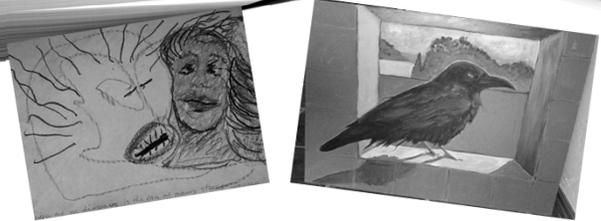


THE THERAPEUTIC POWER OF ART

Ideas For Creative Programming



ART THERAPY VS ART AS THERAPY

Art Therapy uses the creative PROCESS to help people deal with emotional issues. Art as therapy usually focuses on a PRODUCT--creating something

LIFE IS A PROCESS

Art gives space to ruminations, a place to store emotions and metaphors for our experiences

INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR

- Accepting one's life as it is
- Incorporating areas of crisis, failure, disappointment without being overwhelmed by a sense of failure
- Be able to recognize & take pride in achievement "even when those accomplishments fall short of one's expectations" (Development Through Life, Newman, Newman 1995)
- Some older adults become depressed and stuck in a cycle of ruminating on failure, loss, illness and hopelessness

ART MAKING IS INHERENTLY THERAPEUTIC

- Creating art demands being in the moment, focusing on what is in front of us and away from worrying thoughts
- Creating art exposes us to new experiences
- Creating art brings on flow (energized focus, full involvement & enjoyment)
- Creating art helps re-frame our experiences, thoughts, emotions
- Creating art involves "play"--which adds joy to life, relieves stress & helps people connect to one another

ART MAKING IS INHERENTLY THERAPEUTIC

- Art demands mindfulness: dwelling on the past causes depression, worrying about the future causes anxiety. Mindfulness is the antidote for both,
- Art facilitates story-telling

USING PHOTOS



Pick a postcards and use it to:

- Introduce yourself
- Tell a story

USING PHOTOS



- Doors are symbolic of change
- Take photos of many doorways
- Xerox the photos
- Ask them to select a picture of a doorway

USING PHOTOS

- They can color the photo with colored pencils or markers
- The photo can be mounted on a piece of construction paper
- Encourage them to talk and/or write about the photo on the back



USING PHOTOS



- This exercise can be done with other pictures too
- This is an exercise of "putting yourself in the picture"
- For a challenge, the pictures can be placed face down & selected sight unseen.

COLLAGE

- Magazine pictures provide instant images
- Ask them to make a "self-portrait collage" incorporating all the parts of their life
- This facilitates life review, storytelling, and "looking at the big picture"



COLLAGE



- Collage can be used in many ways:
- Holiday themes
- Trading Cards
- Story Telling

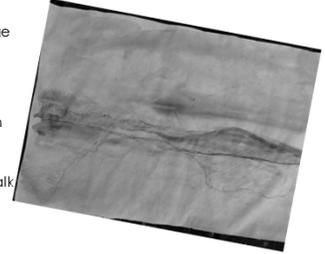
FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS



- Provide paper and markers and ask them to draw a character from the circus that would be a good symbol for themselves
- Ask them to list the strengths of this character
- Have them circle the strengths they share with this character
- This helps focus on strengths

WATERCOLOR

- Play relaxing music and encourage painting "to the music"
- Cover the paper with water, take deep breaths and encourage painting while breathing deeply in and out
- Paint a favorite landscape then talk about it



BOOKS



- Altered books: use an old book or a child's board book and collage, paint, draw and write using a chosen theme
 - Simple books can be made from folded paper
- Themes: gratitude, food, memories

OPEN STUDIO

- Provide materials and encourage people to "play"
- Play music
- Encourage focus on enjoying the process of expression
- Encourage acceptance

- Materials:
- Large paper (for dry & wet media)
 - Watercolor trays
 - Oil Pastels
 - Colored Markers
 - Colored Pencils
 - Magazines
 - Glue Sticks

OPEN STUDIO

- Masks
- Hats
- Wooden Shapes
- Items from Nature such as shells, nuts, rocks, feathers
- Boxes of various sizes
- Tissue paper, napkins, wrapping paper
- Beads, photos, interesting sayings

When you allow free expression the artist will amaze themselves, discover new truths and feel fully alive, in spite of whatever challenges they may be facing at the time.