Introduction to Art Therapy for Seniors

**What is art therapy?**

Art therapy combines a non-verbal creative process with personal and interpersonal exploration. It is intended to help people integrate past experiences and cultivate well-being in their lives.

*No art experience is required.*

**What would someone go to art therapy for?**

People come to art therapy for a variety of reasons, including:

a desire for greater self-awareness

feelings of grief and/or loss

stress and anxiety associated with life changes

communication challenges

physical health issues

trauma, past and/or present

creative blocks

relationship or family challenges

mental health challenges

depression

changes in or crisis of identity

the intention to actively engage in one’s own personal growth

**What are some of the benefits of art therapy?**

Art therapy has many benefits. Most of these benefits result from having a safe space to intentionally immerse oneself into a creative process while being supported by a trained art therapist. This can be in either a one-on-one or a group setting. Either way, safety and confidentiality are emphasized. Some benefits of art therapy for seniors are listed on the following page.

**Personal expression and choice-making**

Express feelings, thoughts, memories, fantasies, and dreams in a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere. This can aid in coming to terms with conflicting emotions and can help counteract a negative view of self

Make choices about what materials to use, what images to create, and what to speak about

**Interpersonal communication and connection**

Be listened to, witnessed and understood

Communicate through verbal and non-verbal means

Rekindle an interest in participating in the world through active art-making

**Confidence and self-awareness**

Connect with creative, physical, mental, and emotional aspects of yourself

Increase your self-knowledge and make sense of your emotional, mental, and physical realties

**Life review and self-reflection**

Explore and share memories, which can provide you an opportunity to forgive and heal past experiences and to achieve a sense of peace with yourself

Reinforce your sense of purpose and meaning in your life

Explore your sense of self identity in an environment of acceptance

Discover and create meaning by expressing your life story in new ways

**Sensory, cognitive and perceptual stimulation**

Maintain and even rebuild your cognitive and perceptual skills by stimulating the senses and engaging in social connection

Use the concrete, tactile nature of art-making to help to maintain small motor skills

Build on and maintain choice-making abilities and problem-solving skills