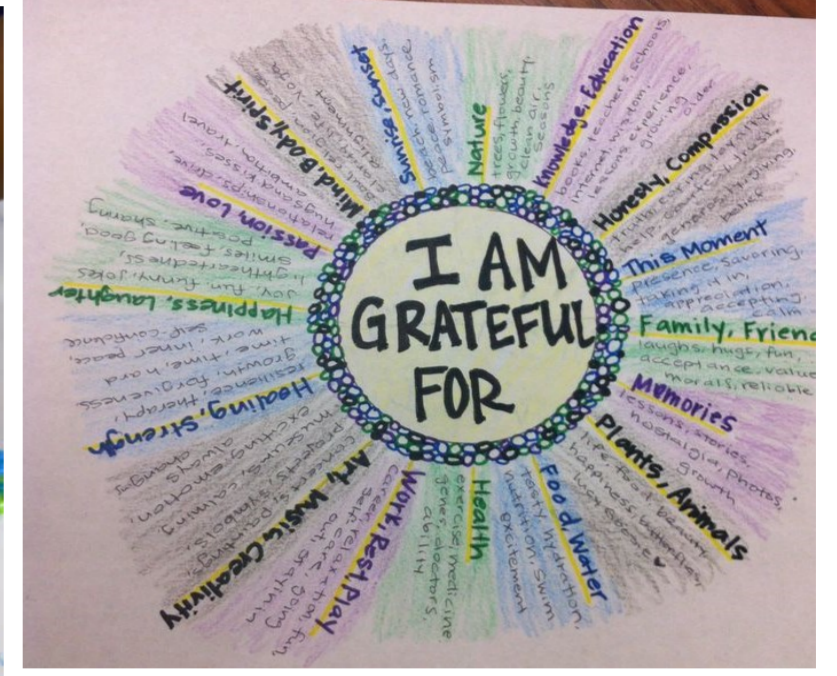


What is Art Therapy?

As an expressive medium, art can be used to help you communicate, overcome stress, and explore different aspects of your personality.

In psychology, the use of artistic methods to treat psychological disorders and enhance mental health is known as art therapy.



Benefits of Art Therapy

• **Distraction**

Drawing and art can take your mind off of what's stressing you, at least for a few minutes. And when you're finished being engrossed in your sketches, you should have a clearer head to tackle your problems again.

• **Flow**

There's a certain quality of being called "flow", that experts say is very beneficial for us. This refers to a state of being completely engaged in something to the point of being in a near meditative state. It carries many of the benefits of meditation, leaving you much less stressed when you're done. You can experience 'flow' when you're doing creative activities like writing, and even gardening. You can also get it from drawing.

• **Self Care**

Sometimes with all of life's responsibilities, we forget that we need and deserve 'down time' and self care. Just the act of having a hobby can make you feel more balanced in your lifestyle.

DO IT YOURSELF Art Therapy for Stress Relief

- Sketch pictures that describe your feelings related to things in your life that are causing you stress currently. If it's in the back of your mind anyway, this could be a way of processing your related emotions, reducing some of the stress they carry.
- Sketch abstract pictures that express feelings related to past stressful experiences, as a way of processing your emotions and healing.
- **Just scribble!** Let out some of your frustration and stress—it doesn't have to look pretty!
- **Have fun!** Paint with your fingers, paint in the dark, use crayons and markers, throw paint—whatever feels good to you—just loosen up!



Sources:

<http://arttherapy.org/>

<http://psychology.about.com/od/psychotherapy/f/art-therapy.htm>

<http://www.arttalk.com/archives/vol-10/artv1007-5.htm>

<http://stress.about.com/od/funandgames/a/learningtodraw.htm>