ART THERAPY

VISUAL ARTS CENTER OF NEW JERSEY | FIND YOUR CENTER

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy is a mental health 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 must be facilitated by a licensed or certified individual based on the requirements set forth by the state where the services are being provided.

Who is an art therapist?

Art therapists are clinicians with master's-level or higher degrees trained in art and therapy that serve diverse communities in different settings—from medical institutions and wellness centers to schools and independent practices. Guided by ethical standards and scope of practice, their education and supervised training prepare them for culturally proficient work with diverse populations in a variety of settings. They are credentialed mental health care professionals who care deeply about the communities they support, helping to advance people's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. (American Art Therapy Association, AATA)

In New Jersey, art therapists are licensed mental health professionals. That can mean either a Licensed Professional Art Therapist (LPAT), or a Licensed Associate Art Therapist (LAAT) who works under the supervision of an LPAT. Individuals can become Board Certified Registered Art Therapists (ATR-BC), which is a nationally recognized certification, but the license trumps the certification on a state-by-state basis.

	Art Therapy	Art & Healing Groups	Art Class
Faciliator	a licensed or board-certified art therapist, depending on the state	a teaching artist interested in arts and healing	a skilled art teacher or instructor
Goals	self-expression, emotional exploration, clinical treatment or non-clinical facilitation, focus on process over product	improve well-being, focus may lie in both the process and the creation of the product	to create artwork, improve artistic skills, focus may lie in the outcome
What to expect	no right or wrong way of doing art therapy	no wrong way to create art from an arts and healing perspective	there may be some expectations, standards, or techniques that the student is striving to learn or gain
Role	to foster a safe, non-judgmental, supportive space that supports authentic creative and emotional expression. May provide directives based on a therapeutic goal.	to foster a supportive space, encourage creative expression through provided art materials or directions	to teach skills and provide feedback, foster a space for students to learn and grow
Materials	are chosen carefully, sometimes based on diagnosis or presenting symptoms, or goals	are provided based on the art project in mind or the population being served	are intended to enable achievement of a specific outcome or task
Artwork	a product for externalizing inner thoughts or feelings, gain understanding of self or insight, the therapeutic process	an opportunity to create art regardless of prior knowledge, skills or artistic abilities	typically evaluated based on standards or qualities such as composition, colours, tones
Participants	are encouraged to express themselves using artwork and/or words, can say no to prompts or directives, may choose to destroy what they produce based on the process, no skills required	are encouraged to express themselves using art materials, may choose to destroy the produce based on the process, no skills required	are typically expected to follow the directions of the class, engage in the prompts and instructions provided by the instructor

Art Therapy must be facilitated by a licensed art therapist in the state of NJ, but the scope of practice can differ depending on the setting in which the art therapy is taking place.

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Clinical Art Therapy

- Is facilitated in a licensed mental health facility.
- Requires a diagnostic assessment.
- Requires the creation and maintenance of clinical documentation.
- Is considered treatment for a diagnosis or symptoms.
- Requires clinical treatment planning to ensure psychotherapeutic goals are being met.
- Has therapeutic benefits.

Non-clinical Art Therapy

- Is facilitated in a community setting or informal environment.
- Does not involve a diagnostic assessment.
- Focuses on goals of authentic creative expression, personal growth and supporting overall well-being.
- Focuses on documenting participant engagement instead of clinical psychotherapy notes.
- Is not a replacement for clinical therapy.
- Has therapeutic benefits.

What we can offer:

As the Visual Arts Center is not a licensed mental health facility, we can offer non-clinical art therapy to the community on-site in order to match our mission goals of fostering spaces for students to support overall well-being, personal growth, and develop ways to ensure authentic emotional and creative expression.

Collaborations with clinical settings in adherence to the regulations and scope set forth by the partnership's setting, such as a mental health clinic or practice, hospital, or other mental health facility.

Scope of Practice:

The art therapist working within the Visual Arts Center will monitor provided care to ensure they are working within their scope of practice and refer individuals to clinical therapy treatment when appropriate to ensure services adhere to the ethics set forth by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) and the laws and regulations set forth by the New Jersey Board of Creative Arts and Activities Therapies.

Resources and References

- American Art Therapy Association (AATA)
  https://arttherapy.org/

- Art Therapy Credentialing Board (ATCB)
  https://atcb.org/

- New Jersey Art Therapy Association (NJATA)
  https://www.njarttherapy.com/

- New Jersey Board of Creative Arts and Activities Therapies
  https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/art

- National Organization of Arts and Healing
  https://thenoah.org/