



Art Therapy and You!

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Who am I?

- Meaghan Wiggins! 😊
- Licensed mental health professional and fulltime art therapist at Cancer Support Community.
- Have been working exclusively with cancer patients for the past 3 years.
- **Fun fact:** Enjoys sweets, thinks otters are INSANELY cute.

Art Therapy 101

What the heck is art therapy?

- Art Therapy is an **integrative mental health and human services profession** that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, **applied psychological theory**, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship. Art Therapy, **facilitated by a professional art therapist**, effectively supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as community concerns. Art Therapy is used to improve cognitive and sensory-motor functions, foster self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivate emotional resilience, promote insight, enhance social skills, reduce and resolve conflicts and distress, and advance societal and ecological change (AATA, June, 2017).

More specifically...

NOT ART THERAPY! ☹️

- Coloring books
- Painting at home, to relax.
 - Therapeutic art, **NOT** therapy.
 - Not every conversation you have is therapeutic!
- **Not** art class!!

ART THERAPY! 😊

- Creating an image with a trained professional.
 - Exploring what that image can say about your life!
- Creating something specific with an art therapist based on your needs!
 - Art therapists have specific training to help guide you through creating to understand your art on a deeper level.
 - Master's level profession that involves mental health!



Story Time!!



Yeah but...
How does this
help people?

Art therapy can be utilized with any population! It's **NOT** just for kids!

- Examples: Substance abuse, eating disorders, trauma, adolescents, LGBTQ+ persons, those with Dementia/Alzheimer's, caregivers, and importantly those affected by cancer!

So what about someone like me, facing cancer?

Benefits for those affected by cancer include...

- Decreased cortisol, reduced stress.
 - Research from Mayo Clinic shows a 21.6% reduction in anxiety levels.
 - 20 of 21 participants found bed side art therapy effective in reducing stress.
- Increased insight into problems.
- Improved self awareness and esteem.
 - In another study, 14.6% of participants reported increase in positive mood!
- Improved communication skills and conflict resolution.
- Common themes include: Identity, Control, Communication, and End of life work.

(Curry EA, Ehlers SL, et al 2018; Eldridge, 2018; ; Malchiodi, 2018; Tripanthi, 2015.)

Where can I find art therapy?

I am now 100% convinced to start art therapy!! But wait, how can I find an art therapist?

Cancer Support Community!


- Open Art Studio:
 - CSC Campus Mondays 3:30-5:30PM
 - Community South, Fridays 10-11.30AM
- Individual Sessions
 - Completely free at CSC!
- Groups
 - CSC Campus, Art Therapy for Caregivers, Mondays 6:30-8:30PM

Art Therapy Centers in Hospitals!

- Art carts on Infusion units/bedside
- Riley Children's Hospital
- Saint Vincent's Breast Center

Private practices!

- Vary depending on location.
- American Art Therapy Association's website
- Ask your PHP/PCP, or a mental health professional.



“The aim of art is to represent not their outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”

ARISTOTLE

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