



MEET LOCAL ART THERAPIST, ANNIE MELL, LPC, ATR-BC

What originally drew you to the field of art therapy?

I originally heard of the field when I was in a pre-college summer program at RISD. One of my friends mentioned it and I got it tucked away in my mind. After I went through some of my own struggles, I decided to pursue it further, as it had been so helpful for me. Around that time, I was graduating from undergrad at The George Washington University (GWU) with my Psychology/Fine Arts degree and the faculty in residence of my dorm was an Art Therapy professor at GWU. I spoke with her and got an internship at the Art Therapy program under her guidance. From the moment I stepped through the program's doors, I never looked back.

From your point of view, what is the most important thing to keep in mind when working as an art therapist?

It is important to remember that you are making a difference even if things feel slow in sessions or people are not respecting the boundaries of art therapy. Do your process with your client and trust yourself.

What are some important self-care practices you recommend or practice?

I always make sure to take time to work on my own projects. When being creative, I choose projects that are not only fulfilling when in the process of creation, but the topic itself also feels comforting. I do like to make more serious art when I cannot otherwise express myself; but, I always make sure to balance that with creations that make me smile. The work we do can be very

difficult and draining so, to keep myself happy and healthy, I need to make sure that I dig into the things that make me joyful as well.

Are you working on anything now that you're really excited about?

I am actually back in school to get an MBA in Health Administration. I have recognized a lack of connection between clinical and business in the mental health world and hope to bridge that gap one of these days. I love my practice, though, so I have no intention of ever giving it up completely.

How important is it to collaborate with your art therapy colleagues & How have your professional collaborations benefited your career?

It is so important to have connections with other art therapists. The type of professional exploration that I've done with other art therapists has made an immense impact in my work.

How would you like to see the field of art therapy evolve in the coming years?

I would like to see continued growth in the respect for art therapy among healthcare facilities. I have first hand experience of art therapy being treated as though it is not a priority while other groups are given more resources. It would be wonderful to give more in-services and show more of the science behind the power of art therapy.

Is there anything you would like to see happen to support and expand the Colorado art therapy community?

Licensure would be amazing! We've all worked hard to get here and deserve the recognition to help the art therapy community grow larger.

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 - [Shauna Perry, MA, LPC, ATR \(Fall 2016\)](#)
 - [Lola Clark, MA Candidate in Art Therapy \(Spring 2016\)](#)
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