



Division of Educational Services  
Instructional Services

## The Arts



# Art Therapy

## LESSONS

### **Are you or your students feeling a bit overwhelmed?**

You're not alone! Many of us struggle with stress and emotional turbulence, and it can be tough to find effective ways to express and process those feelings. Art therapy exercises are a fantastic outlet.

The Arts at RCOE would like to share the following activities tailored for art therapy that will help you channel your emotions in a healthy way. Who knew that something as simple as doodling could make a difference?

From stress-relieving sketches to unique painting ideas for emotional healing, we'll cover a variety of engaging lessons that make expressing yourself both fun and fulfilling! Let's dive in and unleash that inner artist!

### **Key Takeaways**

1. Art therapy exercises can help relieve stress and foster emotional healing.
2. Simple activities like drawing, painting, and collaging can aid relaxation and self-expression.
3. Mixed media art allows for unique personal growth insights through diverse materials.

## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #1

# Temporary Arrangement

**Goal for activity:** To increase self-reflection and mindfulness.

**Medium:** Mixed media.

**Time frame:** 45 minutes.

**Materials:** Found objects in nature, a piece of colored construction paper or felt, and small bags for collection.

**May help with:** Exploring your artistic tastes, increasing happiness, and tapping into memories.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Take a walk outside and collect items in nature that you feel a connection to.
- Set the items in your work space.
- Then arrange the items on your paper or felt in a way that is pleasing to the eye.
- Temporary art isn't meant to last forever.
- Ask yourself, "What are some things I enjoyed in the moment that didn't last forever?"



### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- When you consider that this artwork is not forever, how does it make you feel?
- When you think of things you've enjoyed that weren't permanent, what feelings come up?
- How could this art process encourage mindfulness for you?

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## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #2

# Remind Me!

**Goal for activity:** To coach yourself and give yourself guidance.

**Medium:** Watercolor painting.

**Time frame:** 30 minutes.

**Materials:** Scissors, mixed media or watercolor paper, pen, watercolors, and paintbrush.

**May help with:** Building self-reliance, exploring inner knowledge, increasing awareness, and regulating emotions.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Cut out a small piece of paper about the size of a baseball card.
- Draw a circle in the middle.
- Ask yourself, "What do I need to tell myself today?"
- Write the answer inside of the circle.
- Add watercolor to the card, as you reflect on the message you've written.
- Once it has dried, carry the card with you and look at it when you need a reminder.



### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- Is this something you've needed to hear before?
- Where could you carry this or place it to remind you?
- How might your day/life change if you followed this advice?

## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #3

# On the Other Hand

**Goal for activity:** To let go of perfectionism and unreasonable high expectations.

**Medium:** Drawing.

**Time frame:** 15 minutes.

**Materials:** Pen and mixed media paper.

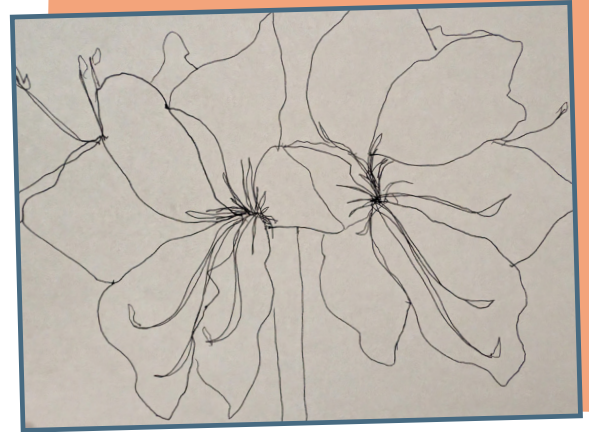
**May help with:** Exploring senses, increasing mindfulness, relieving stress and enhancing relaxation, soothing anxiety, and taking an optimistic view.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a pen to make a drawing with your non-dominant hand.
- Make as many drawings as you like.
- This is meant to be a quick activity to wake your brain up and get you to see things in a new way!

### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- How did it make you feel to draw less comfortably? Did it surprise you?
- How does it feel to make art that isn't intended to look perfect?
- Do you feel more awake after this exercise?



## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #4

# Tissue Paper Tear

**Goal for activity:** To let go of perfectionism and unreasonable high expectations.

**Medium:** Mixed media.

**Time frame:** 20 minutes.

**Materials:** Tissue paper, mixed media paper or card stock, paint brush, and decoupage medium like Modge Podge.

**May help with:** Increasing mindfulness, relieving stress and enhancing relaxation, and soothing anxiety.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Tear tissue paper into pieces to combine into a layered abstract image over paper.
- Notice how layering changes the color combinations.
- Cover with a decoupage medium to seal.
- While you work, tune into your breath, and tune out your brain.
- Let go of expectations of how the art will turn out and simply enjoy the colors and shapes.

### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- How did it make you feel to let go of how the tissue paper was tearing? Was that easy or difficult for you?
- If you view your artwork from a distance, does it change the way you see it?
- If you gave your artwork a title, what would it be?





## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #5

# Blackout Poem

**Goal for activity:** To express your voice creatively.

**Medium:** Writing.

**Time frame:** 20 minutes.

**Materials:** Pencil, page from a recycled book or magazine or printed page of text, black marker.

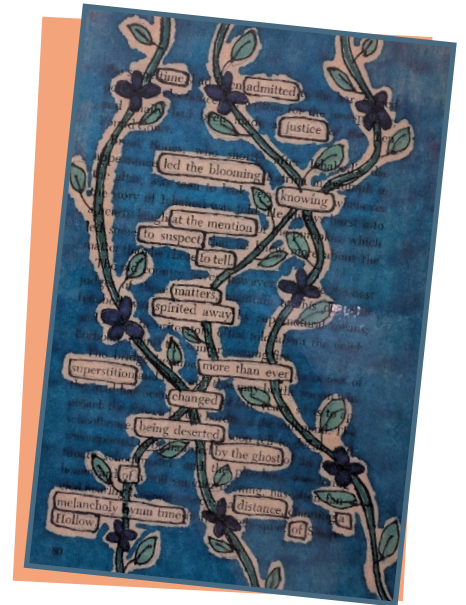
**May help with:** Exploring feelings and needs, increasing awareness, and self-reflection.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Using a pencil, lightly circle all the words on your printed page that stand out to you.
- Black out the rest of the text with the black marker, leaving just the circled words visible.
- Now, read the words as a poem.

### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- How is your poem similar or different than the original content of the page?
- Does your poem express something that you're feeling? Was that feeling apparent to you before you did the activity?



## ART THERAPY ACTIVITY #6

# I HAVE A SUPERPOWER!

**Goal for activity:** To appreciate your personal strengths.

**Medium:** Sculpture.

**Time frame:** 30 minutes.

**Materials:** Polymer modeling clay, paper plate, and sculpting tools (like a toothpick).

**May help with:** Empowering yourself, increasing awareness and satisfaction about your life, setting intentions, and soothing anxiety.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Think of qualities this superhero possesses.
- Can you represent this visually?
- Make a small sculpture using the clay and sculpting tools.

### EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

- What are some of your strengths and weaknesses/superpowers?
- In what situations are your strengths most apparent? Is there a strength/superpower you wish you had? Can you do something to move in that direction?

