

Understanding

Art Therapy

as one of the various **creative therapeutic** approaches that can be used to provide emotional support to children

Some other **creative therapeutic** approaches:

- Art Therapy,
- Play Therapy
- Dance Movement Therapy,
- Dramatherapy and
- Music Therapy



Art Therapy

presented by

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When young people are faced with difficulties it may be hard for them to express their feelings in a verbal way

Art Therapy aim to help young people to be understood and promote their emotional and social wellbeing



What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy
is a form of psychotherapy
that uses art
as a form of communication

Art therapy is not dependent
on spoken language

Therefore it can be helpful
to anyone
who may find it difficult
to express thoughts
and feelings verbally



What is Art Therapy?

In art therapy
children and young people
use art (*paint, clay and other materials*)
and play, to explore
and express feelings

There is no expectation or demand
on the young person
of being good at art
or having previous experience
in order to benefit
from art therapy



What is Art Therapy?

Expression through art and play provides an alternative but important opportunity to understand the young person's emotional life and his or her ways of relating to other people.



What is the training for art therapist?

The Art Therapy training courses are at Masters level and are completed over two years full time or three years part time

Applicants are usually graduates in Art and Design or are qualified art teachers or have a first degree in a relevant discipline like sociology or psychology

Applicants are also expected to have working experience in these fields



What is the training for art therapist?

The training is theoretical, practical and experiential and includes:

- 120 days clinical placement over the duration of the course
- Lectures, discussions and seminars in psychological development, counselling and psychodynamic theory
- Academic assessment by essays, portfolio presentations and a final thesis
- Personal therapy is compulsory during the whole of the training



Art therapists are

- sensitive to the way children may communicate without words
- working in a child-centred approach:
 - importance of holding back
 - not “rescuing” the child
 - non-judgemental attitude
 - being at their level
- working with directive and non-directive approaches depending on individual needs
- aware of the difference between art therapy and art activities
- informed with lots of ideas for therapeutic activities



Similarities and differences between art therapy and art activities

“Art therapy” and “arts activities”
there may be cause confusion
on what they are
and how they differ
from each other

What they have in common
is that the child
works towards
the creation of artwork and
therefore
creativity is involved



Similarities and differences between art therapy and art activities

However they are different
in the skills required
by the practitioner
and in their overall
philosophical assumptions
and orientations

I am now going
to talk about
some of these differences



Art activities

Art activities have the primary goal of creating a finished artwork within a fun and learning environment

The facilitator who is trained or experienced in art making may influence the creation of the artwork or give advice



Art activities

The child may be expected to make use of a set of skills that can be taught, practised, evaluated or judged aesthetically

The artwork produced may be exhibited or assessed



Art therapy

Art therapy's primary goal is the intentional use of the arts for psychological change as a form of therapy within a therapeutic context

The artwork produced in art therapy it is not intended as a product in itself



Art therapy

Drawing an 'ugly' picture
or destroying a picture
is in art therapy
an important
and valuable expression

Therefore the artwork
does not have to be aesthetically pleasing
or finished to be valuable



Art therapy

In art therapy
the therapist acts as a facilitator
a guide and a witness
to help the child
to understand feelings and needs

Art in this context is the means to self-discovery
and the link between
the child and the therapist

The art materials chosen
and the way feelings are expressed
are important aspects
of the creative process



Art therapy

Artwork in art therapy provides the focus of the communication and acts as a vehicle for understanding growth and change in the child

There is an interaction between the child and the therapist in which they work together to understand the art process and product of the session

This is the so-called “triangular relationship” between the therapist the child and the artwork



The creative process

The reason why I chose
to train and work
as an art therapist
is that I highly value
the creative process

I personally believe that
creativity is something that
everyone has within themselves
yet the process
and results
are different
for different people



The creative process

Anyone
can potentially embark
on a creative process
and a creative process
does not have to
result in an aesthetic or finished product

One can't "teach" creativity
in the sense of "teaching"
maths, science or humanities classes,
but one can assist and guide people
to get in touch
with their inherent creativity



The creative process

As an art therapist
I have faith in the arts
as having an important healing role
to play within therapy

However for art making
to be a form of therapy
it needs to be contextually located
within a witnessed
and supportive environment



Therapeutic alliance

A special relationship forms between the therapist and the young person

Within this "therapeutic alliance" the young person feels free to express themselves

Because the therapist:

- accepts whatever is expressed, without criticism
- witnesses artwork (or actions/words)
- reflects it back to the young person, in a way that may help them



Holding Environment (a safe one)

The therapy room and the therapist provide an holding environment ; an environment which is safe, where the young person is free to express themselves

Holding was defined by Winnicott:

- It refers to a mother physically holding a baby, and also to creating a safe and supportive environment
- A mother that is “good enough” as she provides enough support but not too much,so the child is safe to explore, and gradually learns its limitations



Theraupeutic Contract involves:

- Consistent time
- Consistent settings
- Time boundaries
- Safety:
 - Confidentiality
 - Limits of confidentiality
 - Talk in the “I” (only for groups)
- Artwork kept for the length of therapeutic work
- No mobile phones
- Food and drink agreement



Conclusion

- Art therapy involves assessment as well as treatment
- It focuses on the creative process and the artwork as a means to discover the self

Extra Info:



*The British Association
of Art Therapists*



An art therapist is registered with a professional association; the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) www.baat.org

The art therapist is compelled to practice within specific codes of ethics and is regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC) www.hpc-uk.org

