

# Art & Healing

## **Why is Healing Through The Arts necessary?**

We don't plan for cancer, sickness or injuries. Often these experiences catch us by surprise and can dramatically change our lives. When they do, we need to find a new way of living, sometimes temporarily. Some may feel that life is less than before.

Healing Through The Arts can show you that life can be more, or in some way, better than before. True healing is not waiting for time to heal. It is creating the opportunities where healing takes place, and the process of mending can make us stronger.

Through Art we gain a sense of life's meaning. When we create art, we make something that did not exist before and can preserve it to enjoy. Our interaction with art provides a break from the pace of routine, where we can notice the unique. You do not need to be creative to participate, only a desire to learn and enjoy the adventure.

Creation and healing are the same energy. They transform pain, rather than being destroyed by it. Art heals by accepting the pain and doing something with it. (*Art Heals: How Creativity Cures The Soul. By Shawn McNiff, 2004*)

## **Art Therapy versus Expressive Art**

Art Therapy traditionally places more emphasis on the product of the artwork, so therapists can use it to evaluate a client's emotional state.

Expressive Art uses the artistic process as a means of expression and release. In expressive art, the client's work is not used as a diagnostic tool because it is believed that only the person who created the work knows the meaning of it.

**Healing Through The Arts** provides information and resources to encourage and support healing to individuals, caregivers and their families.

**Why is art important to healing?** When patients and their caregivers have exposure to art they:

- Are more optimistic and hopeful
- Experience less boredom, anxiety and loneliness
- Are better able to let go of fears and tension and reduce stress
- Are better able to communicate their emotions and concerns about treatments and procedures
- Feel less pain and respond better to treatment since a less stressed body is more able to heal than a tense one
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## • What is a Mandala?



- *“I recognized more and more clearly that the mandala is the center; it is the expression of all life; it is the path of individualism.” C.G. Jung*
- Mandala comes from the Sanskrit word, meaning circle. Once you see a mandala, you will notice them everywhere, existing naturally in nature or created by mankind. They are representative in the shape of the Earth, stars, bird’s eye view of a hurricane, flowers, plants, or seashells. Mandalas are part of many cultures: Domes and stain glass windows of cathedrals, Native American pottery, Celtic knots, Hindu art and gardens for meditation and Buddhist art as meditative and teaching practices.

## Art and healing

Art As A Healing Force Web will immerse you in the field of art and healing. By art, we always mean storytelling, poetry, music, dance, visual arts, painting, sculpture, everything that is usually thought of as creativity. We believe that art and healing are joining together to become one. As art and healing merge, the field of art will be changed and the field of medicine will be changed. For many of us, healing art is a spiritual path, a transformational process, a way of being. This site concentrates on making art to heal, on the power of the creative process of art as a healing force. We believe that making art frees the body's healing mechanisms to heal. We believe it unites body, mind, and spirit. In art and healing, no interpretation or therapy is necessary. The

creative process is the healer. Here, art is transformational in itself. The field of art therapy and the field of expressive arts also uses art in healing, but tend to concentrate more on therapy or method and involve training and /or licensing although there is much overlap in ways of working.. They are wonderful fields and are usually different from art and healing as discussed on this site. The artists we talk about are usually not trained art therapists or expressive art therapists, they are just people who use the creative process of art to heal themselves, others, and the earth. On this site we have information about how art heals, the history of the art and healing, and how each person can heal themselves with art, music, and dance We also will share the experiences of healers working in medical programs using art, and of artists making healing art to heal themselves, others, and the earth. We will give you links to other art and healing sites, earth sites, and ritual healing sites on the web. We also have links to art therapy and expressive art sites for readers who are interested art therapy. We see ourselves as a center of art and healing energy on the web, to help heal you, others, and the earth. I believe that art and healing will heal yourself, other, community and the earth. It is something you do- an act to heal with spirit.

How does art heal? Scientific studies tell us that art heals by changing a person's physiology and attitude. The body's physiology changes from one of stress to one of deep relaxation, from one of fear to one of creativity and inspiration. Art and music put a person in a different brain wave pattern, art and music affect a person's autonomic nervous system, their hormonal balance and their brain neurotransmitters.

Art and music affect every cell in the body instantly to create a healing physiology that changes the immune system and blood flow to all the organs. Art and Music also immediately change a person's perceptions of their world. They change attitude, emotional state, and pain perception. They create hope and positivity and they help people cope with difficulties. They transform a person's outlook and way of being in the world.

In fact it is now known by neurophysiologists that art, prayer, and healing all come from the same source in the body, they all are associated with similar brain wave patterns, mind body changes and they all are deeply connected in feeling and meaning. Art, prayer, and healing all take us into our inner world, the world of imagery and emotion, of visions and feelings. This journey inward into what used to be called the spirit or soul and is now called the mind, is deeply healing. For healing comes to us from within, our own healing resources are freed to allow our immune system to operate optimally and that is always how we heal. This is the contemporary version of freeing our healing energies and is now recognized to be crucial to healing. We go inward on The Creative Spiral together through art and music.