

## ART THERAPY

**Definition:** Art Therapy enables the individual to explore personal problems and potential skills through verbal and non-verbal expression and art experiences. In art therapy the creative process is used to foster self-awareness and personal growth, and to reconcile emotional conflict. Art therapy is also used in the assessment and evaluation of individuals, couples, families and groups.

### Advantages of Art Therapy

1. We think in images and therefore art medium stimulates the production of images or ideas that enhances the creative process both narrowly in an artistic sense and broadly in the creation of solutions in living.
2. Art is a less customary mode of communication for most people and therefore it is less amendable to control. Unexpected things may burst forth in a picture or sculpture. This is one of the most exciting potentialities in art therapy. Unexpected recognitions often form the leading edge of insight, learning and growth.
3. Unique to art therapy is the permanence of the object produced. The advantage here is that the artwork is not subject to distortions of memory. It remains the same and can be recalled intact months and years after its creation. Revisiting artwork can help individuals develop new insights over time.
4. Communication through artwork is spatial in nature. There is no time element. In art, relationships occur in space and this form of communication nearly duplicates experience. In a picture one can portray, all at once, the present time as it is influenced by past experiences and future wishes.
5. During discussions following an art-making period, individuals are often more open, receptive and revealing.
6. Individuals are given skills in art therapy that can be used outside of the therapeutic setting.  
(From Art Psychotherapy by Harriet Wadeson)

### THE WITNESS DOLL

“There comes to us moments in life when about some things we need no proof from without. A little voice within us tells us.” (from Crafts for the Spirit by Ronni Lundy)



Close your eyes and ask yourself:

*How do I care for myself? Identify the activities, events, places and people in my life that are associated with the care of my soul and well being.*

Visualize yourself enjoying these nurturing elements in your life. Using the materials available (fabric markers, needle and thread and **one** special charm), decorate your witness doll with colors and symbols of these elements in your life in a pleasing way. Your doll will be a useful tool to remind you to listen to your inner voice at any time. Remember to put your doll in a special place where it can witness self-care to you on a daily basis.

If time permits you will be invited to tell the group something about your artwork.

## **THE PLACE OF DOLLS IN ART AND CULTURE**

Many of us, as children, had dolls that brought us happiness. Historically however, dolls are seen as more than just a youngster's companion or toy. Since ancient times artisans from every culture have engaged in doll making for many reasons.

When defined as an art object, dolls have been viewed as embodiments of spirits, as objects with magical powers or as tangible expressions of our relationship to these divine spirits and powers. Dolls have served as symbols of our highest, widest and deepest aspirations and insights of life and death and have been used in religious ceremonies and as gifts to ancestral souls as well as in the theater, commerce and play. (P Dunn-Snow)

I recently reviewed the following book for the Journal of the American Art Therapy Association that you might find interesting.

### ***Doll Making as a Transformative Process***

by Pamela Hastings (2003)

ISBN 0-09744659-0-9

## **SOME OTHER WAYS TO SELF-CARE**

Receive a back rub

Meditate

Call up a pal

Breathe

Move

## **RESOURCE**

### *Take Care*

A publication of National Family Caregivers Association

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