

Art Therapy from a Positive Psychology Perspective

Creative Wellbeing Workshops, LLC

Positive psychology emerges out of the presumption that the profession of psychology, although noble in its intent, has focused more on repairing weakness and alleviating suffering than on examining the conditions and processes that contribute to well-being.

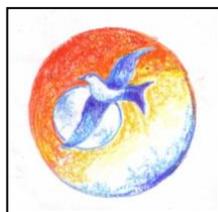
Positive psychologists propose that even the most troubled individuals want more than just the relief of suffering, they want lives filled with joy, meaning, and purpose.

Positive psychology identifies “paths” to increasing wellbeing: positive emotions and experience; positive engagement; relationships; meaning and purpose; and accomplishment. They suggest that relationship and connection are fundamental to all of these domains.



The field of Art Therapy, established in the early 50s, harnesses the healing potential of the creative process to promote healing, reduce suffering, and improve well-being. The artmaking and art therapy processes engage many different parts of the brain, allowing access to and expression of feelings, thoughts, and experiences not always available through verbal means alone. Doing art induces experiences of flow and evokes the relaxation response. Exploring the imagery that emerges through artistic expression allows us examine our experience and our lives in novel ways that can shift perception and encourage fresh insight into ourselves and others.

Art therapy is practiced with an array of populations, in many different settings, and by practitioners from a broad range of philosophical orientations. Art therapy from a positive psychology perspective capitalizes on the unique capacity of the creative process to increase positive emotions, improve mood, and regulate affect, to promote empathy and build relationships, to induce engagement and flow, to illustrate and highlight strengths, to identify and create meaning, to heighten sense of mastery and accomplishment, to reduce stress, and to increase a sense of wellbeing and happiness.



References

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