

## Art Therapy

**Art Therapy** is a 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 based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight. **Art therapists** are trained to pick up on nonverbal symbols and metaphors that are often expressed through art and the creative process, concepts that are usually difficult to express with words.

Some situations in which art therapy might be utilized include:

- Children with learning disabilities
- Adults experiencing severe stress
- Children suffering from behavioral or social problems at school or at home
- People experiencing mental health problems
- Individuals suffering from a brain injury
- Children or adults who have experienced a traumatic event



### Undergraduate Course recommendations:

PY 358 Abnormal Psych  
HD 101 Human Development  
UH 300 Art to Life  
(Art Therapy & Alzheimer's disease)  
Minor in Art

### Preparation for Graduate School:

Research with faculty, like Dr. Rebecca Allen  
Clinical volunteer experiences  
Involvement in organizations like Psi Chi,  
Psychology Club, and NAMI.

### Education Requirements:

- The practice of art therapy requires an educational background in human development, psychological and behavioral disorders, counseling theories, and therapeutic techniques.
- A Bachelor's degree in a related field such as psychology, counseling, art, art education.
- According to the American Art Therapy Association, the minimum requirements:
  1. A master's degree in art therapy, or
  2. A master's degree in counseling or a related field with additional coursework in art therapy
- All entry level practitioners of art therapy are required to have a master's degree from an institution of higher learning recognized by a regional accrediting body approved by the Council for Higher Education Association (CHEA).
- Prospective art therapy graduate students must submit a portfolio of their artwork in order to be admitted to an art therapy degree program.
- New therapists are eligible to earn a credential to become a registered art therapist (ATR). Registered art therapists must successfully pass a written exam administered by the ATCB to become board certified (ATR - BC).

### Salary:

Median: \$41,612

Entry level (0-5 yr) \$41,000

Mid-Career (5-10yr) \$49,000

Experienced (10-20yr) \$52,000

>20 yr \$53,000

### Additional Resources and Further Reading:

#### **America Art Therapy Association:**

[www.americanarttherapyassociation.org](http://www.americanarttherapyassociation.org)  
[psychology.about.com/od/psychotherapy/f/art-therapy.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/psychotherapy/f/art-therapy.htm)