



Potential research project on APP: barriers to learning and empowerment of undergraduates, in order to better prepare students for HE Study

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EdD update

Access and participation plan, barriers to learning and empowerment of undergraduates, in order to better prepare students for HE study

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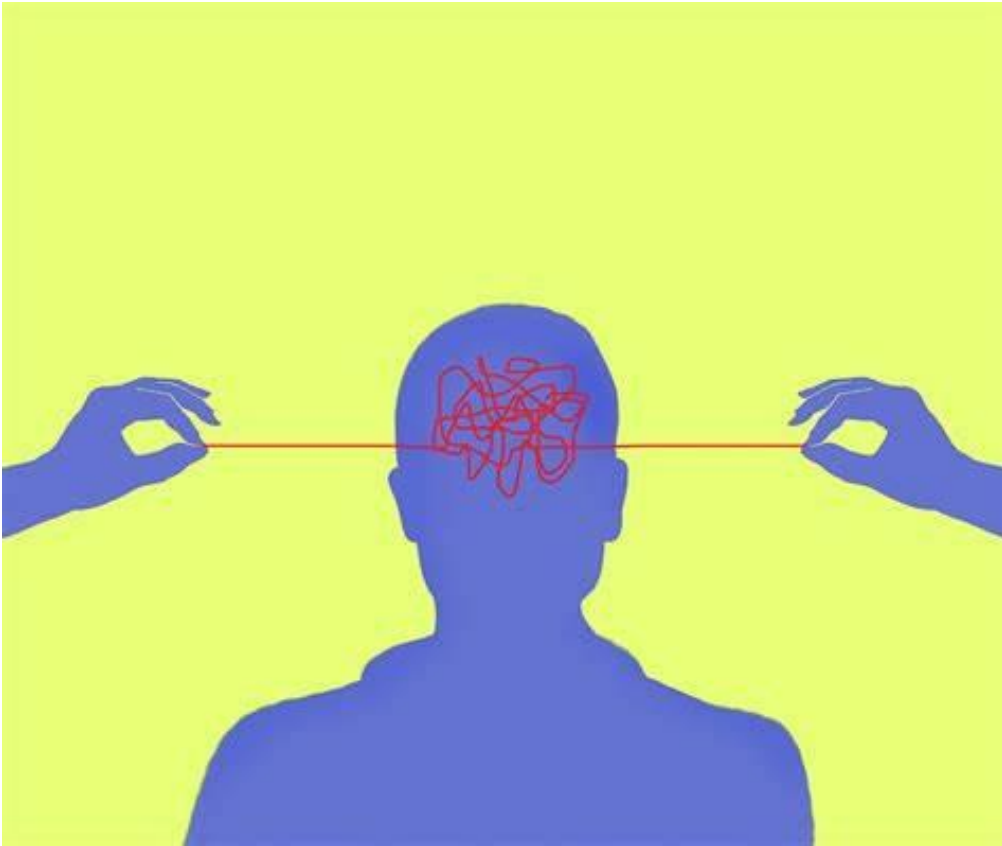
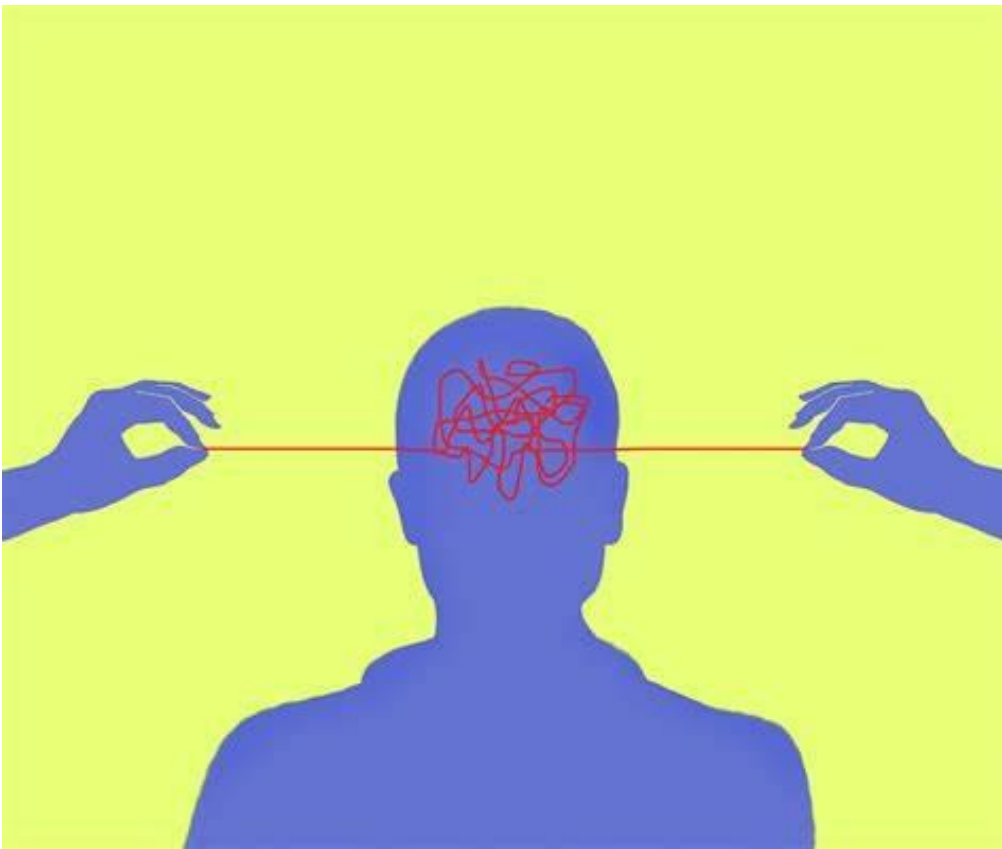


Image: Gary Waters

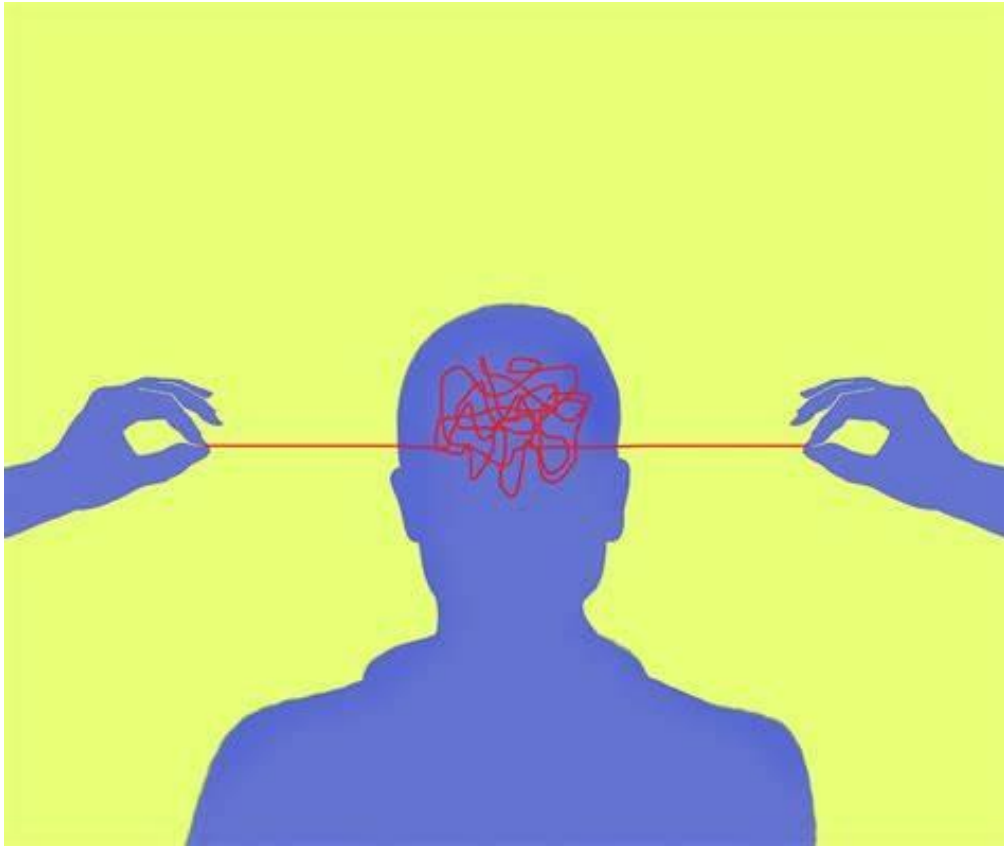
- I am at the start of stage 2 of my doctorate, and have the opportunity to develop a project from which to write my final thesis
- From day 1 of the EdD I wanted to do something that would be meaningful and hopefully make a difference

How do I/we work with this situation we are in? How do we make sense of it? What do we need to know and do to improve things? How do I/we offer explanations to show and explain what I/we are doing... Producing this kind of theory is the business of action research.

(McNiff, 2017, p.3)



- **I began with a set of concerns....**
- Why are students struggling to have ideas and think creatively?
- Why are students so marks driven and ask me what they have to do to get a first?
- Why don't students seem as engaged as they did in the past?
- Why don't students seem ready/prepared for HE study?
- Why do students find it difficult to take risks and be experimental?
- Are students studying through choice, societal expectations or apathy around making decisions about their life?



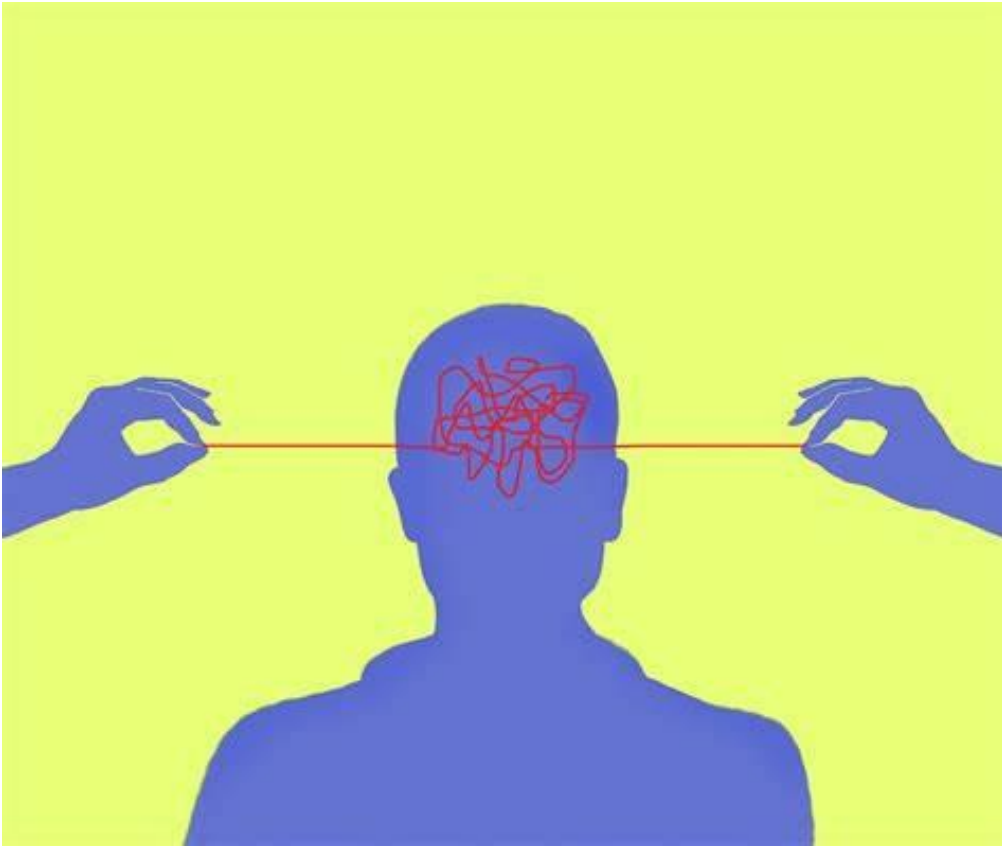
- **In the past two years I have looked at.....**
- English educational policy from the past 40 years (which almost broke me)
- My own positionality, as a working class woman, being first in the family to study beyond 15
- Methodology and data analysis
- Considered possible ways to try to help our students (and their educators)

Which got me thinking?

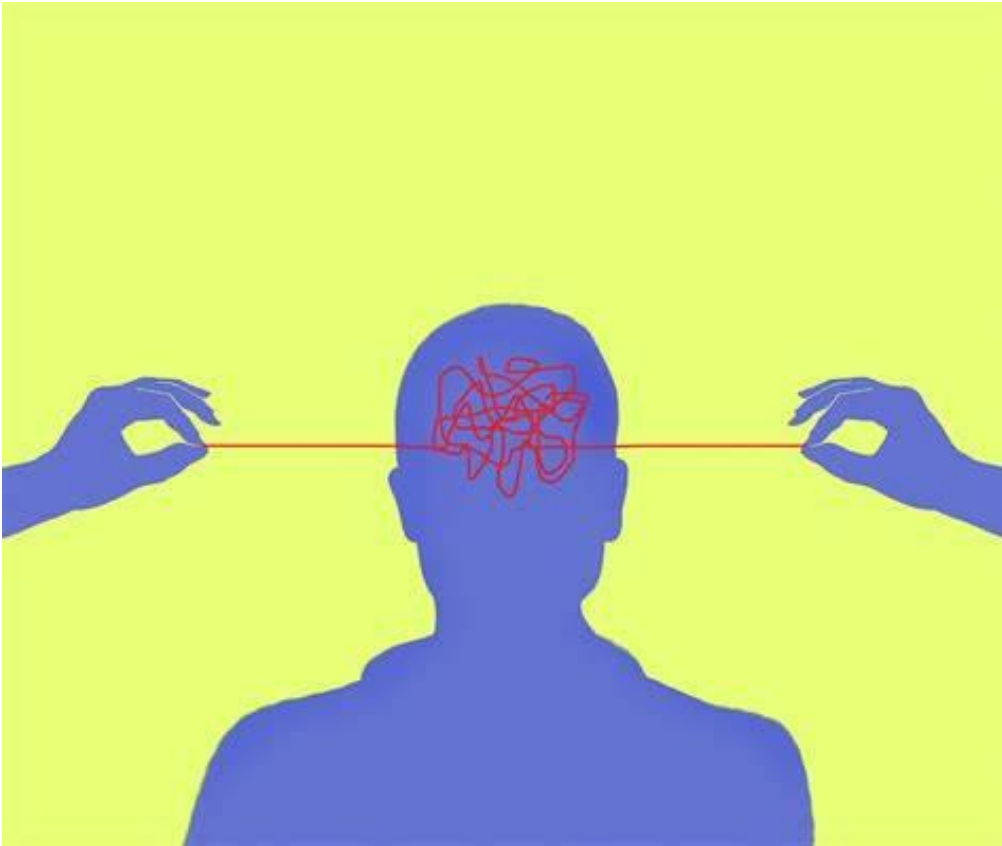
- I was aware of personal barriers to learning – we all see them every day:
- the hours spent at work to support themselves
- financial struggles
- care responsibilities
- the lack of confidence in their abilities
- the mental health struggles
- the lack of family support

Which got me thinking?

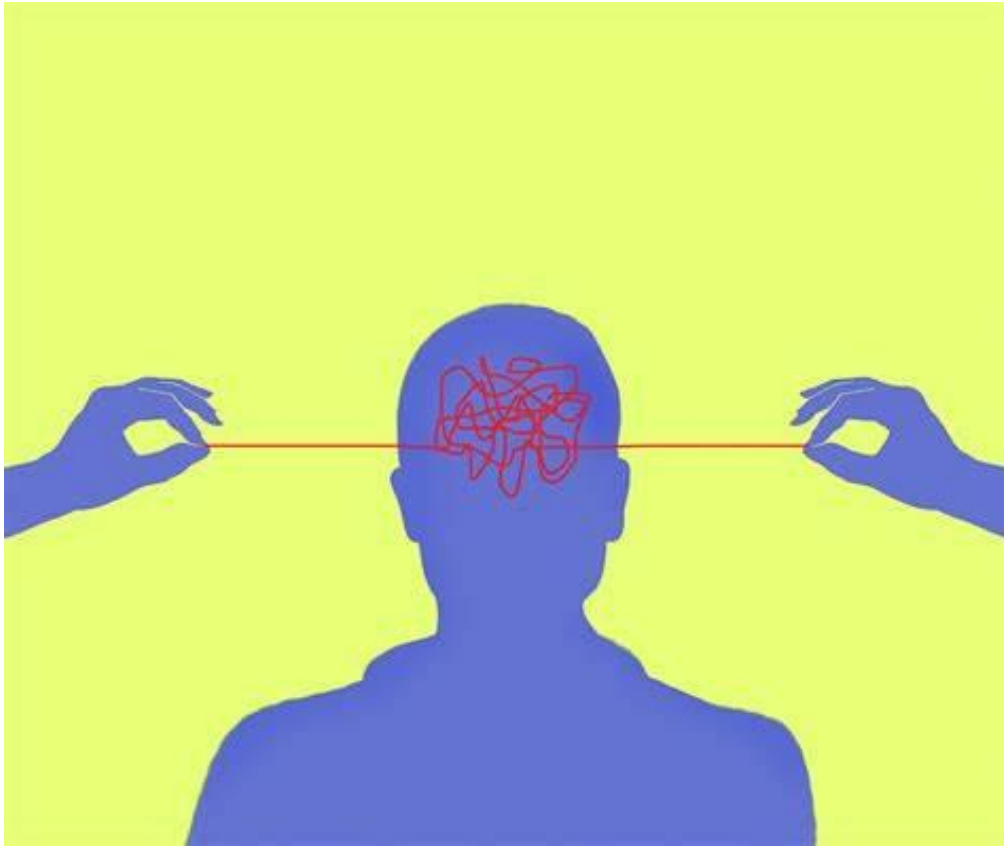
- Could it also be that the national curriculum that our students have been 'taught' intentionally promotes 'schooling that is conforming, normative, and disciplinary as opposed to one that is freeing, critical, and emancipatory,' (Vinson, 1999, p.298), and was that why they were finding art and design based undergraduate study difficult?



- **Where am I now?**
- **Draft question for exploration within the project:**
- *Can arts-based responses to systemic and personal barriers to learning develop critical and creative thinking in art & design undergraduates?*

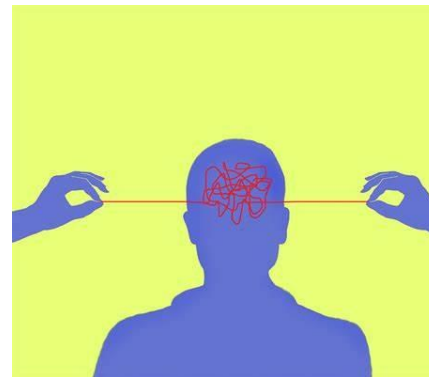


- The project intends to explore personal and systemic barriers to learning, via:
- Autobiographical investigation
- Reflection
- Collaboration
- Creative responses
- Potential impact:
- To empower and upskill the participants (maximum of 15)
- Increase engagement with teaching and learning (on programme)

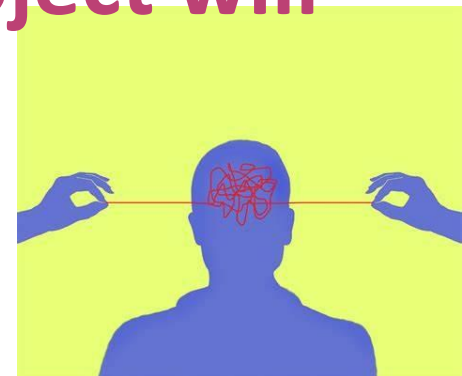


- The project will involve JH working alongside as a collaborator, facilitator, documenter and analyst.
- It will be a voluntary, action research, participatory project, which will include exploration of:

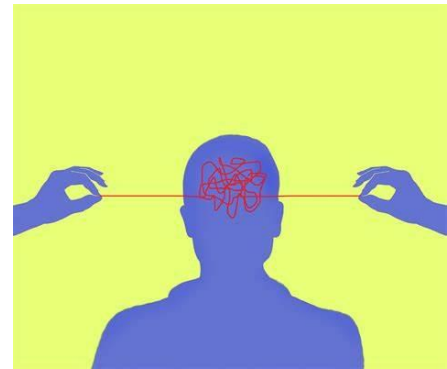
- Previous educational experiences and impact
- Previous social/cultural experiences and impact
- Democratic approaches to empowerment
- Working collaboratively (with JH) across workshop areas, to encourage risk taking and experimentation
- Creative responses to personal and systemic barriers (artworks of any type)
- Analysis by the participants of their artworks
- Study skills (requirements decided by the group)
- Would be qualitative in terms of methodology



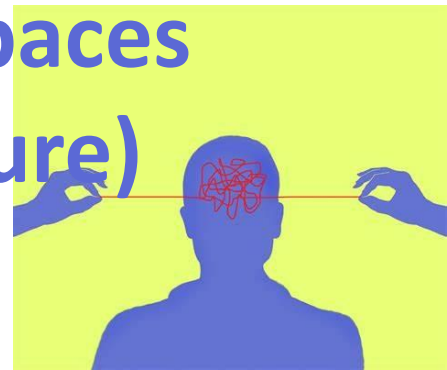
- Originally, the plan was to make it students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1&2 (postcode areas with least people attending higher education)...
- Hockings (2010) paper identifies a 'deficit' view of non-traditional HE students, which has encouraged me to consider that all students studying at HE will face difficulties and challenges (which may include learning, social, cultural, personal, and economic). The project will therefore be open to all students.



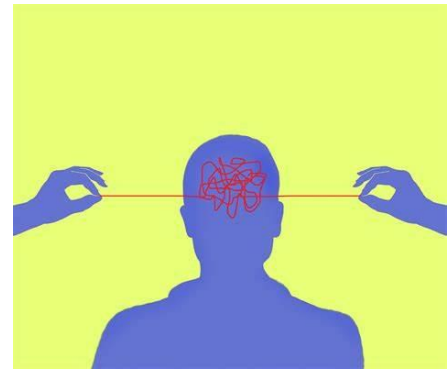
- **How would it work in practice?:**
- Project could be one afternoon a week, during the 2024-2025 academic year, during facilitated learning
- Current timing (around ethics application) means that January to May could potentially work well, with an exhibition as part of the finale/celebration of the project (would could be May/June (part of degree show?), or the autumn term after)



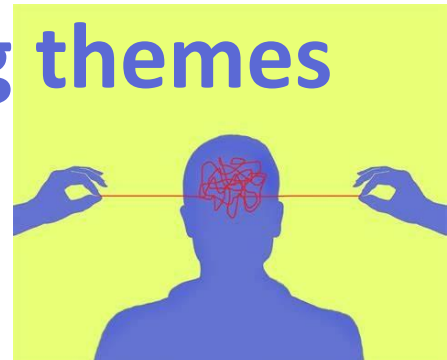
- **How would it work in practice?:**
- The work created would be unassessed, to encourage personal enquiry and exploration, as a direct disruption to the marks driven/league tables approaches of neoliberalism
- The work of Pierre Bourdieu would offer a theoretical lens with which to explore emerging themes around social and cultural capital, habitus and habitus clivé (social spaces and the link between behaviours and social structure)



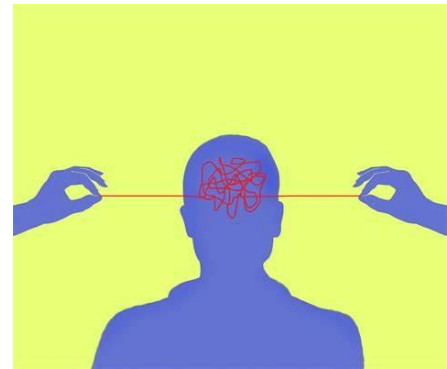
- **Potential issues?:**
- I may get no volunteers, which means I change focus and direction
- I may find out that our students are happy with how things are and may not get the project at all



- **How would it work in practice?:**
- Thesis presentation (2026-2027) would be an artist's book, and include student and project facilitators art work and other artefacts (e.g. childhood photographs), and documentary photography of the chronology of the project
- Narrative inquiry would offer the opportunity to tell the stories of the participants and thematic analysis would be utilised to develop and critically analyse emerging themes



- **Potential Timeline?:**
- June 2024 - Presentation of idea to TNSoA HE staff conference
- September 2024 – Ethics application to York St John University
- Autumn term – Open call for participants to students, via short presentations to L4/L5 student groups
- December 2024 – Ethics forms submitted to participants
- Jan – May 2025 – Project undertaken
- May/June or October 2025? – Exhibition of project work
- October 2025 – January 2027
JH to write up project for thesis submission, which will be presented as an artist's book.

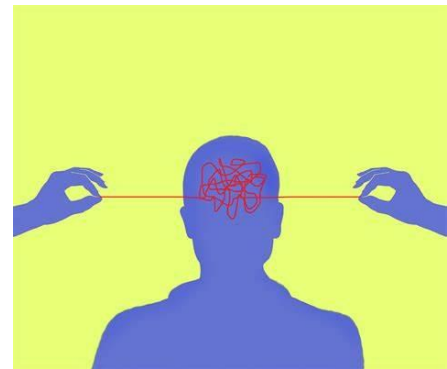


- **References**

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