



Art Therapy and You!

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Introduction

- Meaghan Wiggins
- Licensed mental health professional, fulltime art therapist at Cancer Support Community Indiana, and oncology patient navigator certified generalist.
- Have been working exclusively with cancer patients for the past 6 years.
- **Fun facts:** Enjoys sweets, MA from Herron school of Art and Design.



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!!

Ok, Who can art therapy help?

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

- Examples: Substance abuse, eating disorders, trauma, adolescents, LGBTQ+ persons, also those with Dementia/Alzheimer's.
- Most importantly survivors **AND** caregivers!

What about someone 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.
- Adults undergoing chemotherapy treatments who engaged in one-on-one art therapy found their emotion distress and depression decreased. As well as decrease in anxiety and improvement in mood.
 - These numbers remained low posttreatment and showed improvement in overall quality of life when following up with the 50 participants that completed the study.
- Improved self awareness and esteem.
 - In another study it was seen that 51 of 54 participants felt that doing art therapy during the chemotherapy treatments was largely beneficial.
 - Those involved noted the experience was “relaxing,” and noted that it was helpful in, “expressing emotions and searching for meaning in the art.”
- Improved communication skills, conflict resolution, and coping skills.
- **Common themes:** Identity, Control, Communication, and End of life work.

(Curry EA, Ehlers SL, et al., 2018; Eldridge, 2018; Elimimian, E.B., Elson, L., Stone, E. *et al.*, (2020); Malchiodi, 2018; Tripanthi, 2015.)



Where can I find art therapy?

I am now 100% convinced to start art therapy!! But how can I connect with an art therapist?

Cancer Support Community!

- **Open Art Studio** (Hybrid)
 - Franciscan Health, First and fourth Wednesday of the month, 1:30-2:30PM
 - CSC Campus, Thursdays at 2PM
- **Groups**
 - *Art Journaling*, CSC Campus, Mondays at 1PM
 - *The Artist Within*, CSC Campus, Second and Fourth Wednesday, 3-5PM
 - *Coffee & Coloring Club*, CSC Campus, Thursdays 11AM
 - *Mindful Art*, CSC Campus, first and third Saturday of the month, 11AM
 - *Playful Self Expression*, CSC Campus, first and third Wednesday, 1-2PM
 - And more, see our calendar for more details!!
- **Individual Sessions** (Virtual & In person)
 - Completely free at CSC, availability may vary.

Art Therapy Centers in Hospitals!

- Art carts on infusion/bedside units
- 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.



Let's give it a try!

GRAB A PENCIL AND
PAPER, IT'S TIME TO TRY
OUT AN ART THERAPY
DIRECTIVE!



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

ARISTOTLE

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