



Canadian Art Therapy Association Association Canadienne d'Art Thérapie

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy combines the creative process and psychotherapy, facilitating self-exploration and understanding. Using imagery, colour and shape as part of this creative therapeutic process, thoughts and feelings can be expressed that would otherwise be difficult to articulate.

History of Art Therapy in Canada

The Canadian Art Therapy Association or Association Canadienne d'Art Thérapie (CATA-ACAT) in French was founded in 1977 by Martin A. Fischer, a psychotherapist practicing art therapy. The original objective was to unite and promote the emerging profession of art therapy in Canada.

There are certain qualifications required of art therapists. In Canada and the United States, art therapists must have at minimum a post-graduate degree or a graduate diploma in Art Therapy before identifying themselves within the profession. This graduate level education includes supervised clinical practicum (1000 hours for Canadian art therapists). These qualifications ensure the safety of the client as well as professional liability for agencies and employers offering this form of therapy to their clients.

Who can benefit from Art Therapy?

Art Therapists work with a variety of populations. Art therapy is effective for people of any age and an art therapist works with individuals, couples, families and groups in settings such as counselling agencies, schools, treatment centres, rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, correctional institutes and elder care locations.

Professional and Registered CATA-ACAT art therapists are trained professionals

Art therapists are trained professionals with expertise in counseling psychology and fine arts. In Canada and the United States, art therapists must have at minimum a master's degree or a master's level diploma in Art Therapy before identifying themselves within the profession. This graduate level education includes supervised clinical practicum hours (700 hours for Canadian art therapists), thus ensuring the safety of the client as well as professional liability for agencies and employers offering this form of therapy.

A Registered Canadian Art Therapist (RCAT) is a Professional Member in good standing that received additional training in the profession, clinical supervision (50 hours for 1000 client contact hours) beyond graduation, displays involvement in the art therapy community and are experienced in working with a variety of clients in diverse settings. For more information, go to What is an [RCAT](#) page.

Art therapists abide by a Code of Ethics that is specific to art therapy

Please see our [Standards of Practice](#) page for more details

Art therapists work with diverse clients

Art therapy is effective for people of any age. An art therapist works with individuals, couples, families or groups in settings such as counselling agencies, schools, treatment centers, rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, correctional institutes and elder care locations.

Professional and Registered Art therapists have liability insurance

To graduate, art therapists are required to have at least 700 hours of supervised art therapy practicum hours. This ensures that graduated art therapists have a deep and professional understanding in working with clients and ensures client safety when working with deep psychological issues. As working professionals, Professional and Registered Canadian Art Therapists are required to have professional liability insurance to offer art therapy.

Research supporting art therapy exists

Art therapy outcome research with diverse populations continues to be published in different academic journals in art therapy, psychology, psychotherapy, counseling, special populations, art education, etc. The Canadian Art Therapy Association has been publishing quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods and arts-based academic research on art therapy with diverse populations since 1985 through our academic journal.

The **American Art Therapy Association Research Committee** has created a **Research Outcome Bibliography** on outcome and single-subject studies in art therapy to support the practice of art therapy through providing empirical evidence of its use. Please upload the pdf document here: <http://arttherapy.org/upload/outcomebibliographyresearchcmte.pdf>

Misconceptions of Art Therapy

Art making and art work is therapeutic and has been practiced for centuries as a form of communication and healing modality. With the recent trend of adult coloring books and the influx of 'art therapy' products on the market, there is a general misconception in the public sphere that any application of art can be considered art therapy. This is not true. In order to practice art therapy, one must receive specific training from an accredited organization. Unique therapeutic skills of art therapists cannot be duplicated by recreational therapists, social workers, artists or educators. There is a clear therapeutic difference between general art groups and art therapy groups.

How do I find an Art Therapist?

Go to the Canadian Art Therapy Association's (CATA-ACAT) website: www.canadianarttherapy.org to find a registered or professional art therapist in your area. You may also visit the national organization of art therapists on social media: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).