

How to Guide: Do's and Don'ts Art- Based Practice



Learn It, Lead It!

Integrating Art-Based Practice
in Settlement and Healthcare



Access Alliance
Multicultural Health and Community Services

Do's and Don't of Art-Based Practice

Getting started integrating art into your practice? Onboarding someone new onto your team? Check out common misconceptions and the alternate suggested practices.

What not to do	Suggested Practice
<p>Imposing own Interpretation</p> <p>"Wow, that is a beautiful red horse, its so pretty."</p>	<p>Be mindful NOT to impose our own interpretation about a participants art creation. It can cause invalidation and embarrassment, instead use gratitude.</p> <p>"Thank you for engaging in the art activity today"</p>
<p>It's all about the outcome</p> <p>"Let's hurry and finish the art-piece" "We need to have a complete art piece by the end of the session"</p>	<p>Expressive art therapy programs is NOT about the outcome, but the process. Art-making is used as a tool and experience to foster self-expression and reflection. It's not about the product, but the meaning the participants has made about the product.</p> <p>"We have 30 minutes to engage in the art-making process, remember to observe how it is making you feel."</p>
<p>This is an art class</p> <p>"Today I am going to teach out how to pain and use the colours in the proper way"</p>	<p>Although expressive art therapy programs use many different art forms. Facilitator are NOT art teachers. They can introduce the art-medium, but should not prescribe how it is to be used to create.</p> <p>"Today we will use clay to respond to the question, what does home look and feel like to you?"</p>
<p>Need prior art experience</p> <p>"What is your experience in art? Have you done this before"</p>	<p>No one needs to have previous art experience to engage. Expressive art programs are not about art skills, it's about meaning making and self-expression.</p> <p>"Thank you for being willing to engage in this art activity"</p>
<p>Facilitators cannot engage in art-making</p> <p>"As a facilitator I will watch and observe you while you make the art"</p>	<p>Facilitators are encouraged to also interact with the art-making process. This challenges hierarchy between facilitator and participant. It demonstrates safety and trust. Facilitators may not necessarily draw an image, but showing playfulness is helpful.</p> <p>"Everyone can take a piece of clay and begin squishing it in their hands. How does it make your feel? Observe what are the sensations?"</p>
<p>Art will heal you</p> <p>"Do you feel healed from art-making today?"</p>	<p>As facilitators we need to accept that a program may not change someone's life, but it can be a catalyst towards their goal of an improved mental health. Especially for trauma survivors, it is a life long journey. Art is a tool for managing difficult emotions and processing.</p> <p>"How did today's art making make you feel?" "What colour is your mood?"</p>