

“Art therapy was my lifeline, my reason for survival. I needed to create, to show the deepest aspects of myself and share that with others.”

– Art Therapy Participant

About Us

We are the Canadian voice of art therapy. We bring together art therapists to raise standards and advance art therapy practices.

Health Benefits of Art Therapy

Art therapy engages all the senses to relax the nervous system. Art making causes a shift from sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system, which results in improved self-regulation, anxiety reduction, feeling more in control¹, improved executive functioning², and acceptance and integration within the whole self^{3,4}.

¹Hass-Cohen, N. & Carr, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Art therapy and clinical neuroscience*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

²Del Giocco, M. (2000). *Art therapy: A missing link in cognitive rehabilitation for the neurologically impaired*. Del Giocco Art Therapy Institute.

³Collie, K & Kante, A. (2011). Art groups for marginalized women with breast cancer. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(5), 652-661.

⁴Malchiodi, C. A. (Ed.) (2012). *Art therapy and health care*. Gilford Press.

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CANADIAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The Voice of Art Therapy

The Potential of Art Therapy in Hospital Settings

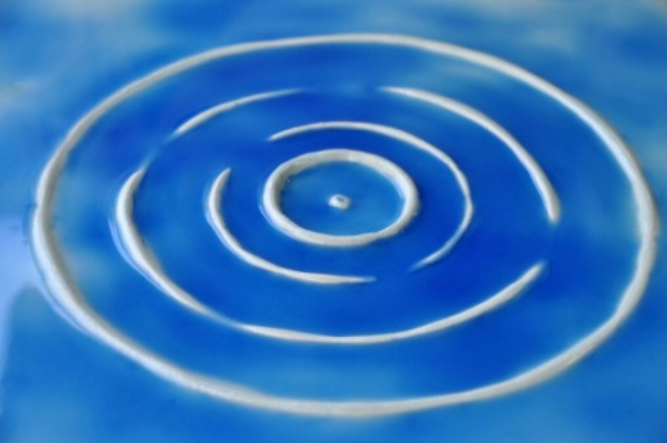


Photo from Adler University

Professional Standards for Art Therapists

Art therapists are trained professionals with expertise in counseling psychology and fine arts. In Canada and the United States, art therapists must have at minimum a master's degree or a master's level diploma in art therapy before identifying themselves within the profession. This graduate level education includes supervised clinical practicum hours (700 hours for Canadian art therapists), thus ensuring the safety of the client as well as professional liability for agencies and employers offering this form of therapy. Art therapists' unique therapeutic skills and understanding about the interplay of art material, art-making and psychological health cannot be duplicated by recreational therapists, social workers, artists or educators.

If you are interested in education in art therapy, or looking for an art therapist in your area, please visit the CATA website at canadianarttherapy.org.

CATA hosts an annual conference that brings together art therapists and other professionals to promote and advance the profession of art therapy. For more information, please visit: canadianarttherapy.org/upcoming-conference/

Who Can Benefit?

A multitude of research studies⁶ exists demonstrating the efficacy of art therapy in areas such as:

- Addictions or substance use issues
- Developmental challenges (e.g. ADD, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder)
- Coping with physical health conditions
- Depression, anxiety and mental health
- Grief and bereavement
- Trauma or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Aging and geriatric issues

Art Therapy & Healthcare

Art therapists work with individuals, couples, families and groups from diverse backgrounds and age groups, in settings such as mental health agencies, schools, correctional institutes, and healthcare facilities. Particularly, art therapy are used in medical settings such as:

- Inpatient care
- Outpatient clinics
- Complimentary medicine programs
- Wellness programs
- Long term care homes
- Rehabilitation units
- Mental health units
- Hospice or palliative care facilities
- Children's hospitals
- Addictions or substance use services
- Eating disorder clinics

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy combines the creative process and psychotherapy, facilitating self-exploration and understanding. Using imagery, colour and shape as part of this creative therapeutic process, thoughts and feelings can be expressed that would otherwise be difficult to articulate.⁵

Art therapists facilitate a non-verbal means for individuals to connect with and express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to communicate due to the person's age or challenging experiences such as trauma, cognitive issues or physical health conditions. Through the use of art-making, discussions and reflections on the artwork, and relationship building, art therapists support individuals in problem-solving, developing insights and self-awareness, improving self-esteem, managing stress, and enhancing interpersonal skills.⁶

⁵ Canadian Art Therapy Association. (2017). What is art therapy. <http://www.canadianarttherapy.org/what-is-art-therapy>

⁶ American Art Therapy Association. (2017). What is art therapy. <https://arttherapy.org/aata-aboutus/>

⁶American Art Therapy Association. (2015). AATA Research Committee Art Therapy Outcome Bibliography. <https://arttherapy.org/upload/outcomebibliographyresearchcmte.pdf>