

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Art Therapy For Children: A Curriculum for Therapists To Utilize With Children Aged  
Six Through Twelve With Varying Diagnosis and Behavioral Issues

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Masters of Science in Counseling,  
Marriage and Family Therapy

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## DEDICATION

This graduate project is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Mayumi. She was an inspirational role model, and the reason why I love working with art and children.

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## ABSTRACT

# ART THERAPY FOR CHILDREN: A CURRICULUM FOR THERAPISTS TO UTILIZE WITH CHILDREN AGED SIX THROUGH TWELVE WITH VARYING DIAGNOSIS AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

By

Jaclyn Yuki Schlanger

Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

The purpose of this graduate project was to design a curriculum which addresses children aged six through twelve with various behavior and emotional difficulties. The primary goal of this eight week curriculum is to foster a sense of emotional awareness amongst children, and allow them to engage in self-awareness activities that are intended to be creative and fun to stimulate personal growth and engagement, along with the ability to feel safe opening up and processing various emotional issues that may plague a child in these age ranges, despite where they may be developmentally. Each session can be modified to fit the specifics of the children enrolled in the program, with modifications and amendments cited throughout the curriculum outline. Through each 90 minute session, the child will be able to build positive relationships with one another while increasing self-awareness and implementing positive coping skills.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

“Fostering creativity within yourself and others revitalizes the ability to feel, express, and act constructively – crucial competencies for our world.”

-Natalie Rogers, Ph.D.

*The Creative Connection for Groups: Person-Centered Expressive Arts for Healing and Social Change*

#### **Statement of Need/Problem**

This project will review the importance of applying art therapy to young children in order to teach verbalization of emotions, resilience and strength recognition for symptom recovery and reduction. The quote above comes from the late Dr. Natalie Rogers. Rogers (1959) was the daughter of person centered therapy founder Carl Rogers, and like her father, she also discovered her own place in the realm of psychology, stating that in person centered therapy, in order to achieve an optimal level of functioning it is important to be open to learning from new experiences. Dr. Carl Rogers (1961) also believed that a large part of the healing process was founded on the relationship between the client and the therapist. Sommers-Flanagan (2007) posits that trusting the client to know what was best for themselves was an overall theme in person centered theory, and one that Carl’s daughter, Dr. Natalie Rogers, utilized in her work which focused on the creative expressive arts as a form of healing. In an attempt to better understand the ideas behind art therapy, the journal of counseling and development interviewer John Sommers-Flanagan asked Dr. Natalie Rogers how she found this passion. Her response was:

I started out as a play therapist with children, and so the whole idea of using art as

a free spirit was part of my integration very early on. Then, when I went into private practice, I integrated what had been healing for me—and much of it came through art. I realized that if I stayed with the person-centered principles, I would not use art to diagnose or treat or analyze. If I just used art as a self-expression and art as a language between us, I could do no harm—which was my major concern since I hadn't had formal training in art therapy, and at that time there was no such word as expressive art. So I just began to ask clients if they would like to express what they were feeling through color or clay, and then when we finished I'd get them to talk about it, what it meant for them (Sommers-Flanagan, 2007 p.122).

This form of therapy utilized various art forms in the realms of dance, painting, sculpting, music, writing, sound and improvisation in a non-judgmental setting to promote growth and healing for clients (Sommers-Flanagan, 2007). Understanding the basis for art therapy and how it can be used to promote verbalization of emotions to promote healing in children is the primary focus of this project.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to support the structuring of a group curriculum designed for therapeutic professionals working with children aged six through twelve who have difficulty understanding and verbalizing their emotions. A therapeutic friendly workbook will accompany this curriculum, which will list guidelines and suggestions for interventions based on behaviors and diagnosis for children aged six through twelve. The curriculum and workbook will be designed from a strength based and creativity provoking mindset, helping children recognize tools within themselves to recognize and

communicate complicated emotions as well as confront the many obstacles that they may encounter throughout their lives. The primary areas of focus will be on children who have a hard time understanding and expressing emotions relating to trauma, grief, depression, autism, sexual abuse and for those who witness parental violence. The curriculum will focus on working with groups of individuals who may have encountered these types of situations, and how a therapist can effectively work with those children. By focusing on a curriculum that primarily addresses how to communicate emotions, children can learn how to recognize the issues that may be stunting or negatively affecting their development and look to therapists to help guide them through these various emotions. The accompanying workbook will help therapists to both recognize a person's' symptoms and utilize the various research based tools and techniques that are unique to each child's experience and diagnosis in order to help emphasize their strength and resilience in understanding their emotions throughout the process of engaging in the curriculum. Learning and applying coping strategies to help children move through the various life experiences that are unique to them are the goals of this project, while also fostering resiliency, communication and self-awareness throughout the process.

### **Statement of Significance**

This project will help fill the gap for the lack of readily available guidelines that support art therapy for children with various behavioral issues and diagnosis. The group curriculum and workbook can be used by therapists, counselors, and/or other licensed mental health professionals towards their own learning and treatment of children with

various diagnosis and life experiences who could benefit from expressing themselves through art.

### **Terminology**

According to Waller (2006), art therapy is a term used to describe a form of therapy that promotes positive change through engagement with both art materials and a therapist within a safe and non-judgmental environment. Art therapy is often used to help children, adolescents, adults and the elderly with emotional, developmental and behavioral issues. Eliciting positive change through art therapy occurs when the client is able to physically involve themselves with the materials, make a significant object utilizing the art materials, sublimate feelings into images they create, and communicate with the therapist utilizing the art they have created (Waller, 2006). Edith Kramer was one of the earliest art therapists from the 1940s, and her work was done primarily with children. Kramer “considered that it was the art activity itself that had inherent healing properties; that an object could emerge out of destructive and aggressive feelings which would symbolize those feelings and thus prevent them being acted out”( 2006, p.275). Since then, more improvements have been made in the implementation of art as a viable form of therapy, and have even listed the fundamentals of art therapy as:

1. Visual image making is an important aspect of the human learning process;
2. Art made in the presence of an art therapist may enable a child to get in touch with feelings that cannot easily be expressed in words
3. The art can act as a ‘container’ for powerful emotions;
4. It may be a means of communication between child and therapist

5. It can serve to illuminate the transference (Waller, 2006 p.271-272)

In order to better understand this issue, it is necessary to review previous studies and research regarding art therapy and children. Looking into how art therapy has been utilized in the past as a form of treatment for trauma, grief, depression, autism, sexual abuse and for clients who have witnessed parental violence is important in understanding art therapy's role in the healing process. One vital aspect of this project is exploring the effects art therapy has in helping children to better understand and communicate the complicated emotions that come with these life experiences.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

Waller (2006) contends that art therapy can be utilized by therapists to elicit positive change in clients as a direct result of creating art in a safe environment to help clients explore and express complicated emotions with their therapist that they may have a difficult time putting into words. Human beings are complex creatures, and often have creativity brimming beneath the surface of their minds. Children often enjoy creativity and artful expression, and much of the curriculum for a preschool class is often art based, since children are still developing and not yet able to effectively read or write at optimal levels. D.W. Winnicott was an art therapist who wrote a book titled *Playing and Reality* (1971) which focused on the importance of creativity being facilitated by the therapist to promote positive change in clients, specifically children. Winnicott also published a paper in 1951 titled 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' which led to the idea that the art created in art therapy could act as a transitional object that would maintain the connection fostered between the therapist and client both in and out of sessions. In doing this, the client develops a secure attachment with the therapist and can even help a child to take part in potentially one of their first playful processes with an adult allowing the child to "express and share emotions and to learn new patterns of relating – in turn leading to becoming more confident and creative, and to feeling more in control of their world"(Waller, 2006, p.277).

## **Art Therapy in Various Settings**

**School Settings.** Art therapy has been utilized with children in various settings and at different stages of a child's development. The school setting is often one of the most prominent places one can imagine utilizing art therapy with children, as most children in the United States are enrolled in school and expected to be attending on a daily basis. Karkou (2010) has explored the ways in which art therapy has been utilized with children in academic settings. The author explores music, art, drama and dance movement psychotherapy, and primarily focuses on research and practice related to the field of art therapy. Following the growing interest in art therapy utilization with children, Karkou identifies applicable therapeutic approaches and expands on relevant research evidence by examining the contribution art therapies have on the emotional and social development of children and adolescents. Karkou focuses on how art therapy can be applied in mainstream classrooms, special schools and student support units. Expanding on the idea of creative techniques to engage children in processing their emotions, Karkou identifies the benefits of solution-focused brief drama therapy in mainstream education, art therapy for children who have experienced trauma and subsequently displayed learning difficulties and music therapy in special education. Karkou emphasizes the importance of collaboration between art therapists and teaching staff, and encourages the usefulness of such tools to help children process emotions inside the classroom setting (Karkou, 2010).

**Healthcare Settings.** Maldiochi (2013) emphasizes the importance of art therapy in the field of health care. The author focuses on the benefits of creative expression and

how participating in art therapy has been proven to positively affect those living with an acute or chronic illness. Utilizing evidence based techniques, the author explains how both children and adults experience positive benefits when coping with the mental and physical symptoms of their illness. Maldiochi lays out the evidence that several studies have demonstrated that art therapy actually enhances the psychosocial treatment of illnesses such as cancer by decreasing the symptoms of distress and providing a more positive perception of body image that contribute to decreased symptoms of distress and pain perception. Research has also indicated that depression and fatigue levels in cancer patients show significant reduction when participating in art therapy, along with increased “perceptions of support, psychological strength, and insights about their cancer experience” (Maldiochi, 2013, p. 8).

### **Impact of Art Therapy on Children with Various Diagnosis**

Assessing the need for art therapy in children based on various behaviors and diagnosis is crucial in making sure that the proper form of treatment is being applied to the linked diagnosis. In order to apply the most effective art therapy interventions to the corresponding diagnosis, it is crucial to examine the research and evidence based literature on these specific areas of focus. This project will focus on the aspects of trauma, grief, depression, autism, sexual abuse, and effects of witnessing parental violence and the research that has been found to support the positive impacts art therapy has on children who have experienced these issues.

**Trauma.** According to Carey (2006), trauma can affect anyone and usually elicits intense, negative emotions associated with a significant event or observation that

overwhelms a person's psyche to the point there that person is "unable to use his or her usual psychological defenses, or to function in the usual fashion" (2006, p.15). Trauma can be defined as "a painful emotional experience, or shock, often producing a lasting psychic effect and, sometimes, a neurosis" (Your Dictionary Online, 2017, para. 2). According to Carey (2006), art therapy has proven to be effective in helping those who have experienced traumatic events. Carey emphasizes the fact that young children, typically those below the age of eight years old, find it difficult to express their emotions utilizing direct words and that those who have experienced some type of trauma find it even more difficult. Utilizing art therapy as a form of healing, Carey advocates for the idea that alternative methods of expression which focus on utilizing creativity to express emotions, can often aid in the understanding and potential eventual verbalization of such emotions within a traumatized child (Carey, 2006).

According to Carey, (2006), Dr. Nancy Boyd Webb examines the various types of trauma that can affect a child and how some traumas can relate directly to the person while others can be inflicted by society. An example of a personal trauma could be children "who have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, who have been neglected and/or exposed to domestic violence, who have lost a parent, sibling, or other family member through divorce or death or suicide. One of the tasks of therapy is to help them find ways to express their feelings through alternative methods of expression" (Carey, 2006 p.12).

**Grief.** Grief can occur when a profound loss occurs to a human being, be it the death of someone close to them or the sudden withdrawal of something significant, and that human being becomes mentally affected by this loss. According to Hill and

Lineweaver (2016), 11% of individuals under the age of twenty experience the death of a parent, and 5% experience the death of a sibling in the United States alone. The children who experience this often are at risk for developing potential negative mental thought processes, including social withdrawal; behavioral aggression; and feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and guilt. In order to confront this, seeking a positive outlet for children to explore their grief through visual forms of therapy is often considered. The results of this study were consistent with past research that proved that art is beneficial for improvements in mood (Hill & Lineweaver, 2016). Davis (1989) examined the effects art therapy had on grieving children. The author indicates the confusion and misinformation often presented to children regarding grief and what really happened to those they care about. The main objectives of facilitating art therapy with grieving children was to present sense of awareness, an ability to effectively express feelings, an ability to work through a problem, and to enhance both creativity and joy (Davis, 1989). While many aspects of grief can be confronted utilizing art therapy as a tool, studies have also shown that those who made art individually experienced improved affect more significantly than those who created art in a group setting (Hill & Lineweaver, 2016).

**Depression.** Fehlner (1994) focused on the effects of art therapy on children who suffered from depression. She explored an art therapy program which allowed depressed children to express their needs and feelings while helping to boost self-esteem as a way of unblocking the energy the children used to deny or repress their personal pain surrounding a traumatic experience that led to depression. The art therapy allowed the children to create spontaneous art and in turn find catharsis through naming the pain they experienced surrounding their depression (Fehlner, 1994).

**Autism.** Emery (2004) focused on how art therapy could be utilized as a tool to help children diagnosed with autism. Emery defined autism as, “a pervasive developmental disorder that is characterized by impairments in social interactions, interests and activities, and language development. Children with autism are deprived of the resources from which the mind develops and organizes. For example, children with autism may exhibit severe language deficits, may not relate well to people, often have a desire for repetition, exhibit exacting attention to detail, and display rigid behaviors” (2004 p.143). The researcher goes on to discuss how the art making process appeals to children with autism in the fact that they soon get to represent their experiences non-verbally. Emery states that “Children create art because it is rooted in the need to relate to their world” and that children diagnosed with autism rarely find the need to relate (Emery, 2004 p.147). Through art therapy, a sense of self-awareness can be fostered that will ultimately help the autistic child to express their inner world more clearly.

**Sexual Abuse.** Pifalo (2006) examined the impact art therapy has on children who experience sexual abuse. The researcher had originally documented the positive effects art therapy had on child survivors of sexual abuse in 2001 by examining the combination of art therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques in an effort to reduce posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in children who have been sexually abused. Pifalo concluded that while CBT laid out the clear-cut goals for addressing trauma in children, art therapy played a vital non-verbal role that allowed children experiencing PTSD and mixed emotions after being sexually abused to find a safe outlet for these complicated emotions in the form of creating art. Some examples of art that was created to aid in this healing experience were containers that served as

metaphors for expressing and releasing powerful emotions, map making that helped children to organize their personal trauma narrative and provided hope by listing goals for the future, and utilizing imagery to identify and represent both internal and external sources of support. Each of these artistic interventions allowed children the ability to communicate their emotions in a form that did not involve verbalization, which aided in those children who were not ready to verbalize their traumatic event but still yearned for a sense of release (Pifalo, 2006). In 2006 a follow-up study was conducted by Pifalo (2006) to once again test the efficacy of art therapy and its impact on child survivors of sexual assault. Utilizing the same art therapy and CBT model as previously examined, the examination of the study provided empirical evidence that utilizing these techniques to treat PTSD symptoms in sexually abused children provides positive results (Pifalo, 2006).

**Witness to Parental Violence.** Children who are exposed to parental violence often present symptoms related to the emotional scars they carry after being exposed to such abuse. Kozlowska and Hanney (2001) focused on the effects of art therapy on children who had been exposed to parental violence. The children all presented with symptoms related to the exposure, and showed signs of post-traumatic stress, developmental problems associated with the trauma, displayed difficulties discussing general traumatic events, displayed difficulties discussing familial concerns, and would often react to being confronted with traumatic dialogue by either exhibiting symptoms of hyperarousal or emotionally shutting down. The researchers documented the fact that many of these children had sought other forms of treatment which varied from outpatient family therapy to medicating the child. In order to facilitate art therapy with the children,

a child psychiatrist and art therapist developed a group that was structured with low anxiety and lots of interaction. Utilizing art as a means of expressing the complicated emotions related to the child being exposed to parental violence, the children were confronted with being exposed to the traumatic event in a manner which felt less direct and facilitated the desensitization of anxiety associated with the parental violence. By facilitating this utilizing art therapy, the children were able to redefine their narrative and articulate their emotions in a less direct manner. Through the medium of art, the children were able to identify the positive changes that have occurred in their family since the traumatic event, and had more overt coping skills identified to manage the stress they had felt (Hanney & Kozlowska, 2001).

### **Impacts of Art Therapy on Diverse Populations**

When applying art therapy to diverse populations, it is important to take into account the perceptions and efficacy such a form of treatment may have on a population that may or may not be as open to the idea of utilizing art as a form of healing. Due to the nonverbal nature of art, in terms of cultures, interpretation can vary but still maintain its ability to be universal in allowing its participant to evoke emotions via images. St. Thomas and Johnson (2007) explored the many benefits art therapy has on children from various cultures from across the globe. The authors focus on children who have had to move to another country, and therefore culture, and how the sudden culture shock can disrupt a child's lifestyle. Through art therapy, these children are able to express and resolve various emotions without needing to verbalize those emotions that are difficult to

express in words, about traumatic experiences with regards to being relocated from one culture to another (Johnson & Thomas, 2007).

### **Exploring Art Therapy Interventions and Benefits**

There are a multitude of art therapy interventions that can be utilized when working with children aged 6-12, and a number of them will be stated explicitly in the accompanying workbook. Along with these interventions come many benefits that contribute to promote positive change in children affected with various behavioral issues and diagnosis. The benefits of promoting art therapy with children include an ability to communicate feelings, improvement in family interactions, better understanding of the child's process, improved social skills, improved self-awareness, and improved self-esteem.

**Communicate Feelings.** In order to promote communication of emotions in art therapy, it is important to remember that children who have a hard time verbalizing emotions may likely turn towards art for that emotional release. As Waller (2006) stated, "art made in the presence of an art therapist may enable a child to get in touch with feelings that cannot easily be expressed in words" (p. 271). While not explicitly stating what the emotion they are feeling may be, a child can utilize line, shape and color to express their emotions within. A child may also attribute meaning to their artwork when reflecting back on it with the therapist, and in turn may be potentially divulging vital information in the form of a cathartic release (Waller, 2006).

**Improved Familial Interactions.** A child who utilizes art therapy to release repressed or denied emotions may result in an ability to process and confront those

emotions which can result in better relationships with those that they are constantly in the presence of. If a family member notices their child acting out due to a repressed emotion, they may find it surprising to see that the child can begin to process and understand their emotions to a higher degree after learning more about it through art therapy. Case and Halliday (1987) focused on how art therapy played a role in eliciting change in children. Their case study of Con, a nine-year-old boy who was acting out aggressively and reported feelings of jealousy after the birth of his younger brother, focused on a boy who would create violent and disturbing images that represented his family life. As work with the child progressed, the researchers needed to maintain extremely strong boundaries as the child began throwing things at his paintings and destroying his metaphorical works that represented those to whom he was closest. The focus of these violent reactions to his artwork was to allow the child to release those violent emotions onto the art rather than onto himself or others (Case & Halliday, 1987). Due to the fact that “patterns of relating and behavior are established very early on and art therapy is not a quick fix for deep disturbance,” it is important to remember that change takes time (Waller, 2006, p. 279). In this particular instance, “change takes place as a result of the child learning that it is possible to have angry feelings but to express them ‘safely’ through the art, and in the knowledge that the therapist will not retaliate,” and results in the child being able to have more positive interactions with his family members (Waller, 2006, p. 279).

**Better Understanding of the Child’s Process.** Every child interprets the world around them differently. Some may not be able to verbalize or outwardly state why they see the world as they do, and to many adults the ways in which the child takes in and processes emotions may be confusing and otherworldly. According to Waller (2006),

through art therapy, the expression is laid out in images that can be interpreted more strategically than the clear-cut understanding of verbalized words. Through observing a child's interaction with their artwork along with their ultimate creation, one can potentially understand the child's process a bit more effectively. A prime example of observing and gaining insight into a child's process was described by Waller in the analysis of how much of a mess a child may make while partaking in art creating therapy. The observation followed child victims of physical and sexual abuse, and noted that there may be a correlation between the ability to loosen control and how immersed a child may become in creating their artwork. "Materials may be smeared, spilled and wasted and the therapist has to struggle to maintain boundaries and to tolerate a high level of anxiety aroused in the child as a result of their attacks on the therapeutic space" (2006 p.276). These "attacks" may be attributed to how the child is processing their emotions, and can even result in a child destroying their artwork if they feel too emotionally disturbed by them to keep them. It was also noted that the act of mess making during art therapy can also be helpful in reanimating children who may have been flattened emotionally by a traumatic experience. All of these observations contribute to the ultimate better understanding of the child's process as a whole (Waller, 2006).

**Improved Social Skills.** Waller (2006) posits that utilizing art therapy with children in a group setting can prove beneficial for children to develop social skills by having to interact with others in a creative environment. Not only is the child releasing emotions through their artwork that can potentially unblock social anxiety, but the child is also creating and allowed to be free to explore their creativity amongst peers, and potentially foster bonds during this time. "In a group setting, the process of art making

and the interaction among members...can assist in the acquisition of social skills and lead to behaviour change” (Waller, 2006 p. 272).

**Improved Self Awareness.** Children who utilize art therapy may have a difficult time expressing themselves and understanding the many complicated emotions that come with being a human being. According to Waller (2006), through emotion recognition and process in artwork, a child can become more aware of their inner feelings and interpretations of the world and people around them. The case study of Amanda was explored by Waller research, and focused on a young girl who would often self-harm. Through repeated and consistent sessions of art therapy, the child was able to produce positive change as evidenced by her ability to trust others as well as “recognize her pain and to see her vulnerability” (2006 p. 274). Through these areas of heightened self-awareness, the child was able to produce the positive change that would put her on the path towards healing (Waller, 2006).

**Improved Self Esteem.** Through art therapy a child can release pent up emotions and identify what it is they are actually feelings within themselves. Waller (2006) argues that by allowing themselves the opportunity to dig deeper into who they are and how they feel, they can begin to form a more solid identity and self-awareness that can foster a higher sense of self-esteem. As evidenced by the case study of Amanda referenced above, the researcher reported that positive change in the form of heightened levels of confidence were observed after the child would interact with the therapist and get a response on her artwork, as “the feedback from this creative process in turn gave her more confidence and a better self-image” (Waller, 2006 p.274).

## **Conclusion**

Art therapy has been proven to be an effective and life changing tool for children who have a difficult time verbalizing or even understanding their emotions. It has been used in various settings from schools to health care settings, and has been shown to be beneficial in each area applied. Art therapy can be utilized to treat a multitude of behaviors and diagnosis including trauma, grief, depression, autism, sexual abuse and children who have witnessed parental violence. Art therapy can also be applied to diverse populations due to its ability to reach a large audience since it is an imagery based approach. The benefits of art therapy include the ability to communicate feelings, an improvement in family interactions, a better understanding of the child's process, improved social skills, improved self-awareness and improved self-esteem.

The purpose of this project is to develop a group curriculum that addresses children who have a hard time verbalizing and understanding their emotions. A therapist-friendly workbook will accompany this curriculum for therapists to utilize which lists guidelines and suggestions for interventions based on behaviors and diagnosis for children aged 6-12.

This project will hopefully help fill the gap for the lack of readily available guidelines that support art therapy for children with various behavioral issues and diagnosis. The group curriculum and workbook can be used by therapists, counselors, and other licensed mental health professionals and will be described in depth in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Introducing the Curriculum**

#### **Introduction**

As presented in the previous chapters, art therapy is a significant tool to be utilized with children aged 6-12 with varying degrees of behavioral issues and diagnosis. The literature review focused on a range of information from the many trauma's that can and do affect children, and how art therapy can be utilized as a form of nonverbal communication and catharsis. Due to the lack of knowledge about what type of art interventions to utilize combined with some hesitation on how to effectively apply art therapy techniques with children, a curriculum has been proposed to assist therapists in utilizing these techniques over the course of eight weeks. The curriculum is intended to help increase self-awareness and positive coping skills amongst children who have experienced trauma or been diagnosed with a wide range of symptomatology that need to be addressed.

#### **Project Development**

Throughout my entire life I have worked with children and art. I obtained my Bachelor's Degree in Child and Adolescent Development from California State University, Northridge in 2008. I took time off from school to do hands on work with children, and became the art director of a local summer camp. During this time I also became an art teacher at a local elementary school and worked with children between ages five through twelve. During my time teaching art, I was able to observe firsthand the

impact that art played in a child's overall development. I observed social interactions and personal awareness increase simply through facilitating self-expression in the form of art, and began to research art therapy. In my research I found that not only is art helpful for those who may not be able to accurately express their emotions through verbalization, but it also empowers children who may not know the "right words" to utilize when attempting to express themselves. After eight years of working in the field of children and art, I decided to go back to school to obtain a graduate degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Through this medium, I have been able to conduct art therapy with children in a clinic setting, and have observed tremendous growth and self-awareness on multiple levels. I was able to work with children diagnosed with ADD and Autism, and those who experienced social anxiety and a lack of confidence. Through firsthand observations, the basis of most of my work with children and art therapy seemed to center around the language of feelings, and whether or not a child had the ability to effectively express themselves and their feelings verbally. When utilizing art in the form of play, a child can slowly learn to understand themselves as they take on the role of willing participant. When play and art is involved, it engages the attention of a child and allows freedom of expression without limitations. This curriculum centers around art and play as a way of facilitating personal expression, and aids in personal growth and the development of awareness across developmental levels of engagement.

### **Intended Audience**

The target population for this curriculum is children aged six through twelve with a wide range of diagnosis. Inclusions include: autism, adhd, ocd, social anxiety, low self-

esteem, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse. It can also be conducted with children who have no known diagnosis, and who may be curious about exploring art therapy and how their internal processing is conducted. Exclusions include: children below the age of six and above the age of twelve. These exclusions are to maintain the curriculum that was designed for those developmentally aged between six and twelve, as it would not be applicable to a person below or above those ranges without significant developmental amendments.

### **Length of Curriculum**

The curriculum will cover the span of eight weeks. This will give the children ample time to build rapport with one another, while working on issues they may not realize they are addressing through play and art. Each session will take place over a 90 minute time period, one time per week. This will give the children time to process on their own outside of the therapeutic environment, and apply the skills and interventions they learn in session to their everyday lives. Progress will be more easily monitored with the time gaps, and consistency will allow children to grow through the curriculum at each step of the way.

### **Personal Qualifications**

The conductor of this curriculum should be a marriage and family therapist, school counselor, or school psychologist with strong knowledge of children and their developmental stages. Licensed professionals who possess high comfort levels working with children aged six through twelve and are comfortable utilizing art materials are

particularly encouraged to conduct this curriculum. Unlicensed professionals with a passion and strong knowledge of the developmental ages and stages of children are also encouraged to utilize this curriculum, but only under the supervision of a licensed professional. There is a short visual PowerPoint presentation which summarizes the key points of the literature review in the appendix of this project for the implementing therapist/therapists to review before beginning to conduct the curriculum to help obtain more insight on the positive impacts of art therapy with children. A detailed workbook of the curriculum is also included to more easily inform the implementing therapist/therapists of procedures and protocol throughout the curriculum, with accompanying handouts and amendments to be utilized at each step of the process.

### **Environment and Equipment**

The program was designed to be implemented in group settings either in therapy clinics or school rooms; nonetheless other facilities are also qualified so long as the conductor brings the appropriate equipment to each session. Due to the nature of art therapy, multiple art supplies will be needed to carry out each session. A “Materials Needed” section is listed with each session description of the curriculum in order to know what to prepare for. The workbook laid out after the outline of the curriculum goes into extensive detail on how to carry out each session.

Modifications can be done if necessary.

## Outline of Curriculum

### I. First Session: Getting to Know You

#### A. Name Signs

1. Each child creates a name sign with only their first name written on it.

Each letter of their name can be transformed into a drawing of something the child likes or relates to. This will provide the child the opportunity to reflect on their own likes, while also pick and choose what they feel they want to share with the group. When they are done each child can go around the table introducing their names and describing why they chose each picture and what they like about it.

- a. Modification One: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it.

- b. Modification Two: You can initiate the name tag talking by modeling what to expect and describing their own name tag that they make alongside the children.

- c. Modification Three: You are encouraged to be creative with the modifications. For example: Instead of using real names, each child can create their own superhero name based on characteristics they admire.

Materials Needed: 8X10 paper (colored or white is fine); colored markers; colored pencils; colored crayons

Total Time: 30 minutes

## B. How I Feel Today

1. The next activity will center around feeling identification and potential verbalization. Each child will be given a “feelings chart” with various emotional faces representing a different mood (a “feelings chart” worksheet is located in the workbook in the appendix of this project).
2. Instruct the children to identify and color in the face or faces they feel encompass their mood for that day.
3. Allow them to go around and explain which face they selected, followed by each emotion they chose to assign to that face. They can then explain what happened to them that day or why they feel that this emotion best represents them.
  - a. Modification One: To occupy more time or for children who seem particularly interested in identifying emotions, have children assign a feeling word for each face and go down the list to identify every one.
  - b. Modification Two: Have children select their favorite emotion and explain why that emotion appeals to them. Encourage nonjudgmental stances and appreciation of each emotion amongst the group. Identify and describe times in which that emotion felt particularly strong in the client.
  - c. Modification Three: You are encouraged to be creative with the modifications. Feel free to come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: Feelings Chart (located in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 30 minutes

### C. Movement Break: Feelings Freeze Dance

1. Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break. Create a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions. Utilize both fast paced and slow paced songs from a variety of genres (a suggested playlist is located in the workbook in the appendix of this project).
2. Instruct the children to dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it. For example, if the music is loud and rock n' roll like, perhaps the child may feel aggressive and jump around excessively. If the music is slow and classical, perhaps the child may feel peaceful and will dance slowly and purposefully. Allow each child to engage with the music how they feel fit.
3. Change and pause each song at random intervals and have children freeze in the moment to create a freeze dance type game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for adhd and autism, though it is important to keep volume in mind and check in with those diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated).
  - a. Modification One: Allow a single "helper" to select songs if you feel it will enhance activity engagement.

- b. Modification Two: You are encouraged to be creative with the modifications. Feel free to come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: Music player; playlist (located in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. After dancing, have the children sit on the floor in a circle. One by one allow them to discuss how they are feeling right now, after all of the activities have finished. Allow them to discuss their favorite activity and why. Encourage and model feedback and interaction amongst the group.

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

1. Allow each child to create their own way of saying goodbye. Have the child act out how they will say goodbye (wave, handshake, high five, thumbs up) in a circle, as each child partakes in it.
2. Recommend that the children remember their “goodbye movement” to utilize in the next session.

Total Time: 10 minutes

## II. Second Session: Feelings Fun

### A. Today I Feel

1. Have pieces of paper and crayons laid out on a table for the children to walk into. Instruct them to draw a picture or write down how they are feeling that day utilizing the crayons.
  - a. This can be represented in color, shapes or images.
2. After the children have finished, have them go around the table discussing the picture they have drawn and the feelings encompassed by it.
3. Have the group identify their primary feeling in the moment and why think they feel that way.
  - a. Modification One: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it.
  - b. Modification Two: You can initiate sharing by modeling what to expect and describing your own feeling in the moment. Discuss how your feelings can change due to what happens in your day.
  - c. Modification Three: Come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: Paper; crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

#### B. Feelings Freeze Dance

1. Allow the children to leave their papers on table as they get up for a round of feelings freeze dance.
2. Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break. Create a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions. Utilize both fast paced and slow paced songs

with a variety of genres (a suggested playlist is located in the workbook in the appendix of this project).

4. Have the children dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it. Change and pause each song at random intervals to create a freezing game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for add and autism, though it is important to keep volume in mind and check in with those diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated).
  - a. Modification One: Allow a single “helper” to select songs if you feel it will enhance activity engagement.
  - b. Modification Two: You are encouraged to be creative with the modifications. Feel free to come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: Music player; suggested playlist (located in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 15 minutes

### C. Musical Feelings

1. Time to take Feelings Freeze Dance to the art table!
2. Have children sit at table with their original large feelings paper with the crayon drawing of how they feel that day.
3. Provide each client with a watercolor palette, cup of water and paint brush.

- a. Explain that the child will now utilize the water color to paint over the crayon drawing of their feeling of the day.
4. Instruct the children to listen to the music that will be played and just like with feeling Freeze Dance, allow the music to sway their emotions, this time with their hands.
5. Utilizing color, line, and shapes the children will then paint over their crayon drawing according to the various songs that will be played, switching styles or colors as each new song comes up.
  - a. The point of the activity is to represent the fact that the child may feel a prominent feeling in the moment, particularly when they first walked into group therapy, but it also facilitates an awareness that there are still a multitude of emotions that can also be felt either right after or at the same time, as dictated by events that are happening to each individual in the moment.
6. Point out to each child that their crayon drawing still shows through the other emotions, and can represent the main emotion they feel despite multiple other emotions co-occurring at the same time.
  - a. Modification One: Allow those who want to explain their emotions to do so after music playlist has finished (only play about 30 seconds to 1 minute of each song, as attention spans are likely to be limited).

Materials Needed: Original Feelings Paper; watercolor palette; paint brushes; water cup; music player; feelings freeze dance playlist

Total Time: 45 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
2. What changed it? Is it still the same? Why do they think their feelings have changed?

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

- a. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

Total Time: 5 minutes

### III. Third Session: Pirates Have Feelings Too

#### A. Feelings Map

1. Have pieces of paper lying on the table in front of each seat.
  - a. Ask the children to come in and take a seat in front of each piece of paper.
2. Let the children know that today they will be pretend pirates, navigating their metaphorical ocean of “feelings”.

3. Instruct each child to pick five different colors from the marker/colored pencil bin.
4. Using blank name tag stickers, assign an emotion to each color and write it on the sticker to put on the marker/pencil.
  - a. For example, red might represent anger while blue might represent sadness.
  - b. Each emotion will be unique to the child and will display their personal images and coloring associated with five emotions they dictate.
5. After assigning each color an emotion, the therapist will utilize music as in Feelings Freeze Dance.
6. Select songs with various tempos and styles, each child is instructed to create a “map” utilizing just color and line.
  - a. For example, if a loud rock song is played that brings up feelings of anger for a child, they can choose the color that they assigned the emotion that most represents anger for them and utilizing sharp, jagged lines to simultaneously represent anger while drawing on their paper.
  - b. If the song switches to something happy, perhaps they may choose a color they associated with happiness and create fluid, rolling lines connected to the sharp ones.
  - c. This is going to be unique to the child and their interpretations and preferences.

7. When five different songs have been utilized, stop the music and allow the children to go around the room to decipher their Feelings Maps with one another, explaining what songs triggered which emotion and why they decided on the specific coloring and line formation for that feeling.
  - a. Modification One: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it and continue to encourage a nonjudgmental safe space for sharing.
  - b. Modification Two: You can initiate discussion of emotions by modeling what to expect and describing your own feelings map that you make alongside the children.
  - c. Modification Three: Come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: blank white paper; blank white name tag stickers; box of multi colored markers/colored pencils; music player

Total Time: 25 minutes (each song only lasts 30 seconds to 1 minute)

#### B. Pirate Feelings Dance

1. Time to dance it out, pirate style!
2. Using the Feelings Maps that were just created, explain to the children that they will now get to act out their treasure maps using the songs they just assigned feelings too.
3. Play the same playlist, but mix it up!

- a. Play the songs in a different order than originally played, and see if the children can correspond their body movements to feelings evoked in each song.
4. Allow time for discussion afterwards if children feel that there has been a shift in their emotions.

Materials Needed: Music Player

Total Time: 15 minutes

### C. Ocean of Feelings

1. Now comes the fun part: making goop oceans!
2. Using clear or white school glue, place  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of glue on plastic or paper plates in front of each child.
3. Next, bring out blue food coloring to dye the ocean.
  - Drop a few colored drops into the glue, and give children popsicle sticks to mix the glue until it is colored blue.
4. Add 1 tablespoon of baking soda to the glue, and mix again.
5. Next add 1 tablespoon of contact lens solution and mix again.
  - Keep adding solution and mixing until desired consistency forms.
6. Create waves in the “ocean” by pulling apart and pinching areas of slime.
  - This allows children to play while also giving them something tangible to form with their fingers.
7. Create an “ocean” on the plate.
  - Modification One: Can add glitter to ocean slime, if desired.

- Modification Two: Can give gloves to children who are nervous about getting their hands messy (check with caretaker and child for latex allergies before putting gloves on child).

Materials Needed: plastic plates; washable school glue; various food coloring bottles; bowls of water; baking soda; eye drop solution

Total Time: 20 minutes

#### D. Ocean Play Time

1. Bring out a box of small toys.
  - a. This includes figurines that represent men, women, animals, etc.
2. Allow each child to decorate their ocean by adding the figurines to them.
  - a. They can create an island in their ocean, or keep it bare.
  - b. This will allow the children to effectively express themselves through play, as they utilize their art project to be the home base of the characters they select and whatever scenes they desire to act out.
3. Allow each child to explain why they chose each character and how they fit into the ocean environment they created.

Materials Needed: Box of small toys

Total Time: 20 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

- I. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### IV. Session Four: Identifying Emotions Day

##### A. Today I Feel

- Begin the session by allowing each child to draw on a piece of paper something to represent the emotion they are feeling today, right at that moment, as session is just beginning.
- Allow each child to go around the room and explain what and why they selected that emotion and image to go along with it.
  - a. If the child wants to decompress about their week, allow them to do so as rapport has been formed.
- This will facilitate more group bonding, and allow the child to safely express themselves.

Materials Needed: Blank paper; crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

##### B. Feelings Charades

1. Allow each child to think about emotions.
2. Have everyone pick an emotion from a piece of paper in the emotions jar.

3. Have them take turns acting out the emotions, like charades, allowing the children to guess what each emotion being acted out is.
  - A. Can be done as one group, or can create two teams to make it a competition and keep score of points.
4. After points are calculated and winning team is announced, have children from each team raise their hands to explain how they are feeling after playing and either winning or losing.
5. Process emotions attributed to each feeling, and ask other members of the group to think about what it would feel like to switch sides with the winning or losing team, and the effect they think it may have on them.
6. Process interpretations of being in the other group member's shoes.

Materials Needed: Feelings Jar (instructions in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 20 minutes

### C. Favorite and Least Favorite Feeling

1. Go around the room and have each child draw out their favorite emotion on one side of the paper using white paper and crayons.
  - a. Allow the children to utilize interpretations of imagery, color, shape and even words on their paper.
2. After they are done, have each child turn the paper over and draw out their least favorite feeling.

- a. Allow interpretations of imagery, color, shape and word to provide the images necessary for the child to effectively express themselves.
3. Go around the room and allow children to explain their favorite and least favorite feelings, and why they selected the imagery they did.
  - a. Explore the deeper meanings behind each feeling, depending on how open the child expresses is willing to go, and discuss with the group why each feeling may have such an impact.
4. Provide and support empathetic reactions throughout the group, to allow for further insight and openness.

Materials Needed: blank white paper; multicolored crayons

Total Time: 30 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. After the intensity and vulnerability of describing personal experiences with both favorite and least favorite emotions, it's time to decompress with a mindfulness meditation.
2. Allow each child to sit or lay down on the floor (a tarp or blanket can be provided if the floor is dirty).
3. Encourage the children to close their eyes, and in a soothing voice guide the group through deep breath and belly breathing in order to relax their body and mind and help decompress from the previous activity.

4. Instruct children to imagine themselves at peace in their favorite place, while breathing deeply in through their nose and out through their mouth, their hands on their bellies as they feel their abdomen expand and release.
  - a. Continue in soft voice for several minutes.
5. At the end of the meditation, after about 15 minutes, allow the children to slowly open their eyes as they bring their focus back into the room.

Materials Needed: Blanket or tarp

Total Time: 20 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

1. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort

Total Time: 5 minutes

### V. My Body, My Feelings

#### A. Where Do I Feel Today?

1. Have pieces of paper with body outline laying on table in front of children.
2. Place box of crayons in middle of table.
3. Instruct the children to write out as many feelings words as they can. Tell them to focus on words they feel the most
  - a. These words can be happy, excited, frustrated, angry, jealous, etc.
4. After writing out each word, instruct the children to assign colors to each word they have listed using the crayons on the table.

- a. Color a little circle in the hue of their choice next to the word it will represent.
5. Finally, color a spot throughout the body outline in the area that the child feels the emotion associated with the color the most.
  - a. Example: Nervousness may be represented in purple, and the child might color purple on the stomach in the outline and the shoulders, if that's a place where they think they feel the emotion the most.
2. Have all children continue until they fill in the entire body with the emotions they have assigned to it.
3. Go around the room and allow each child to explain the emotions they selected and where they feel the emotion inside of their body.
4. Explain interventions that can be utilized to combat certain emotions such as anxiety, by challenging irrational thoughts and recognizing that the “anxiety monster” can lie to you and make you feel out of control when you are not.

Materials Needed: Paper; crayons; colored pencils; body outline paper (located in workbook in appendix).

Total Time: 30 minutes

## B. Patience Bottle

1. Time to help decompress after all of that sharing with another art project. For this one, each child will have an empty plastic water bottle that will be filled with sink water to just under the neck of the bottle.
2. There will be several options of colors, each pre-labeled by the therapist with various emotions:
  - a. Blue will be labeled with “sad”
  - b. Red with “anger”
  - c. Yellow with “happy”
  - d. Green with “jealous”
  - e. more can be created at your discretion
3. There will also be bottles of different colored glitter that can also be labeled with emotions.
4. Instruct the children to select the emotions they want to put into their patience bottle to help them keep calm during moments of overwhelming feelings such as anxiety, anger, etc.
5. Help each child pour a few drops of their desired emotions into their water bottles, along with the glitter (at least 3 tablespoons).
6. Seal the bottles, and allow the children to shake them intensely until the glitter is everywhere inside of the water in the bottle.
7. Challenge the children by allowing them to practice how to be patient with their patience bottle, as they have to sit and silently stare at the glitter as it all falls down to the bottom of the bottle and gives each child a few minutes to sit still and calm down.

Materials Needed: empty water bottles; water; food coloring; emotions labels; glitter

Total Time: 30 minutes

### C. Patience Bottle Freeze Dance

1. Using the patience bottle to help keep calm during times of anxiety or anger is very useful, however the bottle can also be utilized to curb excitement.
  - a. The children will get to practice this by playing freeze dance with their bottles.
2. First, make sure the cap is on each bottle tightly to avoid spillage.
3. Next, play rambunctious songs that will allow the children to dance excitedly, and encourage each child to shake their bottles as they dance.
4. After the song has finished, instruct the children to freeze and take a seat, and place their bottles on the ground.
5. Have each child freeze when the music stops, and instruct them to sit and stare at the glitter in their bottles until all of the glitter has hit the bottom and only after that occurs can they move.
6. After each child's bottle is ready, they can take turns explaining the difference in feelings they had both before and after utilizing their bottles.
7. Point out the differences between feelings of excitement and feelings of calm, and suggest the children use the bottle at home during moments of overwhelming emotions

Materials Needed: Music player; patience bottles

Total Time: 15 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
2. Allow each child to describe how they feel the patience bottle activity has impacted them. Do they feel different after using the bottle? Do they think the bottle will help them with future emotions?

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

1. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

Total Time: 5 minutes

### VI. How Well Do I Know Myself?

#### A. Today I Feel

1. Have children sit at table with a blank piece of paper on it to draw how they are feeling right now.
  - a. They can utilize line, shape, form and color to represent their mood.
2. Then have each child go around in a circle describing what they drew and why.

- a. Allow for time to discuss and process events that may have happened throughout the week and that day to contribute to feelings.
- b. Reflect on feelings children have felt throughout the day or week.

Materials Needed: Blank paper; crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

### B. My Favorites

1. Have children discuss their favorite things by utilizing a question and drawing game. Have each child answer a question on a piece of paper that lists various “favorites”(worksheet located in workbook in appendix).
2. In order to answer each “favorites” question, instruct each child to draw on small separate pieces of paper something that represents the favorite item to them, be it symbols or a drawing of something that relates to their “favorite”.
  - a. Word equations would be fun to utilize here for older children. This is when a few words or pictures are put together to create the name of the object.
3. After they draw on the small paper, each child will place their papers, folded in half, into the same container.
4. You will pull the paper out of the container and allow the children to take turns attempting to identify the picture.

5. After each picture gets identified, the child who drew it will be given the opportunity to speak up and describe why the favorite item is their favorite item and what it means to them. This is to facilitate self-awareness and sense of safety speaking about personal likes amongst others in a familiar setting.
  - a. If nobody identifies them self as the person who drew the picture, you can facilitate an opportunity for the children to go around and each express what they like about the picture and speculate on its significance. This may create a safer circumstance for the actual artist to potentially identify them self. If not, you can discuss ideas surrounding anxiety or shyness with the group and express a sense of safety and non-judgement from the other members or what those words mean to each child participating in the group.

Materials Needed: Paper; colored pencils; scissors; container

Total Time: 30 minutes

### C. Feelings Freeze Dance

1. Allow the children to leave their papers on table as they get up for a round of feelings freeze dance.
2. Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break. Create a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions. Utilize both fast paced and slow paced songs with a

variety of genres (a suggested playlist is located in the workbook in the appendix of this project).

3. Have the children dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it. Change and pause each song at random intervals to create a freezing game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for add and autism, though it is important to keep volume in mind and check in with those diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated).
  - a. Modification One: Allow a single “helper” to select songs if you feel it will enhance activity engagement.
  - b. Modification Two: You are encouraged to be creative with the modifications. Feel free to come up with your own take on this activity.

Materials Needed: Music player; suggested playlist (located in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### D. What Would You Do?

1. Have children sit in a circle and discuss various elementary school situations that can generally apply to each child (worksheet with various scenarios is included in the workbook in the appendix of this project).
2. Allow the children to randomly divulge their answers by raising their hands to say what they would do in each situation.

3. Allow time for deeper questions and processing after each response.

Materials Needed: Worksheet of Scenarios (in workbook in appendix)

Total Time: 30 minutes

#### E. Goodbye Until Next Time

1. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

Total Time: 5 minutes

### VII. Seventh Session: This Is Me

#### A. Today I Feel

1. Begin this session by allowing the children to discuss and draw how they are feeling today on a piece of paper.
  - a. This can be represented in color, shapes or images.

Materials Needed: Paper; crayons

Total Time: 10 minutes

#### B. Self Portrait

1. Have pieces of butcher paper laying on the ground.
2. Allow children to select a partner they feel safe with to draw an outline of their body on the paper.
3. Everyone takes turns outlining each other using a dark crayon.

- a. After the outline is done, it's time for each child to fill themselves in with symbols, colors, pictures or shapes that represent them.
  - b. Magazines can also be used to utilize pictures that can be cut out.
4. Using all of the information gathered over the last several sessions, each child will be given the opportunity to express themselves freely and without fear of judgement utilizing the artwork they create on their bodies.
  - a. They can be as literal or as symbolic as they desire, as this project is all about them.
5. At the end, each child will be given the opportunity to present their self-portraits to the group, expressing what they did and why they did it and how it makes them feel.

Materials Needed: Large, 5ft pieces of butcher paper; crayons

Total Time: 35 minutes

### C. My Special Trait

1. Have the children sit in a circle and describe to one another a trait they feel is special to them.
  - a. It can be a type of personality, a hobby, some way they view themselves.
2. Allow each child ample time to discuss why this trait fits them, and why it is so special to them.
3. Encourage trait by discussing it from a strength perspective.

Total Time: 25 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
2. Discuss self-esteem, and how children view themselves. How does this make them feel?

Total Time: 15 minutes

#### E. Goodbye For Now

1. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

Total Time: 5 minutes

### VII. Final Session: Time to Say Goodbye

#### A. Today I Feel

1. Begin with opening up about today being their last “Today I Feel” day.
2. Allow children to draw on blank paper artistic representations of how they are feelings and encourage them to be as honest as they feel about their emotions.
3. Process together.

Materials Needed: Paper; crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

## B. Tomorrow Is A New Day

1. Have children open up about their hopes and dreams for the future.
2. Incorporate their favorites and strengths discussed in last session into this session.

Total Time: 15 minutes

## C. Butterfly Effect

1. Using the traits and characteristics that were just revealed in the last section, allow children the chance to verbally and outwardly express their strengths and hopes for the future.
  - a. Describe these elements of hope as “uplifting” to the children, and explain how they will be making flying butterflies to be an artistic representation of their uplifting elements taking flight.
2. Have each child first utilize colored marker to draw on the wings of their butterflies and create patterns using hues that represent their uplifting emotions.
3. After each butterfly has been colored, allow the children time to create a “butterfly house”, utilizing colored construction paper and markers.
4. Fold 8X10 paper in half, having it resemble a greeting card shape.
  - a. On the inside, allow the children to color in their house using the uplifting words to represent how they hope to feel and the goals they are looking forward to in their future.

5. Have each child twist their flying butterfly around about 50 times, then place the butterfly into the fold of their card/house.
  - a. Before opening the card up, allow each child the opportunity to speak their uplifting emotions and hopes out loud while folding open the paper.
6. After opening the card, the butterfly will fly out and become a physical representation of the uplifting emotions, and provide a metaphorical symbol of hope that is also fun and engaging

Materials Needed: Flying Butterflies (ordering instructions in workbook in appendix); markers; 8X10 paper; crayons; colored pencils

Total Time: 30 minutes

#### D. Decompress

1. Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that is different from their first session.
2. Discuss the fluidity of emotions, and normalize feelings as something that everyone has and that changes in them are a result of both their interpretations and how they engage with the world around them.
3. Do they feel any different about themselves now versus when they came in for their first session? Why do they think their feelings have either changed or stayed the same?

Total Time: 15 minutes

#### E. Final Goodbye

1. Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session, but allow them the opportunity to amend it according to how they feel their goodbye should be for this final session.
2. Allow time for children to express their experiences and growth in the program, and how they feel they can utilize the coping skills and art activities they have learned to help them in the future.

Total Time: 15 minutes

## **Chapter Four**

### **Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations for the Future**

#### **Summary**

Each child is different and will have their own set of unique behaviors, diagnosis, and personal traumas to overcome. Art therapy has been proven to be beneficial for a wide variety of such circumstances with clients, and children have been proven to be exceptionally resilient and receptive to art therapy as a form of healing. Often children who are even below the age of eight years old can find it difficult to express or understand their own emotions after a significant life event, and utilizing methods of expression through creative means as opposed to verbal or written ones can ultimately help with the eventual verbalization of emotions through patient reinforcing of exploring one's inner workings (Carey, 2006).

The purpose of this curriculum is to help children between the ages of six and twelve to understand their own internal processes at a deeper level through creative means of expression and catharsis. Through this curriculum, children will be allowed the opportunity to explore the meanings behind a specific feeling, and get it out of them through hands on activities that require both play and imagination. Utilizing art as a medium of expression, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer when putting out into the world something that is created based on how one feels on the inside.

This curriculum is to be conducted by a licensed marriage and family therapist, school counselor, or school psychologist with strong knowledge of children and their developmental stages. Licensed professionals who possess high comfort levels working

with children aged six through twelve and are comfortable utilizing art materials are particularly encouraged to conduct this curriculum. Unlicensed professionals with a passion and strong knowledge of the developmental ages and stages of children are also encouraged to utilize this curriculum, but only under the supervision of a licensed professional with personal interest or background utilizing art therapy or working with children. In addition to having the personal interest and therapeutic skills necessary to support this population, the conductor should also be sensitive to the various behaviors and diagnosis of each client, and should pay attention to the developmental levels and cohesiveness of the children in the group as a whole, and how to address varying ages within the same group as well as appropriate behaviors being exemplified. The curriculum will be presented over the course of eight weeks for ninety minutes each session in a room which facilitates the ability to create artwork and has access to a bathroom or place for children and adults to wash their hands and their supplies. Children will have the opportunity to process and discuss what they have learned in the program, as well as utilize the artwork to express their inner feelings and bring about a degree of self-awareness they may not have been able to tap into on their own.

In conclusion, this curriculum will attempt to provide a safe space for children ages six through twelve to explore their internal processing of emotions as well as learn to cope with them when situations call for it. It will hopefully educate the children on effective ways of processing their emotions, and potentially lead to a better understanding and verbalization of what is going on for them internally.

## **Discussion**

After reviewing an extensive amount of research on the topic of art therapy and how it applies to children of varying diagnosis and behavioral issues, I can conclude that this curriculum will be an optimal plan for therapists interested in utilizing art therapy for children of varying diagnosis in order to foster emotional socialization by helping them to practice and recognize emotions in themselves and others, regulate emotions in themselves and others, and recognize the difference between verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions in both themselves and others. Allowing children the opportunity to explore their inner workings utilizing creative means in a safe environment will provide the support necessary to aid in their cognitive and emotional development as well as healing from traumas they may have experienced along the way. Upon further examination of the theories that are applicable to this particular project, I wanted to touch on the subject of Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. This theory was the "first major theory of cognitive development and thus generated the first substantial body of research on children's thinking" (Miller, 2011). According to Piaget's theory, there are four major stages of cognitive development. These stages include: the sensorimotor stage, which occurs from birth to two years; the preoperational stage, which occurs from ages two to seven; the concrete operational stage, which occurs between the ages of seven to eleven; and the formal operational stage, which occurs from age twelve and up (Barrouillet, 2015). Since this project focuses on working with children aged six through twelve, it is important to focus on the latter three stages and their implications on cognitive development. The preoperational stage (two to seven years old) is when a child begins to develop the ability to utilize language and pretend play. This age is still

egocentric, with an inability to clearly see things from another's perspective and often struggles with the ideas of constancy. When working with children who are just about to leave this stage (age six and above) it is important to keep these ideas in mind as a six year old may still be struggling with the ability to empathically associate with others. Fostering this sense of understanding during this age can aid in the eventual development of learning to understand the view of others at a more impactful level, as the exercises in this curriculum that focus on the sharing of personal information and experiences with one another, often help to reiterate the concept of understanding others. The concrete operational stage is where a large portion of this curriculum focuses on, since it dictates the cognitive processes of children aged seven to eleven. This is the stage where children begin to develop the ability of logical thinking, although their thought processes still remain very concrete. Children are becoming more adept at learning how to think from another's perspective, as their egocentric nature begins to disappear. According to Piaget's theory, this is a time when children may begin to understand that their own thoughts and feelings are completely unique to themselves as individuals, and that not every other human may think the same way as them. As their sense of understanding about themselves and others begins to grow, children at this stage begin to realize that their own personal thoughts' feelings and opinions are supremely unique to them, and fostering that understanding through this curriculum will only aid in a more competent understanding through the practice and creativity associated with learning how to communicate and emphasize emotions. The formal operational stage takes place around age eleven or twelve and up. This is during the formative teenage years and focuses on the young adult's abilities to think abstractly and from a moral,

philosophical, or even political standpoint. As their mind matures, they become well versed in the ability to think logically and with deductive reasoning, with another focus on abstract ideas. Due to the fact that this curriculum ends at age twelve, we are just entering the formal operational stage, and therefore focus on the child exiting from the concrete operational stage. This curriculum aids in helping to make that transition smoother, as it focuses on the child's ability to learn how to include reason and logic into their ways of thinking, while simultaneously allowing a child to develop a sense of both themselves and others through emotional understanding.

While taking stages of development into consideration for each age addressed in the curriculum, it is also important to keep in mind that certain diagnoses which may limit a child's ability to effectively communicate with others, such as autism or ADHD, can also be addressed utilizing art therapy as a form of expression for children, so that they can eventually verbalize their emotions after being able to get it out using colors, line and shape on paper. If each child can increase their self-awareness as well as accept and normalize their emotions surrounding various scenarios and events they have experienced in their lives, then the child can feel less stressed and capable of handling situations in the moment and expressing themselves effectively. By identifying and processing thoughts, feelings and moods that each child may experience and have a hard time identifying, the child may be able to gain a deeper sense of identity and increase their positive self-esteem.

Another aspect to look into when dissecting the impact this curriculum has on children and their overall development between ages six through twelve, it is important to take into consideration the way the brain processes information during moments of play,

creativity and mindfulness at these crucial developmental ages. According to research conducted by Aldrich Chan and Daniel Siegel, the default mode network (DMN) is a network in the brain which focuses on the inner workings of the brain during imaginative play and creative endeavors. “The DMN remains highly active, even during resting states, such that it consumes a high percentage of the brain's metabolic energy. The DMN comes into play whenever we ponder introspectively, project ourselves into the future, think about our relationships, or engage our moral compasses” (Chan & Siegel, 2018). Since we know that a child’s brain is constantly growing and changing in response to every experience each child lives through, it is important for adults to play a role in the brain’s positive growth. Siegel further expresses this by explaining how a child’s brain develops in that the right hemisphere, which controls the emotional and nonverbal portions of the brain, develops earlier than the left hemisphere, which focuses on logic and linguistics (Siegel & Bryson, 2012). Due to this, a child may have a difficult time expressing themselves effectively, which is why “temper tantrums” and emotional outbursts tend to occur. By developing connections between the emotional and logical portions of the brain, a child can be taught to manage their feelings and understand themselves at a deeper level. When a child has a difficult time expressing their personal feelings and results in uncontrollable emotional outbursts, connecting first with the right brain hemisphere and first feeling the feeling with the child, then naming the feeling, can help in allowing the child to calm down and access their left-brain hemisphere which would lead to reasoning (Siegel & Bryson, 2012). Thus, it is important for a child to be able to name their emotions, as dictated in the art therapy curriculum, in order to help

with processing and a deeper understanding of their inner workings and potentially the inner workings of others as well.

Another concept that Daniel Siegel incorporates into the idea of further understanding the processes of a child's brain, is the concept of *mindsight*, a term created by Siegel as a way of explaining the ability for a human to perceive both their own mind and the mind of another (Siegel, 2010). By utilizing *mindsight* to gain deeper insight into the inner workings of a person, one can utilize the ability to recognize and acknowledge a feeling without being overwhelmed or consumed by it by first naming it to tame or calm it down then acknowledging and accepting it, which leads to a transformation of the issue and emotions at hand. Going from the right to left brain is what helps in this situation, and Siegel's research has shown that it works particularly well with children, especially in eliciting the ability to focus one's attention, which has been proven to change the shape, structure and functions of the brain which can lead to healing and growth at individual, family and community levels (Siegel,2010).

Overall, the proposed curriculum is designed to be educational, process-oriented and fun for children in order to increase self-awareness and ability to process emotions at a deeper level based on research that has shown to be proven effective for children at these developmental stages.

### **Recommendations for the Future**

This curriculum can be beneficial if conducted at, and in consultation with, agencies that work with children and families. This curriculum can also be easily modified to target the varying ages between six and twelve, and to focus on the specific behaviors and diagnosis each individual brings into the session. Allowing each child the

opportunity to represent their inner dialogue through art will assist in the therapist's role of facilitating deeper communication and understanding of self. This program should be conducted by a therapist who is interested in art and children, and can take advantage of the short PowerPoint presentation to watch and aid in the therapist's deeper understanding of the advantages of art therapy which is presented in the appendix of this project.

This curriculum can also apply to clients of diverse cultural backgrounds, as there is no specific language except expressing oneself creatively through art being utilized. Children can represent ideas in artwork without limitations binding them to specific cultural expectations, and can simply understand themselves through creative means. When addressing this workshop to potential agencies or schools, it is important to advocate for the fact that the population allowed to partake in this program can be culturally diverse, as long as the therapists working with this curriculum are able to maintain cultural sensitivity, along with a full understanding of each of the unique elements that make up every child and their interpretations of the world around them.

In order to correctly identify the problem behaviors occurring in the children partaking in this curriculum, a potentially useful application to utilize in the future is an assessment that may aid in the concrete identification of such issues. The Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) is a part of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment, and was designed by Thomas Achenbach. It is a widely used instrument in both research and clinical practice to determine and identify various problem behaviors in children. A core set of items have been utilized since the inception of this list, with the eight empirically based syndrome scales being listed as: aggressive behavior;

anxious/depressed behavior; attention problems; rule-breaking behavior; somatic complaints; social problems; thought problems and withdrawn/depressed behavior (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). In order to aid in the calculation of scores, two “broad band” scales were created from this list that combine specific behaviors to dictate whether they are internalized or externalized by children in how each child presents their particular behavior. Internalized problems from the list were identified as anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed and somatic complaints scores. Externalized problems were a combination of rule-breaking and aggressive behavior scores. The “total problems score” is the sum of the scores of all the problems listed (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). The CBCL also began to include DSM-oriented scales after 2001, which was created based on the DSM-IV and included diagnosis related to material from that manual such as associating the externalizing problems that are aggressive as a conduct disorder or even potential attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Being able to utilize a scale to more accurately identify and even diagnose problem behaviors in children would be applicable for future use with this curriculum in order to help further solidify the accuracy of problem behavior identification and understanding.

Another aspect of measurement that would be applicable to aid in further identification of accuracy or competency for this curriculum would be the creation of an extensive evaluation that could be administered throughout this program to determine the effects of the curriculum and whether or not long term self-awareness or healing can be achieved through utilizing the core concepts and strategies laid forth in this curriculum. By potentially conducting a longitudinal study which would follow several participants

both before, during and after partaking in the curriculum, I would be allowed to better examine the effectiveness of this project.

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APPENDIX

Art Therapy Workbook

# Art Therapy Curriculum: Ages 6-12

*A tool for therapists who want to utilize art while working with  
diverse populations of children*



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# What Is This?

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1

The purpose of this workbook is to aid in administering art therapy with children aged six through twelve with various behavior and emotional difficulties.

The conductor of this curriculum should be a marriage and family therapist, school counselor, or school psychologist with the knowledge of children and developmental stages. There is a short visual PowerPoint presentation presented in cohesion with this workbook which summarizes the key points of research based evidence to help the implementer further understand the benefits of implementing art therapy with children who fit the criteria for this curriculum.

This curriculum will cover the span of eight weeks, and will take place over a 90 minute time period, one time per week. The primary goal of this eight week curriculum is to foster a sense of emotional awareness amongst children, and allow them to engage in self-awareness activities that are intended to be creative and fun to stimulate personal growth and engagement, along with the ability to feel safe opening up and processing various emotional issues that may plague a child in these age ranges, despite where they may be developmentally. Each session can be modified to fit the specifics of the children enrolled in the program, with modifications and amendments cited throughout the curriculum workbook. Through each 90 minute session, the child will be able to build positive relationships with one another while increasing self-awareness and implementing positive coping skills under the guidance of a trained professional with the aid of this workbook and curriculum.

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<p align="center"><b><u>Session 1:</u></b> <b><u>Getting to Know You</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Name Signs (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Today I Feel (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Movement Break: Feelings Freeze Dance (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (10 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 2:</u></b> <b><u>Feelings Fun</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Feelings Freeze Dance (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Musical Feelings (45 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (5 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 3:</u></b> <b><u>Pirates Have Feelings Too</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel: Feelings Map (25 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Pirate Feelings Dance (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Ocean of Feelings (20 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress: Ocean Play Time (20 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (10 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 4:</u></b> <b><u>Identifying Emotions Day</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Feelings Charades (20 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Favorite and Least Favorite Feeling (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (20 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (5 minutes)</i></li> </ol>
<p align="center"><b><u>Session 5:</u></b> <b><u>My Body, My Feelings</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel: Where Do I Feel Today? (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Patience Bottle (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Patience Bottle Freeze Dance (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (5 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 6:</u></b> <b><u>How Well Do I Know Myself?</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>My Favorites (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Feelings Freeze Dance (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>What Would You Do? (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress/Goodbye Until Next Time (5 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 7:</u></b> <b><u>This Is Me</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel (10 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Self Portrait (35 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>My Special Trait (25 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Goodbye Until Next Time (5 minutes)</i></li> </ol>	<p align="center"><b><u>Session 8:</u></b> <b><u>Time To Say Goodbye</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Today I Feel (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Tomorrow Is A New Day (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Butterfly Effect (30 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Decompress (15 minutes)</i></li> <li><i>Final Goodbye (15 minutes)</i></li> </ol>

## **A Word from the Author**

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The first session of a new group can be a bit intimidating for both the clients and the conductor. Whether one has experience working with children and art or not, it can feel helpless at times to know exactly where to begin. ***This workbook is here to help.*** Keep in mind that modifications may be necessary to adjust to the particulars of each group. It is encouraged to utilize one's own creativity and resilience as the curriculum implementer if modifications seem necessary at each step to suit the best fit needs of each client. Utilize the instructions given in this workbook to help facilitate proper exploration of self and emotions. Enjoy your journey into the world of healing through art, and have fun!

# Session 1: Getting to Know You

6

## Activity One: Name Signs

### Main Objective: Rapport Building

#### Materials Needed:

- ✓ 8X10 paper (colored or white is fine)
- ✓ colored markers
- ✓ colored pencils
- ✓ colored crayons

#### Total Time: 30 minutes

- Each child creates a name sign with only their first name written on it.
- Each letter of their name can be transformed into a drawing of something the child likes or relates to.
  - This will provide the child with the opportunity to reflect on their own likes, while also picking and choosing what they feel they want to share with the group.
- When they are done, each child can go around the table introducing their names and describing why they chose each picture and what they like about it.

*Modification 1: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it.*

*Modification 2: You can initiate the name tag talking by modeling what to expect and describing your own name tag that you can make alongside the children.*

*Modification 3: (Come up with your own take on this activity!): Example: Instead of using real names, each child can create their own superhero name based on characteristics they admire!*

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## Activity Two: Today I Feel

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7

### Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Self Awareness

#### Materials Needed:

- ✓ Feelings Chart (located on next page)

Total Time: 30 minutes

- The next activity will center around feeling identification and potential verbalization.
- Each child will be given a “feelings chart” with various emotional faces representing a different mood.
- Instruct the children to identify and color in the face or faces they feel encompass their mood for that day.
- Allow each child to explain which face they selected, followed by each emotion they chose to assign to that face. They can then explain what happened to them that day or why they feel this emotion best represents them.

*Modification 1: Have children utilize the empty faces to draw their own interpretation of emotional expression on them. Then select a feeling word to assign to each drawing.*

*Modification 2: Allow children to select their favorite emotion and explain why that emotion appeals to them. Encourage nonjudgmental stances and appreciation of each emotion amongst the group. Identify and describe times in which that emotion felt particularly strong for the child..*

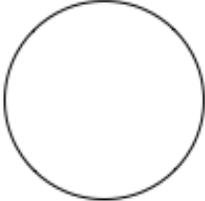
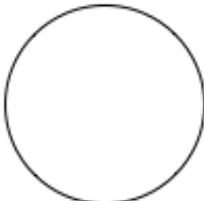
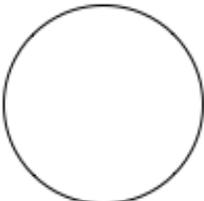
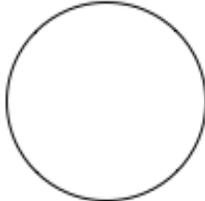
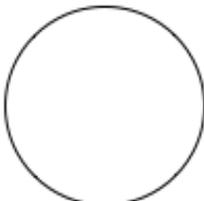
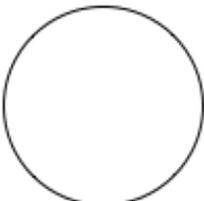
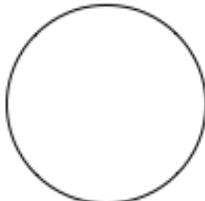
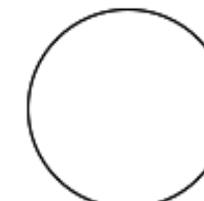
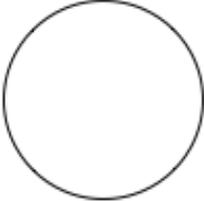
*Modification 3: (Come up with your own take on this activity!):*

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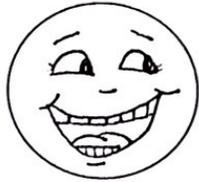
# Draw Your Own Feelings Chart

8

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# Feelings Chart

9



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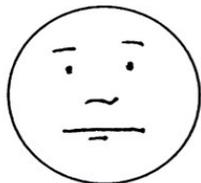
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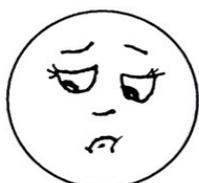
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# Feelings List

10

pleased

strong

wonderful

anxious

angry

ecstatic

grouchy

silly

terrific

playful

happy

frustrated

cheerful

cranky

jubilant

calm

proud

concerned

afraid

lonely

timid

worried

joyful

alarmed

comfortable

excited

quiet

cozy

thankful

gloomy

infuriated

great

sad

safe

loved

unhappy

scared

grateful

empty

relaxed

enraged

disappointed

jealous

frustrated

hurt

confident

satisfied

lost

crushed

furious

sorry

mean

uncomfortable

crabby

embarrassed

irritated

bored

rotten

depressed

## Activity Three: Movement Break: Feelings Freeze Dance

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Body & Feeling Identification**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ music player
- ✓ suggested playlist (located on next page)

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break.
- Create a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions.
- Utilize both fast paced and slow-paced songs from a variety of genres.
  - A suggested playlist is located to utilize on next page of this workbook.
- Instruct the children to dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it.
  - For example, if the music is loud and rock n' roll like, perhaps the child may feel aggressive and jump around excessively.
  - If the music is slow and classical, perhaps the child may feel peaceful and will dance slowly and purposefully.
  - Allow each child to engage with the music how they feel fit.

Change and pause each song at random intervals and have children freeze in the moment to create a freeze dance type game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for adhd and autism, though it is important to keep volume in mind and check in with those diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated). *Modification 1: Allow a single "helper" to select songs if therapist feels it will enhance activity engagement.*

## Suggested Playlist

*Modification: Can modify to include music that is updated to current times and popular/appropriate for children. The following is a list of songs that are available in the public domain.*

1. Bagatelle No. 25 in A Minor- Ludwig Van Beethoven
2. Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-Sharp- Ludwig Van Beethoven
3. Flight of the Bumblebee- Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
4. Take Me Out to the Ball Game- Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tilzer
5. Rockin' Robin- Bobby Day
6. Danny Boy- Old Irish Air; Fred E. Weatherly
7. Oh! Susanna- Stephen Collins Foster
8. Tiger Rag- Nick LaRocca

## Activity Four: Decompress

### **Main Objective: Process of Emotions**

Total Time: 10 minutes

- After dancing, have the children sit on the floor in a circle.
- One by one allow them to discuss how they are feeling right now in that moment, after all of the activities have finished.
- Allow them to discuss their favorite activity and why. Encourage and model positive feedback amongst the group.

## Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time

### **Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Allow each child to create their own way of saying goodbye.
- Have the child act out how they will say goodbye (wave, handshake, high five, thumbs up) in a circle, as each child partakes in it.
- Recommend that the children remember their “goodbye movement” for next session.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**How do you say goodbye?**



## **Session 2: Feelings Fun**

14

### **Activity One: Today I Feel**

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Have pieces of paper and crayons laid out on a table for the children to walk into.
- Instruct them to draw a picture or write down how they are feeling that day utilizing the crayons.
  - This can be represented in color, shapes or images.
- After the child has finished, have them go around the table discussing the picture they have drawn and the feelings encompassed by it.
- Have the each child identify their primary feeling in the moment and why think they feel that way.

*Modification 1: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it.*

*Modification 2: You can initiate sharing by modeling what to expect and describing your feeling in the moment and discuss how that can change due to what happens in your day.*

*Modification 3: (Come up with your own take on this activity!):*

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**Today I feel...**

## Activity Two: Feelings Freeze Dance

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling in Body Identification**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ music player
- ✓ suggested playlist

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Allow the children to leave their papers on table as they get up for a round of Feelings Freeze Dance.
- Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break. Create a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions.
  - Utilize both fast paced and slow-paced songs with a variety of genres.
- Have the children dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it. Change and pause each song at random intervals and have children freeze in the moment to create a freeze dance type game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for adhd and autism, though it is important to keep volume in mind and check in with those diagnosed with autism about the potential to be overstimulated).

*Modification 1: Allow a single “helper” to select songs if therapist feels it will enhance activity engagement.*

*Modification 2: (Come up with your own take on this activity!):*

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## Activity Three: Musical Feelings

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Self Awareness**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ original Feelings Paper
- ✓ watercolor palette
- ✓ paint brushes
- ✓ water cups
- ✓ music player
- ✓ feelings freeze dance playlist

Total Time: 45 minutes

Time to take Feelings Freeze Dance to the art table!

- Have children sit at the table with their original large feelings paper with the crayon drawing of how they feel that day in front of them.
- Provide each child with a watercolor palette, cup of water and paint brush.
  - Explain that they will now utilize the water color to paint over the crayon drawing of their feeling of the day.
- Instruct the children to listen to the music that will be played and just like with Feeling Freeze Dance, allow the music to sway their emotions, but this time with their hands.
- Utilizing color, line, and shapes the children will then paint over their crayon drawing according to the various songs that will be played, switching styles or colors as each new song comes up.

The point of the activity is to represent the fact that the child may feel a prominent feeling in the moment, particularly when they first walked into group therapy, but it also facilitates an awareness that there are still a multitude of emotions that can also be felt either right after or at the same time, as dictated by events that are happening to each individual in the moment.

Point out to each child that their crayon drawing still shows through the other emotions represented in water color, and that the paint can represent the main emotion they feel in that moment despite other emotions co-occurring at the same time.

*Modification: Allow those who want to explain their emotions to do so after the music playlist has finished (only play about 30 seconds to 1 minute of each song, as attention spans are likely to be limited).*

*Modification 2: (Come up with your own take on this activity!):*

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### **Activity Four: Decompress**

#### **Main Objective: Process of Emotions**

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
- What changed it? Is it still the same? Why do they think their feelings have changed?

### **Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time**

#### **Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 5 minutes

- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

## Session 3: Pirates Have Feelings Too

18

### Activity One: Feelings Map

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Self Awareness**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ blank white paper
- ✓ blank white name tag stickers
- ✓ box of multi colored markers/colored pencils

Total Time: 25 minutes (each song only lasts 30 seconds to 1 minute)

- Have pieces of paper lying on the table in front of each seat.
  - Ask the children to come in and take a seat in front of each piece of paper.
- Let the children know that today they will be pretend pirates, navigating the metaphorical ocean of “feelings”.
- Instruct each child to pick five different colors from the marker/colored pencil bin. Using blank name tag stickers, assign an emotion to each color and write it on the sticker to put on the corresponding marker/pencil.

c. For example, red might represent anger while blue might represent sadness.



d. Each emotion will be unique to the child and will display their personal images and coloring associated with the five emotions they dictate.

After assigning each color an emotion, you will utilize music as in Feelings Freeze Dance.

- Select songs with various tempos and styles, and instruct each child to create a “map” utilizing just color and line.

- For example, if a loud rock song is playing that brings up feelings of anger for a child, they can choose the color that they assigned the emotion that most represents anger for them and utilizing sharp, jagged lines to simultaneously represent anger while drawing on their paper.
- If the song switches to something happy, perhaps they may choose a color they associated with happiness and create fluid, rolling lines connected to the sharp ones.

This is going to be unique to the child and their interpretations and preferences.

- When five different songs have been utilized, you will then stop the music and allow the children to go around the room to decipher their Feelings Maps with one another, explaining what songs triggered which emotion and why they decided on the specific coloring and line formation for that feeling.

*Modification 1: If the child does not want to share, do not force them to do it and continue to encourage a nonjudgmental safe space for sharing.*

*Modification 2: You can initiate emotions discussion by modeling what to expect and describing your own feelings map that you make alongside the children.*

*Modification 3: (Come up with your own take on this activity!):*

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## Activity Two: Pirate Feelings Dance

20

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling in Body Identification**

**Materials Needed:**

- ✓ music player

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Time to dance it out, pirate style!
  - Using the Feelings Maps that were just created, explain to the children that they will now get to act out their treasure maps using the songs they just assigned feelings too.
  - Play the same playlist, but mix it up!
    - a. Play the songs in a different order than originally played, and see if the children can correspond their body movements to feelings evoked in each song.
5. Allow time for discussion afterwards, especially if children feel that there has been a shift in their emotions.

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Activity Three: Ocean of Feelings

### Main Objective: Rapport Building

#### Materials Needed:

- ✓ plastic plates
- ✓ washable school glue
- ✓ various food coloring bottles
- ✓ bowls of water
- ✓ baking soda
- ✓ eye drop solution

#### Total Time: 20 minutes

- Now comes the messy part: making goop oceans!
  
- Using clear or white school glue, pour ½ cup of glue on plastic or paper plates in front of each child.
  
- Next, bring out blue food coloring to dye the ocean.
  - Drop a few colored drops into the glue, and give children popsicle sticks to mix the dye into the glue until it is all blue.
  
- ✓ Add 1 tablespoon of baking soda to the glue, and mix again.
  
- ✓ Add 1 tablespoon of contact lens solution and mix again.
  - Keep adding solution and mixing until desired consistency forms.
  
- Create waves in the goop “ocean” by pulling apart and pinching areas of goop.
  - This allows children to play while also giving them something tangible to form with their fingers

*Modification: can add glitter to ocean slime, if desired*

## Activity Four: Ocean Play Time

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/ Self Awareness Increase**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ box of small toys

Total Time: 20 minutes

- Bring out a box of small toys.
  - This includes figurines that represent men, women, animals, etc.
- Allow each child to decorate their ocean by adding the figurines to them.
  - The children can create an island in their ocean, or keep it bare.
  - This will allow the children to effectively express themselves through play, as they utilize their art project to be the home base of the characters they select and whatever scenes they desire to act out with them.
- Allow each child to explain why they chose each character and how they fit into the ocean environment they created.

## Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time

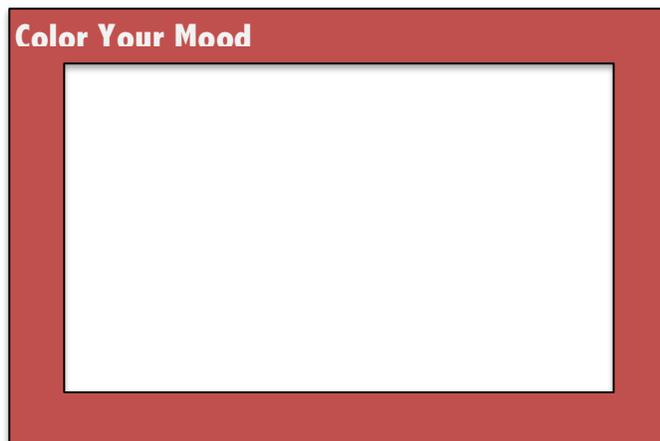
**Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence Increase**

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session

to facilitate continuity, reliability and a

sense of comfort.



# **Session Four: Identifying Emotions Day**

**23**

## **Activity One: Today I Feel**

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Begin the session by allowing each child to draw on a piece of paper something to represent the emotion they are feeling today, right at that moment, as session is just beginning.
- Allow each child to go around the room and explain what and why they selected that emotion and image to go along with it.
- If the child wants to decompress about their week, allow them to do so as rapport has been formed by this time.
- This will facilitate more group bonding, and allow the child to safely express themselves in a familiar setting.

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## Activity Two: Feelings Charades

24

**Main Objective: Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Confidence Increase**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Feelings Jar (instructions on next page)

Total Time: 20 minutes

- Allow each child to think about emotions.
- Have everyone pick an emotion from a piece of paper in the pre-made feelings jar (instructions on next page).
- Have each child take turns acting out the emotions on each piece of paper, like charades, and allowing the children to guess what each emotion being acted out is.
  - Make sure to help children who may still be learning how to read.
  - Can be done as one group, or can create two teams to make it a competition and keep score of points.
- If teams are created, after the points are calculated and the winning team is announced, have the children from each team raise their hands to explain how they are feeling after playing and either winning or losing.
- Process emotions attributed to each feeling, and ask other members of the group to think about what it would feel like to switch sides with the winning or losing team, and the effect they think it may have on them.
- Process interpretations of being in the other group member's shoes.

# Feelings Jar

25

**1.) Use any empty jar/container/canister**



**2.) Type or write out various feeling words.**

*Can utilize Feelings List on page 10.*



**3.) Cut out Feeling Words onto small pieces of paper.**

**4.) Place Feeling Words papers in jar.**



## Activity Three: Favorite and Least Favorite Feeling

26

**Main Objective:** Rapport Building/Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ blank white paper
- ✓ multicolored crayons

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Go around the room and have each child draw out their favorite emotion on one side of the paper using white paper and crayons.
- Allow the children to utilize interpretations of imagery, color, shape and even words on their paper.
- After they are done, have each child turn the paper over and draw out their least favorite feeling.
  - Allow interpretations of imagery, color, shape and word to provide the images necessary for the child to effectively express themselves.
- Go around the room and allow children to explain their favorite and least favorite feelings, and why they selected the imagery they did.
  - Explore the deeper meanings behind each feeling, depending on how open the child expresses is willing to be, and discuss with the group why each feeling may have such an impact.
- Provide and support empathetic reactions throughout the group to allow for further insight and openness.

## Activity Four: Decompress

27

### Main Objective: Process of Emotions Utilizing Mindfulness Techniques

#### Materials Needed:

- ✓ blanket or tarp

Total Time: 20 minutes

- After the intensity and vulnerability of describing personal experiences with both favorite and least favorite emotions, it is time to decompress with a mindfulness meditation.
- Allow each child to sit or lay down on the floor (a tarp or blanket can be provided if the floor is dirty).
- Encourage the children to close their eyes, and in a soothing voice guide them through deep breath and belly breathing in order to relax their body and mind and help decompress from the previous activity.
- Instruct children to imagine themselves at peace in their favorite place, while breathing deeply in through their nose and out through their mouth, their hands on their bellies as they feel it expand and release.
  - Continue in a soft voice for several minutes.
- At the end of the meditation, after about 15 minutes, allow the children to slowly open their eyes as they bring their focus back into the room.

## Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time

28

**Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 5 minutes

- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_  
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**How did the meditation feel for you?**

# **Session Five: My Body, My Feelings**

29

## **Activity One: Where Do I Feel Today?**

**Main Objective: Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Body Outline (located on next page)
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Have pieces of paper with body outline laying on table in front of children.
- Place box of crayons in middle of table.
- Instruct the children to write out as many feeling words as they can, focusing on emotions they tend to feel the most.
  - These words can be happy, excited, frustrated, angry, jealous, etc.
- After writing out each word, instruct children to assign colors to the words they have listed using the crayons on the table.
- Color a little circle in the hue of their choice next to the word it will represent.
- Finally, color a spot throughout the body outline in the area that the child feels the emotion associated with the color the most.
  - Example: Nervousness may be represented in purple, and the child might color purple on the stomach in the outline and the shoulders, if that's a place where they think they feel the emotion the most.
- Have all the children continue until they fill in the entire body with the emotions they have assigned to each color.

- Go around the room and allow each child to explain the emotions they selected and explain where they feel various emotions inside of their body.
- Explain interventions that can be utilized to combat certain emotions such as anxiety, by challenging irrational thoughts and recognizing that the “anxiety monster” can lie to you and make you feel out of control when you are not.

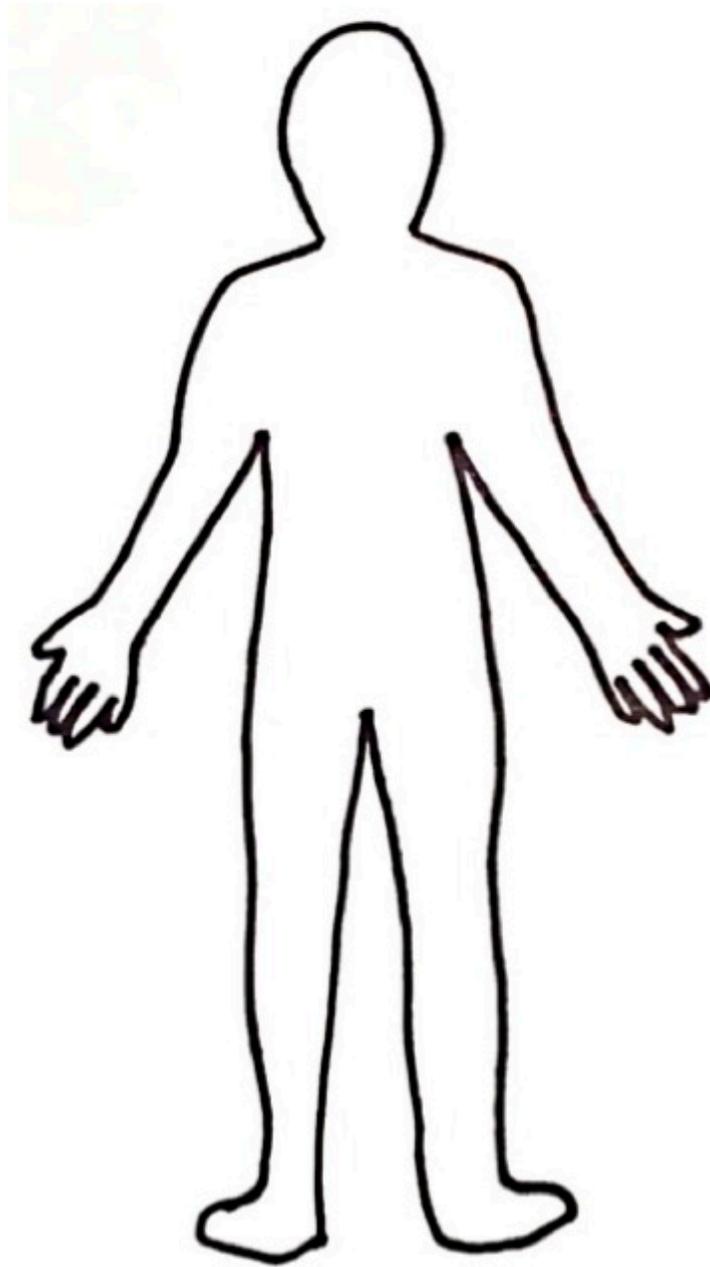
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**My body feelings and colors:**



# Body Outline

31



## Activity Two: Patience Bottle

32

**Main Objective: Process of Emotions/Address Anxiety/Aid in Relaxation**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ empty water bottles
- ✓ water
- ✓ food coloring
- ✓ emotions labels
- ✓ glitter

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Time to help decompress after all of that sharing with another art project. For this one, each child will have an empty plastic water bottle that will be filled with sink water to just under the neck of the bottle.
- Create several options of colors, each pre-labeled by you with various emotions:
  - a. Red with “anger”
  - b. Blue will be labeled with “sad”
  - c. Yellow with “happy”
  - d. Green with “jealous”
  - e. more can be created at the therapist’s discretion
- Label bottles of different colored glitter with emotions alongside the colors.
- The children will be instructed to select the emotions they want to put into their patience bottle to help them keep calm during moments of overwhelming feelings such as anxiety, anger, etc.
- You will help each child pour a few drops of their desired emotions into their water bottles, along with the glitter (at least 3 tablespoons).
- Seal the bottles, and allow the children to shake them intensely until the glitter is everywhere inside of the water in the bottle.

- Challenge the children by allowing them to practice how to be patient with their patience bottle, as they have to sit and silently stare at the glitter as it all falls down to the bottom of the bottle and gives each child a few minutes to sit still and calm down.

### Activity Three: Patience Bottle Freeze Dance

#### Main Objective: Feeling in Body Identification/Calming

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ music player

#### Total Time: 15 minutes

- Using the bottle to help bring calm during times of anxiety or anger is very useful, however the bottle can also be utilized to curb excitement.
- The children will get to practice this by playing freeze dance with their bottles.
  - First, make sure the cap to the patience bottle is on tightly to avoid spillage.
- Next, play rambunctious songs that will allow the children to dance excitedly, and encourage them to shake their bottles as they dance.
- After the song has finished, instruct the children to freeze and take a seat, and place their bottles on the ground.
- Instruct each child to sit and stare at the floating glitter in their bottles until all of the glitter has hit the bottom, and once the glitter settles they can then move.
- After each child's bottle is ready, they can take turns explaining the difference in feelings they had both before and after utilizing their patience bottles.

- Point out the differences and suggest the children use the bottle at home during moments of overwhelming emotions.

### **Activity Four: Decompress**

#### **Main Objective: Process of Emotions**

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
- What changed it? Is it still the same? Why do they think their feelings have changed?

### **Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time**

#### **Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 5 minutes

- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.



## **Session Six: How Well Do I Know Myself?**

35

### **Activity One: Today I Feel**

**Main Objective: Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Have children sit at the table with a blank piece of paper on it to draw how they are feeling right now.
  - They can utilize line, shape, form and color to represent their mood.
- Have each child volunteer to discuss what they drew and why.
  - Allow for time to discuss and process events that may have happened throughout the week and that day to contribute to feelings.
- Reflect on feelings throughout the child's day and week.

### **Activity Two: My Favorites**

**Main Objective: Self-Awareness Increase/Confidence Boost**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Favorites Paper (located on next page)
- ✓ colored pencils
- ✓ scissors
- ✓ container

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Have children discuss their favorite things by utilizing a question and drawing game.
- Using the Favorites Paper, allow children to list favorite food, hobby, book, movie, music and cartoon character.

- In order to answer the question, the child can draw in the boxes on the favorites paper something that represents the favorite item to them, be it symbols or a drawing of something that relates to their “favorite”.
  - *Modification: Word equations would be fun to utilize here for older children. This is when a few words or pictures are put together to create the name of the object.*
- After they draw it they will cut each square out and put all of the small papers, folded in half, into a container.
- You will pull the papers out of the container, one by one, and have the children attempt to identify each picture.
- After each picture gets identified, the child who drew it will be given the opportunity to speak up and describe why the favorite item is their favorite and what it means to them. This is to facilitate self-awareness and a sense of safety speaking about personal likes amongst others in a familiar setting.
  - If nobody identifies them self as the person who drew the picture, you can facilitate an opportunity for the children to go around and each express what they like about the picture and speculate on its significance, which may create a safer circumstance for the actual artist to potentially identify themselves. If not, can discuss ideas surrounding anxiety or shyness with the group and express a sense of safety and non-judgement from the other members or what those words mean to them.

# . Favorites Paper

37

**Draw or write something that represents your favorite:**

Food	Hobby	Book
Movie	Music	Cartoon Character

### Activity Three: Feelings Freeze Dance

**Main Objective: Feeling in Body Identification/Confidence Boost/Self Expression**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ music player
- ✓ suggested playlist

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Have the group stand up in an open area for a movement break. Utilizing a playlist of child appropriate music (either current or past) that can stimulate different emotions. Utilize both fast paced and slow-paced songs with a variety of genres.
  - Have the children dance to each piece of music based on how it makes them feel when they hear it. Change and pause each song at random intervals to create a freezing game with it. This will allow children the opportunity to get up and move their bodies (particularly important for add and autism, keep volume sensitivity in mind for autism).

*Modification: Allow a single “helper” to select songs if therapist feels it will enhance activity engagement.*

### Activity Four: What Would You Do?

**Main Objective: Feeling Identification/Confidence Boost/ Self and Social Awareness**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Worksheet of Scenarios (located on next page)

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Have children sit in a circle and discuss various elementary school situations that can generally apply to each child using the provided worksheet.

- Allow the children to randomly divulge their answers by raising their hands to say what they would do in each situation.
- Allow time for deeper questions and processing after each response.

**My favorite things:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a white background and a thin black border, intended for children to draw or write their favorite things. It is centered within a larger red-bordered frame.

# Worksheet of Scenarios

40

1. You are playing a game at school during recess and a student you don't know starts teasing you and tells you that you are bad at playing the game. What do you do?
2. You are waiting in a long line for the water fountain on a very hot day, and one of your friends tells you they are thirsty and wants to cut you in line. What do you do?
3. A kid in your class is having a birthday party and you found out you weren't invited. What do you do? How does it make you feel?
4. You see that one of your friends forgot to bring lunch to school and they are very hungry during lunch time. What would you do in this situation?
5. During a game of handball, a kid you don't know pushes one of your friends, who falls down crying. What do you do? How are you feeling?
6. You see one of your best friends get angry at another kid on the school yard during recess. What do you do?

## Activity Five: Decompress/Goodbye Until Next Time

41

**Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 5 minutes

- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Draw how YOU are feeling today.**



# **Session Seven: This Is Me**

42

## **Activity One: Today I Feel**

**Main Objective: Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Blank Paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 10 minutes

- Begin by allowing the children to discuss and draw how they are feeling today on a piece of paper
- Allow each child to go around the room and explain what and why they selected that emotion and image to go along with it.
- If the child wants to decompress about their week, allow them to do so as rapport has been formed by this time.
- This will facilitate more group bonding, and allow the child to safely express themselves in a familiar setting.

*Notes:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Two: Self Portrait

43

**Main Objective: Self Awareness Increase/Confidence Boost**

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ 5ft pieces of butcher paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 35 minutes

- Have pieces of butcher paper laying on ground.
- Allow children to select a partner they feel safe with to draw an outline of their body on the paper.
- Everyone takes turns outlining each other using a dark crayon.
  - After the outline is done it's time for each child to fill themselves in with symbols, colors, pictures or shapes that represent them.
  - Magazines can also be used to utilize pictures that can be cut out.
- Using all of the information gathered over the last several sessions, each child will be given the opportunity to express themselves freely and without fear of judgement utilizing the artwork they create on their bodies.
  - They can be as literal or as symbolic as they desire, as this project is all about them.
- At the end, give each child the opportunity to present their self-portraits to the group, expressing what they did and why they did it and how it makes them feel

### Activity Three: My Special Trait

44

#### **Main Objective: Self Awareness Increase/Confidence Boost**

Total Time: 25 minutes

- Have the children sit in a circle and describe to one another a trait they feel is special to them.
  - It can be a type of personality, a hobby, some way they view themselves.
- Allow each child ample time to discuss why this trait fits them, and why it is so special to them.
- Encourage trait by discussing it from a strength perspective.

### Activity Four: Decompress

#### **Main Objective: Process of Emotions**

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that changed from when they first walked in.
- What changed it? Is it still the same? Why do they think their feelings have changed?

### Activity Five: Goodbye Until Next Time

#### **Main Objective: Create Comfort/Reliability/Confidence**

Total Time: 5 minutes

Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session to facilitate continuity, reliability and a sense of comfort.

## **Session Eight: Time to Say Goodbye**

45

### **Activity One: Today I Feel**

**Main Objective: Feeling Identification/Self Awareness Increase**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ blank paper
- ✓ crayons

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Begin with opening up about today being their last “Today I Feel” day.
- Allow children to draw on blank paper artistic representations of how they are feelings and encourage them to be as honest as they feel about their emotions.
- Process together.

### **Activity Two: Tomorrow Is a New Day**

**Main Objective: Self-Awareness Increase/Process of Emotions**

Total Time: 15 minutes

- Have children open up about their hopes and dreams for the future.
- Incorporate their favorites and strengths discussed in last session into this session.

### **Activity Three: Butterfly Effect**

**Main Objective: Self Awareness Increase/Confidence Boost/ Instill Hope**

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Flying Butterflies →
- ✓ markers
- ✓ 8X10 paper
- ✓ crayons
- ✓ colored pencils

Can order butterflies from S & S Worldwide:  
*Color-Me-Magic Butterflies, Item # CO105:*  
*List Price: \$26.55/pack of 24*

 *Link: <http://www.swww.com/item/color-me-magic-butterflies-CO105/>*

Total Time: 30 minutes

- Using the traits and characteristics that were just revealed in the last section, allow children the chance to verbally and outwardly express their strengths and hopes for the future.



- Describe these elements of hope as “uplifting” to the children, and explain how they will be making flying butterflies to be an artistic representation of their uplifting elements taking flight.
- Have each child first utilize colored marker to draw on the wings of their butterflies and create patterns using hues that represent their uplifting emotions.
- After each butterfly has been colored, allow the children time to create a “butterfly house”, utilizing colored construction paper and markers.
- Fold 8X10 paper in half, having it resemble a greeting card shape.
  - On the inside, allow the children to color in their house using the uplifting words to represent how they hope to feel and the goals they are looking forward to in their future.
- Have each child twist their flying butterfly around about 50 times, then place the butterfly into the fold of their card/house.
  - Before opening the card up, allow each child the opportunity to speak their uplifting emotions and hopes out loud while folding open the paper.
- After opening the card, the butterfly will fly out and become a physical representation of the uplifting emotions, and provide a metaphorical symbol of hope that is also fun and engaging

## Activity Four: Decompress

47

### Main Objective: Process of Emotions

Total Time: 15 minutes

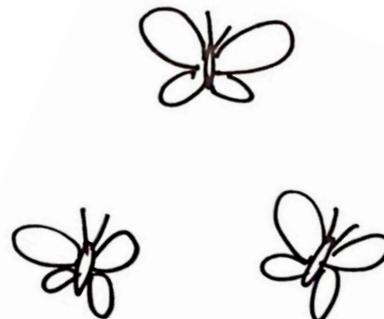
- Have each child go around the room and discuss how they are feeling right now, and how that is different from their first session.
- Discuss the fluidity of emotions, and normalize feelings as something that everyone has and that changes in them are a result of both their interpretations and how they engage with the world around them.
- Do they feel any different about themselves now versus when they came in for their first session? Why do they think their feelings have either changed or stayed the same?

## Activity Five: Final Goodbye

### Main Objective: Process of Emotions/ Hope Instilling/ Self-Awareness

Total Time: 15 minutes

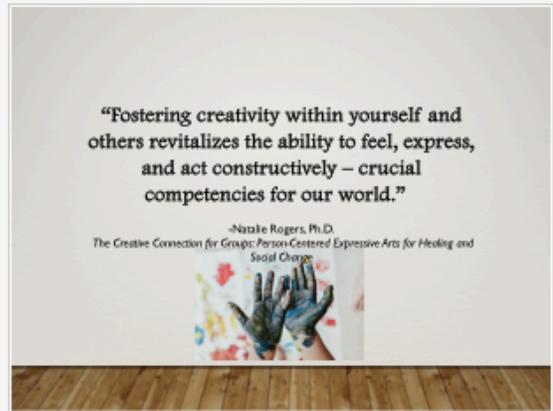
- Have each child utilize the same goodbye movement they used in the first session, but allow them the opportunity to amend it according to how they feel their goodbye should be for this final session.
- Allow time for children to express their experiences and growth in the program, and how they feel they can utilize the coping skills and art activities they have learned to help them in the future.



# Art Therapy PowerPoint: A Summary of Reviewed Literature



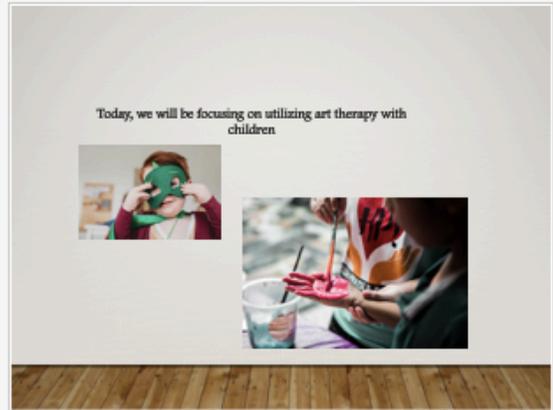
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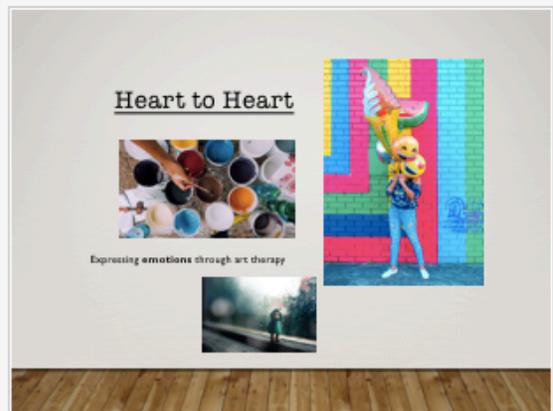
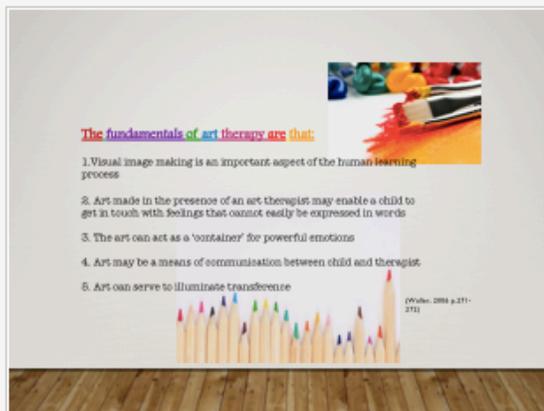
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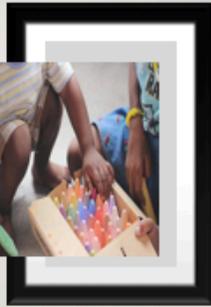
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## HOW CAN APPLYING ART THERAPY TO MY YOUNG CLIENTS HELP?

Art therapy has proven to be beneficial in children with:

- Trauma
- Grief
- Depression
- Autism
- Sexual abuse
- Effects of witnessing parental violence



7



## TRAUMA

• Trauma can affect anyone and usually elicits intense, negative emotions associated with a significant event or observation that overwhelms a person's psyche to the point there that person is unable to use his or her usual psychological defenses, or to function in the usual fashion



(Carey 1996)

8



Young children, typically those below the age of eight years old, can find it difficult to express their emotions utilizing direct words and those who have experienced some type of trauma can find it even more difficult.



(Carey 1996)

9



Art therapy's alternative methods of expression (which focus on utilizing creativity to express emotions) can often aid in the understanding and potential eventual verbalization of such emotions within a traumatized child



(Carey 1996)

10



## Grief

Grief can occur when a profound loss occurs to a human being, be it the death of someone close to them or the sudden withdrawal of something significant, and that human being becomes mentally affected by this loss



(Hill & Lineweaver, 2016)

## ACCORDING TO A STUDY CONDUCTED BY RESEARCHERS HILL AND LINEWEAVER IN 2016:

INDIVIDUALS UNDER AGE 10 AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING COMPLEX, PROLONGED, CHRONIC, DISRUPTIVE THOUGHT PROCESSES

- 11% experience the death of a parent
- 5% experience the death of a sibling
- Social withdrawal
- Behavioral aggression
- Feelings of sadness
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Guilt




- Seeking a positive outlet for children to explore their grief through visual forms of therapy is often considered.



- There is often confusion and misinformation presented to children regarding grief and what really happened to those they care about.

(Witt & Linneman, 2016)

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The main objectives of facilitating art therapy with grieving children was to present sense of awareness, an ability to effectively **express feelings**, an ability to **work through a problem**, and to **enhance both creativity and joy**



(Witt & Linneman, 2016)

14



**Depression**

**I.**

- An art therapy program was researched which allowed depressed children to express their needs and feelings while helping to boost self-esteem
- Art was a way of unblocking the energy the children used to deny or repress their personal pain surrounding a traumatic experience that led to depression.



(Fisher, 1994)

15



Art therapy allowed the children to create spontaneous art and in turn find catharsis through naming the pain they experienced surrounding their depression



16



**Autism**

Researcher Melinda J. Emery of the American Art Therapy Association, conducted research in 2004 on how art therapy impacts children diagnosed with autism

- Emery's research goes on to discuss how the art making process appeals to children with autism in the fact that they get to represent their experiences non-verbally.
- Through art therapy, a sense of self-awareness can be fostered that will ultimately help the autistic child to express their inner world more clearly.



(Emery, 2004)

**Sexual Abuse**

Art therapy played a vital non-verbal role that allowed children experiencing PTSD and mixed emotions after being sexually abused to find a safe outlet for these complicated emotions in the form of creating art.



(Phelan, 2006)

**Some examples of art that was created to aid in this healing experience were:**

- containers that served as metaphors for expressing and releasing powerful emotions
- map making that helped children to organize their personal trauma narrative and provided hope by listing goals for the future
- utilizing imagery to identify and represent both internal and external sources of support





(Pitts, 2006)

19



The children were able to communicate their emotions in a form that did not involve verbalization, which aided those who were not ready to verbalize their traumatic event, but still yearned for a sense of release




(Pitts, 2006)

20

**Parental violence**

A 2001 study was done on children who had witnessed parental violence.

**The children all presented with symptoms related to the exposure and showed signs of:**

- post-traumatic stress
- developmental problems associated with the trauma
- displayed difficulties discussing general traumatic events
- displayed difficulties discussing familial concerns
- often react to being confronted with traumatic dialogue by either exhibiting symptoms of hyperarousal or emotionally shutting down



(Honey & Kocembo, 2001)

21



The researchers documented the fact that many of these children had sought other forms of treatment which varied from outpatient family therapy to medicating the child.

**An art therapy group was created with low anxiety and lots of interaction.**

The children were confronted with being exposed to the traumatic event in a manner which felt less direct and facilitated the desensitization of anxiety associated with the parental violence.



(Honey & Kocembo, 2001)

22



By facilitating this utilizing art therapy, the children were able to redefine their narrative and articulate their emotions in a less direct manner.

Through the medium of art, the children were able to identify the positive changes that have occurred in their family since the traumatic event, and had more overt coping skills identified to manage the stress they had felt



(Honey & Kocembo, 2001)

Now, lets take a few minutes to talk about **BRAINS!**




When kids are experiencing strong emotions, they often need someone to help them put things in order and help name those emotions so they can deal with them effectively



(Sagep, 2012)

25



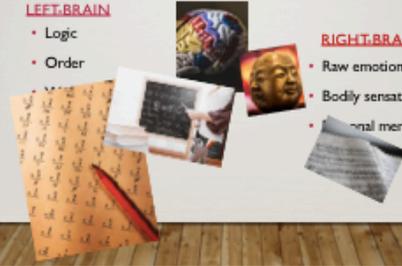
## HOW A BRAIN WORKS

### LEFT BRAIN

- Logic
- Order

### RIGHT BRAIN

- Raw emotions
- Bodily sensations
- Personal memories



26



According to Daniel Siegel, in his 2012 book titled *The Whole-Brain Child*, children need to "Name it to tame it" in order to confront what is troubling them

This technique is all about allowing children to retell the story of a traumatic event over and over until the child's fears lessen and can eventually go away



(Sagep, 2012)

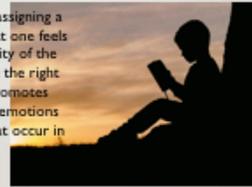
Storytelling often helps children understand things better by using both the left and right brain hemispheres together

27



## This is why journaling and talking about a traumatic event can help human's heal

Research shows that assigning a name or a label to what one feels calms down the activity of the emotional circuitry in the right hemispheres, and promotes understanding of the emotions surrounding events that occur in our lives



(Sagep, 2012)

28



## ART THERAPY

A tool for healing.



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