

H A N D B O O K O F A R T T H E R A P Y

Second Edition

Edited by
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About the Editor

Cathy A. Malchiodi, PhD, ATR-BC, LPAT, LPCC, is an art therapist, expressive arts therapist, and clinical mental health counselor, as well as an internationally recognized authority on art therapy with children, adults, and families. The author of numerous books, including *The Art Therapy Sourcebook*, *Understanding Children's Drawings*, and *Breaking the Silence: Art Therapy with Children from Violent Homes*, and editor of *Creative Interventions with Traumatized Children*, she has written more than 70 articles and chapters and has given more than 350 presentations on art therapy throughout the United States and internationally. Dr. Malchiodi is on the faculty of Lesley University and is a visiting professor to universities in the United States and internationally. She is also founder of the Trauma-Informed Practices Institute, and has provided consultation, service, and expertise to a wide variety of community, national, and international agencies, particularly on the use of art therapy for trauma intervention, disaster relief, mental health, and wellness. She has served on the boards of the American Counseling Association, Association for Humanistic Counseling, International Child Art Foundation, and Alzheimer's Association, and is the President of Art Therapy Without Borders, a nonprofit organization supporting international art therapy initiatives and service. In honor of her clinical and academic contributions, Dr. Malchiodi is the only person to have received all three of the American Art Therapy Association's highest honors: Distinguished Service Award, Clinician Award, and Honorary Life Member Award. She has also received honors from the Kennedy Center and Very Special Arts in Washington, DC.

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Preface

In the preface to the first edition of the *Handbook of Art Therapy*, I wrote:

Art is a powerful tool in communication. It is now widely acknowledged that art expression is a way to visually communicate thoughts and feelings that are too painful to put into words. Creative activity has also been used in psychotherapy and counseling not only because it serves another language but also because of its inherent ability to help people of all ages explore emotions and beliefs, reduce stress, resolve problems and conflicts, and enhance their sense of well-being. (p. ix)

During the revisions and editing of this second edition, I realized that my conviction that art is an effective method of communication and therapy has not changed, but in fact has become even stronger. I have also come to appreciate and be inspired by the many changes that have emerged in the field of art therapy during the last decade. It is personally rewarding to see that that much more is now known about art therapy's effectiveness as a form of intervention. Emerging data from within the field of art therapy as well as neuroscience, human development, creativity, medicine, psychology, culture and anthropology, the arts, and expressive therapies have continued to strengthen my beliefs about the importance of art therapy as a change agent. More important, these new advances have even changed my own views about how and why art therapy is helpful to so many individuals. This edition of the *Handbook* reflects these advances and current applications, underscoring just how art therapy "works" with children, adolescents, adults, groups, and families.

When I first entered the field, art therapists debated the differences between "art as therapy" (the creative process as an agent of change) and "art psychotherapy" (the art product as a form of communication between client and therapist). In the 21st century, this debate still occasionally surfaces in the classroom, but the field itself has now evolved beyond this simple dichotomy. Art therapy has become more sophisticated in the questions it asks itself about the continuum of approaches used; it has also become more aware of its own accountability through examining just how and why art therapy is effective as a form of treatment with a variety of populations. In part, this is a result of the widespread interest in how brain studies are informing the collective understanding of many forms of therapy, including art and other creative arts therapies. It is also the natural outcome of a growing number of research studies demonstrating art therapy's potential with psychological trauma, aging, cognitive disorders, psychosocial aspects of medical illness, and many other exciting and emerging applications.

Because the *Handbook* is one of the most widely used texts in art therapy, counseling, psychology, and related professions, and is often used by new professionals to prepare for board certification as art therapists, this edition includes new and pragmatic chapters on the fundamentals of the field. These include an overview of materials and media ([Chapter 3](#)); professional practice, ethics, and cultural issues ([Chapter 4](#)); the most recent code of ethics

and professional practice ([Appendix A](#)); and two chapters covering the basics of art-based assessments ([Chapters 30](#) and [31](#)). Additionally, theoretical approaches that reflect advancements in art therapy techniques have been added; [Chapter 7](#) includes an overview of sensory-based and mind–body approaches that have become increasingly popular with practitioners. Developmental art therapy, originally associated with the stages of artistic and psychosocial development, has been reframed to include a “neurosequential” approach that shows how current information about the brain can inform the application of art therapy throughout the lifespan ([Chapter 9](#)). There are also many important revisions to chapters found in the first edition and new chapters that reflect contemporary applications of art therapy with client populations including adolescents, returning military, victims of domestic violence, older adults, and clients experiencing grief and loss.

I found developing this edition particularly gratifying because of advances in the field of art therapy over the past decade. Art therapy is broadening its scope and perhaps even its definition in response to growing global interest in the early 21st century. In the 1980s, 1990s, and the first decade of this century, most of my contact with professionals outside the United States was through face-to-face interaction at courses I conducted or conferences we attended. In the last several years, everything has changed as accessibility to real-time Internet communication has become commonplace in most parts of the world. As a practitioner, supervisor, and educator, I did not imagine that I would now be engaged in regular communication with other art therapists and professionals on every continent, and not just by e-mail, but also via webcam on my desktop computer or tablet. I did not foresee that I would be involved in leadership of international art therapy organizations or providing education to colleagues and students around the world from my office. All of this is now possible because access to social media platforms and online discussion groups (see [Appendix B](#) for more information about international art therapy networking) and web communication have eroded barriers to exchange of knowledge across borders. More individuals are able to reach out in the moment to learn about the practice of art therapy and access professional books and articles via electronic downloadable documents. That same technology is influencing how art therapy is practiced, and digital media are challenging how the traditional arts (drawing, painting, clay, and collage) are used through the ubiquitous availability of computers and more sophisticated phones, cameras, and other portable devices that can create or record images (see [Chapter 3](#)).

It is also exciting to see an increased recognition of art therapy by so many helping professionals and by two groups in particular. One group is the field of professional and mental health counseling, which has embraced the development and application of what is often called “creative arts in counseling” or “creativity in counseling.” At about the same time, art therapy education in the United States has adopted a set of educational standards that integrate the major competencies found in professional counseling, creating graduate programs to educate students in the practice of both art therapy and counseling. Despite this overlap, art therapists and counselors still generally hold very different views of the role of art and creativity in treatment. In contrast to art therapists, who see the art as central to the process of treatment, counselors integrating creative methods in their work emphasize

the relational aspects inherent to applying experiential methods in counseling. They also embrace a more activity-oriented approach (see [Chapter 18](#)) and one that is less focused on in-depth knowledge of art, art media, or art process. As this relationship between the two fields continues to develop, art therapy and counseling will undoubtedly influence each other and the overall conceptual framework of art therapy in general.

“Arts in healthcare” is the other group that is influencing the field of art therapy, particularly in medical settings. Visual art in healthcare is a broad terrain including not only artists or other personnel who might work with patients in hospitals, but also the specific inclusion of works of visual art in medical settings to improve aesthetics in hospital environments. Many art therapists work in tandem with artists in healthcare in teams or in specific programs designed to address both psychosocial needs and wellness enhancement (such as those described in [Chapters 16](#) and [27](#)). Visual art in healthcare has contributed significant research and knowledge that informs art therapy practice with a variety of populations, including the expansion of understanding about how creativity influences aging in positive and wide-reaching ways ([Chapter 19](#)).

Because so many helping professions continue to discover the benefits of art in intervention, art therapy continues to expand as both a primary and adjunct form of treatment. Art expression provides another way to communicate, establish relationships, enhance verbal therapy, and reach those whose experiences have not been or cannot be revealed through talk alone. Drawing, painting, collage, or simple sculpture are still modalities through which a child may express an abusive experience for the first time, an adult uncover a forgotten trauma, or a family disclose a hidden secret or significant incident. As more has become known about creative methods of intervention, more counselors, social workers, play therapists, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, nurses, and psychiatrists are discovering that drawing activities and other expressive media are helpful in the evaluation and treatment of people of all ages. Because brief forms of therapy have increased pressure to complete treatment in a limited number of sessions, many professionals find art expression helps people to quickly convey relevant issues and problems, thus expediting assessment and intervention. For this reason alone, practitioners are increasingly using drawings and other expressive art tasks in therapeutic interventions.

On a personal note, I am extremely humbled by my role as an editor of this volume. Over the past decade I have consistently heard from students and professionals in the fields of art therapy, counseling, psychology, nursing, and medicine about the usefulness and practical wisdom they have found in the previous edition. As an editor and author who writes because she wants to learn more rather than just put yet another art therapy book into print, I considered revisions and new material for this edition for several years before feeling comfortable with the final table of contents. As with any edited book, it is almost impossible to include every single specialized application of art therapy and all aspects of professional practice within one text; decisions on content were made based on readers’ preferences for material in the first edition, current best and most widely used practices and approaches, and existing literature at the time of revision. I also engaged many of the most knowledgeable active professionals in their areas of expertise and practice to write about

their work and experiences with children, adolescents, adults, groups, and families. Most of these authors are art therapists, but some are professionals in related fields who have made contributions that have impacted the field of art therapy and added to the field's collective knowledge.

The *Handbook of Art Therapy* is an assembly of theory and approaches that will enhance your understanding of this field in a practical and comprehensive way. It brings together methodology and practice of art therapy through numerous cases and visual illustrations of how children, adolescents, adults, groups, and families can benefit from the opportunity to experience art expression as part of their psychotherapy or counseling. It is exciting to be part of this field at this point in time and personally inspiring to bring a new edition of the *Handbook* reflecting these advances into print. It is my hope that you will be inspired by the extensive range of ideas, resources, and clinical examples in the pages that follow and deepen your own understanding of art therapy's value as a potent method for change and growth with a variety of populations and settings.

CATHY A. MALCHIODI

Acknowledgments

The first edition of the *Handbook of Art Therapy* was my initial attempt at editing a volume of this scope; the second time around is a little easier, but with just as many people to thank and acknowledge for their contributions and assistance. First, I thank the contributors to this book, whose chapters made it possible and whose patience and support made the process pleasurable for me. My deepest gratitude goes to you for making what I believe are significant contributions to the field of art therapy and for making my job as an editor worthwhile and personally rewarding.

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Finally, I never could have envisioned this text without the encouragement and advice of so many colleagues in art therapy, expressive therapies, play therapy, counseling, and psychology, and mentors who have supported my work for close to 30 years. As the years pass, the circle of those who have an influence on my writing and editing ever widens; I am fortunate and humbled to have encountered the wisdom of so many who have taught me so much. Of equal importance are all the clients—children, adolescents, adults, and families—who have taught me by example about the power and value of art therapy in personal growth, recovery, and well-being. Finally, I thank my husband, David, for making all things possible.

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