

Creative Arts Therapies

The axiom from public health—"do no harm"—applies to arts and health too. Not "everybody" is well suited to arts and trauma work. Creative Arts Therapists are human service professionals who use distinct arts-based methods and creative processes for the purpose of ameliorating disability and illness and optimizing health and wellness. Treatment outcomes include, for example, improving communication and expression, and increasing physical, emotional, cognitive and/or social functioning.

Definition of Art Therapy ([American Art Therapy Association](#))

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 sensorimotor 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.

[Ethical Principles for Art Therapists](#) - The goals of the ***Ethical Principles for Art Therapists*** are to safeguard the welfare of the individuals, families, groups and communities with whom art therapists work and to promote the education of members, students, and the public. The principles put forth in this ethics document are intended to address many situations encountered by art therapists. In general, art therapists are guided in their decision-making by core values that affirm basic human rights.

Additional Resources

- [The National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations, Inc.](#), founded in 1979, is an alliance of membership associations dedicated to the advancement of the creative arts therapies professions. NCCATA represents over 15,000 individual members of five creative arts therapies associations nationwide.
- [University of Florida's Center for Arts and Medicine in partnership with Art Place](#) has done a lot of great grounding work. The link to their framework and other resources can be found here: <https://response.arts.ufl.edu/arts-in-public-health-framework>
U of F's repositories focusing on: [Art & Covid-19](#) | [Art & Anti-racism](#) | [Art & Creative Placemaking \(we-making\)](#)
There are projects, people and resources on there that are categorized by Art and Anti-Racism, Art and COVID-19, and Arts and Creative Place-making—although they are moving toward using the term "We-Making."
- [International Arts + Minds Lab at Johns Hopkins University](#) has been studying health equity and social justice from a neuroscience perspective and have great case studies in their News section. This is a great research-based article that I think is a terrific advocacy tool for justifying the need for the arts to be part of the trauma-healing interventions. An example is this article: [Can the Arts Help Us Heal Our \[COVID\] Grief?](#)
- [Michigan Art Therapy Association](#) The Michigan Association of Art Therapy (MAAT) was established in 1977, supporting a long preexisting community of art therapists in Michigan.

[Current legislation in Lansing – Licensing for Art Therapists](#)

[Bill Sponsored by Greg Markkanen, R-Hancock](#) - The practice of art therapy is currently regulated in 20 US states, Canada, the UK, Australia, Israel, New Zealand and more, though it remains an unlicensed and undefined mental health field in Michigan. This poses a significant risk to the public as anyone can claim to be an art therapist, whether or now they have training in art therapy or any other mental health profession. Training in art therapy is equivalent to or exceeds that of other mental health fields, requiring a minimum of a master's degree post-graduate supervised work experience, and a rigorous board-certification exam before becoming fully licensed and credentialed. Yet, training programs are frequently offered that purport to provide adequate training to be an art therapist within as little as a one-hour via an online certificate program.