



# ART THERAPY

*Brendan O'Neill - 2020*

# A BRIEF HISTORY

- **1921** – Hans Prinzhorn, a German psychiatrist, promoted the use of art as therapy in hospitals.
- **1930s** – Karl, William and Charles Menninger introduced an art therapy programme at their Kansas-based psychiatric hospital, the Menninger Clinic.
- **1938** – Adrian Hill (artist and art teacher in the U.K.) coined the term “Art Therapy.”
- **1940s** – Winston Churchill, who suffered from depression (the ‘black dog’), valued the restorative value of painting.
- **1950s** – Edith Kramer (U.S.A.) believed that the art therapy process itself was therapeutic and had inherent healing capacities.
- **1960** – Rita Simon (leading Art Therapy figure in Northern Ireland and England) helped form B.A.A.T. (British Association of Art Therapists).
- **1960s** – Margaret Naumberg (educator, psychologist and art therapist) believed art was a gateway to the unconscious and supported psychoanalytical free association and interpretation.
- **1970** – Art Therapy training course established at Hertfordshire College, St. Albans.
- **1984** – Art Therapy training course established at the Department of Psychiatry in Sheffield University.
- **1997** – C.P.S.M. (Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine), later to become the H.C.P.C. (Health & Care Professions Council), granted State Registration to Art Therapy.
- **2002** – M.Sc. in Art Therapy established at Queen’s University Belfast.

# WHAT IS ART THERAPY?

Through the use of simple art materials and the creative process of art making, “Art Therapists and Art Psychotherapists <sup>1</sup>aim to enable clients both to discover an outlet for often complex and confusing emotions that cannot always be expressed verbally, and to foster self-awareness and growth” (BAAT, 2019).

(<sup>1</sup>Both titles are protected by law and either may be used by HCPC registered Art Therapists/Psychotherapists.)

(B.A.A.T (British Association of Art Therapists) (2019). *Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Practice for Art Therapists*. The British Association of Art Therapists Limited.)



**CLIENT ARTWORK (40 YEAR OLD MALE)**  
*CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS – MANIC DEPRESSION*

# WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN ART THERAPY?

People of all ages, gender and ability can participate in Art Therapy.

# WHAT ISSUES CAN BE EXPLORED?

- Mental health
- Sexual abuse
- Bereavement
- Separation / loss
- Stress....etc

# MUST THE CLIENT HAVE ARTISTIC TALENT?

No special talent is required, only a willingness to use art materials in an exploratory way.



CLIENT ARTWORK (46 YEAR OLD MALE)  
CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS - SCHIZOPHRENIA



# WHERE CAN ART THERAPY TAKE PLACE?

- Hospitals
- Prisons
- Day care centres
- Schools...*etc*

# REFERRAL

- Clients are normally referred by other professionals e.g. Nurses, O.T.s, C.B.T.s, Social Workers, G.P.s.
- The reason(s) for referral should be stated on any referral form.
- A brief clinical / social history and current state of health should be outlined on the referral form.

# ASSESSMENT

Following on from the referral, the Art Therapist will meet with the client(s) to explain the rudiments of the Art Therapy process and to let the client engage in some art making in order to ascertain if Art Therapy is a suitable therapeutic intervention for the client(s).



**CLIENT ARTWORK (56 YEAR OLD FEMALE)**  
*CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS – PERSONALITY DISORDER*

# CONTRACT

- If it is felt that Art Therapy is an appropriate therapeutic intervention for the client(s), a contract is agreed upon to begin a programme of 6 Art Therapy sessions.
- The Art Therapy sessions can focus on specific issues, or they can be used as an opportunity by the client(s) to explore, using the art materials available.
- At the end of the 6 sessions a review is held at which point a decision is made on whether additional sessions are required or are appropriate.

# THE ART THERAPY SESSION

- A one to one Art Therapy session lasts for one hour (a group session lasts for 1½ hours), which includes a 10 to 15 minute period at the end to allow for discussion about the artwork created, or about any issues that may have arisen during the session.
- While a theme can be suggested, Art Therapy tends to be non-directive, with only limited technical advice given. Art Therapy is not an art class in the traditional sense.
- While conversation during the art making process is not discouraged, the main focus of the session is the art making.
- Contrary to popular belief, it is not the task of the Art Therapist to interpret client artwork. The Art Therapist is present to facilitate the Art Therapy session and to help bring the client(s) to some form of understanding about what they have created and what it may be suggesting to them.



'VICTIMS'

1999

CERAMIC ARTWORK – BRENDAN O'NEILL

# CONFIDENTIALITY

- Interruption by others during the Art Therapy session, is strongly discouraged.
- The Art Therapist maintains a record of all that occurs in relation to the Art Therapy process, but ownership of the artwork remains with the client(s) and therefore, the therapist must seek permission from the client (s) with regards to sharing the actual artwork, or photographs of it, with others.
- Between sessions the Art Therapist is the keeper of client artwork.
- Confidentiality can be broken if, during the course of the Art Therapy session, a client refers to an undisclosed incident of abuse, or declares an intent to self-harm or harm others.





# NOTE MAKING

A period immediately after the session is allocated to the Art Therapist for reflection and for making notes on any significant events that occur during the session.

# CLOSURE

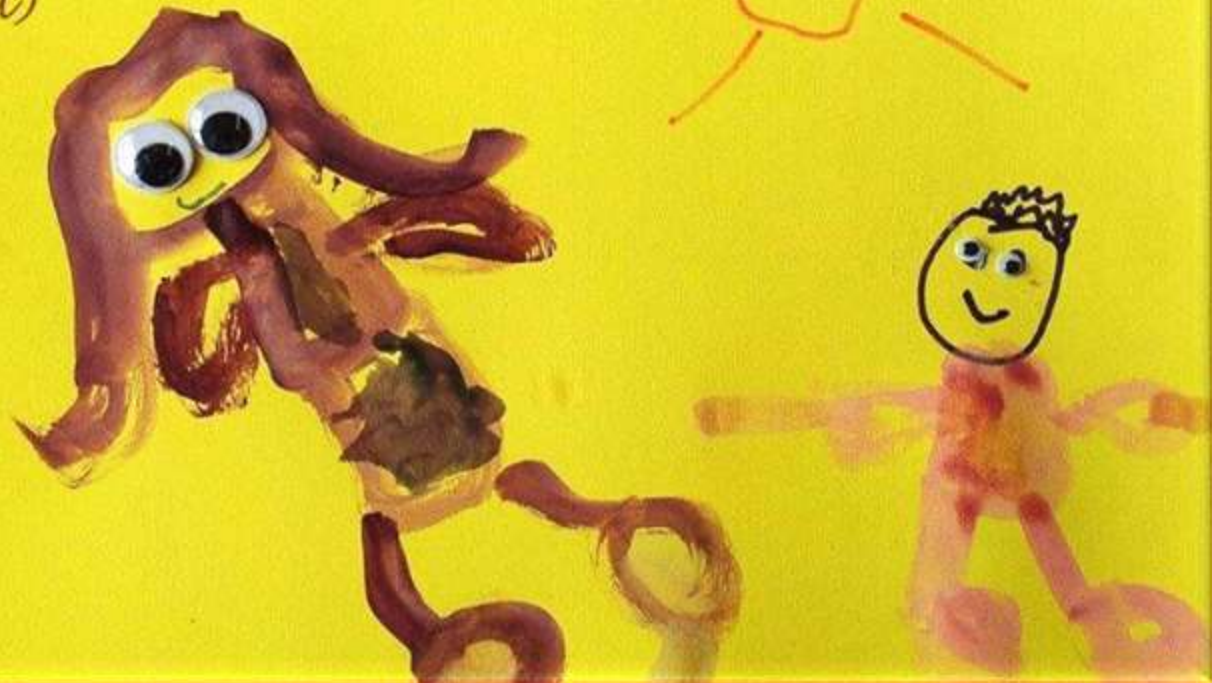
- The Art Therapy process is brought to a close when the client(s) and the Art Therapist feel and agree that it is appropriate to do so. At that point the client can take their artwork with them, either to keep or destroy (for some clients who have worked through personal and difficult issues, the act of destroying the actual work can form part of the healing process).
- Alternatively, clients can ask the Art Therapist to keep / destroy the artwork.
- In the event of the client(s) requesting that the Art Therapist keep the artwork, the Therapist can dispose of it after a period of 3 years.

# Summary of Art Therapy



.....OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY!

*'Art therapy is a place where  
you do art about your feelings!'  
(6-year-old)*





“THE SOUL NEVER THINKS WITHOUT  
AN IMAGE.”

*ARISTOTLE*

THANK YOU  
FOR LISTENING!

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