

# What is Art Therapy?

A guide for service users in Newcastle





## **What is art therapy?**

Art therapy involves using art and discussion with an art psychotherapist. Using art materials can help you to express your thoughts and feelings and it can provide another way of communicating when it is hard to talk. You do not have to be good at art; the aim is not to improve your skills.

In art therapy you will have time to talk and think about your difficulties with the art psychotherapist and it may help you to understand yourself better, gain insight and for change to occur.

Art therapy focuses on your feelings and how they affect your life so it can make you feel emotional during and after a session.

Art therapy takes place as individual one to one sessions or within group settings.

## **What are the benefits of art therapy?**

It can help you communicate when you cannot talk about your feelings and difficulties.

- Making artwork about how you feel can help you cope better with your emotions and make them feel more manageable.
- Through discussion with the art psychotherapist you can gain a better understanding about yourself, this can enable you to recognise your strengths and weaknesses.
- It can improve self-esteem and confidence.
- It can improve the ability to relate to others and maintain relationships.
- It can help you to feel more in control of your emotions, i.e. through your artwork you can gain a different perspective of your difficulties.
- It may help you to make links between past experience and the here and now.

## **Will the work I do be confidential?**

The artwork made in art therapy and any information shared with the art psychotherapist will be treated as confidential. Health professionals who are part of the team involved in your treatment will be kept informed of your progress.

There may be times when we need to share information that you have talked to the therapist about, this would only occur if you or another person may be at risk.

Some details of your care may be recorded either on paper or on computer systems; this information is strictly governed by the Data Protection Act and only accessible by authorised personnel. If you would like more information about this please ask your art psychotherapist.

All information regarding your treatment is held in accordance with the Caldicott principles, which protects the use of information about service users.

## **How can I be referred to the Art Therapy Service?**

If you are interested in attending art therapy please talk to your key worker on your ward, your care co-ordinator or psychiatrist or other health professional who can refer you to the service.

Following receipt of your referral you will have an initial appointment with the Art Psychotherapist to discuss what art therapy work would involve.

## **Assessment**

Following your initial meeting you may be offered up to six sessions on an assessment basis. This is so the Art Psychotherapist can assess your current needs and together you can decide if therapy is appropriate and if so identify the difficulties you would like to work on in art therapy.

When beginning an art therapy assessment you will be encouraged to explore the art materials and will be given a confidential folder to keep your artwork in. Your folder will be kept safe by the art psychotherapist for the duration of the assessment.

Goals of therapy will be identified during the assessment if appropriate. Duration, regularity, location and times of therapy will be agreed and once established will usually remain the same throughout therapy in order to provide a sense of consistency and security.

Following the assessment, a report will be written outlining the work that has been done and the outcome. You may receive a copy of this report if you wish.

## **Discharge**

Your last art therapy session will usually be agreed with you well in advance as this can sometimes stir up a lot of mixed feelings.

Discharge summaries are discussed with and offered to you and sent to each member of your care team and G.P.

Discharge may also come about if you frequently fail to attend sessions without notice. In such cases your referrer and Consultant Psychiatrist and/or GP will be notified of your discharge from art therapy.

## **Will travel expenses be reimbursed?**

If you are travelling to attend art therapy in the community or at The Hadrian clinic and are currently receiving one of the following benefits:

- income based job seekers allowance
- income support
- working families tax credit
- disabled persons tax credit

you will be able to get financial help with your travel expenses.

## **For more information**

If you would like more information about the art therapy service in Newcastle please contact us on 0191 246 8687 or for more general information about art therapy visit [www.baat.org](http://www.baat.org).

## **References**

British Association of Art Therapists [www.baat.org](http://www.baat.org)

## **What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?**

If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can:

- talk to the people directly involved in your care
- complete a feedback card, available on wards. Some areas of the Trust have electronic feedback touch screens, staff can help you to use these. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you or your carers bring to our attention.
- ask a member of staff for a feedback form, or complete a form on the Trust website [www.nw.nhs.uk](http://www.nw.nhs.uk) (click on the 'Contact Us' tab)
- telephone the Complaints Department Tel: 0191 245 6672





Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre  
Tel: 0191 246 7288

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