

MuseumsForward

Understanding students' emotional wellbeing within art museum experiences

Jessica Conway and Erin Cotton

Abstract

Young people in the United States experience high rates of mental health disorders, yet treatment levels are low. Art museums have the potential to make a difference through thoughtful programming, exhibits, and community building. Little research has focused on understanding the emotional health impacts of art museum visitation on students. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of art museum experiences in teens' and college students' emotional wellbeing. Participants included 24 undergraduate students attending the University of Washington, Seattle, WA and 13 teenagers participating in teen councils at Seattle-area art museums. Both teens and undergraduates participated in semi-structured interviews via Zoom after participation in a museum visit or teen arts council. Data was collected using the University College London Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit. Findings suggest that teens and undergraduate students felt that their emotional wellbeing was positively impacted by museum experiences. Participants felt that they escaped school and other outside stressors; developed their personal interests; enhanced their feelings of inclusion in building community; and shared their ideas with each other. These findings suggest that museum professionals and educators can further support students' emotional wellbeing by implementing repeated museum experiences that help them feel more confident.

Keywords

emotional wellbeing; adolescents; student life; art museums

Committee Chair

Dr. Jessica Luke

Committee Members

Rachel Hershberg; Rayna Mathis

Research Assistants

Jonathan Kwong; Annabelle Smith

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Introduction

During the transitional period of young adulthood, teens and college-aged students are faced with many stressors, from building relationships, to succeeding in school, to thinking about their future (Baldwin, Towler, Oliver & Datta, 2017). The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that from 14 to 24 years old, 25 percent of lifelong mental health conditions are developed (NAMI, 2005). Yet there is little intervention in these crucial early years to prevent the symptoms and consequences of poor mental health. Traditional intervention methods, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy or dialectical behavioral therapy, typically overlook the benefits that arts and culture can play in promoting positive wellbeing. This article describes two research studies that examined how visiting an art museum impacts the emotional wellbeing of both teens and undergraduate students.

Emotional wellbeing

Wellbeing is a popular public health measurement that goes beyond the standard definition of health. It holistically integrates both the mental and physical states of an individual. Wellbeing can even be applied to an individual's economic status and the health of a community as a whole. For the purpose of this article, we will focus on emotional wellbeing as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), "a state in which an individual realises [their] own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to [their] community" (2005). Ander, Thompson, Noble, Lanceley, Menon, and Chatterjee (2011) argue that in order for wellbeing to improve, people need "a sense of individual vitality, to undertake activities which are meaningful, engaging, and which make them feel competent and autonomous... and be resilient to changes beyond their immediate control" (p. 244).

Research studies have explored many ways that adults' positive emotional wellbeing predicts improved health and greater satisfaction within their lives (Chatterjee & Noble, 2013; Cuyper, Krokstad, Holmen, Knudsten, Bygren & Holmen, 2012; Davies, Knuiman, & Rosenberg, 2016; Mastandrea, Fagioli & Baisi, 2019). Davies et al. (2016) found that

people who participated in arts engagement activities like attending an art event, creating a piece of art, or volunteering in an arts organization or club scored higher in their mental wellbeing. Cuyper et al. (2012) revealed that participation in cultural activities is correlated with good health, low anxiety and depression scores, and satisfaction with life. Most of the participants in these studies, especially those indicating positive wellbeing, were between the ages of 35-65 and from predominantly privileged backgrounds. There has been a lack of research that focuses on teens' and young adults' positive emotional wellbeing (Goble & Bye-Brooks, 2016; Zaff, Calkins, Bridges & Margie, 2002).

COVID-19 and emotional wellbeing

In March 2020, American citizens began to adjust to the new reality of life during a global health crisis. New disruptions to livelihood, including unemployment, isolation, and fear of illness, made this year an incredibly hard time to maintain emotional wellbeing. A Kaiser Family Foundation study revealed that almost half of all Americans say that COVID-19 has impacted their mental health (Achenbach, 2020). Furthermore, many are experiencing anxiety and depression for the first time in their lives. Experts suggest that this recent nationwide increase in mental health difficulties has the potential for long term impacts. The president of Mental Health America, Paul Gionfriddo, informed *The Washington Post* that "if we [do not] do something about it now, people are going to be suffering from these mental-health impacts for years to come" (Wan, 2020).

This year has set unprecedented challenges for maintaining emotional wellbeing for everyone, including teen- and college-aged students. Research shows that poor mental health is the most frequent reason why students suffer in their academic pursuits (Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang & Sasangohar, 2020; Zaff et al., 2002). A recent study in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* surveyed 195 students from a large university in Texas and found that 71% of them reported experiencing increased stress or anxiety due to the pandemic. Furthermore, they cited new stressors, including adjusting to class online, worrying about the health of family members, and worrying about their future employment. Because of this, teachers and professors have tried to take up the role of both educator and caretaker. Wong (2020) discusses that while most students already have high stress levels, the pandemic has added loss and socio-

economic stress into students' lives with a lack of routine and support that school normally provides. Educators and school counselors are looking for ways to provide a "stable environment for cognitive, emotional, and social growth" (p. 36).

Art museums and emotional wellbeing

In the past decade, many museums and cultural heritage sites across the globe have realized their potential as spaces of healing and have developed programs aimed at improving visitors' wellbeing (Camic & Chatterjee, 2015). These programs have been designed to address various emotional and physical health issues such as dementia, grief, and even post-traumatic stress disorder. While people may undergo regular treatment at hospitals or therapists' offices, museum experiences can provide them with a sense of comfort and alleviation of stress. Research suggests that the "arts can promote health and psychological wellbeing and offer a therapeutic tool for many, especially adolescents, [the] elderly, and vulnerable individuals" (Masterandrea, Fagioli & Biasi, 2019, p. 1). Moreover, patients are typically more willing to participate in healing programs in a museum, as there is no stigma attached to these cultural environments.

One relatively recent research finding on the topic of wellbeing is that visiting an art museum can actually reduce people's stress levels (Binnie, 2010). Binnie investigated how viewing art in an art museum impacts the anxiety levels of staff and visitors. This study divided visitors up by the frequency of visits: those who had a keen interest in the arts, and infrequent visitors with little experience in art museums or galleries. Results suggested that those who engaged in art-related activities had more substantial decreases in anxiety ratings. Similarly, Ter-Kazarian (2020) measured the self-reported change in stress levels of participants attending an art museum during their lunch break. Museum visitors scored themselves on 19 stress-related adjectives both before and after their brief visit. Participants indicated a 72% percent drop in self-reported stress and a 28% increase in excitement. This evidence supports that non-clinical psychological interventions could have a positive impact on the future of public health. Much like a calming space, museum visits are refreshing to those who live and work in big cities across the world.

In addition to providing a calming break for visitors, museums can foster positive feelings. Research has shown that people participating in museum experiences report improved emotional wellbeing (Cuypers et

al., 2012; Davies et al., 2016; Green, 2019). Ander et al. (2011) framed how emotional wellbeing is examined within museum spaces and experiences that can elicit “positive emotions such as empathy, tolerance, happiness, kindness, [and] laughter” while distracting from negative emotions (p. 249). These positive emotions can also be channeled through encounters with art exhibit objects. The National Gallery of Contemporary Art’s Assistant Curator and researcher, Elisabeth Ioannides, suggests that museum visitors often see their identity in artifacts and can “come to the realisation that human beings have much in common” (Ioannides, 2016, p. 105). This sense of universality can be comforting to those who are experiencing issues, such as self-worth and isolation. Furthermore, researchers acknowledge that viewing art in museum settings provides visitors with a chance to reflect on their own lives and emotions (Spencer, 2012). It is common for visitors to see the museum as a safe space, with the security to guard priceless objects (Ioannides, 2017). This sense of ease contributes to museums being an ideal space for art therapy intervention.

As well as leisure visits, museum-based art therapy programs have the capacity to support positive emotional wellbeing in participants. These programs can be designed to target a wide range of visitors with individual needs. For example, in 2014 the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts created a programmatic offering in partnership with the Douglas Mental Health Institute for people struggling with eating disorders. Participants in the program, *Sharing the Douglas*, visit the museum once every six weeks for a total of six months. This multi-visit structure follows best practices and notes that for art museum programs to promote wellbeing, participants must regularly engage, rather than only participating once (Camic, Paul & Chatterjee, 2013). During their time in the museum, participants are given a thematic tour of the museum, engage in an art-making activity, and are given the space to share how their emotions relate towards their artwork (Baddeley, Evans, Lajeunesse, & Legari, 2017). Although this program was not meant to replace the clinical work taking place at the hospitals, it did succeed by giving participants a chance to step away from thinking about their bodies and engage in healing self-expression.

Another successful art therapy program, the *Artefact project*, took place in North Wales in 2012. A group of museums sought to address how “creative engagement” could improve the mental health of those experiencing emotional distress (Chatterjee & Noble, 2013). Using qualitative interviews with participants, as well as a quantitative well-

being measurement scale, themes of positive immediate and long-term effects emerged from the data. Immediate positive effects in participants included healing from physical and emotional pain as well as a chance to relax. Some of the benefits of continued interaction with the museums include increased self-awareness, independence, sense of satisfaction, the feeling of something to live for and a greater ability to deal with problems.

These examples illuminate the potential for museums to serve as a therapeutic resource to the communities that they serve. With partnerships and support from the healthcare profession, museums can become life changing amenities in our public landscape for many individuals. Research supports that active participation can not only reduce feelings of unhappiness, but more generally improve life satisfaction (Weziak-Białowolska, Białowolska, & Sacco, 2019). Despite the wide array of evaluation on the effects of art engagement on wellbeing, there is little studied about young people specifically. This study is designed to build on the pre-existing literature about the benefits of museum participation by examining the experiences of teenagers and undergraduate students.

Art museums and teens

Research on teens and art museums tends to focus on the developmental impacts of art museum teen programs, rather than on emotional wellbeing impacts. However, studies show that sustained participation in art museum programs can enhance teens' cognitive, personal, and social growth. Teens participating in art museum programming have reported positive impacts on their critical thinking skills (Erickson & Hales, 2014; Luke, Stein, Kessler & Dierking, 2007). Luke et al. (2007) studied teens in a sustained high school art program and found that the teens demonstrated enhanced knowledge and understanding of art history, artistic techniques, and artists' intentions. Additionally, Erickson and Hales (2014) found that teen programs increased their critical and reflective thinking, and helped them to learn about art. In the words of these teens, "[it] has made me think of the artist's thoughts instead of my own" and "I learned that even the simplest medium [of art] can communicate complex meanings and feelings" (p. 419). Within this teen program, the students discussed their work with museum curators, professional artists, and educators. Furthermore, the teens' reflected on artistic methods and

contemplated the deeper meanings of an artwork, which contributed to the development of their own thought processes.

Research also shows positive social benefits for teens participating in art museum programs, such as developing supportive connections with their peers and building a community (Linzer & Munley, 2015; Luke et al., 2007). Luke et al. (2007) showed an improvement in teens' social competence, such as public speaking skills in addition to building positive connections with others. Teens said that they "formed bonds with peers outside of usual school or social groups" (p. 427). Additionally, Linzer and Munley (2015) showed that opportunities to develop close and supportive relationships with museum staff and peers positively impacted teens' experience during and following the program. The collaborative nature of teen programs amplified their ability to make friendships and value differences amongst their peers. The relationships they formed were "based on experiences working with a diverse peer group toward shared goals, led teens to value community and collaboration," (p. 40).

Finally, studies suggest that teen programs in art museums can positively impact their personal growth (Bellamy, 2018; Linzer & Munley, 2015; Luke et al., 2007;). Linzer and Munley (2015) showed various positive outcomes such as personal growth, increased confidence, "feelings of accomplishment," increased self-awareness, and an enhanced sense of identity (p. 26). Similarly, Erickson and Hales (2014) showed through a yearlong program at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMCA) that participating teenagers learned about themselves and explored their personal identity through their art. Participants reflected on their thoughts, experiences, feelings, and art which led them to building a greater understanding of themselves (Erickson et al., 2014). These programs were designed to support teens' development. In a non-museum space, LGBTQIA+ teens benefited from exploring their identity and making sense of experiences through the arts (Bellamy, 2018). The results of this study showed that art was a powerful storytelling tool to explore positive aspects of self, sexuality, and gender (Bellamy, 2018). It is highly possible that art museums could be a place for young people to work through and process their emotions.

Art museums and college students

College students are positioned at a unique time in their lives since they are typically experiencing life without the security of their family

for the first time. The years of an undergraduate student are often associated with socialization, independence, and career building. In the past decade, the number of undergraduates reporting mental health difficulties has increased greatly (Baldwin, Towler, Oliver & Datta, 2017). Additionally, college students frequently engage in unhealthy behavior, such as binge drinking and smoking, which can impact their wellbeing later in life. These feelings and behaviors can be attributed to stress associated with rigorous academic programs, the collection of student debt, and even adjusting to life away from home. It is imperative to address mental health in this period of academic pursuit because reports suggest that “positive well-being during adolescence predicted fewer health behaviors in young adulthood” (Baldwin et al., 2017, p. 1). The four or five years in which students attend college are formative for lifelong wellbeing and the ability to overcome obstacles in the future.

Many college students who live on or near campus have access to a campus museum. Both small liberal arts colleges and large research universities have historically prioritized the creation of these centers of learning. In fact, over 700 academic institutions across the country have an art museum or exhibition space (Glesne, 2012). Despite this, not all undergraduate students utilize campus museums or are even aware of their existence. Glesne researched how students interact with these campus museums both inside and outside of academic curriculum. She determined four primary motivations for visiting an art museum, including being surrounded by art as a child, taking an art history course that piques interest, working for an art museum or frame shop, and finally simply visiting them. She argues that art museums have real impacts for the lives of these students who choose to engage with these institutions. As many of their mission statement’s reference, these spaces are meant to enhance quality of life for both students and professors alike. Campus museums can be used by students to research, relax, or even inspire creativity. Glense notes that students report feeling “less stressed” or “serene” after a visit to their campus art museum. Therefore, a visit to an art museum can serve as an outing to promote positive wellbeing and because “educational facilities are ideal settings for wellness promotion” (Baldwin et al., 2017, p .2).

Our studies

This article describes two research studies designed to examine the role of art museum experiences in teens’ and college students’ emotional wellbeing. These studies were driven by the following

research questions: 1) To what extent do art museum experiences enhance teens' and college students' emotional wellbeing, and 2) What aspects of their art museum experiences do teens and college students attribute to their enhanced wellbeing? By exploring the experience of teens and college students in art museums and the impacts on their emotional wellbeing, we can better understand how museum professionals can design experiences to help young people navigate their mental health.

Methodology

Both studies used a descriptive survey design to collect data from a sample of students with the aim of gaining a wide understanding of young visitors' experiences in art museums (Pickard, 2013). Using a survey design is beneficial for this purpose because the results can be "generalized to the wider population" and identifies "trends and patterns within the sample group" (p. 111-112). The interviews for both studies were semi-structured consisting mainly of quantitative questions and a few qualitative follow-up questions (see Appendices).

Study 1

Study 1 participants were recruited through teen council programs at four art museums in the Puget Sound area. Thirteen teens of the 46 in these programs agreed to participate in the study. Over half of the teen participants in this study have participated in the teen program for two years or more. Six teens identified as female, one teen as non-binary, one as trans-masculine, and two as male. Across the racial and ethnic identities, these were coded multiple times to encompass the complexity of responses. Majority of teens (n=7) identified as Asian American, specifically Korean, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese. Additionally, teen participants identified as Hispanic, White, and Moroccan. In this study, teens are a part of one or more marginalized identities which has not been prevalent in previous studies on wellbeing. This illustrates the intersections between racial and gender identity of teens within these diverse programs. When asked about the subjects they found interesting in school; art, english, history, and science were most commonly mentioned amongst the thirteen teens.

Data were collected through virtual interviews conducted via Zoom (Appendix I). At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked for their permission to record the interview for transcription

purposes and informed of their right to end the recording and the interview at any point with zero negative consequences. The interview questions began once verbal consent was given.

Semi-structured interviews consisted of clinical measurement scales found in the University College London Museum Wellbeing Toolkit (Thompson & Chatterjee, 2013). To begin the interview, the researcher started with a warm-up to encourage a comfortable environment between researcher and participant. The majority of the interview was structured by statements that included feelings like happiness, engagement, comfort, and enjoyment within the teen programs. Participants were asked to rate how much they agreed with these statements. Follow-up questions examined the factors that influenced their feelings and experience in the teen programming. The interviews averaged 27 minutes in length.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed using emergent coding analysis in order to identify themes between responses (Patton, 2002). The likert scales were analyzed for averages, medians, and frequency of responses. All interviews were coded and analyzed using a coding rubric.

While the researcher was able to interview over twenty-five percent of teen program members, a major limitation of the study was the number of teens willing to participate in the study. This could have been due to the impacts COVID-19 had on teen programs and teens' wellbeing. The impacts could include, but are not limited to, Zoom fatigue, family and financial stress, lack of socializing, loneliness, etc. (Achenbach, 2020). Both school and the teen programs were conducted online due to COVID-19, where normally these programs are hands-on social learning experiences within museums. Due to the low number of participants in this study, results cannot be generalized or speak to all teen program members' experiences. However, the results can highlight the trends and commonalities in responses.

Study 2

For *Study 2*, twenty-four participants were recruited from the University of Washington's three campuses through two methods. First, faculty members associated with the Museology Graduate Program shared information about this opportunity and incentives directly with their classes. These incentives included a visit to either the Frye Art Museum or Henry Art Gallery, as well as a gift card of their choice. These two

museums are currently free of charge to the public and therefore removed any potential financial burden on participants. Secondly, an advertisement was created and shared on UW-affiliated social media including Facebook and Instagram. The researcher provided an email for interested subjects to sign-up to participate and then they were screened for qualifications. The requirements to participate in this study were that a subject must be 18 years or older, they must be enrolled as an undergraduate student, and that they must be able to visit an art museum, they must be able to read and speak English and be willing to attend a brief virtual interview post-visit.

Of the twenty-four participants, sixteen described themselves as female, seven as male, and one as gender fluid. The majority of respondents (n=13) identified as white or caucasian. Several participants cited having mixed race, with general Asian heritage being included most frequently. Additionally, participants identified as Indian, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Thai. Participants represented ten different academic majors offered at the university from the humanities to STEM programs. These academic disciplines included Anthropology, Communication, Computer Science, Design, English, Psychology, and Public Health. The research site distribution was even among participants. Twelve students opted to visit the Frye Art Museum and 12 visited UW's Henry Art Gallery.

All data were collected through semi-structured interviews on Zoom (see Appendix II). Each interview took place within hours after the subject visited the art museum. In the beginning of each interview, the participants were asked to verbally consent to the meeting being recorded. They were reminded that their answers would be anonymous, and the recordings could only be accessed by the research team for transcription purposes. Like *Study 1*, *Study 2* also used the Generic Wellbeing Questionnaire from the UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit (Chatterjee & Thompson, 2013). The instrument used consisted of 12 Likert scale questions and 6 open-ended questions. Participants were asked to rank their association with present tense wellbeing adjectives such as "happy" and "safe," from 1 to 5. The qualitative questions required the participant to reflect on why they agreed or disagreed with the above statement. On average, interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes.

All of the undergraduate interview sessions were recorded with permission and transcribed. The six open-ended qualitative questions were grouped into five coded categories using an emergent coding

approach (Patton, 2002). The quantitative likert scale questions were analyzed for averages, median, and range.

This study has potential limitations on the accuracy of its findings given the unprecedented nature of conducting this research during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following CDC guidelines, all of the data was collected remotely via Zoom instead of directly after the subjects exited the museum. Therefore, it is possible that the lapse of time between the experience and the debrief could cause a shift in emotion. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that many adults have experienced increased anxiety as a result of the virus (Achenbach, 2020). Being in a public place could cause these feelings for some participants, skewing the survey results towards negative emotional wellbeing. Another limitation of this study is that the participants had to all speak English as the researchers did not have fluency in other languages. Therefore, the sample is not truly representative of the demographic makeup at University of Washington.

Results

Our results are organized into two separate study sections. Within each section, we answer our research questions to explain **to what extent** art museum experiences impacted students' emotional wellbeing and **what aspects** of the experiences were attributed to teens and college students' emotional wellbeing.

Study 1

In *Study 1* teens indicated they experienced feelings of positive emotional wellbeing at least *very often* to *all of the time* while participating in teen art museum programming. Teens ranked themselves overwhelmingly high on the 5-point likert scales with medians between 4 (*I felt that way very often*) and 5 (*I felt that way all the time*) across all sections.

Table 1 shows the average ratings on the 12 wellbeing statements posed to teens. The feelings of **comfort, safety and security**, and **interest** were most frequently felt by the teen participants throughout the program.

Table 1

Median and range scales of emotional wellbeing. (N=13)

<u>Statements</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
I felt comfortable	5	4 - 5
I felt safe and secure	5	4 - 5
I enjoyed the company of others	5	4 - 5
I was interested	5	4 - 5
I enjoyed	5	4 - 5
I felt healthy	5	4 - 5
I talked in the teen program	4	3 - 5
I felt happy	4	3 - 5
I felt engaged	4	4 - 5
I felt confident	4	3 - 5
I was entertained	4	3 - 5
<u>I felt amazed</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2 - 5</u>

The open-ended questions allowed participants to share why they ranked *felt that way some of the time* (3), or higher on the scaled portion. Each question in which the participant responded over this threshold was coded into emergent categories. Responses amongst teen participants were found to share overlapping themes and similarities.

Happy, Engaged, and Interested

All 13 participants indicated that they felt happy and engaged at least some of the time in the museum program. When asked to describe a moment that they felt happy or engaged, the majority of teen participants (n=9) expressed that being a part of the process and working on an exhibit, program, or project with other teens contributed to feeling happy and more engaged. A participant described, "Well it's most of the time and we're just like discussing any project or plan... just being a part of the process is interesting, which helps me be engaged all the time and happy."

Teen participants (n=5) also explained that sharing ideas, art, opinions, and experiences helped them feel happy and engaged during the teen programs. A participant said that they felt engaged "when we share art pieces, it's really cool to see other people's art and explain it and have everyone like share their own interpretations, as well as a little bit of

what their purpose was.” Another teen explained that sharing ideas anonymously helped her feel more engaged:

“I think one of the most engaging moments for me was actually brainstorming sessions, especially like in a virtual setting now ... we all show up as anonymous. And so the pressure of having to like wait to speak...and so I was able to sort of think more freely and like share just anything that just popped up...[reflecting on a] panel on art and activism in Seattle...I was sort of trying to find ways to tie those into questions so that we could ask the panelists and I think that was just really engaging since it was something I was interested in.”

In addition to sharing ideas, teens (n=4) explained that meeting new people in the program contributed to their feelings of happiness. One teen shared that before the teen program they haven't met many LGBTQ+ people or been in gender affirming spaces. Another teen explained, “It was so cool to meet new people who are interested in the same things as you.”

Teen participants often described what was interesting and engaging about being a part of the teen program. Their responses of interest overlapped with responses of feeling engaged in teen programming. Teens described multiple aspects of their interest as aligning with learning about artist perspectives (n=4), learning about curating an exhibit or coordinating a program (n=7), learning new skills (n=4), and making social impacts (n=1). Amongst the teens that indicated interest in learning about artists perspectives (n=4), one teen discussed what interested her specifically in understanding the artists' perspective:

“This year was really cool that we got to do these talks and learn more about the artists, their piece, and their interpretation of the theme... you definitely get a more nuanced understanding of their work and them as a person and how that shaped their work.”

Teens described learning about curating and coordinating a program (n=7) indicated that being able to experience and work directly on an exhibit or program aligned with their interests. One teen mentioned that this is not something he'd learn about in school:

“...We got to see a curator come in and talk about how to arrange pieces and that was just something that I

had never been introduced to since these aren't things you learn in school so that was very cool."

Another aspect of the teens' interest was in alignment with their interest in learning a new skill or ability (n=4). One participant described exploring a new skill:

"Getting to choose what I want to do as part of our projects that we're doing for the open, like researching stuff for designing posters. It's nice to have some sense of control over what I can do, and like what I'm more comfortable in and what I want to explore more of."

Lastly, a teen further explained their interest in the program to align with the impact and social work they have done with other teens:

"I love how teen arts council, as a whole, just helps spread more voices out there for on topics like...for like the LGBTQ community and stuff like that. I felt like since nowadays people do pay attention to that, but as a teen group, [we worked with other teen groups to] ponder upon like global issues, kind of, social issues, I think that's like really impactful and I just love that about teen arts council specifically."

Comfort, Safety, and Confidence

When asked to describe a moment that teens felt comfortable or safe and secure, a majority (n=8) described the teen program as a **welcoming, supportive, and non-judgmental space**. Participants further explained that they could be themselves, freely express themselves, and share their gender identity with fellow teen members. Some participants said, "I felt really comfortable in that environment and I felt like I could really just be myself" and "It was nice to have a community that was completely separate from the school and everyone was super nice and warm." While another participant similarly shared,

"I always felt comfortable there because everyone there was very welcoming. My school isn't like that. I was really shocked that everyone accepted my personality and what I do. I felt comfortable there all the time, especially the first day I was super nervous, but right

away everyone introduced themselves to me and was super friendly and welcoming.”

In addition to describing the teen program as a welcoming and judgement free space, teens explained that **checking-in and icebreaker activities** (n=4), **setting guidelines for discussion** (n=2), and **sharing ideas anonymously** (n=2) contributed to their feelings of comfort and safety. Of those participants that described checking-in and icebreaker activities (n=4), one said, “...Having that facilitator vibe with checking in questions and like icebreakers and stuff for each meeting kind of set like a stage for comfort” and another said, “...I think everyone, just like me, ends up super comfortable, because we know each other...”

All participants (n=13) indicated that they felt confident at least some of the time throughout the teen programs. Teens (n=9) noted that their confidence aligned with their skills, abilities, or knowledge and specifically described that their confidence aligned with their **ability and accomplishment** that they built in the program (n=5). One participant described his confidence in his graphic design abilities and said, “It was my niche. I always felt confident in my ability.” Other teens felt confident when **sharing** their thoughts or ideas with their fellow teen members (n=4). As one teen described, “...I get very nervous and the fact that I just had some things I wanted to add and questions to help clarify things that made me feel more confident.”

Teens (n=4) also described their confidence as **gradually building over time** throughout their involvement with the teen programs. One participant described that in the beginning they felt less confident but it improved as they got to know people:

“I felt a lot less confident, but once I got to know how it works and just getting to know the people. I think, generally, I do feel really confident sharing my art, because I know that there's no like level that we're expected to be at we can all present whatever we want.”

Additionally, teens felt more confident when encouraged by fellow students (n=3). One teen discussed what they were working on in the teen program and that they have “gotten to take a lot of artistic license, and it was a confident boost because my team encouraged me.”

Feeling Healthy and Enjoying the Company of Others

When asked if they felt healthy during their involvement with the teen program, teens largely discussed experiences that contributed to their mental health. Teen participants described the teen program meetings as a ***place to escape from all the school stressors*** (n=5). One participant explained, “[the meetings were] really nice and it forced me to slow down and center myself without thinking of the biology test I had tomorrow.” Additionally, another teen said “I felt healthy because I felt relaxed. And like I wasn't stressed out as usual.”

Teens (n=4) explained that ***checking in with each other*** and sharing their feelings through facilitated discussion contributed to their feelings of healthiness. One teen discussed how checking in with their facilitator helped them work through school and college application stress. Another participant discussed how checking-in with other teens really helped them feel better: “I feel the most healthy when we do our group check-ins because we get to all share how we're feeling and that definitely makes me feel better to be able to talk about my feelings.”

All participants (n=13) indicated that they enjoyed the company of others either very often or all the time. When asked to describe moments that they enjoyed the company of others during the teen program, the majority of teens first described ***in-person experiences*** (n=7) from this past year or past years that were “really fun.” Teens also mentioned moments of collaborating with other teens to plan events or make art together. One participant explained, “They were super funny and just kind of laid back, but we always discussed really fun new ideas and just talking with them.”

On the other hand, teens discussed ***challenges brought on by the virtual environment*** (n=7), explaining that it has been difficult to build a connection with others when unable to see others' faces, unsure of when it's okay to talk, or feeling fatigued from going to teen program meetings virtually in addition to school. One participant explained, “It's just a little harder to connect and sort of yeah to connect on a more personal level.” When asked about these virtual experiences, most teens (n=8) explained instances where they were still able to collaborate and create a community. One participant said that, “TAC like teen arts council was like kind of a community, I guess. Because we were all just like calling on each other and got to know each other better, and I guess that was like a good aspect, yeah.”

Study 2

In Study 2, undergraduate participants scored themselves higher than average on the 5- point likert scales. The median score for all 12 quantitative questions fell between 3 (*felt that way some of the time*) and 5 (*felt that was all of the time*), indicating more common feelings of positive emotional wellbeing.

The emotion that correlated with the highest median score was **safety and security** followed by **interest**, and **enjoyment**. When asked to respond to the statement, "I felt safe and secure when I was in the museum," 23 out of the 24 participants responded that they *felt that way most of the time* (4) or *felt that way all of the time* (5). Overall students scored lowest for feeling **amazed** and **confident** while at the museum, with both questions sharing a median of 3. When asked "I felt amazed in the museum" and "I felt confident in the museum," the scores ranged across the whole scale from *felt that way none of the time* (1) to *felt that way all of the time* (5).

Table 1

Median and range scales of emotional wellbeing. (N=24)

<u>Statements</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
I felt safe and secure	5	3 - 5
I enjoyed the company of others	5	2 - 5
I was interested	4	3 - 5
I enjoyed	4	2 - 5
I felt happy	4	2 - 5
I felt engaged	4	3 - 5
I felt entertain	4	2 - 5
I felt healthy	4	2 - 5
I felt comfortable	3	1 - 5
I felt confident	3	1 - 5
I talked in the museum	3	1 - 5
I felt amazed	3	1 - 5

The open-ended questions allowed participants to share why they ranked *felt that way some of the time* (3), or higher on the scaled portion. Each question in which the participant responded over this threshold was coded into five emergent categories.

Happiness/Engagement

All 24 participants in the study scored themselves a 3 or higher for feeling happy or engaged during their visit. When asked to describe a moment at the museum that contributed to this feeling, forty-two percent (n=10) of those in the study responded by sharing the **immersive quality** of the museum they visited. A participant described her experience in the Frye Art Museum's *Alice in Parts* exhibit: "All these different sensory things and I felt like there's so much going on, and it was kind of cool just to look somewhere and also be like hearing stuff in the background..."

Thirteen percent (n=3) of participants cited **humor** as the reason for scoring average or higher for feelings of happiness or engagement. For example, one undergraduate student found humor in the heavy content in this same exhibit:

"I think the audience was Alice, but she had a bed, and she was saying out loud all her thoughts, while she was trying to sleep and just insomnia, was just overtaking her, and it was just a whirlwind of random thoughts and I thought it was really funny and the whole time I was listening to her talk it was very entertaining, so I found myself very happy about that."

Comfort/Safety

Again, 100% of the participants in Study 2 (n=24) scored 3 or higher when asked to rank their comfort of safety and security at the museum. Seventy-one percent (n=17) expressed that their reason for feeling comfortable or safe and secure was due to the **COVID-19 precautions** that the site was taking. Answers included mentioning temperature checks upon arrival, hand sanitizer stations, social distancing protocols and even mask enforcement. One participant who visited the Frye Art Museum shared validation of their safety efforts:

"Before we were able to be let in they checked to make sure that they didn't have too many people in the rooms and like that everyone was safely distanced and also had a lot of hand sanitizer available, so I thought it was a very nice health precaution."

One third of participants (n=8) attributed the feeling of comfort and safety and security to **staff interactions** at both the Henry Art Gallery

and the Frye Art Museum. Some noted that the staff on duty gave them suggestions about how to navigate the space. One participant shared how an employee helped guide them through the exhibit:

“One of the staff came up to us and kind of introduced us to the first exhibit. And she was just kind of saying ‘you know take your time here’ and ‘you know go around this way and stuff,’ that it was just really... It was, yeah, it was definitely comfortable, I felt really welcome”

Others attributed these feelings to the security guards who made them feel protected and “out of harm's way.” One undergraduate student expressed this feeling by stating that, “I don't know what would happen, but it's nice to know that there are people there, you know just surveying all the room's stuff”.

Company/Talking

Twenty three out of the 24 participants ranked *felt that way some of the time* (3) or higher for enjoying the company of others or talking while they were at the museum. Of this subset, thirty-five percent (n=8) of the undergraduate students felt that interacting with others allowed them to have **improved interpretation** of the artwork on display:

“But mainly it was just to analyze or clarify an art piece because one of us may have misunderstood it or not understood what it was trying to portray or... So yeah, we mostly talked about art pieces and getting to understand them better.”

Interest/Enjoy

All participants (n=24) felt **interested** or **enjoyed** the museum at *least some of the time* (3) during their scheduled visit. The top emergent codes for this category were more specific, alluding to different programs or exhibit content. Twenty-five percent (n=6) of the students linked these feelings of interest or enjoyment to a specific medium: **painting**. Most of these answers were referring to the Frye Art Galleries permanent exhibit.

Educational and personal interest was another prominent code for why the students ranked high for interest or enjoyment. Twenty-one percent (n=5) of the young adults linked their higher than average score

to a personal association. While some respondents actually learned about artists or techniques on display in UW courses, others simply enjoy art as a hobby. One respondent recognized a familiar poem by Audrey Lorde and felt that her academic efforts were validated:

“I enjoyed that a lot and when I can see things that I've learned being practiced in the real world definitely it is something that I get hyped about. Because I feel like my education is important and that it's not for nothing.”

Confidence

Seventy-one percent of participants (n=17) felt **confident** *at least some of the time* (3) at the museum site. Of this sample, thirty-five percent (n=6) believed the **intellectual challenge** of interpreting exhibit content contributed to this score, either negativity or positivity. Many undergraduates noted that they decreased their confidence ranking because they had a desire to understand what the artist intended to depict. One participant outlined this mental conflict elaborating on her experience at the Frye:

“Because there was so much going on in that exhibit that my attention was being drawn to different places and sometimes I felt confused by it. But then when I asked my roommates what they thought things meant, or stuff like that, they also were a little bit confused. So I felt like my confidence was kind of regained in that it's supposed to make you question what's this person going through.”

Additionally, 18% (n=3) of the respondents for this question felt confident due to **inclusion and social justice** being reflected in the exhibit content. For example, one participant who visited the Frye Art Museum's exhibit *Unsettling Femininity* shares feeling represented through art:

“So I think anytime in a museum, where you get to see yourself in fine art is just... It's just a big boost of like wow somebody sees me... or I'm part of this, too, even though I had nothing to do with it sort of thing.”

Healthy

All but one participant (n=23) felt **healthy** *at least some of the time* (3) while visiting one of the two museum sites. Again, **COVID-19 precautions** was the most prominent code with thirty-five percent of these respondents sharing these measures made them feel more healthy. Participants generally explained that the timed-ticket system as well as the staff enforcing distancing made them feel as if their health was not at risk.

The next common reason why undergraduates felt healthy at the museum was because they were able to take an **escape or break** from their everyday responsibilities, such as school and work. Thirty percent (n=7) of the 23 respondents alluded to this code when given the statement: *I felt healthy in the museum*. Some felt that stepping outside of their homes put them in a more positive “headspace” and even made them feel more calm. One participant specifically commented that,

“I think emotionally, or like mentally, was really nice to get a break from school with finals coming up to kind of just nice to be in a different space with people I love and like and enjoy their company and just like see what other people create.”

Discussion

The purpose of the studies described in this article was to examine the role of art museum experiences in teens’ and college students’ emotional wellbeing. Both teens and undergraduate students reportedly felt that their emotional wellbeing was positively impacted from participating in museum visitation and yearlong programming. Our findings expand upon previous research studies by showing that art museums can positively impact the mental health of not only adults, but young people as well (Cuypers et al., 2012; Ander et al., 2011). From the open-ended results, we found six main themes that emerged to summarize what aspects of teens and college students’ experiences attribute to their enhanced emotional wellbeing: 1) escaping school and other outside stressors; 2) personal interest; 3) inclusion and social relevance; 4) impacts of COVID-19; 5) sharing ideas and collaborating; 6) feelings of comfort in building community.

A place to escape from school and other outside stressors

Teens and undergraduate students described feeling that these museum experiences were spaces that they could use to escape or put aside school and other stress. Teens often described moments of being able to step away from schoolwork and be present with what they were working on or creating within their teen program meetings, further showing that even in a virtual environment, the programs were used as a break from school. Undergraduate students also often shared that they viewed their museum experience as a break from their everyday duties of school and work. Binnie (2010) supports this observation in her dual study examining the role of art in anxiety reduction. She writes that, “the well-known idea that they are spaces of calm within a busy world can be true and as such museums and art galleries can be seen as places beneficial to personal wellbeing” (p. 199). These findings align with previous research on art museums and emotional wellbeing as places to escape and relax (Chatterjee & Noble, 2013; Davies et al., 2016; Green, 2018; Cuypers et al., 2012). These research studies showed that taking a break from stress and using the museums as a place to escape led to higher satisfaction with life and increased overall wellbeing (Chatterjee & Noble, 2013; Cuypers et al., 2012; Davies et al., 2016; Green, 2018).

Skills, personal interest, and prior knowledge

Teens experienced high levels of interest and a majority of teens discussed many aspects of their engagement within the four teen programs, which aligned with their learning, personal interests, and development of skills. Some of the many areas of interest were learning about curating exhibitions, exploring their artistic expression, creating engaging virtual programs, and contributing to larger societal conversations around social justice and the LGBTQ+ community. Due to the combination with the feelings of **interest, enjoyment, engagement,** and **happiness** indicated by teens, ultimately led to show enhanced emotional wellbeing in teens. Thus, building on previous studies conducted on art museum teen programming, have shown that exploring interests and acquiring new skills have a positive benefit on their critical thinking skills in addition to emotional wellbeing (Erickson et al., 2014; Luke et al., 2007). Additionally, contributing to research done on how involvement in arts and cultural programming can broadly impact personal development and how people feel (Chatterjee & Noble, 2013; Matarasso, 1997).

Undergraduate students experienced higher feelings of **happiness, engagement, interest, enjoyment,** and **confidence** when their academic or personal interests were reflected in the museum. A qualitative research study conducted by the Kress Foundation indicates that campus museums are a helpful resource to supplement formal classroom learning because “the art museum lends itself well to comparing concepts over time and/or across cultures” (Glense, 2012, p. 15). Other students cited their personal interests such as painting or poetry, as reasons why they experienced higher than average emotional wellbeing in the galleries.

Inclusion and social relevance

Students’ emotional wellbeing was influenced by inclusive and socially relevant art museum experiences. Teens felt included and confident in sharing their voices with others while in the programs. Educators of these programs support teens' feelings of being included and a part of a community by asking for each person's thoughts on a project, empowering teen voices

within the LGBTQIA+ community, and exploring important social issues within their work. In the majority of the open-ended questions, undergraduate respondents cited their appreciation of the inclusive artwork and artists showcased. Two issues that the participants specifically alluded to was gender and race, or femininity and the BIPOC experience in the United States. Many students expressed a sense of gratitude and excitement for the fact that the gallery content was culturally relevant. These findings are reiterated in Noble and Chatterjee’s (2013) *Museums, Health, and Wellbeing* where “identity capital, self-esteem” is listed as a role that museums can play in improving emotional health (p. 36). Furthermore, students expressed that these displays were “relevant” to the times. Despite these findings, it is important to note that museums have historically excluded marginalized voices and have much more work to do to make people from all identities feel welcome. But, when museums commit to inclusion they actively “promote tolerance, inter-community respect and challenge stereotypes” (Ioannides, 2016, p. 103).

Feelings of comfort in building community

Teens feel most comfortable in the teen programs when checking in with each other, during icebreaker activities, setting guidelines for

conversation, and anonymously and virtually sharing with others. Many of these instances helped create a welcoming, supportive, and non-judgmental space where teens felt comfortable to be themselves. In some instances, the moments and circumstances that helped teens feel comfortable also helped teens feel more confident and enjoy the company of others. The social components of building a community outside of school and amongst fellow teens with similar interests, align with the experiences of teens in this study (Linzer & Munley, 2015; Luke et al., 2007).

Impacts of COVID-19

Given the context of this study, both teen and undergraduate participants were inherently impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Teens described the virtual environment of the teen programming to introduce challenges to building community and collaborating with each other. However, teens met challenges with a positive or solution-based framing. Teens naturally reflected on and mentioned past memories of being in person from this year or previous years that were very meaningful for them. The overwhelming majority of undergraduate students mentioned that they appreciated the research site's safety efforts to combat the spread of the virus. This modern need for sanitation and spaciness to feel safe and secure can be related to Maslov's Hierarchy of Needs. This theory describes that a human's physiological and safety needs must be met before they can progress to self-actualization, much like a museum visitor must feel comfortable in the space before engaging with the exhibits and programming (Mathes, 1981). Additionally, several participants expressed gratitude for the fact that they could return to museums after a long period of closure. Therefore, acknowledging the key role that cultural participation plays in their everyday lives.

Sharing ideas and collaborating

In both instances, teens and undergraduates valued the art museum experience as a place to share and exchange ideas. In regard to teens, the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and experiences were frequently mentioned across all teen participants. Collaborating with other teens helped them feel engaged, interested, comfortable, and enjoy the company of others. Research studies have found that giving teens space to share their ideas, opinions, and experiences with others

benefit their social development (Erickson et al., 2014; Linzer & Munley, 2015; Luke et al., 2007). Therefore, this study on teens emotional wellbeing contributes to these understanding of impacts on teens' development. Additionally, undergraduate students also demonstrated this behavior of collaboration, but in a different fashion. The interviews revealed that many students believed that talking to a peer during their visit allowed them to not only have a better understanding of the art, but also provided emotional support for many of the more challenging exhibit topics.

Implications

The results of this study exemplify the positive role of art museums in the emotional wellbeing of teens and undergraduate students. Findings suggest that teens who engaged in sustained museum programs had higher rates of wellbeing in comparison to undergraduate students who visited a museum once. Key variables that may have influenced that finding are that teens were engaging in repeat participation with the councils, through weekly meetings, while the undergraduates were visiting the museum as a one-off experience, and teens were involved in a learning community with their peers, while most undergraduates visited the site by themselves. This finding is supported by Camic (2013), who notes that for museum programming to be fully effective for wellbeing, participants must "participate regularly to more realise the benefits" (p. 67).

The outcomes of our study could be helpful for museum professionals interested in enhancing emotional wellbeing experiences within art museum visitation and programming for young people. Museum practitioners could design wellbeing programs that encourage continued participation and allow participants to build connections with others. In regards to teens, an example could be consistent weekly meetings that give space for teens to connect with fellow members and build friendships. For undergraduate students, continued participation could be facilitated by creating a student group on campus, similar to the teen councils.

Museum professionals could help young people feel more confident by exploring and expanding upon the interests of students. For instance, educators could continue to allow teens to self-select tasks or projects in order to build skills in their area of interest. Further, providing encouragement and support for teens in their self-selected roles could help them feel more confident. For example, teens often explained that

they felt more confident with encouragement and receiving positive feedback from their facilitators and peers. Undergraduates benefitted from viewing exhibit content that was related to their academic courses at the university. Therefore, campus museum educators should consider extending communication with professors and faculty members to best align interpretive materials with relevant subjects on campus.

Museum professionals could continue to create comfortable, inclusive, and welcoming spaces for young people. Teens benefitted from building a community within teen programming. Therefore, museum educators could continue to give space for teens to share amongst themselves about how they are feeling, what they are working on, get to know each other, and deepen connections between members. If the virtual environment continues in the future, museum educators could encourage cameras being on to encourage feelings of engagement and connecting with each other. While fatigue was prevalent this year, educators could provide plenty of time for breaks and movement. Undergraduate students benefitted in terms of feeling comfortable and confident when inclusive art from a diverse range of artists and cultures was displayed. Therefore, museum professionals should continue to advocate for incorporating work that speaks to more challenging topics including racism, sexism, and other types of oppression that are prevalent in society. Although the *Alice in Parts* exhibit was challenging for many participants because it dealt with themes of white supremacy, exposure to this type of content is important for college students.

Further research is strongly encouraged due to the limitations of COVID-19 on participation and the altered art museum experience. In regards to *Study 1*, future research could be repeated once in-person teen programming is permitted. This would provide additional understanding of teens' experience in regards to talking, enjoying the company of others, and feelings of engagement. This research could also expand to other areas of the country to better understand and encompass teen programming experiences more broadly. Additional research is strongly suggested to examine the depths of these teen program experiences and the intersectionality between emotional wellbeing and marginalized identities as a phenomenological design. This would supplement this study by understanding the deeper level of emotional wellbeing and how teens' identities influence their experience.

Similarly, the undergraduate portion, or *Study 2*, could be extended to examine several college campuses in different regions as a case study. This would supplement this study by providing more variables to emotional wellbeing including student body size, rigor of academic programs, and geographic area. Furthermore, it is suggested that future studies use both a pre and post visit instrument in order to better isolate the experience. Although most participants did focus their answers on the visit itself, it is possible that their emotion scores were influenced by outside factors, such as the ongoing pandemic.

One final implication from this study recognizes that museum visits are not always positive for every visitor. Both research sites that undergraduates visited exhibited art which expressed challenging topics, including violence and racism. Students who have related past trauma, or even lack exposure to these subjects, could likely experience negative emotions. Museum staff have a difficult job of striking a delicate balance between bringing socially relevant artists to the galleries while embracing emotional wellbeing for their guests. A possible means of alleviating possible tension would be to place a content warning sign or poster at the beginning of a gallery space.

Notes from Authors

As we move towards culturally competent research, it is important to be transparent about the collective lens that we brought to these studies. We are University of Washington Museology graduate student researchers and the intersections of our social identities inherently influenced and shaped our research, especially as cis-gender white women. While our identities could have influenced the experiences shared with us, we strongly valued being able to listen and learn from people's experiences, especially ones that are different from our own.

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Appendix I: Teen Wellbeing Instrument

Teen Interview Guide

IMPORTANT: Hello! With your permission, I will start off this interview by asking you if I can record this interview for transcription purposes. This allows me to be present in our interview and not need to take notes. My research assistant and I will be the only ones who view this interview. What you say here will remain anonymous. Can I record this interview? _____. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary so, if at any point during the interview you would like me to stop recording or stop the interview, please let me know and we will stop. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Warm-up: I will have students bring an object, this could be their favorite book, artwork, picture, etc. to the interview. We will begin by describing these objects and why we love them/bring us joy or comfort. Then, we will take two minutes to grab something similar that we might have in our house that is similar to their favorite object. [Should take up about 5 minutes max].

I'm going to read you a series of statements describing how you might have felt while you were participating in [teen program]. For each one, I want you to rate on a scale from 1-5 how much you agree with it, where 1 is I felt that way none of the time, 2 is I felt that way not very often, 3 is I felt that way some of the time, 4 is I felt that way very often, and 5 is I felt that way all of the time.

You can type the number into the chat or say it out loud.

1. I felt happy when I was involved in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

2. I felt engaged when I was in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW-UP: [If they answered that they felt happy or engaged at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt happy or engaged while you were in the program? What were you doing?

3. I felt comfortable when I was in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

4. I felt safe and secure when I was in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt comfortable or safe and secure at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt comfortable or safe and secure while you were in the program? What were you doing?

5. I enjoyed the company of other people when I was in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

6. I talked to other people when I was in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they enjoyed the company of others or talked with others at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you enjoyed the company of other people while you were in the program? What were you doing?

7. I was interested in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

8. I enjoyed the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt interested or enjoyed at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt interested in the program? What were you doing?

9. I was amazed in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

10. I was entertained in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

11. I felt confident in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt confident at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt confident while you were in the program? What were you doing?

12. I felt healthy in the [teen program].

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW-UP: [If they answered that they felt healthy at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt healthy while you were in the program? What were you doing?

Thank you for your responses and sharing your experiences with me!

In studies like this one, when we know the demographics, things like ethnicity, race, and gender, we learn more about what kinds of perspectives we are representing in our study, and, more importantly, whose voices are being left out. All responses will be anonymous and compiled to find commonalities across teens' experiences.

The form is completely optional, but if you feel comfortable sharing these things with us, they will help us make suggestions for other studies, which might help teen programs feel more inclusive and supportive to you in the future.

Optional Form:

<https://uw.manifoldapp.org/projects/museums-forward>

1. How long have you been a part of the teen program? *Open-ended*
2. How do you describe yourself? (Non-binary, Male, Female, or prefer to self-describe) *Open-ended*
3. What is your racial/ethnic identity? *Open-ended*
4. What high school do you attend? *Open-ended*
5. What subjects do you find most interesting in school? *Open-ended*

As we wrap up this interview, I want you to know that this conversation does not need to end with this interview. If you think of something later on, please email me at any point, the line of communication is always open.

Thank you again for sharing your experiences with me. Do you have any final questions for me about this process, research, and/or in general?

Appendix II: Undergraduate Wellbeing Instrument

1. I felt happy when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

2. I felt engaged when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW-UP: [If they answered that they felt happy or engaged at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt happy or engaged while you were in the museum? What were you doing?

3. I felt comfortable when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

4. I felt safe and secure when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt comfortable or safe and secure at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt comfortable or safe and secure while you were in the museum? What were you doing?

5. I enjoyed the company of other people when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

6. I talked to other people when I was in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they enjoyed the company of others or talked with others at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you enjoyed the company of other people while you were in the museum? What were you doing?

7. I was interested in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

8. I enjoyed the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt interested or enjoyed at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt interested in the museum? What were you doing?

9. I was amazed in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

10. I was entertained in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

11. I felt confident in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW UP: [If they answered that they felt confident at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt confident while you were in the museum? What were you doing?

12. I felt healthy in the museum.

1	2	3	4	5
I felt that way none of the time	I felt that way not very often	I felt that way some of the time	I felt that way very often	I felt that way all of the time

FOLLOW-UP: [If they answered that they felt healthy at least some of the time] Can you describe a moment when you felt healthy while you were in the museum? What were you doing?

Thank you for your responses and sharing your experiences with me!

In studies like this one, when we know the demographics, things like ethnicity, race, and gender, we learn more about what kinds of perspectives we are representing in our study, and, more importantly, whose voices are being left out. All responses will be anonymous and compiled to find commonalities across students' experiences.

The form is completely optional, but if you feel comfortable sharing these things with us, they will help us make suggestions for other studies, which might help museums feel more inclusive and supportive to you in the future.

Optional Form:

1. What year are you at UW?
2. How do you describe yourself? (Non-binary, Male, Female, or Prefer to self-describe)
3. What is your racial/ethnic identity?
4. What is your major (and minor if applicable)?
5. Which museum did you visit today?

As we wrap up this interview, I want you to know that this conversation does not need to end with this interview. If you think of something later on, please email me at any point, the line of communication is always open.

Thank you again for sharing your experiences with me. Do you have any final questions for me about this process, research, and/or in general?