-up, clothes and accessories. It wasn't much, but she appreciated it because it made her feel loved. A showed the researcher a bracelet her daughter had made for her and said she was very talented. Her son, who lives nearby, found it rewarding to see that even when he ate cold rice, he left warm rice for his mother and always put her first when he had something tasty to eat.

"My daughter always buys cosmetics. She often buys them for her mother-in-law, so she buys them for me too. (Interruption) She's good at it, so she buys clothes and makes accessories and things like that for me. I love those little things, even though they're not big." (C, 9th session)

"Even if my son eats the cold rice, he gives me the hot rice... The man, not the woman, always eats the cold rice. The neighbor gave him potatoes and he left mine because he said it was good... I said, 'I won't eat it'... He said, 'I'll eat it with my mom'." (C, 7th session).

### 1.1.2. The painful memories of life left behind

There are painful memories and life wounds that are left behind as unresolved issues in life. A and C faced their stuck memories through



photo-telling and relationship exploration. A explored her family of origin and realized that she had been “unlucky” as a posthumous child and that her life had been difficult due to two bouts of cancer and her husband’s stroke.

Her father died when she was eight months pregnant. Her father died of a vengeful disease that left him without the use of his hands, and she has lived all her life with the identity of a “posthumous child” and has been perceived as such by her neighbors. It was a shadow that followed her life and made her feel unloved and unappreciated. In addition, two bouts of cancer and her husband’s stroke, which came without warning, were perceived as “suffering” and “unfortunate” . This negative self-image was a point of loss of harmony and balance in her self-understanding, leading her to ask herself “Is this really so?”

"My biological father? I didn't see my biological father, I didn't see him, he died in the boat... I was 8 months old when I was in my mother's boat and my father died because of something and they couldn't fix it much back then, so the boat was full of water, so... Where can I see a picture from that time? There were no pictures back then, so I'm a posthumous child! I'm a posthumous child..." (A, 3rd session)

"My husband moved here and farmed for three years... and suddenly he couldn't use his body... he couldn't use his back... ah... so he went to the hospital in Seoul and had an operation. Is that all? And then he came out of the hospital and got sick again, so I took care of him and now I'm suffering like this." (A, 1st session)

The painful memories of C's life are the accidents of her second and first sons and the death of her husband. She lost her second son in winter, when he was three or four years old, when he fell through broken ice while skating with the neighbourhood children. The traumatic memories came back to her when she found a photo of her second son in a pile of scattered photos. She had never talked about it before in her life and seemed to feel the pain and grief of that time just by recalling the memory. The experience



of trauma is characterized by the surprise and shock of being thrown into a situation for which one is unprepared (Freud, 1996: 12-13), and it is a state of being on the verge of being broken or disconnected, unable to return to its original state (Jinhee Lee, 2018). C, who lost her child before she was ready, described the pain as “feet not on the ground,” “feet in the air,” and “my bones hurt when my child dies.” She said that now, in the season of the accident, she feels the same pain and can’t sleep.

"The neighbors took care of my son... Who would have thought... Just talking about him makes my heart beat faster and it still hurts. When a real parent dies, we can eat and talk, but when a child dies, our feet don't touch the ground... They're in the air... It's so hard. It's still the same... Parents and children are different... When a child dies, our bones hurt. That's why I can't sleep at this time of the year. (Interruption) This is the first time I've really talked about it... Nobody has asked me, nobody has told me, it's the first time." (C, 1st session)

"I couldn't see the sky, I couldn't see the ground when my eldest son injured his eye." (C, 9th session).

However, facing the pain and suffering of a lifetime is a step towards healing. Verbalizing repressed memories is the first step towards healing (Kim, 2013). Freud saw the key function of the talking cure as restructuring the conversation. By reinterpreting and restructuring one's life story in a positive way, away from a narrative of pain, healing begins at the moment of telling, providing emotional catharsis. The hermeneuticist Gadamer saw healing as the process of facing and overcoming pain by reinterpreting unchangeable events and framing an alternative story (Freud, 1991; Gadamer, 2000). Facing and verbalizing the narrative of pain is therefore an important step in healing, and it can be said to be therapeutic as a process of releasing to someone the memories of experiences that have been pent up in the heart.



## 1.2. Recognizing women's identity in patriarchy

The values of a time and culture influence how we make sense of our lives and shape our unique narratives. Through photo-telling life memories and exploring sociogram relationships, participants discovered their identities as shaped by the values of their society and culture throughout their lives.

The participants made sacrifices for their families by fulfilling fixed gender roles as daughters-in-law, wives and mothers under the influence of patriarchy. At that time, women were exposed to violence and were not treated equally due to unjust marriages and a man's dominance of the family. They were often physically and emotionally exhausted in their roles of care and service within the family (Prus & Gee, 2003). Patience, sacrifice and silence were required as feminine virtues. The study participants lived through difficult years as the sacrificial and caring agents of their families and sought to find meaning in their lives through their sacrifices, in their grown children, and in the acceptance of their relatives and neighbors. In addition, the lack of public education forced women into low-paid wage labour or into financial dependence on their husbands through marriage. In rural areas, women cared for their families or worked in agriculture for a living, but were often not compensated for the value of their labour. Participants reflected on their past lives, which they took for granted due to the influence of the society and culture in which they lived. Subcategories of women's perceived identity in patriarchy included caring and patience as virtues, a life dependent on family approval and expectations, and limited educational and career opportunities.

### 1.2.1. Caring and patience as virtues

Participants reported that in patriarchal cultures, men are responsible for bread and women for care (Noddings, 2001). In this case, the source of





oppression may be the beliefs and knowledge within the community's socio-cultural structure (Kwon, 2021). The participants in the research were all very old, over 75, and influenced by the values of patriarchal culture. The sacrificial caring role imposed on women was present in all their life stories. The participants were suppressed by the values of right and wrong, good and bad, normal and abnormal in the patriarchal culture and were unable to express their unique existence.

When B married and had a family, there was a strong patriarchal culture, especially in rural areas. As a result, men were not allowed in the kitchen and housework was primarily the responsibility of women, especially daughters-in-law. B's in-laws were the head of the family and she had to prepare several meals for each holiday. Although she had help around the house, she had to fetch wood and firewood for the kitchen. Preparing meals and doing laundry for 13 families was no small task. There were no electric cookers or washing machines in those days, so she had to cook meals in pots and go to the stream to wash clothes. The socks, underwear and outerwear for the family of 13 was a mountain. B. said her body was broken from working tirelessly as a daughter-in-law, wife and mother.

"My sisters-in-law are all married and my brothers-in-law don't do it because they don't know how... My mother-in-law doesn't help me. I'm the only one. I didn't realize it at the time. I didn't realize it was hard at first, I just tried to learn and do it... I didn't take a break and that's how I got here." (B, 3rd session).

"I have many family members and I have to go to the stream to do laundry... What kind of washing machine is there, how much does it hurt to wash a pair of socks... My sister-in-law says... She always feels sorry for me. When I cook, I have to cook a whole kettle and they eat everything... I also have to cook on wood and no one does that for me... They like to eat at night, so I must have suffered a lot... I don't tell them anything, so what can I do? It's bad, but what can I do... Before, the boys weren't even allowed in the kitchen." (B, 5th session).



"In the old days, we used to gather at the eldest family member's house for the holidays, so the children say that the eldest mother had a hard time... During the holidays, the eldest mother has to set the table several times, and then she has to set the table again, and again, and again... It's just too much work." (B, 5th session)

A and B have lived their whole lives holding back from freely expressing their thoughts and feelings because they are women. "If a hen crows, the house is ruined," and "women's voices shouldn't go beyond the fence." She gave birth to three children without a midwife and brought up her youngest brother-in-law, who was born late, with her children and never complained. She feels strongly about the rapid generational changes in women's status and freedom of expression, and has tried to adapt to the changing values in her life here and now, and to accept her children's changed ideas and attitudes to life.

"But my daughter-in-law won't put up with it... If I do that, my mother-in-law doesn't like it... That's not right... She talks about my mother and everything...I put up with it..." (A, 4th session)

"In the old days, we couldn't fight with our parents... We couldn't talk to them... Now the kids think we're friends... It's not like that in the old days... Father, mother's word was law. Now they think we're friends. They're just winning, the kids are winning. It wasn't like that in the old days." (A, Session 4)

"The In-laws eat on the table and put the rest of the food under the table... In the old days, they couldn't say right or wrong, they had to put up with it and watch... They are all difficult... They are all scary... I lived like that... in a small thatched room, and I gave birth to all three of my children there without a midwife. Nowadays, you always go to the hospital to give birth... There is no comparison. But I have to live with what I have been given." (B, 4th session)

### 1.2.2. A life dependent on family recognition and expectations



In contrast to the urban older adult, the participants found meaning in life not through lifelong educational opportunities, leisure or social interaction, but through living up to family approval and expectations. B's life as the eldest daughter-in-law, wife and mother of three children left her unable to look after herself. She couldn't even apply a simple lipstick properly. However, the recognition of her in-laws, her husband and her children was the driving force and meaning of her life.

"My husband wouldn't say "Why did you do that?" even if I did something wrong because I didn't listen to him... I think he thought I did everything right and left it alone..." (B, 5th session)

"My older sister-in-law knows... she knows my struggle... she knows how much I struggle in the family, and when her younger siblings say something to me, she takes my side... when I go to her place now, my older sister-in-law always says to the neighbour... she's always said that I have a hard time." (B, 3rd session)

C has worked continuously from before her marriage until now, including farming, business and factory work, and was loved and recognized by her family, in-laws, siblings and children. Before her marriage, C worked to support her mother, who was a widow, and supported her mother and siblings. The younger brother was especially thankful that C worked, provided pocket money and supported him to complete his studies. Her parents-in-law and brother-in-law were also thankful to her daughter-in-law and brother-in-law for taking care of the household and managing the property well. The children also recognized their mother for raising them diligently and supporting them through farming and working in a factory after their father's death. For C, the expectations and recognition of her family have been a driving force in her life.



"Before I got married, I earned some money and gave it to my mother... so that we could live a little... At that time, after the war, we were all poor... (Interruption) Especially my younger brother and my fourth sister, when I earn some money, I give them pocket money and buy them things so that they like me." (C, 3rd session)

"My daughter thinks I'm a wonder woman. She says no one else has that. She says my mom is amazing, that there's no one else like me in the world." (C, 9th session)

"My brother-in-law said to me, 'Thank you for protecting my brother's property, even though he was spending all this money and going around... Then he died.'" (C, 9th session)

### 1.2.3. Limited educational and career opportunities

older adults women were undereducated due to the absence of public education and a culture of masculinity due to colonization, the Korean War and rapid modernization (Lee, 2023). None of the participants had the opportunity to go beyond secondary school. As a result, they could read Korean, but most of them had difficulty writing it.

A and C had to start earning money early by farming or working in factories because their fathers died early and their families became poor. At that time, during the Korean War and the barley hump, education was a luxury for women, so neither of them had the opportunity to study beyond primary school. B was also unable to study beyond secondary school due to the poor educational environment when she was younger and the difficulty for women to attend school and study at that time.

"No clothes! We wear cotton skirts, our hair wears a binyeo<sup>12)</sup>... Now we live in comfort and die... What did we eat before? Now we eat well and live well.

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12) An ornament worn to prevent a hair into a neat bun from unraveling to secure to the head.



(Interruption) Me and my sister had a hard time living with our mother because she didn't have a husband... How can we study? We have to help her with everything." (A, 3rd session)

"I went to OO Primary School and then I moved... My siblings all went to school in Seoul, and I just dropped out... When my biological father died, we sold the land and moved to Seoul. My mother sold sweet potatoes and it was good to sell sweet potatoes at that time... Still, our family situation was difficult, so I worked in a factory at an early age and was a nurse's assistant in a local hospital... It was a small hospital... I cleaned and gave medicine." (C, 1st, 3rd session)

The participants stopped working when they got married. B learned to be a hairdresser, but of course stopped when she got married. C worked as a nurse's assistant in a small hospital but was unable to continue her career when she moved to the countryside. The late elders lived as in-laws after marriage. Their lack of formal education and illiteracy limited their social activities. The research participants said that they ran a traditional Korean sweet factory with their neighbors, and out of 10 people, only C could read and write Korean, so he became the representative.

"My elder sister-in-law (B) is a licensed hairdresser and she used to make money for my father-in-law's birthday party, but then (Researcher: Did you stop working?) I didn't do it because I couldn't afford it. I couldn't live, I had to have a baby... I obeyed my in-laws because I was the eldest daughter-in-law and I was responsible." (B, C, 9th session)

"I was a nurse's assistant in a small hospital and I'd fill a Ringer's bottle with water and put it on a hook, and I'd fill the children's medicine and put it in there and shake it. And I'd clean... "Nurse, nurse, nurse, come on...(Interruption) My husband liked me so much that when I told him I didn't want to go to my in-laws, they set up a shop for me. (C, 1st session)

I thought I was the most ignorant person in the world when I was working in the factory with traditional Korean sweets. I was in the factory with 10 neighbors. I'm the only one who can write their names. so I was the president. We were all like



that at our age... We had to evacuate and take care of our younger siblings, so we couldn't study because our mother was working." (C, 2nd session)

Atkinson argues that a priority task for older people is to reflect on their lives as a life story (Atkinson, 2011: 300). A life story connects and illuminates possible paths through life, taking us to our deepest feelings, the values we rely on and the shared parts of our lives (Atkinson, 2011: 319). When research participants tell their life stories, the specific themes and experiences they choose are based on their unique perspective on life (Rosenthal, 1995). A life story is a structured self-image, not everything an individual has objectively experienced (Fischer, 1978: 319). Thus, life storytelling is a process that allows research participants to understand their self-image.

In particular, during the photo-telling process, A looked at the wedding albums of her two sons and the photos she had collected in loose sheets, while B and C brought unorganized and scattered photos in large paper boxes to tell their life stories. By collecting and organizing photos of important life events and moments they wanted to remember into albums, the participants were able to develop an integrated sense of self. They were also able to recall faded memories of their lives by visiting the Park Soo-geun Museum of Art of Art and facing the scenery of their past lives. By recalling and narrating their lives in the midst of ups and downs and rapidly changing times, the research participants were able to look at their lives from multiple perspectives through the added stories of others. Self-understanding is not a task that is possible only through self-understanding<sup>13)</sup> of oneself, but it can be said to be self-comprehend<sup>14)</sup> by understanding who I am from various

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13) Understand is 'under + stand', which means to understand from someone's position below. The spatial location of the concept of 'under' refers to a psychological space, and this location allows someone to see something exclusively from the perspective of that one' object (Lee, 2014).

14) Comprehend is a combination of 'com (together) +prehend (to hold)' and means to know the insides of a subject through all the perspectives and limitations surrounding it, like holding an object in your hands (Lee, 2014).

perspectives through the detour of my relationship with others.

## 2. Expressing Creativity

In HCT, creativity of arts is an important therapeutic factor because it is an essential human characteristic (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Through creative activities, humans can lose themselves in their work and discover new meanings through immersion in their activities. This process fosters personal growth (Bachmann, 1993; Jeong, 2016, cited in 1229).

Dewey highlighted that art serves as the most effective form of communication, allowing for free and complete expression between individuals (Dewey, 1934). It transcends the limitations of language and conventional learning, offering a more direct form of interaction. Arnheim further argued that art represents a unique form of expression, distinct from universal communication. It conveys meanings through visual, tactile, auditory, and synaesthetic non-verbal expressions, reflecting the creator's experiences and perceptions (Arnheim, 1996).

Consequently, art acts as a symbolic language unique to its creator, open to multiple interpretations based on varying perspectives. Symbols is vital in reframing and interpreting personal narratives. In HCT, participants use art to deconstruct societal and cultural values that have influenced their lives, thereby reframing their personal narratives and understanding the uniqueness of their subjective experiences. This process enables them to express their creativity through new artistic mediums, directly engaging with and manifesting their experiences. The outcomes of expressing creativity by the research participants are detailed in the following Table 16.

Table 16: *Expressing creativity content*

Core themes	Sub themes
Sensory experience of art	• Positive emotions from art
	• The meaning of life through nostalgia
Creative self-expression	• Lifelong desires elevated to art
	• Inner desires reflected in artwork

## 2.1. Sensory experience of Art

The research participants visited the Park Soo Geun Museum of Art, a local cultural and artistic space, to view artworks and make box collages. Park Soo-geun, born in 1914, was an artist who depicted the landscapes around him and the lives of his neighbors, capturing in his paintings the daily lives of the suffering and impoverished common people who lived through Japanese colonization and the Korean War (Park, 2014). M. Miller, a journalist who lived in Seoul in the late 1950s when Park was active and a collector of Park's artwork, commented on his work as follows.

"Park's subjects are thoroughly Korean: women and young girls with children on their backs, peddlers on the street, children playing in back alleys, labourers and people under the gnarled branches of winter trees. His objects of painting are his own sons, his own family, his own neighbors. (Interruption) No other artist has so faithfully expressed the quiet, morning, sunrise lyricism of Korea."<sup>15)</sup>

Park's paintings include vivid depict scenes from the participants' lives, capturing memories such as sitting by a stream to wash clothes, carrying a child on their back, using a mortar and pestle to grind grain, observing passersby on the street, and witnessing, the stark beauty of dead trees in winter. These artworks provided participants with a sensory experience deeply

15) Miller, M. (1965). "Park Soo-geun: Artist in the Land of Morning Calm", Designer West.





rooted in local space, time, objects, and culture. Engaging with these paintings and related media activities facilitated self-healing, evoking positive emotions and a sense of nostalgia, thereby helping participants find meaning in life.

### 2.1.1. Positive emotions from art

The immersive experience of integrative art, combining sight, sound, and synaesthesia, transcends the boundaries of time and space, leading to a loss of temporal and spatial consciousness. And the interaction of the imaginary world with the physical senses brings positive emotions beyond visual pleasure. Art extends its senses through space, and space gains a certain status through art (Ho & Bae, 2023: 396). Merleau-Ponty believed that we can approach reality through bodily experience as a non-verbal communication beyond language (Lee, 2021). The participants visited the Park Soo-geun Museum of Art and experienced immersion while viewing the exhibition “Infinite Ties” in the form of Interactive Projection Mapping on the theme of “a wash place.” The space centered on Park’s “a wash place” and showed visual images of everyday scenes such as a washing landscape, a mother suckling her child, a woman returning home with a basket on her head, and a sister carrying her younger brother against the backdrop of the changing time of day and the four seasons. In addition to the visual elements, the auditory elements, such as seasonal background music, birdsong, streams, and the sound of objects playing, helped the participants to feel a sense of presence (Gefühl der Präsenz) as if they were back in the time when they lived. Additionally, the interaction between imaginary visuals and bodily sensations in virtual reality fostered new perceptions and emotions (Park, 2008).



Figure 3: *Park Soo-geun Museum of Art, 'Infinite Ties'*

Source: <https://blog.naver.com/gwdoraeyo/222758232167>

B and C sat before the digital screen at the Park Soo-geun Museum of Art of Art, viewing “a wash place” they were immersed in a familiar yet unique landscape of memories. These included vivid recollections of neighbors chatting happily while washing clothes in cold water, carrying luggage on their heads, and preparing food by pounding. This experience, blending the synesthesia of digital visuals and sound, evoked positive emotions and new perceptions, allowing them to transcend the hardships of their lives through immersive engagement with the artwork.

“We lived in a thatched house like this, and the birds would have their babies in the eaves of the thatched house, and then the grandfather would take them out and roast them and feed them, and my kids still talk about it, and when we go to the market, we’d put the sparrows and sell them.” (B, 5th session)

“In winter, we went to the laundry despite the cold, because that was our way of life. We didn’t perceive it as hard work. The washing place is place of lively conversation and enjoyment, even with just a few of us. I remember carrying various items on my head. The artwork vividly portrays our past, showing our clothing, activities like sitting down to feed a baby, and how we used to carry children - often a sister carrying her younger sibling, just as I carried a baby for a long time.” (C, 5th session)

Huizinga (1981) describes humans as “homo ludens” emphasizing play as a



spontaneous and purposeless act aimed solely at fun and enjoyment. Yeon (2011) argued that play with human creativity, transforming reality through imagination and intellect. In the study, participants explored a variety of picture designs and pressed flower stickers provided by the researcher, selecting their favorites and engaging deeply in collage work with childlike immersion. They also found unexpected pleasure and healing while experimenting with unfamiliar media like paints, craft coats, pastels, and signature pens.

"It's so bright with this one... I need another flower here. I like flowers like this. Give me another flower! Give me another flower! He's got one as big as his fist... (laughs) Look what I've got (shows off to a neighbour who comes by)." (A, 5th session)

"It's fun because we do it, we draw it, we try to make it pretty... What's there to laugh about... We can see the colours, we can touch it, we can feel it... I'm grateful to the teacher. It's fun to sit here and play like children. We're grateful to be alive." (B, 6th session)

### 2.1.2. The meaning of Life through Nostalgia

Nostalgia, characterized by recalling irretrievable past memories, was triggered in participants through the integration of life drawings with visual, auditory, and synaesthetic elements. Studies have shown that personal nostalgia, invoked through life reminiscence, enhances positive mood, subjective well-being, and a connection to the past, adding a sense of meaning (Jun & Kim, 2019; Routledge et al., 2011; Cox et al., 2015)

Park's work resonated with the participants, evoking nostalgia by reflecting landscapes and emotions similar to their past experiences. These paintings connected to their memories, reminding them of happier times. According to Kant, the essence of nostalgia lies not in a specific place but in a specific

time or “past memory” (Kim et al., 2020). The participants’ recollections of these times were tinged with nostalgia and happiness, despite the economic hardships and physical demands they faced.

A recalled the warmth of her youth by reminiscing about carrying her child to see the full moon of January, while B remembered her daughter’s wish to bring soap to the washing place and the joy of children playing in the dirt yard. C recollected gathering under an old tree for chats and games, and the familial warmth of sleeping closely under a single quilt. These paintings, rich with life, do more than reproduce facts; they rekindle warm emotions, evoke nostalgia, and offer comfort amid rapidly changing realities. This process provides a space for reflecting on the present and transforms past memories into positive images, offering solace and contemplation (Woo & Lim, 2011).

"We used to see a lot of samulnori performances(nongak)<sup>16)</sup> on the full moon of New Year's Eve, we would pay the money and prepare a table with drinks and food... We would go to this house, that house and have fun. Then we would take the children and watch at night." (A, 5th session)



Figure 4: Park Soo-geun of Art ‘Nongak’

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16) A performance using four traditional Korean instruments: the kkwaenggwari (a small gong), janggu (an hourglass-shaped drum), jing (a larger gong), and buk (a barrel drum), or a play that is performed to the rhythm of these instruments. (Basic Korean Dictionary, <https://krdict.korean.go.kr/kor/mainAction>, Search for 2023.12.20)

"My children don't play with other children... They play with each other... Because there are many children... (C: There are two of us and three of my sisters-in-law... They play together always)...(Interruption) When I see children playing, they have fun! When the big one falls, he falls on his belly and his hands and feet are all in the air! I think he doesn't mind if his belly touches the ground." (B, 6th session)



[Figure 5] *Lee Jung seop of Art 'sun and Children'*

"In the past, my family slept together, our feet tucked under one blanket, often leading to a playful tug-of-war for coverage, sometimes leaving someone exposed. That was the real intimate feeling of family togetherness. Nowadays, with the little one in a separate bed, I often worry about what happens as the baby sleeps at night." (C, 6th session)



Figure 6: *Chang Ucchin of Art 'A Family'*

Nostalgia evokes a mix of joy and sadness, reflecting on past events. While it's often linked to positive emotions, it can also resurrect memories of struggles. A, looking at a picture of rubber shoes, recalled her ten-kilometer palanquin journey to give birth and her walk back home with the newborn, blending the happiness of life's birth with her laborious experiences. B, viewing an image of a mandarin duck, a symbol of marital unity, felt a longing for the connection lost with her late husband.

"Old rubber shoes remind me of past hardships. Marriage used to be about endurance rather than pleasure. Pregnant, I worked in the mountains, and for childbirth, I traveled ten kilometers by palanquin and walked back post-delivery.

Postpartum care was a luxury; I couldn't take care of myself after giving birth. My mother-in-law only gave me food for a week and went back home." (A, 5th Session)



Figure 6: *Park Soo-geun of Art 'rubber shoes'*

"Won-ang(a couple of lovebirds) symbolize happiness, much like the relationship I had with my husband. We were always happy to see each other. He passed away too soon, at seventy-seven, in the OO hospital. Sometimes, I wish he had been treated in a Seoul hospital." (B, 5th Session)



Figure 8: *Park Soo-geun of Art 'Won-ang'*

Participants experienced positive emotions like fun, happiness, enjoyment, and fulfillment through immersion in artistic activities, acting as an internal motivator. According to Rhodes (1990), this represents a developmental shift from deficit creativity to existential creativity, where later-life deficit needs are expressed and fulfilled through art. Immersion in creativity not only addresses these needs but also fosters internal motivation by the joy derived from the activity itself.



## 2.2. Creative self-expression

Creativity in later life involves reorganizing life using experiences and wisdom, rooted in imagination (Cohen, 2016; Hickson & Housley, 1997; Hong et al., 2012; Jung, 2016). This creative self-expression is realized through artistic activities, where inner meanings and experiential insights are projected onto chosen mediums (Kim, 2020). Such self-expression lowers psychological defenses and self-control, leading to psychological relaxation, natural emotion expression, and healing through a sense of liberation and catharsis, as noted by McNiff (1977). Additionally, envisioning and depicting a desired future state in art contributes to healing (Jung, 2016). The creative self-expression through the imagination of the research participants was derived as ‘Lifelong desires elevated to art’ and ‘inner desires reflected in artwork’.

### 2.2.1. Lifelong desires elevated to art

In art, emotional expression overcomes resistance and is reformed into a blend of sensations, emotions, and ideas. The symbols, reconstructed in this process, serve as mediums for self and environmental expression, as well as a means to communicate emotions. Long-held mental images, previously difficult to articulate, were manifested through visual symbols via interaction with art mediums. particular, Park Soo-geun’s artworks with storytelling, masterpieces for emotional exploration, and images from magazines became effective strategies for participants to recall their life histories through specific art texts, spontaneously express past memories and experiences, and express their emotions.

A recalled an incident in which she learned to dance because of her husband’s infidelity. She took up dancing as a way of coping with her husband’s infidelity. By symbolizing herself as a single red rose, she created



an artistic representation of how she dealt with stress and lived passionately without giving up on life. B created a three-dimensional collage of the most important life cuts of her life to represent her desired look. Although she was busy living without wearing lipstick, she pasted the image of red lipstick and the image of a woman in a yellow dress and shaped it into her own image, revealing her hidden desire to be a woman.

"Look at these guys dancing (looking at and selecting pictures). When I used to dance, it was fun, you know, when I was in my early forties, I'd go to somebody's house in town, and I'd dance with them, and they'd dance with me, and they'd step together like this... I'd pair up with the guy, and there's only one guy, and they'd take turns..." (A, 6th session)

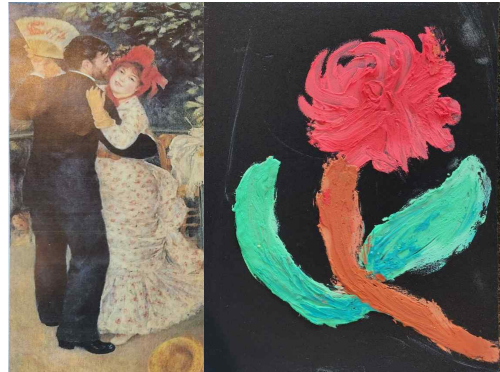


Figure 9: *B's 6th session artwork*

"I love yellow, but I haven't worn it...I want to wear it... I can't wear it with my kids... and I'm wearing this lipstick." (B, 8th session)



Figure 10: *B's 7th session artwork*



## 2.2.2. Inner desires reflected in artwork

Symbols in paintings, embodying memories, expectations, desires, and ideals, facilitate communication with our unconscious, as described by Riedel (2000). In art therapy, the expression of wishes, inclinations, and fantasies through symbolic representations aids in healing, aligning with perspective (Jung, 2016). Drawing confronts and processes emotions, leading to the healing. This reflects Rogers' concept of the "eureka moment" during creative activities, where participants realize a significant personal insight.

A lived a difficult life with a husband who liked to drink and whose drinking led to violent behavior. She spent almost 15 years caring for her husband and expressed her desire to be free from her difficult life by projecting her feelings onto a bird and wishing to fly away. C also expressed her desire to fly and live where she wanted to go freely through the bird.

"When you die, you're buried in the ground... I wish I could live and fight with my mom and sister and husband... and be a free bird all by myself." (A, 5th session)

"When I feel stuffy, I want to fly away... it's good to fly away... I don't feel stuffy, I'm flying in the sky... it's good... free." (C, 5th session)



Figure 11: A's 5th session artwork

C always wanted her eldest son to get married. Her sincere wish for her son was expressed in her collage work as two birds, two women, two ducks and two monkeys, and she experienced an "aha" moment when she realized her unrecognized desire. She also expressed her happy feelings from viewing the paintings as three flowers blooming side by side, and later added a

butterfly, saying that she wished there was a butterfly. And like a butterfly, she expressed her wish for a woman to come to her son.

"I picked this one, but then I realized that they're all twins. I don't have any daughters-in-law. (Interruption) I ask him to get married, but he doesn't go. Everyone else does. I want my son to get married, but then I realized that they're all twins. Really!" (C, 5th session)



Figure 12: *C's 5th session artwork*

"My son must have a wife... Before I die, right? Because this flower is my son... I'll just draw a butterfly... (interrupted) I want my son to get married so that I don't have to worry about him when I die. I'm getting older and I keep thinking about it... My son is lonely. I'm worried about him." (C, 9th session)



Figure 13: *C's 6th session artwork*

Hope, defined as the expectation and importance of achieving a goal is a crucial factor in human behavior, driving action and accomplishment. This concept, associated with both cognitive and emotional behaviors (Choi, Kim & Nam, 2019; Stotland, 1969). It serves as a potential internal force, motivating individuals to surmount challenges and acting as a key driving force in life, as highlighted by Snyder (1999).



### 3. Reframing Self-Narratives

Old age is a period for redefining one’s identity, a time for reflecting on life and pondering the question ‘Who am I?’ (Lee, 2023). In counseling older adults, both the researcher and the participant reflect on their lives, transforming experiences of uncertainty and disorganization into clarity and harmony (Dewey, 1933). This process acts as a mutual mirror, where interactions between the counselor and the participant help each reflect on their own stories. The researcher, as a listener to the participant’s life story, offers additional perspectives that the participant might not see independently.

The participant’s story, fluid in nature, gains new meanings through interaction and retelling, aiding both parties in reframing their identities. This process of sharing, listening, and reinterpreting enables both the researcher and participant to self-reflect, adjust their narratives, and realign their lives. In this dialogue of mutual awareness and differing perspectives, both counselor and participant engage in a reflective process that leads to a new level of awareness and healing. The outcomes of this self-narrative reconstruction are detailed in Table 17.

Table 17: *Reframing self-narratives content*

Core themes	Sub themes
Restoring one’s uniqueness	• Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency
	• Moving from a negative self-perception to a positive one
Narrative transformation and creation	• Integrating scattered memories
	• Redefining life by discovering meaning



### 3.1. Recovering one's uniqueness

The two main strands of the counseling paradigm are normalization and subjectivization, and HCT is close to subjectivization (Kim & Kim, 2023b). The self-healing of HCT is seen as healing to recover and express one's unique potential as a subject. In particular, the universal value of the external social and cultural other is emphasized in order to look into the uniqueness of the shrunken and submerged being and to examine and reveal its value.

In HCT, creative and active self-expression through interactive dialogue and artistic activities between researchers and research participants lowers self-defense and exposes the unconscious, revealing the individual's subjective and unique self. Imagination in art is a crucial element in the search for broader and deeper meanings and the reconstruction of new ones (Dewey, 1934/2021). Imagination can expand and deepen the meaning and value of experiences by forming images in the mind, reorganizing experiences into something new, and creating fictional worlds (Kwak, 2016; Kim, 2020). By enabling reflective and integrative thinking based on life memories and imagination, HCT does not take past experiences raw, but reconstructs meaning through reflection and integration with current experiences. It is like recreating existence by giving life a new order and meaning.

Through a process of integrative activities such as life reminiscence, relationship exploration, Museum of Art visits, collage, art therapy and ink painting, the study participants discovered and reflected on the central narrative of their lives and reorganized their perception of their existence. Through this process, they experienced self-healing by "Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency," and "Moving from a negative self-perception to a positive one" (Kim & Kim, 2023b).



### 3.1.1. Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency

Individual life stories encompass both universal human experiences and unique agency. Yet, many older women have lived under a patriarchal culture that often suppressed or neutralized their individuality and subjectivity. They have typically conformed to roles as daughters-in-law, wives, or mothers, influenced by the patriarchal narrative that glorifies patient, long-suffering women or compassionate, selfless mothers. This cultural framework, as outlined by Park (2005: 91), limited their ability to actively express their will and led them to conform to prescribed societal roles.

In the HCT program, participants redefined the universal narrative of womanhood prevalent in patriarchal culture through their life stories and self-expression. Art enabled them to break free from social constraints and customs, express nuanced emotions, and liberate themselves from ingrained ideas and prejudices. This process allowed them to move away from self-identities influenced by socio-cultural norms or authoritative figures, leading to the discovery and reconstruction of their unique self-narratives and a journey towards a more subjective self.

A, born posthumously after her father's death, was often viewed negatively in society as "pitiful" or "unlucky," a perception that influenced her own view of her identity. However, through revisiting her life story, she redefined her narrative, seeing herself as blessed, having been loved by her stepfather and brother and cared for by her children.

(Researcher: I see your sacrifices for your children as rewarding and joyful, though she describes it as 'suffering.' I believe it's not suffering, but rather love, reward, and the joy of life. You are often labeled as a posthumous child, but I want to redefine that; she's not just a posthumous child, she's blessed, truly a blessed person) (A: You're right, you're a teacher, you're a real teacher, you're a teacher)  
(A, 8th Session)



Figure 14: A's 8th session artwork

Married into a large patriarchal family as the eldest daughter-in-law, B left her job as a hairdresser and devoted herself to roles of daughter-in-law, wife, and mother, losing sight of her own identity. During the process of creating a three-dimensional collage, she chose an image of a dignified woman from a magazine, using it to represent her own strength. She depicted herself not as a passive life object, but as a resilient figure who managed a household of 13, worked the land, gathered firewood, cooked meals, and worked in a Korean traditional sweets factory. B labeled the canvas with her name "Kim Young-hee (pseudonym)", focusing solely on images that represented her true self.

"I used this shovel to feed my family of thirteen. I dug the earth and cooked the rice. People noticed my old body in the rubber shoe shop and said, 'You've worked so hard, why has your body become like this?' But to me they said, 'Getting old and weak is a medal of honour.'" (B, 8th session)



Figure 15: B's 7th session artwork



### 3.1.2. Moving from a negative self-perception to a positive one

Through interactive dialogues with the researcher, participants in their old age reconstructed their life narratives, discussing past experiences and emotions. Art served as a medium to reveal and express negative and repressed experiences, facilitating the transformation of negative self-narratives into positive ones. This is attributed to the creativity in artistic activities, which liberates emotions, fostering new perceptions, behaviors, and directions (Bloch & Crouch, 1985), while alleviating personal tensions and negative feelings (Malchiodi, 2008). Weiss (1984) suggests that by engaging in artistic expression, older adults can change their narratives, achieve self-acceptance, regain self-esteem, and find greater balance and harmony in their lives.

A was able to condense her life story into an ink drawing book, transforming the difficult and painful experiences of her relationship with her abusive husband and unkind neighbors into a story of love, forgiveness and gratitude. Using ink drawings to represent important scenes in her life, A moved towards reconciliation and forgiveness, saying, “I want to see my husband with me when the flowers bloom in front of the house.” She also wanted to express gratitude to her children, grandchildren and neighbors through potted plants rather than regret. This change in narrative allowed her to experience self-healing by reinterpreting her identity as a “fortunate person,” which was an important factor in her negative perception of her life, as a “blessed person” in a positive sense.

“When the flowers bloom in spring, we should put them in pots and give them to people who are grateful, and I hope that my husband, who has been suffering for 16 years, will feel peaceful and happy when he sees them. (Mid-sentence) I miss my husband when the flowers bloom in front of our house, and although we had many problems, it was still good to be together. (Mid-sentence) I am Yubok, and



I have lived my life passionately like a red flower. I am blessed! 有福!" (A, from the ink picture book of the 8th session)



Figure 16: A's 8th session artwork

When describing herself in the Life Story Exploration and Relationship Exploration, C said, "I was immature," and "I didn't save money while I was living immaturity, and I used up a lot of my in-laws' property." However, by making a collage using Park's artwork and magazines to represent the main scenes of his life, she was able to recall the past time when she worked hard without rest. In this way, she was able to revise her narrative, which was perceived as negative, into a positive one. She reconstructed her existence as a person who loved and was loved, who did not waste the time of the day she was given, and who lived by cultivating rice fields and selling the produce of her fields. While working as a representative of a traditional Korean confectionery factory, C actively lived her life by using people to grow rice and by cultivating the fields in front of her house. She projected herself onto the image of a person running against the sunset in a magazine and was able to move towards a positive self-image by telling a story about herself that was evoked by seeing the image. The expressive process of combining and arranging visual images allows the creator to reflect on past experiences and change perceptions, and can be a



pleasurable and healing process involving high levels of thinking and learning (Rugh, 1991).

"I used to sell yellow cabbage in the market when I worked at the Korean traditional sweets factory. I grew cabbage at home and carried it on my bicycle when I was younger and rode a motorcycle when I was older." (C, 5th session)

"Yeah, I just lived hard... hard. (looking at the collage) I lived hard to clean up after my husband... I only lived with my in-laws for seven years, but I lived with my in-laws and then they all liked me." (C, 7th session)

"I didn't feel much pain when my husband passed because I was the one doing the work even when he was alive. I didn't inherit the rice paddies; I bought them from others and built them up. I paid 7 million won for the irrigation water from the lake below. In autumn, I harvest rice from 5,000 pyeong using a harvester, sell it in the market, and make about 15 million won. After deducting costs for inputs and such, I'm left with around 12 million won. Additionally, I grow chili peppers in the field, sell the chili powder, and earn another 5 million won to support myself." (C, 9th session)



Figure 17: *C's 7th session artwork*



## 3.2. Narrative transformation and creation

Self-reflection provides life lessons and changes subjective narratives. Retelling has a practical meaning of retelling and a reflective meaning of looking at oneself (Cho et al., 2022). According to Bartlett, retelling is not simply a recall activity that relies on memory, but an active reconstruction by the speaker that does not “simply repeat” existing narratives, but creates and revises them to tell a different story (Yu, 2010a: 488). It is a way of understanding the present in a new and more meaningful way, as the meaning and value of past experiences are fused into present perceptions (Yu, 2010b: 466).

The researcher listens and empathizes with the participant, aiding their introspection and story unraveling. This process involves verifying the participant’s intent in their narrative. Retelling lets participants reflect on their lives, offering new insights. The researcher’s retold story, marked by their unique interpretation, presents fresh perspectives to the participants (Yoo, 2010b). This concept emphasizes the recreation of existing narratives through reflection, encapsulated in terms such as reinterpreting, reframing, transforming, and adapting (Yu, 2017: 28-29). Transforming subjective narratives fosters a new self-view and the revival of a unique self-image, leading to self-healing. Thus, the narrative transformation process was identified as “Integrating scattered memories,” and “Redefining life by discovering meaning.”

### 3.2.1. Integrating scattered memories

Human memory is not a vague accumulation, but a conceptual element that makes us who we are. The British empiricist philosopher John Locke regarded memory as a repository of ideas, a collection of ideas about things, and linked



the essence of self-identity to memory (Cheon, 2020: 86). Bergson called it a primordial synthesis of the past and the present that is carried out for future life (Kim, 2003: 160). For humans, memory is something that holds what is understood, my understanding of something that is not itself. Human memory is the result of the unconscious sifting, connecting and combining of our experiences, thoughts and feelings, and our interpretation of the past (Hong, 2015: 349). Memories are created through the reinterpretation of various information in life by the subject's cognitive framework, and the memories that are filtered and left behind by the cognitive framework are scattered and fragmented and sink into the unconscious. In the process of recalling memories through interaction with the researcher, participants reconstructed their narratives by modifying, transforming and integrating their stories.

A had a strong negative narrative of being unloved in her life story and in her search for her birth family. Her mother, who had remarried after the death of her father, had always favoured her older daughter over her, and A's perception of herself as unloved was strong. However, as she continued to explore relationships that had a positive impact on her life, she reconstructed her narrative by remembering that she was loved by her stepfather and brother. She also realized that although she had described the time she spent fighting cancer and caring for her husband of many years as suffering, the time she spent caring for him and her children made her life worth living.

"My mom didn't... My stepdad and my brother loved me like that. Even after we got married, when I got cancer and had surgery, he said, "If she dies in front of me, how will I see her..." (interruption). When I'm working, I sit here, and I bought a chair, and I bought a small one like that for the bed, and I put it on the bed..." (A, 3rd session)

"(Researcher: It was painful, but you always seemed to find joy in it) Yes. It was a pain, but I think it was a joy... But she's good at it." (A, 8th session)



B has lived a hard life as a daughter-in-law, wife, and mother serving a large family. As the eldest daughter-in-law of a large family, she had to do heavy domestic work and take care of her grandmother-in-law, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, and her own family, an environment where she could not help but lose herself. Much of her life story is told as a daughter-in-law, wife, and mother. Having been in a position of service for much of her life, B found gratitude for her family and neighbors, that she was loved and accepted by them, and that she had a place and role in life as a subject rather than an object to be served, and expressed herself in the image of an empowered woman. B was a Christian who kept a Bible verse on her kitchen table and read it regularly. The researcher retold B's life story by quoting biblical passages, centered on the client's revised narrative, based on the stories shared with the research participant through sessions.

"(Researcher: Fruit of the Blessing Award, meeting your loving husband and raising a large family, there were times when your body was tired and your mind overwhelmed, but you never complained. You made the best of it, feeding, clothing and serving your family. When your children grew up and returned the love you gave them, you didn't take it for granted, you said thank you. You gave all the praise to your children. I give you this award because you have lived your life with integrity, perseverance and dedication, and like a tree planted by a stream, you have borne the fruit of blessings in your relationships with your children and your neighbors, just as a tree planted by a stream bears fruit along the way. We really struggled with that... you wrote it so well... you wrote it so well... you did it. We couldn't do it." (B's retelling award)

C met her husband and lived happily ever after, as if they were in a relationship. However, C described her life as "immature." She lived a life of ease and love because of her in-laws, who were local rich, but her life was shattered when her son died in a sudden accident. She described her feelings as "feet not on the ground," and "I feel like I'm in the air." This

incredible pain motivated her to embrace and love others for their flaws and imperfections. C said that the most important value in her life was the love she gained through her pain. By loving others with her own body and mind, she was accepted by her children, family and neighbors. In addition, in the midst of continuous illnesses, such as the blindness of her eldest son and the accidental death of her husband, C did not despair and lament her life, but worked hard and pioneered her life without a break, even taking over her husband's share. She was able to discover herself and create a new identity in the midst of an active life of working and running, rather than a life lived life immaturely. The researcher made a list centered on the narrative that the participants reconstructed and retold her story.

"(Researcher: For your 'Love's Nuclear Bomb Award,' you left Seoul for OO, tirelessly working and caring for your family, finding joy and pleasure in it. Your positivity has made you beloved by your husband, parents, relatives, and neighbors. Despite the immense pain of losing your children and husband, you didn't despair. Instead, you shared the value of love learned from your pain with others. This award honors your life of faith, hope, and love, the greatest being love, which you've practiced and spread enlightenment with your life.). You've become truly wise. It never occurred to me like that; I think it's because you said it. We never thought about it, receiving a prize we never expected." (C's retelling of the award)



Figure 18: C's retelling of the award



### 3.2.2. Redefining life by discovering meaning

Participants found meaning and value in their lives by reflecting on their lives in old age. Life reflection is a process of reorganizing one's identity by overcoming meaninglessness and discovering new meaning in the dialogue between self and others (Yang, 2005: 104). A and B discovered the joy of gratitude that enriches their lives through relationship exploration. When her stepbrother bought her an electric blanket for the winter, she repaid him with a bigger one, and when her son gave her pocket money or gifts, she didn't just accept them; she gave them back to her children as pocket money, or to her granddaughters as back-to-school gifts or pocket money. When she was suffering from cancer, she never forgot the 50,000 won she received from a neighbour who happened to know she was suffering from cancer and asked her to contribute to her hospital expenses, and every year she would farm and send her favorite food and produce.

"My step-brother loves me so much. He has been so good to me. He bought me a chair so I could sit here when I was tired from work... And he bought me a little electric sheet for my bed... So I bought him one that multiplied... When I visited him, he was living in the cold." (A, 3rd session)

"So if someone thinks of me like that... then I can do something for them... I had an operation for cancer and someone sent me 50,000 won in an envelope. It's not a relative, it's a stranger, it's a neighbor's cousin... she said she had cancer surgery and he knows how it feels... so I'm going to send her corn to plant and I'm going to give her beans after the New Year so she'll like it more... I have to return the favour." (A, Supplementary Interview 3~4 session)

Reflecting on the difficult years as daughter-in-law, wife and mother, B began to find moments of gratitude rather than regret. When she felt overwhelmed, her husband would take her to his parents' house to rest for a few days. After all these years, she was grateful for this kind thoughtfulness.



When she worked late at her job in a traditional Korean confectionery factory, her husband would cook rice and kimchi stew to feed their children, and now that they are adults, they say that “the kimchi stew my dad cooked was the most delicious.” She remembered her husband’s kimchi stew. Although she sometimes felt sorry for her husband, he was the most supportive of the in-laws, and she was especially grateful for her children, who grew up well and lived their own lives without any help from her. The fact that her children have grown up and are now living their own lives, fulfilling their roles as husband and wife, father and mother, daughter-in-law and son-in-law, and members of society, is the greatest reason for her gratitude.

"Even if I do something wrong, he doesn't say, "Why did you do that?" He doesn't say that... He thinks I did everything right and leaves me alone... He's on my side... If I'm tired, he takes me to my parents' house... We have a lot of family members, so if I'm tired and struggling, he takes me to my parents' house. And he says, "You've worked hard... Now go to your family and rest." (B, 5th session)

"They just go their own way, whether they're good at it or not, and I'm grateful for that. I'm just grateful for that." (B, 9th session)

The research participants were able to find meaning in their later lives through patience and love. Living with thirteen in-laws was difficult for B, but she learned to be patient and not to hold things against them. Over time, her patience and emptiness of spirit gave her values and meaning that earned her the recognition and respect of her family and guided her life. C learned “selfless love” through the pain of losing her son. She realized the importance of people through her great loss, and her life of serving and loving those around her, regardless of what she might gain or lose, beyond love for love’s sake, resonated with her neighbors and children. C thought she had achieved nothing in her life, but when she realized that she was loved by her



neighbors, she found the meaning of life.

"My heart isn't big enough... My mother was worried about me getting married because I had a bad personality. But I lived through it. It gets better with time... If it's not a big deal forget about it... (Researcher: Didn't it ever bother you?) Even if it's a small thing, why not... I can't remember... I don't know... There are many things to say, but I can't think of them... Forget it... I don't need to remember them. Sometimes it's difficult in life, and now forget it! I don't know because I've forgotten it." (B, Supplementary Interview 3~4session)

"I think it's because I've had such a big pain... I think it's because other people don't have that pain... so I can't help but feel discouraged... so I don't want to say anything bad about anybody, I don't want to say anything right... so it's like... you know, I think it's good to see everything... (interruption) You know, I just love each other like my body." (C, Supplementary Interview 3~4 session)

#### 4. Experiencing Coexistence

The Other is an external being that connects our inner and outer worlds, enabling insight into unseen aspects and self-identity, as described by Choi (2014: 298). Bakhtin defines this interaction as "the aesthetic," which involves understanding another's life as a whole without making ethical judgments or adhering to conventional standards of beauty, thus adding meaning to their existence (Choi, 2014: 300). This concept establishes that each individual is both a subject and "The Other," participating in a symbiotic relationship of mutual coexistence that crosses boundaries and influences each other by Kim & Kim (2023b).

HCT is a journey that explores the participant's narrative and helps them to find harmony in areas that are out of balance and emotionally challenging in their lives, including internal conflicts, relationships with others and their environment (Kim et al., 2022). By asking the question, "Why has the person



lost harmony and balance in their life?,” the researcher draws attention to the inner dynamics behind the participant’s symptoms and how the person has lived their life in response to all the circumstances surrounding their life, including time, culture and people (Kim & Kim, 2023b). Both researcher and participant work together as co-subjects to solve problems. The researcher recognizes his or her own underlying vulnerability and emotionally empathizes with the suffering of the other researcher as the other. The coexistence of diverse and heterogeneous voices between researchers and research participants, and between research participants and researchers, can lead to a life of coexistence. The content of the experience of coexistence is as follows Table 18.

Table 18: *Experiencing coexistence content*

Core themes	Sub themes
Community belonging and connection	· Emotional connection in mutual support
	· A life partner that gets you going
Companionship with others	· Passing on life’s wisdom
	· Sharing and nurturing life together

#### 4.1. Community belonging and Connection

“The Other” exists outside oneself and possesses a surplus view, a deeper understanding of oneself that is unknown to the individual as noted by Choi (2014). This surplus view enables one to access insights and dimensions beyond personal reach, facilitating the discovery of a new self-image and a closer connection to one’s true self. Kim and Lee (2018) suggest that sharing thoughts and experiences later in life helps in recognizing our nature as social beings. Park (2012) found that during group sessions, participants indirectly



experienced various situations, empathized with others, and formed social connections. This process gave them a new previously unrecognized surplus perspective, leading to an integrated self-understanding and a positive sense of existence.

In the study, participants developed empathy by sharing life stories and discussing artwork, which fostered social bonds and alleviated loneliness, depression, and alienation. The surplus perspective and support from others affirmed life's meaning and elicited positive emotions. Consequently, the sense of belonging and connectedness within the community was identified as “Emotional connection in mutual support,” and “A life partner that get you going.”

#### **4.1.1. Emotional connection in mutual support**

In the group sessions, participants were able to discover their strengths and positive self-image by giving and receiving positive feedback on each other's artworks and empathetic and supportive feedback on the life stories that explained the artworks. Particularly in the supplementary interviews in the fifth and sixth sessions, the participants were able to reflect on their own and other participants' strengths and to see their strengths from the perspective of others, in addition to their subjective and integrative self-understanding.

All the participants knew each other well, as they had worked together in the Korea traditional sweets factory for twenty-four years, lived close to each other and shared many aspects of their lives, so they talked about their strengths from the bottom of their hearts. When A had interpersonal problems, he did not express them well in words, which caused him a lot of stress. However, when others recognized and appreciated her patience and perseverance, she was able to see this as a strength. B found meaning and pride in her life through her continued care and service to her family,



especially her in-laws and siblings, and recognized the patience and perseverance she gained through these experiences as her main virtues. Despite her advanced age, C continues to be an active economic participant and is able to recognize her high level of care and love as her strengths and values. At the end of the session, the researcher summarized and retold the participants' stories. After listening to the retellings, the participants showed empathy and encouraged and supported each other's lives.

"He always says yes, he can't say no, he never says no to anything I say... we live like that, we don't know that he can say no... he makes me feel comfortable even when I'm upset because he says that." (Benefits of C as told by B, Supplementary Interview, 5~6th Sessions)

"She's good at her job. She makes good money. That's the best thing." (Benefits of C as told by A, Supplementary Interview, 5~6th Sessions)

"She's very good at living in a cosy house. Food is delicious. She likes to share with others. She always looks after my son. She doesn't say anything to hurt people's feelings. Even if there is something upsetting, she doesn't tell other people. Because she doesn't say it, other people don't know. So it goes deeper." (Benefits of A as told by C, Supplementary Interview, 5~6th Sessions)

"She's patient with her younger siblings-in law, but not with us. She washed all her sisters-in-law's shoes and studied with them. She is the eldest daughter-in-law, so she has to be patient with them. When she takes the kids to her parents' house, I feel lonely at home alone, and I really cry because of her presence." (Benefits of B as told by C, Supplementary Interview, 5~6th Sessions)

#### **4.1.2. A life partner that gets you going**

Through the mutual support given and received during the program, the participants were able to understand each other's situation, help each other through difficulties and lift each other up when they were down. In the



process of telling their life stories and sharing their appreciation of their artworks, the participants found a lot of empathy and encouraged each other's lives by expressing support for their artworks and life stories and feelings. In particular, the praise and encouragement they gave each other while expressing themselves through the medium of art helped to alleviate the loneliness and isolation of the older women living alone who lacked a supportive network of relationships, and raised their self-esteem.

At the beginning of the program, A compared her artwork with the artwork of other participants and rated her artwork low. Initially, she showed a passive attitude by covering or hiding her paintings, but as the other participants praised and sympathized with her, saying it's a perfect representation of you and it looks like a million-dollar painting, she gradually showed confidence, smiled, joked, said "Are you going to sell this?" and showed satisfaction with her work. In the process of sharing her appreciation, B received positive feedback from the other participants about her artwork and expressed regret that she could not show it to her eldest son, who majored in art.

"(looking at A's work) It's real it's a million dollar flower. It's a flower of passion. It's a flower of passion. This is it. It's just you!" (C, 5th session)

"They don't do it to teach us, they do it to sell paintings." (laughs). (A, 5th session)

"If my son hasn't left yet, come in and show him this, and this is you. And he's like... so my mum did this? This is the best mum ever, she's amazing, he said 'I must be good because I look like you', I think so." (B, 5th session)

Throughout the program, participants checked in with each other and called and visited each other to encourage participation. B has limited mobility, so C always accompanied her when she traveled to the program. A usually thought of C's work during the week and sent the food to C's son who lived nearby.



C was grateful for A's consideration and care. The time and space of the program, where they shared their life stories and thoughts, became another place of community for the participants, giving them a sense of belonging and connection.

"My cousin here is also kind to me... Even now, when I go to the bathhouse, I went with my sister-in-law the other day. I went to the bath house and she said, "Come and sit here". So how thankful to her very much. I didn't do anything (interruption) That's why I've been sick lately. I can't walk properly and I can't go anywhere without my sister-in-law. How much support she gives me." (B, 5th session)

"She has to make something for our son, and it's so delicious. Do you know what he did yesterday? He put snow white on the rice. He gave it to me and it was delicious and moist." (C, 7th session)

In particular, when the participants projected their individual life difficulties, regrets and desires into the artworks in the collage of paintings and magazines in the seventh session, they not only sympathized with them, but also achieved coexistence through the act of finding and presenting the necessary images. In the ink paintings of the eighth session, they expressed their will to serve and share with each other.

A had always regretted not having a daughter of her own, and to express her feelings she selected images of various women and pasted them on a sheet of paper. C sympathized with A's feelings and presented her with an image of a warm mother-daughter relationship, expressing the hope that she would have a daughter in the next life. At the same time, C reminded A that her son now gave her happiness and value, replacing ten daughters, and helped her restore her psychological balance and satisfaction. A responded to C's emotional support by giving her an image of her son to symbolise their mutual emotional support. C used the image on a piece of paper to visually express her desire for her son to be healthy, comfortable and in a high

position.

"A doesn't have a daughter. Don't you want to live like that? (Shows an affectionate mother-daughter picture) It's a gift... (Interruption) (Researcher: There're a lot of images of girls here) (A: Just to have a daughter because they are pretty) You gathered all these pretty girls because you want to have a daughter, but your son is better than any daughter, and my daughter said, "Honestly, daughters can't do that. Your son operated on your cancer in Seoul hospital stomach surgery, womb surgery, and even though it's been over five years, he hasn't taken a bus once, he drives you to the hospital!" (A, C, 7th session).



Figure 19:

*C's 7th session artwork*

"(C: I hope our son will live a healthy and comfortable life in a high position, just like this picture). Yes, I gave you this to put on! You only need to write two letters of his name, right? (Researcher: Ah! You exchanged gifts)." (A, C 7th session)



Figure 20:

*A's 7th session artwork*



## 4.2. Companionship with others

Coexistence is the practice of reciprocity and otherness in the relationship between subject and object (Kim et al., 2022). Bakhtin saw otherness as moving into the place of the other, functioning as the other, being situated in a mutual relationship of being both subject and other, and crossing boundaries (Choi, 2014: 317). ‘I and you’ are independent individuals with their own ways of being, equal subjects who affect and are affected by each other, and interdependent beings (Yun, 2022: 210). If we acknowledge each other’s individuality and subjectivity, and continue a continuous dialogue in which our lives are mixed and transformed, we will be able to approach the lives of others and live a life of coexistence.

Participants in the research showed not only self-understanding but also understanding and empathizing with the suffering of others, responding to the needs of others, entering into the lives of others and living with others through interaction between themselves and the researcher. These experiences of consideration and solidarity transcended the boundaries of their own lives and manifested as lives united with and directed towards others. They also showed a positive outlook on the time to come and a willingness to plan a life with others and to cultivate their own lives. Thus companionship with others was indicated by “passing on life’s wisdom,” and “sharing and nurturing life together.”

### 4.2.1. Passing on life’s wisdom

To see the face of the other and to hear the face of the other is to hear the voice of the other (Kim, 2021). Others is like a mirror that reflects your life. For the participants, the researcher is similar to their child’s generation. Therefore, the participants shared their life wisdom with the researcher



through life stories during the sessions, and the researcher was able to reflect on his own life while participating in the participants' life storytelling. In their life stories, the participants told the researcher about the values and wisdom they had learned in their lives and added requests and advice. According to Kim and Kim (2023b), the counseling process not only had a positive impact on the participants, but was also very beneficial for the counsellor's own correction. Through the process of listening to and participating in each other's stories as speaker and listener, storyteller and narrator in the researcher-participant relationship, reflective thinking and expansion of consciousness can be achieved, experiences can be reconstructed and coexistence can be experienced.

B and C shared their parenting practices as life wisdom for maintaining positive relationships with their children. They never used a stick to discipline their children, let them play freely when they were young, and trusted and supported them during their school years. Although she had a large family, when her eldest son came home from university, she would barbecue meat for the family and secretly set a table in the kitchen. The love and support of her parents was an important part of her relationship with her children. C never hit her children or treated them badly, but loved, recognized and accepted them for who they were, even when they were not good enough. She respected her children's choices and did not force them.

"I don't punish my children, children don't get punished because there's nothing to punish. I just let them play, I don't tell them to study... so they're happy... I feel sorry for the children today, I feel so sorry for them... I feel sorry for the mothers, I feel sorry for the children, it's the same. When mothers punish their children, it hurts after a while..." (B, 1st session)

"No hitting! We raised them without hitting, and they listened to us. If you swallow your anger and step back, there's no need to hit. OO still regrets how much he hit his eldest son. All the other children were fine, but he wasn't. You shouldn't hit





your children, not even a slap." (C, 2nd session)

The research participants described how their parent-child relationship stories brought them joy and reward. A was grateful to her son for setting the table without a word when she had difficulty sitting and standing up. B appreciated her children's weekly visits to her hometown, where they brought great joy to her life by eating with her, making kimchi, helping her with mobility issues like picking her up from church, and showing affection by holding her hand and patting her back when departing. C expressed regret for never having bought her mother a single piece of clothing, contrasting this with the attention her daughter gave to her mother's needs, including cosmetics and clothes. She advised the researcher to be filial to her parents during their lifetime to avoid such regrets.

"My favourite thing is to see my children. They come to see me once a week. But it's always not enough. Even now I call them and say, 'Hey, I'm sorry. I can't feed you and I can't play with you because I have to go to church. So they say, 'Mum, you can play on Saturday.'" (B, 6th session)

"I'm sorry I didn't do more for my mum. I couldn't buy her the clothes that are so common these days. My sister supported my mother. Her daughter bought her a lot of things, but I didn't, so I told my daughter, "Be good to mum before I die. Don't regret it after I'm gone... I still think about that. You should be good to your parents." (C, 9th session)

"It's more important to be good to your mom than to be good with money, but you have to be good with heart. After she died, I regretted it... I regretted that I didn't go to my mom's hometown much because I lived in Seoul with a distant family." (C, supplementary interviews, 5~6th session)

The research participants' experiences of parenting were life wisdom that they wanted to pass on to the next generation. As we are all children and parents of someone, the research participants' life stories consisted of



relationships, roles and events with different people and served as a mirror to reflect their lives to future generations. In particular, the participants wanted to share and pass on their wisdom to the researcher who was the same age as their children. For older women living alone, children are a source of strength, and bonding, cohesion, support, and contact with children are important factors in determining quality of life (Choi, 2014; Kim & Park, 2015; Ko, 2017; Kwon et al., 2018).

#### **4.2.2. Sharing and nurturing life together**

There are many social relationships that people maintain. From parents, siblings, friends, and neighbors, to people we see daily or simply know, we all engage in some form of relationship (Han, et al., 2019). Research has shown that relationships in later life are characterized by less fluctuation in the size of emotionally intimate groups and more variation in the size of less intimate groups (Morgan, Neal, & Carder, 1997). These intimate relationships provide a sense of worth, belonging, and attachment by offering opportunities for social engagement (Berkman & Glass, 2000). They are particularly crucial for older adults living alone, who are more prone to isolation, as they help them integrate into the community with family and neighbors, and maintain independent living and health.

During the program sessions, A used flowers to represent herself, her children, and grandchildren. For her, flowers symbolized personal enjoyment and a means of sharing life with others. The variety of flowers in her eighth period ink paintings served as a tribute to her husband, children, grandchildren, and other cherished neighbors in the nursing home. She plans to plant flowers in the flower beds around her home the following spring to share her joy with her husband and nursing home neighbors, and intends to cook food with vegetables from her home garden for her beloved neighbors.

This positive outlook and zest for life can be seen as a self-healing factor.

"(Researcher: When it blooms in spring, will you put it in a pot and give it to someone?) My poor husband, who has been suffering for 16 years... I want him to feel relaxed when he sees the flowers... and the grateful people around him..." (A, 8th session)



Figure 20: A's 8th session artwork

"I'm going to plant corn here in the summer and kimchi cabbage in the autumn. I don't say it's hard work because when I do it, they eat well... (interrupted). When the flowers bloom here in the summer, it's so pretty. How about do you think it would be all right if I planted red flowers here and white flowers there? Come and see that time. And I'll plant corn here. They will love it so much." (A, transcript of an out-of-session conversation, 25 March 2023).

B has difficulty with her usual mobility and walks carefully with a walking aid. However, despite her increasingly reduced physical function, she said that she walks with her neighbors in the warm spring, goes to the community center for meetings, spends time with her children at weekends, goes to church on Sundays, and is too busy to meet the researcher when he comes to visit. C also supported B's hand with limited mobility, walked alongside her and looked forward to their time together. She was still feeling the reward and joy of working for their children and living together.



"Even now, if I go somewhere, they hold on to me and I can't walk, so I'm very grateful for that... Also, my brother and sister-in-law go to church, so they hold on to me from both sides, so I can't go if they don't go... I fall down, who will pick me up like this? They have so much support. So even if I go to the neighbourhood, my brother and sister-in-law say, "Let's go play there," then yes, we go together and play and come down, and we've been living like that until now." (B, Supplementary interview, 3~4th session).

"We always go round the neighbourhood in the street carriage, and then we go to the center. We go to the center, have a cup of coffee and... On Saturday, I go to the bathhouse with my brothers-in-law, and on Sunday, I go to church, and then I go to the hall and play... When the weather is fine, I'm busy farming." (B, transcript of post-session conversation, 25 March 2023)

## 5. Summary

Chapter 5 aimed to analyze and understand the meaning of the research participants' experiences in the HCT program from the perspective of self-healing in HCT. The four perspectives of self-healing in HCT are self-understanding, recovery of unique existence, recovery of sensory artistry and imagination, and recovery of coexistence. We explored the meaning of the participants' experience of participating in the program from the perspective of self-healing.

First, self-understanding. As an essential process of self-healing, it is first of all a process of self-understanding. The program started with life reminiscence and relationship exploration and then applied artistic techniques in the form of painting, collage and four cuts comic. Life reminiscence and relationship exploration uses interviews and sociogram with photographs and puppets to explore specific events and stories, and to recall faded memories of life's ups and downs. In addition, artistic techniques were used to create



four life cuts of emotions and life events, and unconscious memories were made conscious, enabling an integrated self-understanding. The research participants viewed the joys and sorrows of life from an integrated perspective, including the rewards and joys of life through their children and the painful memories of their past. They also acknowledged their Confucian identity, including living as a woman in a patriarchal society, relying on family approval and expectations, and having limited educational and career opportunities. The process of self-understanding through interdisciplinary therapy provided an opportunity for the participants to examine themselves and their lives as agents of healing.

Self-understanding requires not only self-interpretation but also explanation from others. The researcher's empathy and support in the counseling process helped the participants to approach their self-understanding from an integrated perspective. Interaction with the researcher allows new perspectives to be explored and previously unrecognized "The meaning of my existence" to be discovered. Key to A's self-understanding was the recognition that she was not born a bereaved child, unloved and suffering from illness and care, but that she was loved by her adoptive parents and children and that she was able to return and share love. This integral self-understanding was the basis for reframing the narrative of negative self-perception. B's self-understanding shifted from being stuck in her identity as a daughter-in-law, wife and mother, which was what was expected of women in her time, to being able to see herself as a person who provided for her large family. C's self-understanding was integrated by her self-image as a young newlywed in a time of suffering due to the death of her second son, and her awareness of the fruits of her love for others in the midst of that suffering, and the active life she lived as she worked tirelessly to overcome her suffering. This integral self-understanding became the basis for reorganizing the narrative and moving towards self-healing.



Second, the experience of self-healing in HCT emerged as an experience of creativity. The expression of creativity was manifested in the sensory experience of art and creative self-expression. First, as local artistic content, the digital exhibition involved the visual auditory and synesthetic senses, which allowed the research participants to immerse themselves in the artwork and evoke nostalgia for their youth. Park's artwork not only provided a sense of presence in the era in which the participants lived, but also evoked a sense of positivity about the difficult years, helping them to construct positive emotions and new stories. The collage work using Park's artwork and pressed flower stickers evoked the aimless fun and joy of childhood play and provided a healing experience.

Next, I experienced creative self-expression through art, such as sublimating life's desires into art and reflecting inner desires in artworks. Park's works and paintings brought catharsis through creative self-expression, expressing life's repressed needs and projecting inner desires. A recalled her youthful days of dancing happily through Renoir's "Country Ball" painting and recreated her passionate and energetic self by forming it into a picture of herself with a red rose, thus expressing her life needs through art and experiencing catharsis. Through the collage work using Park's works, the "bird" appeared in all the participants and they shared the desire to be liberated from the hard and arduous life they had to endure as women in their time. In her collages and paintings, C expressed an unspoken desire for her unmarried son to start a family by gluing pairs of figures together or adding butterflies to flowers. These lifelong desires and wishes, sublimated in art, brought about self-healing through creative expression.

Third, self-narrative reconstruction is important as a process of self-healing. By dismantling socio-culturally prescribed distorted self-perceptions and oppression, and affirming their own uniqueness, they expressed their agency and experienced a positive outlook on their negative self-image. In the



previous session, participants deconstructed the self-narratives constructed by social perceptions and others, and reconstructed their own subjective and unique self-narratives through integrated self-understanding and creative expression. A, who usually envied her neighbors who had daughters and saw them as unhappy with the self-identity of being an unhappy child, reconstructed her identity and narrative by expressing that she had a son who was not envious of ten daughters and that she was loved from birth through magazine collage and ink painting works, saying “Don’t envy her!” and “It’s a blessed life!” In her magazine collage, B put a picture of a woman with her hands on her hips and a shovel on the front, and then wrote her name as “Kim Young-hee (pseudonym)” to represent herself as a subjective and assertive woman, moving from being an object to being a daughter-in-law, wife and mother. C also reconstructed her narrative through the image of a woman running against the backdrop of the sunset in her collage work, reimagining herself as someone who has worked tirelessly and actively built her life. By allowing the research participants to exercise their imagination, art deconstructed fixed narratives, allowed for different interpretations and reconstructed their narratives anew. In other words, they freed themselves from the universal values set by society and others and acquired subjectivity as unique beings.

In addition, the participants experienced self-healing in the process of creating a new identity and transforming their subjective narratives through retelling, which is the result of empathy, support and reflection as an interaction between the researcher and counselor. The participants reflected, reinterpreted and retold their life narratives through interactive dialogue with the researcher. The researcher collected the participants’ reconstructed and reinterpreted narratives and retold them to the participants in the form of a list. Through the interaction between the participants and the researcher, the scattered memories were consolidated and retold as a narrative as the



participants' own interpretation, which encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning of life, appreciate the present and look forward to the future. They were also able to enrich the meaning of their lives by reviewing their lives and discovering the values of gratitude, patience and love that have guided them.

Fourth and finally, we wanted to move forward to a place of self-healing through encounters with others and a life of coexistence. What distinguishes the concept of self-healing in HRT from other counseling theories is the concept of coexistence. As a sociologist and practitioner, Kim Youngsoo's concept of coexistence comes from the humanistic perspective of coexistence in a multicultural society and sees healing as the restoration of coexistence, including the individual as a being of inner coexistence, coexistence between individuals, coexistence between individuals, coexistence between individuals and nature, and coexistence with divine beings. Self-awareness in old age is characterized by looking back and reflecting on life, both internally through self-reflection and externally through the surplus vision of the other, and gaining the ear to hear and the shore to see the essence as wisdom (Erickson, 1997).

The peripheral third-person perspective of older adults provides a counterbalance to distorted self-perceptions and allows them to see and know more of themselves in a positive light. Mutual support within a community can provide emotional bonding and a sense of belonging, helping to move towards self-healing. Through the interaction of group members freely expressing their thoughts and feelings about each other, they discovered their unrecognized strengths and weaknesses and experienced emotional bonding through mutual support. C presented a picture of a mother-daughter photo to A, who was sad about her daughter's absence, and A presented a picture of a man sitting comfortably and smiling to C, who was sad about her son living alone, thus manifesting as a healing coexistence that blessed the happiness of their





children. Knowing each other's life needs and wanting to help and comfort each other, they experienced the benefits and joys of living together by experiencing the companionship of life that caused the lonely body and mind of an older adult person living alone.

It was also expressed in the will to inherit wisdom of life through transitioning into the lives of others, responding to the needs of others, and practising life for others rather than for oneself. Participants in the study sought to inherit life wisdom in old age by sharing their experiences of raising children and positive parent-child relationships. It was also expressed as a willingness to show gratitude to family and neighbors by cultivating flower gardens and gardening in real life, and a positive outlook on the future as a community of living, walking, gathering and sharing with neighbors to provide for their children for the rest of their lives.

## Chapter 6 Conclusion

### 1. Research Summary

Chapter I presents the purpose and need for the study, the research questions and content, a review of previous studies, and the motivation for the study. The discourse and perception of old age in Korea is dominated by issues such as health, marginalization, poverty, and meaninglessness (Jung, 2022). Critics argue that the media and gerontological research focusing on the problems of old age have contributed to the production of negative discourses about old age. To avoid the risk of representing older people as heterogeneous others, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between old age and the problems of old age and to recognize that older people, like other generations, are narrative agents who seek and construct different meanings of life based on their own experiences (Jung, 2014). As the number of older people increases and older people come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, wellbeing, happiness, and well-being in old age are becoming important topics in aging research (Lee, 2023: 103). Much of the literature on wellbeing, well-aging has focused on people aged 65 and over. However, as the number of older people increases, there is a need for research on specific issues and phenomena. In addition, most research on well-being in later life has been based on reviews of the well-being literature and quantitative studies of factors and program effectiveness. Most studies have used single interventions such as reminiscence therapy, art therapy, music therapy, literary therapy, play therapy, and gardening. The literature suggests that multidisciplinary approaches to interventions for older adults are effective, and multidisciplinary research is being conducted, but is still lacking. Therefore, this study focuses on the subjective and unique experiences of



well-aging of ROAWLA who are socially, culturally and regionally marginalized and underrepresented. The purpose of this study is to design an HCT program for ROAWLA and to analyze the meaning of their experience of participating in the program from the perspective of self-healing in HCT. Therefore, the research questions of this study are as follows. First, what is the design of an HCT program for the well-aging of ROAWLA? Second, what is the significance of the self-healing experience of ROAWLA through HCT?

Chapter II presented theoretical discussions related to the well-aging of ROAWLA and self-healing in HCT. First, the well-aging of ROAWLA consisted of the understanding of ROAWLA and the understanding of well-aging in old age. The understanding of ROAWLA examined their socio-cultural, relational, economic and health characteristics and the resulting policy discussions, critiquing old age policies that focus on welfare and economic support and arguing for a shift in the perception of older people as subjective human beings rather than simply as objects of care. ROAWLA's well-aging examined different discourses of aging, such as success, production, activity and creativity in old age, and mentioned the need for well-being. Unlike other discourses of aging, well-aging is a concept based on subjective judgments and choices about aging in old age, and it means human life and death (Jung, 2022). Based on the different definitions of well-aging in the literature, the concept of well-aging can be summarized in terms of accepting aging, maintaining dignity by discovering the meaning of life, having a positive outlook on the future, and pursuing continuous development and growth.

Second, HCT and self-healing consisted of well-aging and HCT and self-healing in HCT. First, well-aging and HCT explored the humanistic approach to well-aging by dividing it into the fields of literature, philosophy, and art, discussed the lack of program research and the need for a convergent approach as a concrete direction for practice, and introduced the concept of HCT. Based on an individual's life history, the humanities and



various psychotherapeutic techniques are combined to approach well-aging in old age through the core values of subjectivity and coexistence. Next, self-healing in HCT examined various scholars' concepts of self-healing and specifically derived the concept of self-healing in HCT through FGD research. The concepts of self-healing in HCT derived from the FGDs can be grouped into four categories. They are: ① looking into oneself, ② restoring unique existence, ③ moving toward coexistence, and ④ restoring sensory artistry and imagination. This study analyzed the meaning of the experience of participating in the program to examine the meaning of HCT as self-healing.

Chapter III presents the research method of this study, qualitative case study, research procedures, research participants, data collection and analysis, and research ethics and reliability. A qualitative case study was adopted to specifically explore the unique self-narratives of rural older adult women who participated in the HCT program and to analyze the meaning of the experience of participating in the program from the self-healing perspective of HCT, and the research procedures of pre-preparation, program implementation, data collection, analysis, and report writing were described. The selection criteria and characteristics of the participants were then described, and it was explained that the program was initially conducted with five participants, but that three participants participated in the final program, apart from two who withdrew for health reasons. The researcher then described the diversification of data collection through activity dialogues, activity works, research and reflection notes, observer notes, and informal interviews, and the analysis process through open coding, categorization, and thematic analysis. Finally, research ethics were adhered to through IRB review prior to the program and, as a qualitative researcher, I described my participation in a qualitative research methodology camp and prior research related to my dissertation to enhance the reliability of the study.

Chapter IV explored research question 1, "What is the design of an HCT



program for the well-aging of ROAWLA?” , the specific program content was constructed according to the consensus qualitative research process, and the final program was constructed through the consensus and validation steps. The program outline and objectives described the specific goals and intervention strategies of the program, and the program composition and process were described according to the four steps of the consensus qualitative research procedure proposed by Hill et al. (2016). The program process and content were then described on a session-by-session basis, before the final designed program was presented.

Chapter V used open coding, categorization, and thematization to derive the meaning of self-healing experiences through HCT for ROAWLA in research question 2. As a result, the meaning of self-healing experience of HCT was analyzed in four categories of meaning: “self-understanding,” “expressing creativity,” “reframing self-narratives,” and “experiencing coexistence.”

First, “self-understanding” brought about an integrated self-understanding through life reminiscence, relationship exploration, masterpiece art therapy, and four life cuts that allowed her to confront her inarticulate self and reconstruct her memories as stories interpreted in the present. Self-understanding is the foundation for self-narrative reconstruction as a preliminary step in the healing process. The core categories that led to self-understanding were “recalling the highs and lows of life” and “recognizing women’s identity in patriarchy.” Looking at the subcategories that led to the core category, Recalling the highs and lows of life refers to the reward and joy of life through children and the painful memories of life left behind. The subcategories that led to the core category, “recognizing women’s identity in patriarchy,” refer to caring and patience as virtues, a life dependent on family approval and expectations, and limited educational and career opportunities.

Second, “expressing Creativity” used the art therapy techniques of HCT to



uncover unconscious narratives and enable creative self-expression, leading to self-healing. The core categories that led to Expressing Creativity are “sensory experience of art,” and “creative self-expression.” Looking at the subcategories that led to the core themes, “sensory experience of art” refers to positive emotions from art and the meaning of life through nostalgia. “Creative self-expression” refers to lifelong desires elevated to art and inner desires reflected in artworks.

Third, “self-narrative reconstruction” is an experience of self-healing through the reconstruction of self-identity and the creation of a unique self-narrative through integrative self-understanding and reflection. The core categories of self-narrative reconstruction are “recovering one’s uniqueness,” and “narrative transformation and creation.” The subcategories that lead to the first category, “recovering one’s uniqueness” refer to Breaking social norms and reclaiming agency, and moving from a negative to a positive self-image. And the sub-themes of “narrative transformation and creation” are integrating scattered memories and redefining life by discovering meaning.

Fourth, the “experience of coexistence” is the core concept of HCT, which is the experience of self-healing through coexistence. Individuals can look at themselves in an integrated way through others and restore the broken balance to become the subject of harmony and live an other-oriented life. The core categories that led to the experience of coexistence were “community belonging and connectedness,” and “companionship with others.” The subcategories of “community belonging and connectedness” are emotional connection in mutual support and a life partner to get you going. “Companionship with others” refers to passing on life wisdom and sharing and nurturing life together.

These self-healing experiences were life-changing for each participant. Participant A reframed her narrative from “unhappy,” and “unlucky” to “happy,” “blessed,” and “loved,” which shaped her life identity. For more



than a decade, A has cared for her husband, who has battled two bouts of cancer and suffered a stroke, leaving her exhausted as she organizes their assets, does odd jobs, and runs the household without help from others or her children. This physical and mental exhaustion shaped her self-narrative as a framework for understanding her life, locking her identity into the label of a life without blessings, a life of fortune. However, as she participated in the HCT program, she was able to reflect on her life and recall her relationship resources, such as her stepfather, brother, son, and neighbors who positively influenced her, and who helped her without saying a word. She realized how valuable and cherished she was, even though she usually didn't realize it, and was able to view and integrate her identity positively. She moved from a negative view of her life to a positive view of her life.

Participant B reframed her narrative as a subject rather than an object in her life. She repositioned herself as a servant to the greater good and as a servant to someone else's life. Behind this objectification narrative is an era and socio-cultural context that marginalized and othered women. B was unable to pursue higher education, and after her marriage, she was forced to give up her hairdressing career to take care of her in-laws, have children, and raise them. She took all of this for granted. As the sessions progressed, however, she repositioned herself from an object to a subject. As the session progressed, B's story shifted from her children and husband to being about herself. In the seventh session, in the four life shots with the magazine collage, she revealed herself for the first time as the story's subject. Through the image of a woman standing tall in a yellow dress with a shovel, she represented herself as an empowered woman who had worked the land and fed her family. By reevaluating life events and time, B positioned herself as a subject and integrated them into a meaningful life. Against the potential despair of old age, which Erickson (1998) identified as integrity versus despair, B achieved life integration by positively reinterpreting her history through



mythic narratives of the past. By creatively reframing her life story, she sought to make her identity valuable and meaningful as she aged, without abandoning it.

Also B embraced her weakened body, which had become too weak to walk, and instead of feeling hopeless, depressed, and afraid of dying, she saw it as an extension of her happy life, which she spent caringly and harmoniously with her children and neighbors, rather than diminishing her relationships.

Participant C reframed the labels that had defined her, such as “immature” and “weak,” as “working tirelessly to protect the family,” and “practicing the value of love through pain. At the beginning of the program, C was unable to separate her existence from that of her husband, who was a spendthrift and didn’t save. However, through life reminiscing and exploring the meaning of life, C realized that she had worked hard to protect her family’s wealth. She also lost her second son in an accident, her first son was blinded in one eye, and her husband died suddenly, but she did not despair or collapse, but rather she tried to overcome them by moving her body constantly. This is symbolized by the figure of a person running against the sunset in the 4th life shot using a magazine collage from the 7th session. This symbolizes the toil of life, working non-stop until the sunset to protect the family. By reevaluating life’s events and time, C found the meaning of life and rewrote her story.

In addition, C practiced the value of love in the midst of life’s hardships, loving people and being tolerant. Specifically, she looked at others in a positive light and tried to recognize and accept them as they were, rather than judging them by her own standards. She did not resent or criticize her husband, but tried to find and discover good memories and meaning with him. She was grateful and joyful that her children were healthy and had a good parent-child relationship, even though their lives were not going well in the eyes of others. When her daughter had





difficulties with her business and was in debt, she shared the difficulties and burdens with her. This aspect of C shows that through the pain she has learned from her life experiences, she has deep empathy and compassion for others and a communal perspective. Through his pain, C has embraced and loved others who are different from him, but there were parts of himself that he had not integrated in a positive way. However, by discovering and revealing the positive parts of her being through the program, she was able to redefine her narrative and give meaning to her life as someone who has worked tirelessly and lived an active life.

Each participant's path to aging well is different and includes the uniqueness of their lives. However, they all began with awareness and understanding of their past selves by facing and accepting life's pain; they experienced self-healing by discovering and creating meaning in their lives through narrative reconstruction; and they sought to look at life positively in their later years and engaging with their neighbors. For the study participants, humanities convergence therapy allowed them to tell stories that they had never told before, and helped them to heal themselves by renaming their repressed identities and revealing them as their own.

## 2. Discussion and Suggestion

This research is a qualitative study of the experiences of ROAWLA in HCT. Specifically, this research explored the unique experiences of ROAWLA in a program developed in the context of well-aging and analyzed them from the perspective of self-healing in HCT. The results showed that ROAWLA were able to reconstruct their self-narratives through creative self-expression, while understanding and reflecting on their life narratives from an integrative perspective and discovering positive life views and aspirations while



participating in the program. Based on the findings, this chapter discusses the significance of this research, limitations, suggestions for further research and policy suggestions. The following four theoretical implications were summarized and discussed by linking the study results with existing literature.

First, well-aging is a concept that can encompass all generations, not just old age. It means growing older in the life course of young, middle and old age before the successful life outcomes of old age, accepting aging as a positive process and seeking developmental tasks in old age (Kim, 2020; Koo et al., 2021; Shin, 2020). According to Koo et al. (2021), the need for well-aging education is highest in middle age than in old age, and there is a need for lifecycle- specific well-aging programs. Therefore, as well-aging is a process of aging, it is recommended that further research examine the experience of well-aging by cohort to understand how well aging is experienced and perceived not only in old age, but also in youth, middle age, and old age.

Second, this research conducted an HCT program that combines the life story of photo-telling, sociogram, masterpiece art therapy, four cuts comic and retelling. The humanities include literature, history and philosophy as well as music, art and theater. The core of HCT is a healing approach through exploration and reconstruction of the participant's narrative, and it is recommended that a program be developed using various humanistic approaches and media that suit the characteristics of the participant's age, symptoms, etc.

Third, this research is the first study to conceptualize and conduct self-healing in HCT, and it is necessary to expand the research related to self-healing. As counselee-centred counseling, it can be seen as a method of self-narrative exploration and self-care. Since COVID-19, research on self-healing has increased in various studies of psychological and emotional care, and it is necessary to continue to expand research on self-healing in



the post-COVID-19 era. Therefore, for self-healing in HCT, it is recommended to prepare various humanistic approaches that can be used by counselees on their own initiative, and to further study self-healing cases.

Fourth, self-healing in HCT is in line with self-care, which is the core content of older adult Care Service, one of the policies for older adults. As family care has weakened and the social network of older adults has narrowed, the socialization needs of caregivers have increased, and the number of older adults and those living alone in need of care has risen, the HCT self-healing program can be used as a preventive approach to reduce expected welfare costs and improve the quality of life in old age. Currently, care services for older adults are provided through home visits and outpatient services, and include mental health education and counseling. In particular, they prevent loneliness and suicide by providing specialized services for vulnerable older adults who are at high risk of isolation and depression in old age (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2023). Therefore, it is recommended that the HCT program be used as a group or individual program in the context of home visits and outpatient counseling by older adults care services.



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## 국문초록

### 인문융합치료 참여 농촌지역 여성 독거노인의 자기치유 경험의 의미

인하대학교 대학원

인문융합치료학과

김도경

본 연구는 농촌지역 여성 독거노인의 웰에이징을 위한 인문융합치료 프로그램 참여 경험의 의미를 자기치유 관점에서 분석한 질적 사례연구이다. 연구의 목적은 농촌지역 여성 독거노인의 웰에이징을 위한 프로그램을 설계하고 그 경험을 인문융합치료의 자기치유 관점에서 분석하는 데 있다. 연구참여자들은 프로그램에 참여하며 자기 삶의 내러티브를 탐색하는 과정에서 자기 이해, 성찰, 창의성 발현, 자기 내러티브 재구성, 공존을 경험함으로써 자기치유로 나아갈 수 있었다.

한국은 고령화 시대에 접어들고 노인 인구 증가가 증가하며 노화와 노년에 대한 다양한 담론과 논의가 이루어졌다. 노년의 주제는 성공적 노화, 활동적 노화, 생산적 노화, 창조적 노화 등 다양하며 어떻게 하면 노년의 삶을 건강하게 활동하며 행복하게 보낼 수 있을지에 초점이 맞춰져 있다. 노화에 대한 다양한 담론은 노화에 대한 인식을 높이고 대처방안을 마련하는 데 기여했지만, 노화에 관한 객관적 기준을 강조함으로써 주관적으로 다양한 노화의 고유한 특성을 배제했다는 한계를 지닌다. 노년은 사회의 문제 이전에 개인이 겪는 문제이며, 사회복지 측면에서 바라보면 보호받아야 할 객체이지만 인간 존재론적 관점에서 보면 고유한 삶의 이야기를 통해 사회에 영향을 미치는 주체이다.

이에 본 연구는 웰에이징을 위한 인문융합치료 프로그램을 통해 노년에 자신의 지난 삶을 돌아보고 내러티브를 재구성함으로써 자기치유의 경험을 살펴보

는 것이 연구의 목적이다. 인문융합치료는 인문, 예술, 심리, 상담 등 다양한 분야들을 융합하여 연구참여자의 내러티브를 탐색하고 재구성하려는 시도이다. 인문융합치료의 치료는 전인적 건강 회복과 인간성 회복을 의미하며 치료보다는 치유로서 의미를 지닌다. 특히 인문융합치료는 치유의 주체를 내담자로 보며 자기치유를 지향한다. 인문융합치료에서 말하는 자기치유는 네 가지 개념에서 살펴볼 수 있다. 연구참여자는 치유의 객체가 아닌 주체로서 스스로 자기 내면을 들여다보고 치유하는 내적 과정이며, 보편적인 기준으로 정상성을 강조하기보다 개인의 고유성 회복에 초점을 둔다. 또한 창의적 자기표현을 통한 카타르시스를 경험하고 자기 내러티브를 재구성하고 공존적 존재로의 회복을 경험하는 것이다.

이러한 이론적 논의를 바탕으로 연구자는 농촌지역 여성 독거노인 3명의 연구참여자를 선정하고 인문융합치료 프로그램 참여 경험과 자기치유로서 경험의 의미를 질적 사례연구로 분석하였다. 자료수집은 2022년 11월부터 2023년 4월에 걸쳐 이루어졌다. 프로그램은 총 10회기, 1~2주 1회기, 매회기 60~90분 진행되었으며 수집된 자료는 프로그램의 진행 과정에서 생산된 활동 대화, 활동 작품, 연구자의 연구 및 성찰 노트, 관찰자 노트, 비형식 면담 기록 등이다. 자료 분석은 인문융합치료 참여 경험을 자기치유 관점에서 사례를 분석하는 과정에서는 개방코딩, 범주화, 주제화의 귀납적 과정을 통해 분석하였다.

연구 결과는 웰에이징을 위한 인문융합치료 프로그램 구성과 프로그램 참여 경험의 의미를 자기치유 관점에서 분석함으로써 두 가지 영역으로 나누어 4장과 5장에 각각 기술하였다.

웰에이징 인문융합치료 프로그램 참여 경험의 의미를 살펴보면 ‘자기 이해’, ‘창의성 발현’, ‘자기 내러티브 재구성’, ‘공존의 경험’ 4개의 의미 범주로 나타났다.

첫째, ‘자기 이해’는 생애 회상, 관계 탐색, 명화 미술치료와 4컷 만화 등 언어와 비언어 소통을 통해 가능했다. 다양한 인문학적 접근은 지난 기억을 떠올리고 표현하게 하며, 현재 시점에서 그 시간을 재해석함으로써 통합적 자기 이해를 도왔다. 자기 이해는 치유 과정의 선행단계로서 자기 내러티브 재구성의 바탕이 된다. 자기 이해를 이끈 핵심범주는 ‘삶의 회로애락 회상’, ‘가부



장제에서 여성의 정체성 자각'이다. 핵심범주를 이끈 하위범주는 다음과 같다. '삶의 회로애락 회상'은 자녀를 통해 알게 된 삶의 보람과 기쁨과 머물러 있는 삶의 아픈 기억이다. '가부장제에서 여성의 정체성 자각'은 돌봄과 인내를 미덕으로 앎, 가족의 인정과 기대에 기댄 삶, 교육 및 경력 기회의 제한으로 나타났다.

둘째, '창의성 발현'은 예술을 활용하여 드러나지 않은 내러티브를 드러내고 창조적인 자기표현을 통한 카타르시스를 경험하고 자기치유로 나아가게 했다. 창의성 발현을 이끈 핵심범주는 '예술의 감각적 경험', '창조적 자기표현'이다. 그에 따른 하위범주를 살펴보면 다음과 같다. '예술의 감각적 경험'은 예술로부터 얻는 긍정 정서와 노스텔지어를 통해 돌아본 삶의 의미이다. '창조적 자기표현'은 예술로 승화된 생애 욕구와 작품에 투영된 내적 소망으로 나타났다.

셋째, '자기 내러티브 재구성'은 통합적 자기 이해와 자기성찰을 통해 가능했다. 연구참여자들은 자신의 내러티브를 재구성하고 새롭게 창조하는 과정에서 자기치유를 경험했다. 자기 내러티브 재구성을 이끈 핵심범주는 '자기 고유성 회복', '서사의 변용과 창조'이다. 먼저 '자기 고유성 회복'을 이끈 하위범주는 사회적 관념을 깨고 주체성 발현, 부정적 자기 인식을 넘어 긍정적 조망이다. 그리고 '서사의 변용과 창조'는 흠어진 기억의 통합과 삶을 재조명하는 의미 발견이다.

넷째, '공존의 경험'은 인문융합치료의 핵심인 공존을 통한 자기치유로서의 경험이다. 개인은 타자의 시선을 통해 자신을 통합적으로 바라보고 균형과 조화의 주체를 회복함으로써 주체성을 회복할 뿐 아니라 타자 지향적인 삶을 살아갈 수 있다. 공존의 경험을 이끈 핵심 주제는 '공동체 소속감과 연결성', '타자와의 동행'이다. 그에 따른 하위범주는 '공동체 소속감과 연결성'은 상호지지 속 정서적 유대감과 나를 일으키는 삶의 동반자이다. '타자와의 동행'은 삶의 지혜를 계승하기와 더불어 나누며 가꾸는 삶으로 나타났다.

결과에 따른 본연구의 의의는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 노년의 웰에이징을 위한 프로그램을 마련하였다는 데 의의가 있다. 둘째, 본 연구는 단일중재 방법이 아닌 다양한 학문 간 융합을 통한 인문, 예술을 융합 접근했다는 데 의의가 있다. 셋



째, 인문융합치료의 자기치유의 개념을 정리하고 이론화하여 인문융합치료 프로그램 참여 경험의 의미를 살펴보았다는 데 의의가 있다. 넷째, 본 연구는 찾아가는 프로그램으로서 정책적으로 소외되고 접근하기 어려운 지역의 독거노인을 대상으로 이루어진 웰에이징 프로그램이라는 점에서 의의가 있다.

핵심어: 농촌지역 여성 독거노인, 인문융합치료, 웰에이징, 자기치유, 질적 사례연구





## Appendix

### Appendix A: Study Description and Consent Form (연구 설명문 및 참여 동의서)

<b>연구 설명문 및 참여 동의서</b>	
<b>연구 제목</b>	농촌지역 독거노인의 인문융합치료 참여 경험에 관한 합리적 질적연구
<b>연구기관 부서 및 주소</b>	인하대학교 인문융합치료학과 (인천광역시 미추홀로 인하로 100 서호관/ 032-860-7870)
<b>연구자 성명 소속 및 연락처</b>	연구책임자: 김도경(인문융합치료학과 박사과정 / 연락처/ 이메일) 공동연구자: 김영순(사회교육과 교수 / 연락처/ 이메일)

<b>연구참여권유</b>
<p>본 연구는 귀하의 인문융합치료 참여경험의 의미를 탐구하는 데 목적이 있습니다. 본 연구자는 귀하에게 [농촌지역 독거노인의 인문융합치료 참여 경험에 관한 합리적 질적연구]에 참여해 주시기를 정중히 요청합니다. 본 설명문은 연구 참여를 결정하는데 도움이 되도록 연구의 배경 및 목적, 연구방법, 위험(불편감) 또는 이익, 귀하의 정보를 포함한 자료관리 등에 대한 내용을 포함하고 있습니다. 본 설명문을 주의 깊게 읽어보신 후 궁금한 점이나 명확하지 않은 부분이 있다면 질문하여 주시기 바랍니다. 이 연구를 수행하는 연구담당자가 귀하에게 이 연구에 대해 자세하게 설명해 줄 것입니다. 선생님의 서명은 귀하가 본 연구에 대해 그리고 그 위험성에 대해 설명을 들었음을 의미하며, 이 문서에 대한 서명은 귀하께서 자신(또는 법정 대리인)이 본 연구에 참가를 원한다는 것을 의미합니다.</p>

1. 연구의 배경 및 목적

본 연구는 고령화가 빠르게 진행되고 있는 한국의 농·어촌 지역에 거주하시는 독거노인의 정신건강 예방 및 치유적 차원에서 프로그램을 제공하고 그 경험의 의미를 탐색하고자 합니다. 한국의 경제성장과 의학의 발달은 영양 및 생활 수준의 향상과 평균수명 증가로 이어져 급속하게 초고령사회로 진입할 예정이며, 더불어 핵가족화가 빠르게 진행되며 자녀가 있더라도 혼



자 사는 독거노인의 수가 증가하고 있습니다. 독거노인의 정의는 가족 없이 혼자 사는 살아가는 노인(국립국어원, 2022)으로 특히 여성, 농어촌 지역, 저소득층 및 저학력층에 집중되는 양상을 보이고 있습니다(정경희, 2015).

노년기는 노년기에 따른 역할상실, 경제적 어려움, 건강 문제, 심리적 고독감, 공허함, 여가 시간 활용의 어려움을 경험합니다. 이러한 어려움이 증대되며 노인에 대한 정부차원의 지원과 정책이 요구되는 가운데 지역사회 노인의 건강한 노화, 고비용 돌봄 진입 예방을 위한 예방적 돌봄 강화를 위한 정책으로 2019년 6월부터 지역사회 통합돌봄(community care), 2020년부터 노인맞춤돌봄서비스 사업을 추진하고 있습니다(보건복지부, 2020). 특히 지역사회 통합돌봄을 국정과제로 도입하며 노인이 지역사회에 계속 거주하며(aging in place) 건강하게 늙어가는 것(healthy aging)에 관심을 가지고 노인맞춤돌봄서비스를 통해 만성질환 및 허약한(frail) 경증의 노인의 건강과 독립적인 생활을 지원하고 있습니다(보건복지부, 2021). 이는 모두 예방적 차원의 서비스로서 전국의 서비스 수행기관을 통해 다양한 프로그램 및 자조모임을 운영함으로써 신체 및 정신건강과 사회관계 형성을 지원하고 있습니다. 이에 예방 차원의 다양한 심리치료 및 치유 프로그램의 개발과 프로그램 적용을 통한 현장의 목소리를 담은 연구를 필요로 합니다(전용호·이석환, 2022). 이에 따라 본 연구는 인문학의 기본요소인 내러티브에 인문학의 다양한 분야들을 융합한 프로그램을 제공함으로써 인생에서 경험하는 심리·정서적 어려움을 돕고 자기치유적 경험을 할 수 있도록 돕고자 합니다.

인문융합치료 프로그램 내용은 연구참여자의 스토리텔링을 통해, 내면화된 자기 서사를 재해석합니다. 고통으로 해석되었던 생애 내러티브를 re-telling하는 작업, 즉 스토리텔링이 긍정적인 의미를 부여하는 치유적 과정이 됩니다. 또한 인문학의 기본요소인 시간, 공간, 인간이 내러티브의 기본요소인 시간, 공간, 인간과 동일한 것에 기반하여 내러티브의 re-telling(스토리텔링) 작업을 위해 말(talking)뿐 아니라 사진, 미술, 문학, 연극 등의 인문학적 장르를 활용합니다. 회기별 내용을 살펴보면 다음과 같습니다.

- 1, 2회기는 포토텔링 생애사를 활용하여 연구참여자의 유년기부터 노년기까지 전체 삶에 대한 내러티브를 살펴봅니다.
- 3, 4회기는 회상치료 접근법으로 생애에 나타난 주요 인간관계를 탐색하는 회기로 소시오그램을 활용합니다.
- 5, 6회기는 영화 미술치료를 활용하여 관계 가운데 나타난 중심 정서를 확인하고 감정표현과 해소를 위한 회기로 진행합니다.
- 7, 8회기는 지난 회기에서 살펴본 내러티브를 요약하는 회기로 상징적 표현을 통해 인생의 중요한 의미를 살펴봅니다.
- 9, 10회기는 이전 회기의 요약된 생애를 re-telling함으로써 생애서사 재해석 및 재구성하도록 돕습니다.

## 2. 연구방법 및 절차



본 연구의 대상자는 농촌지역에 거주하는 독거노인으로 자발적으로 인문융합치료에 참여하기를 희망하는 70세 이상의 노인 3~4명입니다. 인문융합치료 회기당 소요되는 시간은 약 90분이며 자료수집 기간은 연구참여자가 지원하신 때로부터 인문융합치료 프로그램 진행과 심층면담까지 합하여 총 12주 정도입니다. 자료수집은 설계된 프로그램에 따라 개인 및 집단으로 회기를 진행하며 도출된 개인별 내러티브, 활동 결과물, 심층면담 자료 등입니다. 연구참여자의 생생한 이야기를 정확하게 정리하기 위해 연구참여자의 동의를 얻은 후, 회기별 내용을 녹음할 예정이며 녹음된 내용은 텍스트로 전환하여 연구참여자들에게 열람 후 내용상의 왜곡이나 오류가 없는지 검토 및 수정 절차를 가질 것입니다. 연구 기간은 기관생명윤리위원회 (Institutional Review Board, IRB) 승인 후 1년 안에 종료할 예정입니다.

### 3. 예상되는 불편감과 위험 및 기대되는 이익

인문융합치료 과정에서 자신의 내러티브를 탐색하며 스트레스를 불러올 수도 있지만 연구 가설에 따르면 결과적으로 이것은 오히려 치료적으로 작용합니다. 연구참여자는 이러한 불편함이 있을 경우, 질문에 답하지 않아도 되며, 연구중단 의사를 표현할 수 있습니다. 이외 참여하면서 예상되는 신체적, 정신적, 경제적 위험과 불편함은 없으며 발생하는 비용도 없습니다. 다만 본 연구는 60~90분씩 10회기의 시간이 소요됩니다. 연구 참여에 소요되는 시간적 불편감을 고려하여 최대한 연구참여자의 편의에 따라 날짜와 시간을 정하고 진행할 예정입니다. 또한 프로그램 회기가 종료된 후 연구참여에 대한 답례로 10만원 상당의 상품권을 지급합니다. 마지막으로 본 연구에 수집된 자료 및 정보 등은 연구 이외의 목적에 사용되지 않음을 밝힙니다.

### 4. 연구 참여 및 중단

본 연구의 참여는 자발적 참여를 원칙으로 하며, 비록 연구의 진행 단계에 있다 하더라도 연구자가 밝히고 싶지 않은 것을 강압적으로 물어봤다고 판단되거나 그동안 밝힌 정보들이 후회되는 등의 불편함을 느낀다면 연구참여자의 의사에 따라 언제든지 연구를 중단하고 동의를 철회할 수 있습니다. 자료수집에 동의하셨다 할지라도 연구참여자가 거부할 경우 자료수집은 중단됩니다. 그리고 연구를 중단하고 동의를 철회할 경우, 연구자료(개인정보, 인체유래물 포함)는 폐기합니다. 또한 연구참여자는 언제든지 연구참여자의 기록 등을 직접 열람하거나 요청할 수 있으며 연구참여자에게 어떠한 불이익이나 피해는 발생하지 않습니다. 프로그램을 수행하는 과정 또는 면담으로 인해 위험 이상 발생 시 의료적 치료를 지원합니다. 이 외 상황에서 발생하는 위험에 대해서는 연구자 또는 연구기관이 책임을 부담하지 않습니다.

연구 참여시 수집된 자료나 정보는 「생명윤리 및 안전에 관한 법률 시행 규칙」 「제5조(인간대상연구 기록 및 보관 등) 제1항과 제2항」에 따라 연구가 종료된 시점부터 3년간 보관하며, 그 이후에는 폐기됩니다. 한편 연구자의 건강 악화, 친족 부고 등 일신상의 이유로 연구정지 및 중지가 발생할 경우 해당 사유를 작성하여 각 연구참여자에게 개별 연락하도록 하겠습니다.



다. 이 경우에도 기존의 수집된 자료나 정보는 「생명윤리 및 안전에 관한 법률 시행 규칙」 「제5조(인간대상 연구의 기록 및 보관) 제1항과 제2항」에 따라 연구가 종료된 시점부터 3년간 보관하며, 그 이후에는 폐기됩니다. 불가피하게 연구자의 건강 이상 및 사고 등의 이유로 연구 정지 및 중지의 경우가 발생하더라도 연구자 외 자격을 갖춘 치료사가 프로그램의 종결로서 1회기의 프로그램을 제공하며 개인 상담이 필요할 경우 상담전문가를 연결하도록 할 것이며 그동안 수집된 연구자료(개인정보, 인체 유래물 포함)는 폐기합니다. 그리고 참여 시간에 비례하여 사례비를 지급할 계획입니다.

#### 5. 개인정보 및 비밀보장

본 연구를 위해서 연구참여자의 프로그램 참여 내용 및 개인정보 등이 수집됩니다. 수집되는 개인정보는 다음과 같습니다. 성함, 성별, 연령대, 전화번호, 구술면담 및 심층면담 녹음파일, 계좌번호입니다. 수집된 정보는 연구를 위해서만 사용할 것이며, 연구자료를 타인 또는 다른 연구 목적으로 제공하지 않을 것입니다. 연구참여자의 신원이 드러나는 기록은 절대 비밀로 보장하고, 연구결과가 출판된 경우에도 연구참여자의 신상정보는 비밀로 유지될 것입니다. 자료의 전자본을 포함한 모든 자료(개인정보, 유전정보, 인체 유래물 포함)의 이름과 기관명은 익명으로 전환하여 신분을 보장하며, 수집한 모든 자료는 연구담당자 개인 컴퓨터의 한 폴더에만 모아질 것입니다. 이 폴더는 연구담당자의 개인 구글 계정 드라이브에 업로드될 예정이며 활동자료나 소감문은 캐비닛에 넣어 보관할 것입니다. 별도의 USB 장치를 활용하여 연구자와 합의팀 및 자문팀, 지도교수만이 접근할 수 있도록 관리하며 연구의 신뢰성 및 타당성 확보를 위해 동료집단의 지지와 조언 시에는 연구자료의 보안을 위하여 출력물이나 저장가능한 형태로 공유하지 않고, 빔프로젝터 또는 비대면 회의 프로그램(zoom) 화면공유 기능을 활용할 것입니다. 수집된 자료나 정보는 「생명윤리 및 안전에 관한 법률 시행 규칙」 「제5조(인간대상 연구 기록 및 보관 등) 제1항과 제2항」에 따라 연구가 종료된 시점부터 3년간 보관하며, 그 이후에는 폐기할 것입니다. 연구의 결과가 출판되는 경우 출판물을 연구참여자 전원에게 전달할 계획이고, 연구참여자가 직접 열람을 원할 경우 학술연구 정보서비스(www.riss.kr)를 통해 확인이 가능합니다.

#### 6. 연구 관련 문의

- 1) 연구참여자 권익에 관해 궁금하신 부분은 아래로 문의하여 주시기 바랍니다.  
인하대학교 기관생명윤리위원회/ 032-860-9158/ irbedu@inha.ac.kr
- 2) 본 연구에 관해 궁금하신 부분은 언제든지 연구자에게 연락하여 주시기 바랍니다. (연락처/ 이메일)
- 3) 본 연구의 설명문 및 동의서 1부는 연구자가, 1부는 연구참여자가 수령합니다.

본인은 연구의 설명문 및 동의서를 읽었고 내용을 충분히 이해합니다. 본인은 연구에 대한



자세한 설명을 들었으며 자발적인 연구 참여에 동의한다면 아랫부분에 서명하십시오.

연구참여자 성명		서명		서명일	
연구자 성명		서명		서명일	