

American Art Therapy Association

Promoting the Profession and Practice of Art Therapy Since 1969

Art therapy is an established mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. It is based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight.

Art therapy integrates the fields of human development, visual art (drawing, painting, sculpture, and other art forms), and the creative process with models of counseling and psychotherapy. Art therapy is used with children, adolescents, adults, older adults, groups, and families to assess and treat the following: anxiety, depression, and other mental and emotional problems and



disorders; mental illness; substance abuse and other addictions; family and relationship issues; abuse and domestic violence; social and emotional difficulties related to disability and illness; trauma and loss; physical, cognitive, and neurological problems; and psychosocial difficulties related to medical illness. Art therapy programs are found in a number of settings including hospitals, clinics, public and community agencies, wellness centers, educational institutions, businesses, and private practices.

Art therapists are masters level professionals who hold a degree in art therapy or a related field. Educational requirements include: theories of art therapy, counseling, and psychotherapy; ethics and standards of practice; assessment and evaluation; individual, group, and family techniques; human and creative development; multicultural issues; research methods; and practicum experiences in clinical, community, and/or other settings. Art therapists are skilled in the application of a variety of art modalities (drawing, paint-

ing, sculpture, and other media) for assessment and treatment.

American Art Therapy Association Mission Statement, Organizational Structure, & Purpose

The AATA is an organization of professionals dedicated to the belief that the creative process involved in art making is healing and life enhancing. Its mission is to serve its members and the general public by providing standards of professional competence, and developing and promoting knowledge in, and of, the field of art therapy. The AATA is a national, non-profit association representing approximately 4500 members. It is governed by an 11-member Board elected by the membership and more than 35 AATA Regional Chapters conduct meetings and activities that promote art therapy on the local level.

The AATA promotes the therapeutic use of art by:

- Encouraging the highest quality of art therapy services to the public;
- Facilitating communication among members and colleagues;
- Supporting legislative efforts at the state and federal levels;
- Disseminating information to the general public, art therapists, and related mental health professionals;
- Recognizing excellence in clinical, professional, educational, and research activities.

Publications

- *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association;*
- *AATA Newsletter* and *AATA E-Newsletter*
- Monographs, and books.

Meetings & Educational Opportunities

- Annual AATA Conference in November of each year;
- Regional Symposia throughout the US
- Continuing education opportunities through conferences, symposia, and distance learning.

Web Site Resources

- Information on practice, legislative initiatives, public information, and research;
- Late-breaking news on art therapy and art therapists throughout the US and the world.