

ART THERAPY IN ART CLASS WORKSHOP

“All art can be thought of as therapy. When we make art, a part of us is on that paper, and something inside us comes out in the artwork.” – this is how Emilia Negru (art teacher) started this workshop with the 11th grade students.

Art related activities are powerful means of personal development, among students and across their life span. Art has a strong therapeutic power and is strictly connected to body: art activities can influence blood pressure and breathing. Art also promotes self-esteem and self-expression, empathy, self-knowledge and self-regulation, time and space management skills. Art facilitates mental and emotional growth. As a matter of fact, it can be a great tool to promote integration and communication among students, especially the ones affected by autism, attention deficit disorders, learning disabilities.

Visual-plastic art therapy is an activity that uses non-verbal methods based on plastic creation (drawing, painting, sculpture, modeling, collage) with psychotherapeutic valences, highlighted by the imagination creation of an artistic product, or by receiving and experiencing the meanings of some such products. The primary objective of art therapy is to use creativity to improve and heal life as it provides the way to self-reliance based on the spontaneity of expression, the non-verbal expression of emotions and thoughts and the overcoming of communication barriers.

Art therapy is made up of four particular therapies: drawing, modeling and collage therapy, drama therapy, motion and dance therapy, and music therapy. The use of expressive-creative techniques helps eliminate the bottlenecks, and children can directly or symbolically reveal feelings, feelings and beliefs in an open way that leads to personality integration and development.

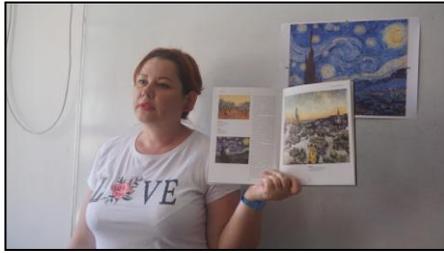
Creative therapy offers students the opportunity to express their emotions and feelings difficult or impossible to verbalize because songs, musical instruments, dancing, colours, plasticine (modelling clay) are naturally accessible and the novelty of such concrete activities is pleasant, surprising and at the same time stimulating. Children show originality, developing valuable products, but creativity is often unintentional. It also exhibits a number of characteristics considered as part of the creative adult personality: spontaneity, openness to experience, energy, initiative, expressiveness.

The language of art therapy is that of analogies, in opposition to the scientific language of medicine or psychology. We are aware of the fact that every painting is has a mysterious life, a life with many torments, doubts, hours of enthusiasm and light, which is also true for literature or music. The choice and realization of the art-therapeutic project allows people to find a connection with his aspirations, with his symptoms, with his current situation.

Art offers people the opportunity to express themselves throughout the therapy and is used to channel, reduce and transform emotions, aggression, negative energies, and achievement of psychological change. Sometimes, the artistic process not associated with verbalization is enough to work on the existing difficulty and to release tension. Art is curative in itself and the creative act is an act of sublimation – sewerage, reduction and transformation of potentially destructive or antisocial energies specific to art therapy since they facilitate the expression of emotions in a non-verbal way and cause them to be active, have the courage to engage in a process of change, and try to solve their own problems in a way that balances what they do, what they think and what they feel. Also, art therapy is an act of integrating personality – integrative experiences involve the recognition of hidden conflicts, suppressed feelings and the reconciliation between the unconscious and the conscious (in the artistic act, the conflict is resolved, solved and integrated). At the same time, it encourages children to experience the role of being the creator of their own situation, not just the victim, and encourages the development of beneficial interpersonal relationships and the intensification of interpersonal communication.

Art can be the place of articulation of three dimensions of the spirit, which are: the imaginary, the real and the symbolic and it resides in the creation of symbolic forms of human feelings, allowing the image to pass through the symbol and the symbol in the image. Art is a constructive tool, allowing the person to connect with himself, and it expands its expression, communication and relational capabilities.

Art therapy is based on the cataract, expressive and relational power of art; aesthetic emotions can contribute, alongside cognitive and moral, to restoring a person's psychic balance. Visual-plastic art therapy allows the obscure tendencies of the unconscious to free themselves through sublimation, passing the barriers imposed by censorship of consciousness. Temptations forbidden by moral consciousness and obsessions sublimate, convert to graphic, pictorial, or pathophysical images.



Visual-plastic art therapy through drawing, painting, modelling, etc. allows the release of some obsessions, some ideal-affective complexes and nightmares. Famous artists of the world have used art as a means of emotional release, such as Francisco Goya, through *The Capricious*

cycles (Los Caprichos) or Vincent Van Gogh, an eloquent example of a connection between mental illness and art. The release of deep tensions, conflicts and obsessions through plastic creation is a fact acknowledged by Van Gogh who said he feels a great relief when making a painting. During the admission to the Saint-Remy, Van Gogh has been diagnosed with various diseases: epilepsy, manic-depressive illness, schizophrenia. After getting sick, having hallucinations and prolonged seizures, being obsessed with the idea of death, the paintings of Van Gogh no longer have the sonority of the previous era; the yellow colors became brown, the blue became dark and the gold became brown. Instead, the rhythm is exalted: arabesque turbulence, dislocated and contorted forms, perspectives running out into the horizon in a ruse of lines and colors when he was admitted to the Saint-Remy asylum, created 150 paintings and 100 drawings, working as a 'possessed', being interrupted in his work of three long crises, followed by a painful prostration. Most often, landscapes painted during psychiatric illness are delusional, with stormy sky, contorted olives and cypress trees twisted by heat.

