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Creative Treatment with Art Therapy

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Art comes in many different forms, including music, photography, writing, sculpting, sewing, drawing, acting, gardening, painting, cooking, dancing, etc. With all the different types of art, art can mean something unique to everyone! Art excites or inspires a person's senses, imagination, and creativity. As well, art can help an individual improve his/her physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Therefore, art is important because it allows people to express themselves and have an "outlet."

What Is Art Therapy?

Art therapy is a mental health profession. It combines art and therapy in order to help adults and children heal, communicate, and improve their lives overall. It focuses on the creative process as a way to help people deal with different emotions and situations. Through art, they can work on reducing stress, increasing self-awareness, and communicating messages in a unique, hands-on way. Art therapists are the professionals who have special training in both art and therapy. Common types of art used in art therapy are painting, drawing, sculpting, and various crafts that use materials like beads, feathers, yarns, photos, etc.

The first few sessions of art therapy typically involve family consultation, observation, assessment, establishment of treatment goals, and relationship/trust building. This friendship building comes through the creation of art between the client and the art therapist, which encourages an open communication. Art therapists also try to recognize the hidden messages communicated through art in order to help assess and treat problems, such as issues with relationships, substances, trauma, disabilities, illnesses, and anxiety.

Art therapy services can take place in settings such as mental health or medical institutions, community outreach programs, wellness centers, schools, nursing homes, and independent practices. To learn more about art therapy or to find an art therapist in your area, go to: www.arttherapy.org.

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