

# Introducing Art Therapy to Children

## **What is art therapy?**

Art therapy is a special way of using art-making to help us feel better. It can help us to feel better in ourselves, about ourselves, and about our relationships with other people. There are many types of art-making in art therapy, including colouring, drawing, painting, and constructing.

*You don't have to think that you are good at art in order to do art therapy.*

## **Why do people go to art therapy?**

People come to art therapy for help with a variety of experiences, including:

- feeling really sad a lot of the time
- difficulties getting along with sisters, brothers, or other people
- feeling really angry a lot of the time
- having someone die who was very close to you
- challenges making friends
- feeling worried or afraid a lot of the time
- having a hard time in school
- challenges with parents

## **What do people get out of going to art therapy?**

Art therapy has many benefits. These benefits come from having a special time and a safe place to be creative, explore big feelings, and talk about whatever you want. This could mean you and the art therapist meeting together for one-on-one time. Or, it might mean a group session with other kids in which everyone can help one another in a safe environment.

Art therapy is a place where you might:

### **Express yourself**

- Find a positive way to express strong feelings in a safe place and a safe way.
- Make choices about what materials to use, what images to create, and what to speak about

### **Experience connection**

- Be listened to and understood
- Use art to say things that are hard to find words for
- Learn to sense how other people might be feeling

**Feel brave and confident**

Connect with your creativity, your body, your feelings, and your thoughts

Create something you feel proud about making and that feels important to you

Feel better about your choices and learn skills to deal with difficult experiences

**Have fun**

Practice using your hands and your eyes

Be a detective by finding things in your artwork

Play games that help you to remember or to understand something new