



## WHAT IS ART THERAPY?

Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance physical, mental and emotional well-being. The creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, reduce stress, and increase self-esteem and self-awareness. Art therapists are master's-level professionals who hold degrees in art therapy and/or a related field. The educational requirements art therapists must fulfill include coursework in theories of art therapy, counseling, and psychotherapy; individual, group, and family therapy; human and creative development; assessment and evaluation; multicultural issues; research methods; ethics and standards of practice; and practicum experience in clinical and community settings. Art therapists are also trained in applying a variety of art modalities as part of assessment and treatment, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and other visual media.

## WHO CAN BE HELPED BY ART THERAPY?

Art therapists work with people of all ages in many different environments to address challenging mental, physical, and social issues. They are trained to work as private practitioners and as part of treatment teams in psychiatric outpatient and inpatient programs, hospitals and community health centers, veterans' health facilities, rehabilitation programs, schools, hospices, and many other settings. Art therapy is used to treat a wide range of issues and conditions, including family and relationship issues, depression and other mental health conditions, substance abuse and addiction, abuse and domestic violence, social and emotional issues related to disability or cognitive loss, trauma, and psychosocial difficulties related to medical illnesses.

## CREDENTIALING AND LICENSURE OF ART THERAPISTS

Art therapists who meet rigorous education and experience requirements are credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board. The "Art Therapy Registration" credential (ATR) is granted to art therapists who have completed graduate education and post-graduate supervised experience requirements and the "Board Certification" credential (ATR-BC) is granted to Registered Art Therapists who pass a written examination. Credentialed art therapists are entitled to use the professional designation of ATR or ATR-BC after their name. The credentials are recognized by all states and D.C. and are maintained by meeting stringent continuing education requirements.

Five states currently license professional art therapists or creative arts therapists: Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and New York. In addition, many art therapists are licensed in related mental health fields that have education and training requirements paralleling those of art therapy, such as counseling or marriage and family therapy. All states currently license professional counselors and in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Texas, art therapists are specifically included in the counselor licensure laws.

## AMERICAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The American Art Therapy Association, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization founded in 1969, represent a worldwide membership of more than 5,000 art therapists, mental health professionals, researchers, educators and art therapy students. For more information on the Association and on art therapy in general, please visit our website at [www.americanarttherapyassociation.org](http://www.americanarttherapyassociation.org).