



ABOUT ART THERAPY

Art therapy is a regulated, integrative mental health and human services profession.

Art therapy uniquely promotes the ability to unlock emotional expression by facilitating non-verbal as well as verbal communication.



Art therapists use art-making, the creative process, psychological theory, and knowledge of human experience when working with clients.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ART THERAPY

ANYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM ART THERAPY. Art therapists work with individuals, families, and communities and enhance clients' mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

People may seek art therapy services to address a variety of challenges, including: mood disorders such as anxiety and depression; communication and/or learning disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); neurological disorders such as Parkinson's or cerebral palsy; neurocognitive disorders such as dementia or Alzheimer's Disease (AD); Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); as well as difficulties related to medical treatment; domestic abuse, natural disasters or other collective trauma; navigating identity or sexual orientation; displacement from home or country; and major life transitions.

WHERE ART THERAPISTS WORK

Hospitals

Community clinics

Schools

Crisis centers

Veterans' clinics

Forensic institutions

Private practice

Senior communities

Psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities

Museums

HOW TO FIND AN ART THERAPIST

WHEN SEEKING ART THERAPY SERVICES, CONSIDER:

YOUR NEEDS – Art therapists, similar to other mental health providers, may have a specialization or area of expertise.

YOUR EXPECTATIONS – You do not have to be artistically inclined to benefit from art therapy.

THEIR QUALIFICATIONS – Your practitioner should have (or be working toward) credentials specific to art therapy practice: an ATR (Registered Art Therapist) or ATR-BC (Board-Certified art therapist). Credentials can be verified via the Art Therapy Credentials Board's online [Credential Verification Search](#).

The American Art Therapy Association provides the [Art Therapist Locator](#), as a guide to finding an art therapist in your area.

HOW TO BECOME AN ART THERAPIST

A minimum of a Master's degree is required for entry-level practice in art therapy. Program applicants also must complete coursework in studio art and psychology at the undergraduate level. Currently, AATA-Approved art therapy Master's programs are offered by 35 accredited institutions in 20 states and Canada. These programs are transitioning to independent accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

MASTER'S CURRICULUM INCLUDES: training in history and theory of art therapy; materials and techniques of art therapy practice; creativity, symbolism, and metaphor; psychological and counseling theories; group counseling and psychotherapy, theories and techniques; psychopathology and diagnosis; assessment procedures; research methods; human growth and personality development; helping relationships and applications; social and cultural foundations; professional ethics; practicum/internship; thesis/ culminating project; and various specialization topics (marital and family art therapy; trauma; addictions, etc.).

National Office

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