

# art therapy and ptsd

## Art Therapy and PTSD: Healing Through Creativity

art therapy and ptsd have become increasingly intertwined as more mental health professionals recognize the profound impact that creative expression can have on trauma recovery. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affects millions worldwide, often leaving individuals feeling trapped by memories, anxiety, and emotional numbness. Traditional talk therapies are invaluable, but for many, art therapy offers a unique and powerful path toward healing that words alone sometimes cannot reach.

## Understanding PTSD and Its Challenges

PTSD occurs after a person experiences or witnesses a traumatic event, such as combat, natural disasters, assault, or accidents. Symptoms can include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and emotional detachment. While cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy, and medication are common treatments, some survivors find it difficult to articulate their feelings or confront memories directly. This is where art therapy steps in, providing a non-verbal outlet to explore and process trauma safely.

## How Art Therapy Complements PTSD Treatment

Art therapy uses creative processes—like painting, drawing, sculpting, or collage—to encourage self-expression and emotional release. In the context of PTSD, this method can bypass verbal barriers and tap into subconscious feelings that words might fail to express. By externalizing trauma through art, individuals can gain new perspectives, reduce anxiety, and regain a sense of control over their experiences.

# **Why Art Therapy Works for PTSD**

## **Accessing Emotions Non-Verbally**

One of the biggest hurdles for PTSD patients is communicating the depth of their trauma. Art therapy offers an alternative language. When a survivor paints or molds, they often reveal emotions and memories that may be too painful or complex to discuss. This non-verbal communication can help therapists understand their client's inner world and guide them more effectively.

## **Reducing Stress and Anxiety**

Engaging in creative activities activates the brain's relaxation response. Studies show that art-making lowers cortisol levels, the hormone linked to stress. For PTSD sufferers, this calming effect can provide a much-needed break from hypervigilance and panic. The repetitive motions of drawing or coloring also promote mindfulness, helping individuals stay grounded in the present moment.

## **Encouraging Empowerment and Control**

Trauma often leaves people feeling powerless. Art therapy empowers individuals by allowing them to make choices in their creative process. Selecting colors, shapes, and materials fosters a sense of agency, which can translate into increased confidence outside the therapy room. This regained control is a crucial step in overcoming the helplessness associated with PTSD.

# **Practical Approaches in Art Therapy for PTSD**

## **Creating a Safe Space**

Before any creative work begins, establishing trust between therapist and client is vital. A safe environment encourages honest self-expression without fear of judgment. Therapists often start with simple exercises, like drawing feelings or memories, gradually building towards more complex projects as the client becomes comfortable.

## **Using Symbolism and Metaphors**

Art therapy often involves exploring symbols and metaphors related to trauma. For example, a stormy sea might represent emotional turmoil, or a locked box could symbolize repressed memories. Discussing these images helps individuals externalize their trauma and view it from a new perspective, facilitating healing.

## **Incorporating Group Art Therapy**

Group sessions provide communal support, reminding survivors that they are not alone. Collaborative art projects can build trust and encourage sharing, which is therapeutic in itself. The sense of belonging and shared experience can reduce isolation—a common feeling among those with PTSD.

## **Scientific Evidence Supporting Art Therapy for PTSD**

Research on art therapy's effectiveness in treating PTSD has grown significantly. Several studies

highlight improvements in emotional regulation, decreased PTSD symptoms, and enhanced quality of life among participants. Neuroimaging research also suggests that creative activities can stimulate brain areas involved in emotional processing and memory, aiding recovery.

For example, a study published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* found that veterans who engaged in art therapy reported fewer flashbacks and reduced anxiety. Another research project demonstrated that art therapy helped female survivors of domestic abuse reframe their traumatic experiences, promoting resilience.

## Tips for Incorporating Art Therapy Into PTSD Recovery

Whether working with a licensed art therapist or exploring creativity independently, certain approaches can maximize benefits:

- **Start Small:** Begin with simple materials like colored pencils or clay to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Focus on Process, Not Product:** The goal is expression, not creating a masterpiece.
- **Be Patient:** Healing takes time; emotions may surface gradually.
- **Use Journaling Alongside Art:** Writing about your creations can deepen insight.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** Therapists trained in trauma-informed art therapy can provide tailored support.

# **The Role of Technology and Digital Art Therapy**

With advancements in technology, digital art therapy is becoming more accessible. Apps and tablet-based programs allow individuals to create without the mess or cost of traditional materials. For some, digital platforms feel less intimidating and more private, encouraging participation. Teletherapy sessions incorporating digital art tools also expand access for those unable to attend in person.

## **Personal Stories: Finding Hope Through Art**

Many people living with PTSD have found art therapy transformative. One veteran described how painting landscapes helped him reconnect with feelings of peace and safety, something he struggled to achieve otherwise. A survivor of childhood trauma shared that clay modeling allowed her to express anger and sorrow in a contained way, eventually leading to emotional release.

These stories highlight that while art therapy is not a cure-all, it can be a meaningful complement to other treatments—offering a creative sanctuary where healing begins.

Exploring art therapy and PTSD reveals a compassionate approach to trauma recovery. By tapping into creativity, individuals can find new ways to understand and integrate their experiences, paving the way for renewed strength and hope. Whether through brushstrokes, sculpture, or digital design, art provides a powerful tool to reclaim one's story and foster resilience.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is art therapy and how is it used to treat PTSD?**

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses creative art-making to help individuals express and process emotions. For PTSD patients, it provides a non-verbal outlet to explore traumatic experiences,

reduce anxiety, and promote healing.

## **How effective is art therapy in managing symptoms of PTSD?**

Research indicates that art therapy can be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks, anxiety, and depression by facilitating emotional expression and helping patients process trauma in a safe environment.

## **What types of art therapy techniques are commonly used for PTSD treatment?**

Common techniques include drawing, painting, collage, sculpting, and journaling. These methods help patients externalize their feelings, improve self-awareness, and develop coping skills.

## **Can art therapy be combined with other PTSD treatments?**

Yes, art therapy is often used as a complementary treatment alongside traditional therapies like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), medication, and EMDR to enhance overall treatment outcomes.

## **Is art therapy suitable for all PTSD patients?**

While art therapy can benefit many individuals with PTSD, suitability depends on the patient's preferences, severity of symptoms, and willingness to engage in creative processes. A mental health professional can help determine if it is appropriate.

## **How does art therapy help in reducing PTSD-related trauma triggers?**

Art therapy helps patients identify and express difficult emotions and memories associated with trauma, allowing them to process triggers in a controlled way, which can reduce the intensity and frequency of trauma-related responses.

## **Are there specific populations with PTSD that benefit most from art therapy?**

Art therapy is particularly beneficial for populations who may struggle with verbal expression, such as children, veterans, and survivors of sexual trauma, offering a creative means to communicate and heal.

## **What qualifications should an art therapist have to work with PTSD patients?**

Art therapists working with PTSD patients should be licensed mental health professionals with specialized training in art therapy and experience in trauma-informed care to ensure safe and effective treatment.

## **Additional Resources**

Art Therapy and PTSD: Exploring the Healing Potential of Creative Expression

art therapy and ptsd have increasingly intersected within mental health treatment paradigms, offering a complementary approach to traditional therapies for trauma survivors. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affects millions worldwide, often leaving individuals struggling with intrusive memories, heightened anxiety, and emotional numbness. Conventional treatments like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and medication have proven effective for many, yet some patients seek alternative or adjunctive methods. Art therapy emerges as a promising modality, leveraging creative processes to facilitate emotional expression, cognitive integration, and psychological healing.

Understanding how art therapy works within the context of PTSD requires an examination of both the disorder's complex symptomatology and the unique mechanisms of artistic engagement. Unlike verbal therapies that rely heavily on language, art therapy taps into nonverbal channels, allowing patients to externalize trauma in symbolic or visual form. This dynamic fosters a safe space for trauma survivors

to process difficult emotions without the constraints of direct verbal recounting, which can sometimes exacerbate distress.

## **The Role of Art Therapy in PTSD Treatment**

Art therapy is a specialized form of psychotherapy that uses creative art-making as a therapeutic tool. For individuals with PTSD, the art therapy process can circumvent the barriers posed by trauma-related avoidance and dissociation. By creating art, patients engage different areas of the brain, including those involved in sensory processing, memory, and emotional regulation. This can help in reprocessing traumatic memories and reducing symptoms such as hypervigilance, flashbacks, and emotional numbing.

Clinical evidence supports the efficacy of art therapy as part of a comprehensive PTSD treatment plan. Studies have indicated that patients who participate in art therapy report improvements in mood, reductions in anxiety and depressive symptoms, and enhanced self-awareness. For example, a study published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* found that veterans who engaged in art therapy showed significant decreases in PTSD symptom severity and depression scores compared to control groups.

## **Mechanisms Behind Art Therapy's Effectiveness in PTSD**

One of the core benefits of art therapy for PTSD is its ability to facilitate emotional expression when words fail. Trauma can disrupt the brain's capacity to process experiences verbally. The creative process allows individuals to communicate feelings and memories through imagery, color, texture, and form.

Moreover, art therapy promotes mindfulness and grounding, which are crucial in managing PTSD symptoms. The act of focusing on creating art helps individuals remain present, reducing rumination on traumatic events. This sensory engagement can calm the nervous system, decreasing hyperarousal and panic.



Another psychological mechanism involves narrative reconstruction. Through art, patients can construct visual narratives that help organize fragmented trauma memories into coherent stories. This narrative formation aids in cognitive restructuring, helping individuals reframe traumatic experiences and reduce their emotional impact.

## Comparing Art Therapy with Traditional PTSD Treatments

While evidence-based treatments like prolonged exposure therapy and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) are widely recommended for PTSD, art therapy offers distinct advantages and potential limitations.

- **Advantages:** Art therapy provides a nonverbal outlet that can be less intimidating for patients who struggle with verbalizing trauma. It fosters creativity, self-expression, and can be tailored to individual preferences. It may also reduce stigma as it is often perceived as a less clinical intervention.
- **Limitations:** Art therapy alone may not address all aspects of PTSD, particularly when trauma is severe or complicated by other mental health disorders. It often works best as a complementary therapy alongside traditional psychological treatments.

Given these factors, many trauma treatment centers integrate art therapy into multidisciplinary approaches, combining it with psychotherapy, medication management, and peer support groups.

## Applications of Art Therapy in Different PTSD Populations

Art therapy is versatile and has been adapted for various demographics affected by PTSD, including

military veterans, survivors of childhood abuse, refugees, and first responders.

## **Veterans and Military Personnel**

Military veterans often face complex PTSD due to combat exposure. Art therapy programs tailored for veterans emphasize themes of identity, loss, resilience, and reintegration into civilian life. Group art therapy sessions can also foster camaraderie and social support, which are critical for recovery.

## **Children and Adolescents**

Younger PTSD sufferers benefit from art therapy's playful and accessible nature. Children may lack the verbal skills or emotional awareness to describe their trauma, but through drawing, painting, or sculpting, they can reveal inner conflicts and fears. Therapists can then interpret these creations to guide trauma-focused interventions.

## **Refugees and Survivors of Mass Trauma**

For displaced populations and survivors of mass violence, art therapy offers a culturally sensitive and flexible healing modality. It transcends language barriers and can be adapted to diverse cultural art forms, making it an inclusive option in humanitarian mental health services.

## **Challenges and Considerations in Implementing Art Therapy for PTSD**

Despite its benefits, art therapy is not without challenges. One critical consideration is ensuring

therapists are properly trained in both art therapy techniques and trauma-informed care. The therapeutic process must be carefully managed to avoid re-traumatization, especially when dealing with graphic or emotionally charged art expressions.

Additionally, access to qualified art therapists remains limited in many regions, which can hinder widespread adoption. Insurance coverage and reimbursement policies also vary, affecting affordability for some patients.

Evaluating the effectiveness of art therapy presents methodological challenges as well. Many studies rely on small sample sizes or lack control groups, making it difficult to generalize findings. More rigorous randomized controlled trials are needed to establish definitive evidence and optimize treatment protocols.

## **Future Directions in Research and Practice**

Emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and digital art platforms are beginning to intersect with art therapy, offering novel ways to engage PTSD patients. VR art environments can simulate safe spaces for trauma processing, while digital tools increase accessibility and flexibility.

Interdisciplinary collaboration between neuroscientists, psychologists, and art therapists is also expanding understanding of how creative expression modulates brain function and emotional regulation in trauma recovery.

## **Conclusion: The Evolving Role of Art Therapy in PTSD Care**

The therapeutic relationship between art therapy and PTSD represents a growing field that bridges creativity with clinical science. While not a standalone cure, art therapy enhances the spectrum of trauma interventions by addressing the emotional and cognitive complexities of PTSD through nonverbal, experiential means. As awareness and research continue to develop, art therapy holds

promise as a valuable component in personalized, trauma-informed care strategies.

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Terence M. Keane, Matthew J. Friedman, Judith A. Cohen, 2008-10-24 This book has been replaced by *Effective Treatments for PTSD*, Third Edition, edited by David Forbes, Jonathan I. Bisson, Candice M. Monson, and Lucy Berliner, ISBN 978-1-4625-4356-4.

**art therapy and ptsd: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Art Therapy** Amy Backos, 2021-01-21 This book focusses on art therapy as a treatment of PTSD in both theory and practice. It includes an in-depth look at what PTSD is, how it develops, and how art therapists should approach and treat it, with a focus on furthering social justice. The chapters cover a wide variety of contexts, including adults at a rape crisis centre, veterans, children in group homes and patients at substance use facilities. The second section of the book includes invaluable practical strategies and interventions based on the author's decades of experience in the field. It also discusses more complex concepts, including the impact of avoidance in maintaining symptoms of PTSD, and considers how Acceptance and Commitment Therapy can guide art therapy interventions.

**art therapy and ptsd: Art Therapy, Trauma, and Neuroscience** Juliet L. King, 2021-09-22 *Art Therapy, Trauma, and Neuroscience* combines theory, research, and practice with traumatized populations in a neuroscience framework. The classic edition includes a new preface from the author discussing advances in the field. Recognizing the importance of a neuroscience- and trauma-informed approach to art therapy practice, research, and education, some of the most renowned figures in art therapy and trauma use translational and integrative neuroscience to provide theoretical and applied techniques for use in clinical practice. Graduate students, therapists, and educators will come away from this book with a refined understanding of brain-based interventions in a dynamic yet accessible format.

**art therapy and ptsd: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder For Dummies** Mark Goulston, 2012-03-27 As Dr. Mark Goulston tells his patients who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), The fact that you're still afraid doesn't mean you're in any danger. It just takes the will and the way for your heart and soul to accept what the logical part of your mind already knows. In *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder For Dummies*, Dr. Goulston helps you find the will and shows you the way. A traumatic event can turn your world upside down, but there is a path out of PTSD. This reassuring guide presents the latest on effective treatments that help you combat fear, stop stress in its tracks, and bring joy back into your life. You'll learn how to: Identify PTSD symptoms and get a diagnosis Understand PTSD and the nature of trauma Develop a PTSD treatment plan Choose the ideal therapist for you Decide whether cognitive behavior therapy is right for you Weight the pros and cons of PTSD medications Cope with flashbacks, nightmares, and disruptive thoughts Maximize your healing Manage your recovery, both during and after treatment Help a partner, child or other loved one triumph over PTSD Know when you're getting better Get your life back on track Whether you're a trauma survivor with PTSD or the caregiver of a PTSD sufferer, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder For Dummies*, gives you the tools you need to win the battle against this disabling condition.

**art therapy and ptsd: Art Therapy with Military Populations** Paula Howie, 2017-06-26 For decades, art therapy has proved to be a practical treatment for veterans and other military populations suffering from trauma. *Art Therapy with Military Populations* provides an in-depth overview of both the theoretical and historical bases of art therapy with these groups while also chronicling the latest trends in treatment and the continued expansion of treatment settings. Edited by an art therapist with over 25 years' experience working with the military and including chapters by a variety of seasoned and innovative clinicians, this comprehensive new volume provides professionals with cutting edge knowledge and interventions for working with military service members and their families. Available for download are employment resources for art therapists who would like to work in military settings, a bonus chapter, historical documents on establishing art therapy, a treatment objectives manual, and resources for art therapists.

**art therapy and ptsd: Somatic Art Therapy** Johanne Hamel, 2021-05-17 This book focuses on somatic art therapy for treating acute or chronic pain, especially resulting from physical and/or psychological trauma. It discusses the role of the psyche in physical healing and encourages

combining of traditional medicine and holistic perspectives in treatment. Translated from the French text, this volume provides case studies and examples from the author's art psychotherapy practice of 40 years, including the four-quadrants method. Chapters review the current treatments for chronic pain and PTSD and focus on art therapeutic methods to treat those conditions, such as art therapy protocols for PTSD. The book exposes the underlying rationale of somatic art therapy, covering art therapy effectiveness, Levine's somatic dissociation, van der Kolk's somatic memory, and Scaer's procedural memory concepts. Also featured are chapter contributions from art therapists Sophie Boudrias, Mylène Piché, and Dr. Patcharin Sughondhabirrom. By providing a unique, clear and concise synthesis of available art therapy methods this text will appeal both to the general and professional public, including professional art therapists, psychotherapists, helping relation professionals, and medical practitioners.

**art therapy and ptsd: ESSENTIAL ART THERAPY EXERCISES 2022** The Books of Pamex, 2022-03-14 The intention of my art therapy practice is to create a safe place for clients to experience and creatively express their emotions, as well as to cultivate new opportunities for navigating life. Art has been an outlet for me during turbulent times, and it has been my first defense when dealing with life's challenges. Art is also a part of my daily regimen of keeping my life in balance. I practice what I preach. My mission is to support others in finding a way to connect body, mind, and soul through creativity. It's incredibly satisfying to help a person realize their true potential and live a life free of suffering. As a registered, board-certified art therapist (ATR-BC), I run a private practice that provides these services to all age groups, both in person and online. My experience with adolescent clients ranges from working with at-risk youth in crisis shelters and juvenile jails to kids in public schools. I also have vast experience working with adults who have anxiety, depression, and trauma. Outside of my private practice, I have also worked in psychiatric facilities and women's shelters. My clinical experience has been using the cognitive-behavioral art therapy approach to treat depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Cognitive-behavioral approaches, including mindfulness practices and meditation, are also a part of my art therapy method. Art therapy is a way for clients to visualize what's going on in their mind and learn new ways to change their thinking patterns, which can lead to a new perspective. This book provides creative techniques for dealing with depression, anxiety, and PTSD. If you are a mental health professional, try the exercises yourself before doing them with your client. If you are doing these art exercises independently, give yourself time to reflect by journaling the discussion questions. My hope is that this book will provide a springboard for insight, self-expression, mindfulness, acceptance, and self-compassion. Specifically, the exercises are designed to provide visual representations of thoughts and feelings. When people learn that they have control over their thoughts, and how they choose to feel, it will affect their behavior. Everyone can learn new ways to respond to situations in their lives. Art therapy isn't solely for people with an artistic disposition. It can also be helpful to those who consider themselves nonartistic. Anyone open to learning techniques that foster self-awareness can gain something from the experience. Those who are new to creating art should focus on the process rather than the product. To accomplish this, they must let go of critical thoughts because judging whether artwork is good or bad will stop the creative process. The act of expression is what is valuable because it provides insight into emotions and behaviors. Creating art to express emotions can be truly cathartic and liberating. Everyone should take the time to loosen up by trying the warm-up exercises I've included at the end of chapter 1. When an individual is open to looking inward and finding new ways to cope with life events through creating art without judgment, transformation happens. The world begins to change. If thoughts of judgment come up, just witness them and do not respond. They are only thoughts. Keep the intention clear to use these exercises to heal and to learn new ways to exist comfortably in the world.

**art therapy and ptsd: The Wiley Handbook of Art Therapy** David E. Gussak, Marcia L. Rosal, 2016-01-19 The Wiley Handbook of Art Therapy is a collection of original, internationally diverse essays, that provides unsurpassed breadth and depth of coverage of the subject. The most comprehensive art therapy book in the field, exploring a wide range of themes A unique collection of

the current and innovative clinical, theoretical and research approaches in the field Cutting-edge in its content, the handbook includes the very latest trends in the subject, and in-depth accounts of the advances in the art therapy arena Edited by two highly renowned and respected academics in the field, with a stellar list of global contributors, including Judy Rubin, Vija Lusebrink, Selma Ciornai, Maria d' Ella and Jill Westwood Part of the Wiley Handbooks in Clinical Psychology series

**art therapy and ptsd: PTSD and the Return from the Front** Pasquale De Marco, 2025-07-07 This book provides a comprehensive overview of the psychological effects of combat and the resources available to help veterans cope with these effects. The book is divided into ten chapters, each of which covers a different topic related to combat and mental health. The first chapter provides a general overview of the psychological effects of combat. The second chapter discusses the history of PTSD and the different ways it can be treated. The third chapter examines the role of the media in shaping public understanding of combat and mental health. The fourth chapter discusses the legal implications of combat-related mental health problems. The fifth chapter explores the impact of combat on family relationships. The sixth chapter examines the role of community organizations in supporting veterans' recovery. The seventh chapter discusses the future of combat-related mental health research and treatment. The eighth chapter examines the use of art to express the experience of combat. The ninth chapter explores the role of spirituality in recovery from combat-related mental health problems. This book is intended for a general audience. It is written in a clear and concise style, and it does not require any prior knowledge of mental health or military service. The book is intended to be informative and helpful, and it is hoped that it will provide readers with a better understanding of the psychological effects of combat and the resources available to help veterans cope with these effects. This book is an essential resource for veterans, their families, and anyone who wants to better understand the psychological effects of combat. The book provides a comprehensive overview of the different mental health problems that veterans may face, as well as the different treatments and resources that are available to help them cope. The book is also a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the psychological effects of combat and the challenges that veterans face when they return home. If you like this book, write a review on google books!

**art therapy and ptsd: Art Therapy and Clinical Neuroscience** Richard Carr, Noah Hass-Cohen, 2008-10-15 This book offers an authoritative introductory account of recent developments in clinical neuroscience and its impact on art therapy theory and practice. It deciphers neuroscientific language and theory and contributes innovative concrete applications and interventions useful in art therapy.

**art therapy and ptsd: Art Therapy in the Treatment of Addiction and Trauma** Patricia Quinn, 2020-12-21 This book examines the benefits and uses of art therapy in the treatment of addiction and trauma, highlighting its effectiveness at revealing underlying causes and relapse triggers, as well as treating co-occurring conditions that impair learning and recovery. This book also focuses on art therapy for trauma within specific populations, including incarcerated individuals, military personnel and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Quinn discusses how art therapy is often carried out alongside combined approaches, such as CBT and DBT, and how it can help those with cognitive issues to learn through treatment. Furthermore, this book explores the benefits art therapy has for people with co-morbid conditions, such as dementia, emotional disorders and traumatic and acquired brain injuries. With co-authored chapters from leading researchers in art therapy, the book demonstrates how art therapy can help to uncover triggers, process trauma and find a means of self-expression whilst working towards a sustained recovery.

**art therapy and ptsd: *Handbook of Art Therapy*** Cathy A. Malchiodi, 2011-11-30 Providing a complete overview of art therapy, from theory and research to practical applications, this is the definitive handbook in the field. Leading practitioners demonstrate the nuts and bolts of arts-based intervention with children, adults, families, couples, and groups dealing with a wide range of clinical issues. Rich with illustrative case material, the volume features 110 sample drawings and other artwork. The inclusion of diverse theoretical approaches and practice settings makes the Handbook

eminently useful for all mental health professionals interested in using art in evaluation and treatment. New to This Edition\*Incorporates the latest clinical applications, methods, and research.\*Chapter on art materials and media (including uses of new technologies).\*Chapters on intervening with domestic violence survivors, bereaved children, and military personnel.\*Expanded coverage of neuroscience, cultural diversity, and ethics.

**art therapy and ptsd: *An Introduction to Art Therapy Research*** Lynn Kapitan, 2011-01-11 This book fulfills the need for a pragmatic text that is grounded in art therapy research literature and surrounding contexts, providing guidance to students and practitioners in research design via a broad survey of appropriate questions, methods, and ethical values.

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**art therapy and ptsd: *Group Art Therapy and Combat-related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*** Cheryl Miller, 2010 With the high number of soldiers returning from war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with this population, it is necessary to explore creative treatment solutions. The current study looks at the implementation of a group art therapy approach as part of an interdisciplinary inpatient treatment program for Canadian veterans diagnosed with PTSD. The purpose of the study is to assess the applicability of an art therapy intervention with this population. The study presents a review of the existing literature on the use of art therapy in the treatment of PTSD, including studies with a specific focus on war veterans. It also describes the group art therapy process of seven veterans. Group art therapy was offered twice a week and qualitative data was collected over a ten week period. Data collected includes images of the art works created in therapy, therapist observations, and observations by other staff members. The process of art therapy is described and data is looked at in terms how the veterans engaged with the process and the issues and emotions expressed in their art making. Potential benefits are explored.

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