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Enriching the Lives of Seniors Through the Art Therapy

ELISTAT MODULES

Specific Art Therapy Applications

Module 04

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Module 04

Content of The Module

1. Self-knowledge study
2. Trauma focused art therapy
3. Anxiety focused art therapy
4. Art therapy for grief and loss



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Learning Outcomes

The knowledge, skills and attitude to be gained in the module

After the module, the participants will be able to:

- define the concepts of self-knowledge, trauma, anxiety, grief and loss;
- learn about the specificity of emotions;
- initiate self-reflection and deepen self-knowledge;
- reorganize traumas, anxiety and other overwhelming emotions;
- practice specific art therapy to deal with trauma, anxiety, grief and loss.

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Main Subject of The Module

The explains how art therapy may be used with certain affective disorders or pathologies in order to restore a person's functionality and offer new ways of managing emotions and inner reflections to re-establish homeostasis. Also, practical activities are offered as examples, which may be applied exactly as described, adapted for the specific cases or may just serve as inspiration to develop other exercises and activities with similar impact.

Materials and Documents of The Module

Tutor Guide
Curriculum
Visual tools

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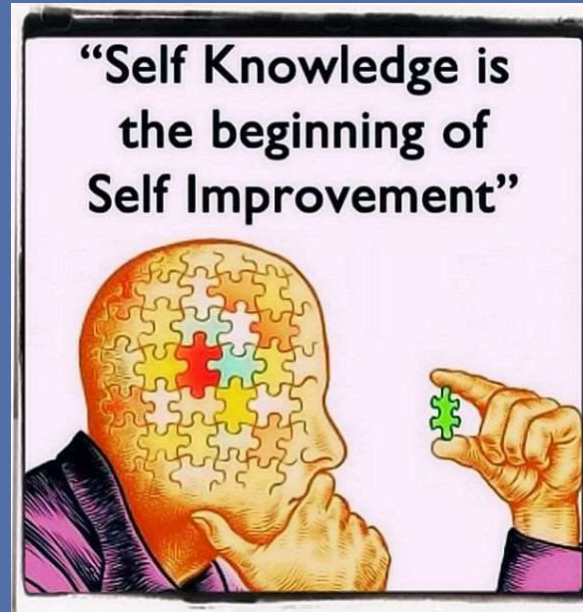


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Unit 1. Self-knowledge study

- In terms of psychology and psychotherapy, self-knowledge or self-awareness is often defined as the ability to engage in some kind of reflective awareness.
- As one develops a certain level of self-awareness, the person will:
 - begin to connect with his/ her own unique identity,
 - have a more accurate perspective of own resources and limits,
 - be able to better evaluate his/ her own behavior in comparison with internal standards and values,
 - become more self-conscious.



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Unit 1. Self-knowledge study

- A person with a high level of self-knowledge will be able to engage in suitable activities, will be more decisive regarding when to take risks and when to step down, will initiate more functional relationships with the others and will be able to handle and communicate his/ her own emotions in a more functional way.



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Activity 1.

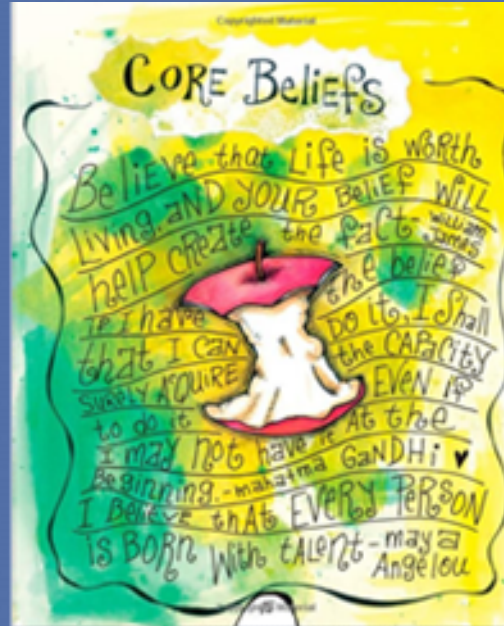
Create an art-journal page which reflects who you are



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Share your work with the group and let the others know how you feel about their work.



Activity 2.

Create a dramatic role play to reflect the role you had/have in your family



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- Choose a few persons from the group to help you recreate a scene of your family's present/ past life that best reflects the role you had/ still have in your family of origin.
- You should remain outside the scene, as a director at first, and choose somebody else to play your part. You might be asked to switch places in turns with different other members of the family and then explain to the group what are the feelings, the thoughts etc. of that person.



Activity 3.

Using body paints, draw the personal resources that you see in others



- There are always things that one person knows about oneself and which the others are not seeing, but there are also things that the others see about the person and that the person cannot acknowledge.



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Activity 3.

Using body paints, draw the personal resources that you see in others



- Work in pairs. Choose from the available body paints and draw on your partner's skin one personal resource (one strength) that you have noticed so far. Then switch places.
- Each of you is then invited to interpret the "tattoo" on their skin and explain what you think it means.
- Afterwards, each of you, as authors of the body art, will also explain what you did and why you believe that the body "tattoo" is representative for your partner.

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Unit 2. Trauma focused art therapy

- Trauma is an experience or a chain of repeated experiences of high emotional distress, which destabilizes the usual balance of the self by reflecting the inability and inadequacy of a person to engage in regular activities and relationships.
- Trauma is often a generic term used for exceptional harmful or painful experiences, like physical or sexual abuse, childhood neglect, natural disasters or accidents, death of a loved one, war etc., but it is not limited to those.



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Unit 2. Trauma focused art therapy

- Often, the traumatic experiences of a person may not be so exceptional and may not seem as traumatic to another individual (e.g. the loss of the favorite toy, children's gossip, falling in love with another who does not respond with the same affection may be traumatic).
- Thus, trauma is not about the experience in itself, but about the degree of emotional impact that the experience has upon the inner equilibrium.



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Unit 2. Trauma focused art therapy

- Trauma is often all-consuming and it may impact every facet of a person's life (career, relationships, self-esteem, sleep patterns, physical health, the ability to function in society).
- If not addressed properly and timely, it may also lead to more severe disorders (acute distress disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, alcohol or drug addictions etc.)
- Art therapy applied in trauma cases allows people to express themselves without having to verbalize their emotions, thus, they may heal their pain even though they don't recognize it consciously or they don't feel empowered enough to relive it.



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Activity 1.

Draw/ paint a boat at sea, a storm and a lighthouse and reflect upon you as being the passenger on the boat



■ Reflect and discuss in small groups:

- What does the storm look like? How does it make you feel?
- Do you feel alone? Is there anybody else with you on the same boat?
- What resources do you have that could take your boat to the shore?
- Who is guiding you or has the potential to guide you from the lighthouse to reach the shore? Who would you ask to help you?
- What actions you need to take in order to get to safety? Will it be hard or easy to get to shore? What would make it easier on you?

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Activity 2.

Choose a song that inspires you to be strong and confident and dance your way to strength and confidence

- Music and dance are therapeutic.
- Using the body to express a certain state of mind or emotion has a strong effect upon the mind and may induce that feeling or conviction.



Share your feelings and thoughts with the group.



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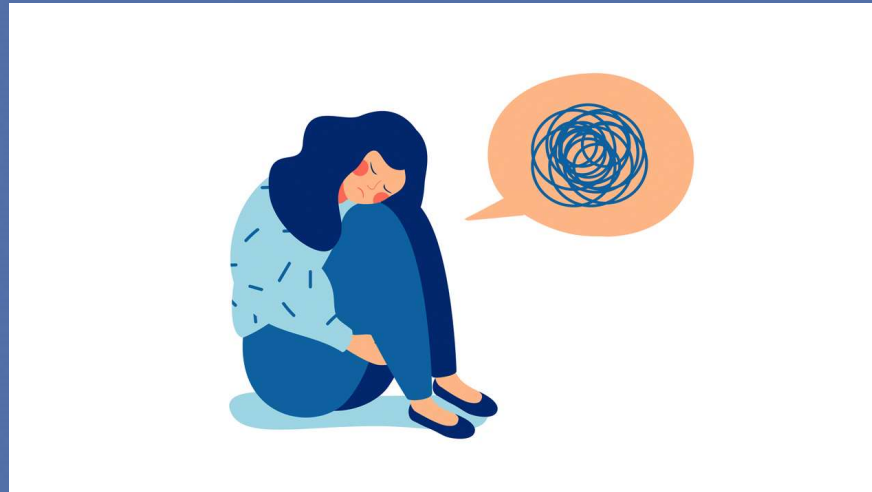


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Unit 3. Anxiety focused art therapy

- Anxiety is a feeling of worry, uneasiness or fear which may occur in a situation that is not well-defined, that is out of the ordinary and of which the outcome may not yet be predicted. Everybody may feel anxious in such situations.
- **Anxiety disorder** on the other hand is a condition in which people may experience intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear in everyday situations. In such cases, the emotional response of a person is disproportioned in relation with the situation.



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Unit 3. Anxiety focused art therapy

- Art therapy techniques may be used to help express and relieve the anxious feelings and cultivate calm and tranquility. When one is focused on creating, his/her attention shifts away from worrisome ruminations. Thus, the nervous system will begin to regulate and will make room for other emotions and thoughts. Also, because art therapy supports nonverbal expression of emotions, it helps the anxious person to move away from the inner spoken thoughts and contributes to structure a more general view of the situation.



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Activity 1.

Anxiety expressing itself



- Tape a blank paper in front of you and have your pencils close by. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply a few times. Get in touch with a feeling of anxiety. Feel it in your body. Let it come to you, pay attention to it, observe it. With your eyes still closed and without thinking too much, start scribbling on the blank paper a continuous drawing without lifting the pencil from the paper, just as the anxiety would express itself on the paper. The movement should stop when the expression of the feeling would stop.
- You may now look at the drawing, turning also the page if necessary, and try to find a meaning for it, by continuing to develop the drawing. As soon as the drawing is complete, try to imagine a dialog with the anxiety on the paper.

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Activity 2.

Make a collage of calm and safety

- Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and remember a time and a place in which you felt safe and relaxed.
- Then create a collage of it with the various materials at hand.
- After the collage is finished, you may present to the group and imagine yourselves as being in that place.



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Unit 4. Art therapy for grief and loss

- Grieving is the natural response to the loss of someone dear.
- Even though people process loss differently, some grief symptoms are common in the majority of cases: sadness, loneliness, fear, crying, intrusive thoughts and memories, hopelessness, numbness.
- Most people tend to isolate themselves from others while grieving, thus the feelings may actually get amplified by that.



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Unit 4. Art therapy for grief and loss

- Just like in the other cases of overwhelming emotions, art therapy has the potential of facilitating the expression of emotions and reduces their intensity, while triggering exploration of underlying feelings associated with loss.
- It also may help people connect with each other and fight the hopelessness and loneliness together, especially if conducted in a group.



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Activity 1.

Have a conversation with the person you have lost (the empty chair technique)



- Think about a person you have lost in your life. Remember the appearance of that person. Imagine that the lost one will take a seat in front of you, on the empty chair, right now and you have a conversation together.



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Activity 1.

Have a conversation with the person you have lost (the empty chair technique)



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■ Reflect upon:

- What would you like to say to your dear one? Is there anything you would like to ask? What would you like him/ her to know?
- What do you think that your dear one would say? What do you think his/ her words would be in reply to your question?
- What would you like your dear one to remember from this conversation? What is that you will take with you from this conversation?



T.C. ANKARA VALİLİĞİ
AİLE VE SOSYAL HİZMETLER
İL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ



Activity 2.

Make a present for the one departed

- Use any technique you like for this: it may be a drawing, a painting, a collage, a clay representation, a bead or sand work, a music composition or a dance etc.
- Describe the gift you have made and the person you have made it for. Explain to the others why you chose to make it in a specific way.



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