



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?

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

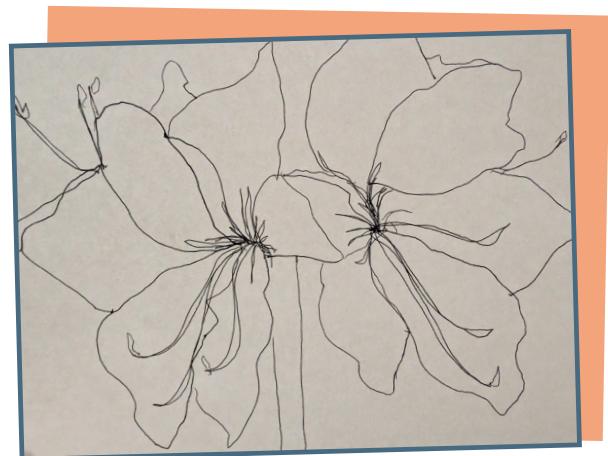
Goal for activity: To let go of perfectionism and unreasonable high expectations.

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.

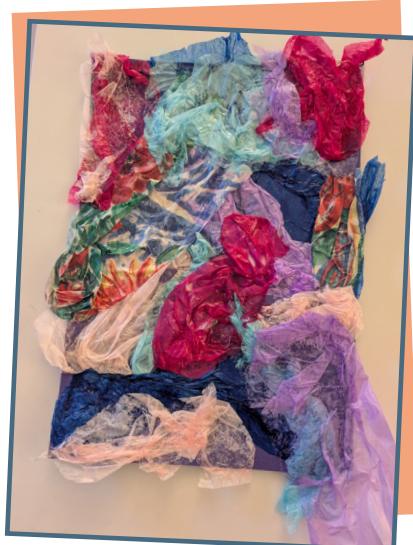
Time frame: 20 minutes.

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?

