

Who We Serve

Art Therapists work with persons of all ages and abilities in individual, family, couples or group settings.



You do not need to have previous artistic experience to participate in and benefit from art therapy.

Art Therapy Is Used To Assess and Treat – Here are Some Examples:

- Anxiety, depression and other mental and emotional issues
- Substance abuse and other addictions
- Family and relationship issues
- Abuse and domestic violence
- Concerns related to disability and medical illness
- Trauma and loss
- Physical, cognitive, and neurological problems

Education and Credentials

Art Therapists are educated at a Master's level where they receive in depth clinical therapy training and supervision. They are also trained in the visual and creative arts (drawing, painting, sculpture, fiber arts, photography, etc.).

The ATR designation signifies that the art therapist has completed a qualifying master's level education and post-education supervised clinical experience. The ATR is recognized as basic credentials in the field of art therapy by the ATCB (Art Therapy Credentials Board).

The ATR-BC designation means that the art therapist has met the requirements for the ATR credentials and has passed a voluntary ATCB art therapy certification examination to become a Board Certified Art Therapist.

ATACO's Mission

The Art Therapy Association of Colorado, ATACO, is an affiliate chapter of the American Art Therapy Association, AATA. AATA is an organization of professionals dedicated to the belief that the creative process involved in art making is healing and life enhancing.

Our mission is to serve our members and the general public by providing standards of professional competence, and developing and promoting knowledge in, and of, the field of art therapy.



Developing awareness of the practice and profession of art therapy throughout Colorado



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What is Art Therapy?

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 founded in the theory and knowledge that the creative process involved in artistic expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insights.

How Did Art Therapy Begin?



Visual expression has been used for healing throughout history, but art therapy did not emerge as a distinct profession until the 1940s.

In the early 20th century, psychiatrists became interested in the artwork created by their patients with mental illness. At around the same time, educators were discovering that children's art expressions reflected developmental, emotional, and cognitive growth. By mid-century, hospitals, clinics, and rehabilitation centers increasingly began to include art therapy programs along with traditional "talk therapies," underscoring the recognition that the creative process of art making enhanced recovery, health, and wellness.

In 1969, the American Association of Art Therapists was founded (now AATA) and 1993 the Art Therapy Credentials Board was established. Art therapy has grown into an effective and important method of communication, assessment, and treatment with children and adults in a variety of settings. Currently, the field of art therapy has gained attention in health care facilities throughout the United States and within psychiatry, psychology, counseling, education, and the arts.

Where Do Art Therapists Work?

Art therapists work in a wide variety of settings, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Hospitals and clinics, both medical and psychiatric
- Out-patient mental health agencies and day treatment facilities
- Residential treatment centers
- Halfway houses
- Domestic violence and homeless shelters
- Community agencies and non-profits
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Correctional facilities
- Elder care facilities
- Art studios
- Private practice



Affiliated with the American Art Therapy Association (AATA)

Following the direction of AATA, the Art Therapy Association of Colorado 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.

If you or someone you know can benefit from working with an Art Therapist, contact the Art Therapy Association of Colorado. Art Therapists are available for group or individual therapy sessions, professional speaking engagements, contracted art therapy services or as members of a multidisciplinary team.