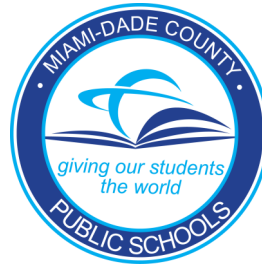


What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. It is based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight.

The profession of art therapy integrates the fields of human development, visual art (drawing, painting, sculpture, and other art forms), and the creative process with models of counseling and psychotherapy. Art therapy is used to assess and treat the following: anxiety, depression, and other mental and emotional problems and disorders; impulsivity and attentional issues; substance abuse and other addictions; family and relationship issues; abuse and domestic violence; social and emotional difficulties related to disability and illness; trauma and loss; physical, cognitive, and neurological problems; and psycho-social difficulties.

Art therapists are Masters level professionals who meet educational requirements in the areas of: theories of art therapy, counseling, and psychotherapy; ethics and standards of practice; assessment and evaluation; individual, group, and family techniques; human and creative development; multicultural issues; research methods; and internships/practicum experiences in clinical settings. Art therapists are skilled in the application of a variety of art modalities for assessment and treatment. Art therapists incorporate these skills to assist those with whom they work reach their therapeutic goals.



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Art Therapy in Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Non-Traditional Interventions
For
Non-Traditional Populations

Clinical Art Therapy in Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The profession of art therapy has become increasingly recognized and appreciated by school administrators as a valuable related service that supports and improves the well-being of children and adolescents in a variety of educational settings.

Art therapy began as a related service in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) in 1979, and is the oldest continuous and most comprehensive art therapy departments in the country. The M-DCPS Art Therapy Department has served as a model to other schools and programs throughout the nation. Art therapy is used to help students access their educational opportunities by providing them with the supports and services as documented on their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Art therapists support the student's education through the provision of interventions and strategies aligned with the student's IEP goals and benchmarks. Services are scheduled according to the IEP and may be provided through either individual, and/or small group sessions. M-DCPS art therapists conduct formalized art therapy assessments, work as part of the educational team, meet with parents, and provide staff development and support. For more than thirty-five years, M-DCPS art therapists have employed art and the creative process to help those students who are not otherwise able to successfully access educational opportunities through traditional means.

Art therapy in M-DCPS is a related service for students participating in programs for emotional/ behavioral disabilities (E/BD). The IEP team determines the specialized instruction and related services needed for students with disabilities to access a free and appropriate education.

Related services are educationally relevant services that support academic, developmental, functional, and transition goals to assist a student to benefit from special education. Traditional forms of counseling as well as art therapy and other services are also considered.

Why is Art Therapy Necessary in Schools?

Not all children learn the same way. Not all children have the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings in the same way, either. Art therapy helps those students who have difficulties responding to traditional forms of counseling find their voice through non-traditional approaches.

Art therapists utilize both art products and the verbal associations to help students make connections between their thoughts, feelings, and actions; relate to the world around them; and reach their fullest potential by helping them maintain a path toward graduation and successful post-school outcomes.

For more information on art therapy:

<http://arttherapy.dadeschools.net>

www.arttherapy.org

www.floridaarttherapy.org

www.atcb.org

What Do Art Therapists Do?

- Assess the current functioning and needs of students.
- Develop treatment goals and benchmarks to address student concerns.
- Plan, design, and facilitate a schedule that addresses therapeutic goals.
- Enable students to explore their artwork as it relates to individual needs.
- Increase:
 - Academic Performance
 - Cognitive Functioning
 - Emotional Regulation
 - Peer Interactions
 - Self-Esteem
 - Social Skills
- Decrease:
 - Behavioral Incidences
 - Retention
 - Absenteeism
 - Suspensions
 - Dropout
- Document student progress.
- Work as part of a multidisciplinary team of professionals.
- Maintain professional competence through participating in continuing education sessions.
- Provide referrals to appropriate community programs.
- Provide parent outreach and support.

• **Make a difference**