

American Art Therapy Association Fact Sheet



The American Art Therapy Association is composed of a network of 36 statewide Chapters, more than 5,000 practicing art therapists, students, educators, and related practitioners in the United States and around the world. Each year, that network of service reaches more than a million people who need help in unlocking the issues that restrict their lives. Art therapy helps people express their problems through art which can then be facilitated by a trained professional and the healing can begin.

Our Mission

Advancing art therapy to restore and enhance lives.

Our culture is one of inclusion of people of all backgrounds, open to new concepts and artistic expression that continues to expand the effectiveness of art as a healing therapy. We are rooted in the experience of those who began this field 40 years ago and honor their legacy by our commitment to the future of the art therapy profession.

The American Art Therapy Association promotes the therapeutic use of art by:

- Encouraging the highest quality of art therapy services to the public;
- Facilitating communication among members and colleagues;
- Supporting legislative efforts at the state and federal levels;
- Disseminating information to the general public, art therapists, and related mental health professionals; and,
- Recognizing excellence in clinical, professional, educational, and research activities.

How We Help

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, self-awareness, and achieve insight. Therapy is used with children, adolescents, adults, older adults, groups, and families to assess and treat the following: anxiety, depression, and other mental and emotional problems; substance abuse and 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 psychosocial difficulties related to medical illness. Art therapy programs are found in a number of settings including hospitals, clinics, public and community agencies, wellness centers, educational institutions, businesses, and private practices.

Membership Benefits

Members of the American Art Therapy Association have access to a wide array of benefits that support career advancement, provide practical support materials and resources for the members' practices, and enable easy access to research and information useful to those interested in the field of art therapy. In addition, the Association advocates on behalf of its members with federal and state government officials, agencies, and others that can impact career opportunities for art therapists and expand the field. The American Art Therapy Association offers a variety of membership options, including:

- **Professional Member** - Individuals who have completed graduate level educational training in art therapy.
- **New Professional Member** - Individuals who have graduated from a Master's art therapy program within the last 12 months.
- **Credentialed Professional Member** - Individuals who are registered by the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB) as an ATR or an ATR-BC.
- **Associate** - Individuals interested in the therapeutic use of art who support the purposes and objectives of the American Art Therapy Association.
- **Student** - Individuals who are taking courses in art therapy or a related field.
- **Contributing** - Individuals, organizations, institutions or foundations which contribute annually to the American Art Therapy Association may be eligible for Contributing Membership.
- **Retired** - Individuals who are at least 65 years of age and who are no longer practicing.
- **International** - Individuals living outside of the United States that work in the field of art therapy, or are interested in the field of art therapy, are encouraged and welcome to join the American Art Therapy Association under the International category.
- **Affiliate** - Organizations and educational institutions that wish to support the Association.

Member benefits are accessed through the American Art Therapy Association's website and are grouped in three categories:

- **The Practice Center** providing operational support, services and insurance and health care benefits for members.
- **The Career Center** enhancing career development through its new Art Therapy Distance Learning Institute, Student Mentor Program, the Art Therapy Job Posting Board, and many other career supports.
- **The ART Clearinghouse** containing art research and therapy information, Association publications, including the leading research publication in the field of art therapy, the Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association. Research in the field and other publications of interest to the field are available in the Clearinghouse.

It is important to note that the Art Therapy Credentials Board is a separately incorporated entity and is an independent credentialing body that creates and maintains standards associated with earning art therapy credentials: Registered Art Therapist (ATR) and Board-Certified Art Therapist (ATC-BC). For more information visit their website at www.atcb.org.

For more information about the American Art Therapy Association, please contact us:

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