



January 2018

Creative Arts Therapy

January is International Creativity Month! This month's issue will focus on Creative Arts Therapy.

Creative Arts Therapy can heal people through the use of imagination and various forms of creative expression. Unlike traditional art expression, the process of creation is emphasized rather than the final product.

- Types of Creative Arts Therapy include Art Therapy, Music Therapy, and Dance Therapy.
- Each provides a unique way of communicating that differs from traditional therapy and carries many health benefits.
- There are many simple activities you can do at home or in a group setting to experience the benefits of the creative process.

Types of Creative Arts Therapy

What is Art Therapy?



Art therapy is a form of therapy that enriches the lives of people through active art-making and the creative process. Art therapists choose materials and activities appropriate to their clients' needs to achieve therapeutic goals and objectives. Art therapy may involve drawing, painting, collage,

sculpture or other materials. Sometimes the creative process itself is used as a healing tool and sometimes a work of art is created and then discussed as a way of aiding communication between the client and therapist.

What is Music Therapy?

Music Therapy is a form of therapy in which music is used to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals. After assessing the strengths and needs of each client, the music therapist plans interventions including creating, singing, moving to, and/or listening to music. Through musical involvement clients' emotional health is strengthened and this benefit can be transferred to other areas of their lives.



What is Dance Therapy?

Dance Therapy is a form of therapy in which movement and dance is used to support intellectual, emotional, and motor functions of the body. It focuses on the ties between movement and emotion. There is no single fixed type of movement style used, programs range from traditional dances like

ballroom to more subtle forms of movement like yoga and stretching to calm the body. Therapy sessions are focused on movement behavior through guided sessions.

Benefits

No Skill Required

You don't need to be an artist, musician, or dancer to participate. The focus is on the creative process itself, not the product. It is an opportunity for everyone to experience and create art without judgement.

Revealing the Unconscious

Creative Arts Therapy bridges the gap between the conscious and the unconscious mind. It can bring light to areas that are blocked, inhibited, and stuck, as well as bringing greater focus to those areas of concern. Various media like painting, psychodrama, dance, and sculpting draw forth unearthed material that may not have been seen, felt, observed, or accessed in some way via talk therapy. Through letting go and getting into the creative flow, a portal is created to the process, enabling listening, watching, and observing what might not be explained through words.

Communication

Speaking to someone about your problems can be scary or difficult. When it is hard to find the right words, it may be easier to explain thoughts and feelings through art. It also gives people who are nonverbal a chance to be heard without using words.

It is Tangible

Creating art makes feelings and emotions into something real you can see, hear or touch. You can look back on things you've made and see your progress. It also can create distance from a painful or difficult memories by allowing the a person to observe and discuss what is happening in the art, which may be easier than describing themselves or their experience.

It's Fun!

Everyone tends to enjoy creating or enjoying art in some way. You don't need to see a professional in order to benefits from the creative process. If being creative in any setting makes you feel healthier and happier, you are experiencing the benefits of creative arts therapy.

Exercises to Try

Scribble Drawing

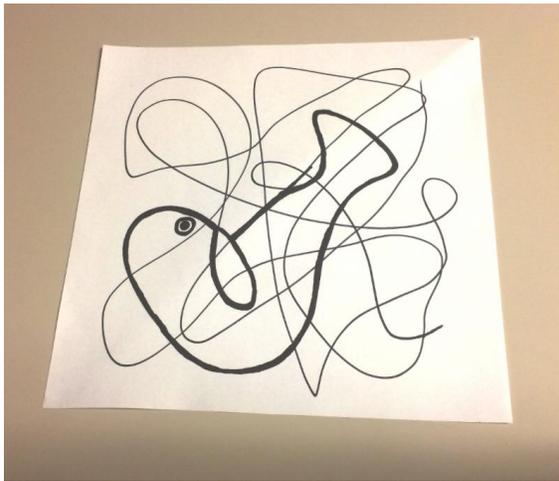
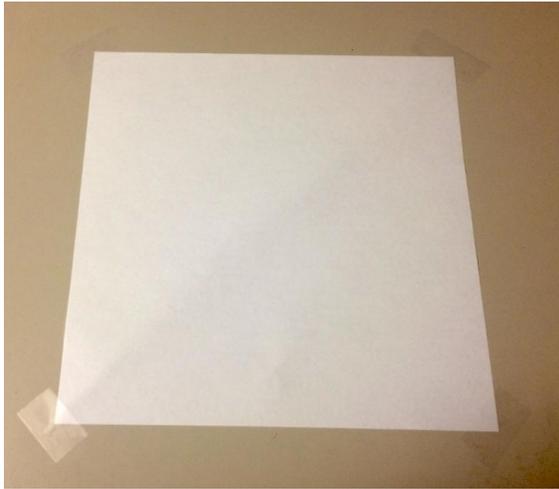
A scribble drawing is a quick and easy art therapy activity that anyone can do. It can help focus your mind on the here and now. You can use it to take your mind away from stressful thoughts and relax.

1. Gather your supplies. You'll need a piece of paper; traditionally this is done with an 18" x 24" sheet but you can use something smaller. Then, grab your medium of choice, making sure to have a variety of colors. A pack of pastels is recommended.
2. Before you begin, try listening to soothing music or meditation for a few minutes. You want to try and clear your mind as best you can before you start drawing.
3. Tape or weigh down your sheet of paper so it doesn't move around while you

work.

4. Choose a visible color pastel for your scribble, such as black.
5. Close your eyes and begin to scribble on your paper for about 30 seconds. Don't worry about what your scribble will look like, just draw freely.
6. Open your eyes and examine your scribble. Try and find a particular shape, figure or object within it that catches your eye. Feel free to rotate the paper as you examine your scribble.
7. Use the rest of the colors to bring "that image into clearer focus". Color and decorate as you see fit.
8. Title your completed drawing!

SOURCE: [The Art Therapy Sourcebook](#), by Cathy A. Malchiodi



Drumming Emotions

Drumming exercises can be a fun way to destress in a group setting. This exercise can be useful to express and explain your pent up emotions and feelings. It can also aid in understanding and empathizing with others.

1. You will need paper, a bowl and a surface to drum on. You can use actual percussion instruments if available, or just drum with your hands on a table or even your lap.
2. On a slip of paper, group members will each write down one word describing the emotion they are currently feeling.
3. Each group member will put their slips the bowl. Then, mix up the slips of paper and have everyone draw one.
4. Go around in a circle and have each individual "perform" or demonstrate emotion written on slip of paper by drumming. There is no right or wrong way, simply drum to your idea of the emotion. Perhaps "sad" may inspire a slow, gentle beat while "angry" may be fast, loud, and full of energy.

5. The rest of the group watches and then tries to guess who among the group wrote that emotion on their slip of paper.
6. Once the person with that emotion has been identified, ask them to speak about that emotion. Is it positive or negative? What caused this emotion?
7. Continue going around the circle, performing each emotion, until everyone has had a turn to perform and be heard.

SOURCE: <http://musictherapyactivities.wikia.com/wiki/Drumming>



For more information about drumming as an emotional release, watch the above video by author and music therapist Christine Stevens.

Mirroring

This exercise involves matching and echoing the person's movements to show empathy and validate what the person is feeling. It is a completely nonverbal process that focuses instead on body language.

1. Find a partner to work with. If in a group, have everyone pair up.
2. Choose a Leader and a Follower.
3. The Leader decides on a movement and proceeds slowly.
4. The Follower "mirrors" the Leader's movements, copying them as close as they can.
5. Switch roles. The Follower is now the new Leader. Repeat Step 3.
6. Try a third set of mirroring without a set Leader. Alternate moving and copying each other freely.

SOURCE: [Project Creo](#)



Make Art, Stay Healthy!





The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey

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Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities