

How substance abuse addicts can benefit from art therapy and spiritual nourishment...

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Abstract

For this particular research paper I will go over some details of the use of Art Therapy and some of the techniques that is used for Art Therapy. This is a spiritual technique that is not used often in counseling sessions, especially with adults even if it is a technique useful for all ages, and it is a spiritual technique that I am not quite familiar with. Art Therapy will be explored throughout this paper as well as some examples of some of the techniques used.

Art Therapy

Many people have trouble expressing themselves when they have complications in their lives. This is even harder for people that suffer from substance abuse. The reason we have therapy is for people that need help with substance abuse to be able to express themselves well enough in order to make progress through recovery. Many different places offer different types of treatment methods that involve: music, religion, etc. Another type of therapy that they offer, that I am not familiar with, is the use of art therapy. I have heard of people expressing themselves through art before, but I am not quite sure how. This paper where go into depth on how the use of how art therapy is useful for people suffering through substance abuse.

The use of art therapy in counseling first started in the early 1940s when therapists first started noticing that the use of art in the sessions were therapeutic. Therapists like Edward Adamson of Britain and Dr. Edith Kramer started using art therapy in their sessions and they noticed how well it impacted their clients that suffered from substance abuse. Art therapy is a

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technique that helps the counselor interact with their clients better where words may fail them in certain stages of recovery. Today the use of art therapy is respected as a form of psychotherapy and you can find it in many drug rehab centers, mental health clinics, prisons, etc. (The Ranch, 2015).

You might wonder why use art as a therapy technique. The reason why is that many addicts that are trying to go through recovery are unable to vocalize many of the things that they may be feeling. The use of art in therapy allows them to communicate and self-reflect on things that have happened through their life and things that are being said in the session. This could help the client deal with internal and external conflicts that they may be struggling with, and it helps the therapist build rapport with their client in order for the two of them to communicate better (The Ranch, 2015).

Art therapy has been around a long time, but it wasn't until the late 20th century where scientists and therapists started using the techniques in real life sessions. Once they realized that the use of art therapy reduces stress and anxiety on the client more people started using this technique in their office. Not only that, art therapy helps the client to start building a level of trust with others in their life in order to recover. This works out well because not only will the client start to trust their counselor it may help them to open up more to other people they interact with (The Ranch, 2015).

Art therapy isn't just useful for helping the client open up, it is also useful for helping the client's mind as well. The use of using creative art helps involve different parts of a person's brain that they may not normally use which is the right side of the brain. Not only that the use of art therapy helps a person

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with their hand eye coordination skills and it helps them turn things like, emotions, internal/external conflicts and fears into something concrete that the therapist can then understand. This is quite helpful in order to help the client rationalize some of the things that they are going through. There are still many studies and research being done on the use of art therapy, but this technique is used in a lot of places (The Ranch, 2015).

Art therapy is a great technique that is used for addiction sessions, but that isn't the only place where it is used. I have stated before that art therapy has been, and still is being researched by many scientists and therapists that feel that this type of treatment is effective. Art therapy is used in psychosocial treatment with cancer, it helps a person have a positive outlook on their body image, and it is really useful in helping with the distress of others. These are all things that can help a person recover through life no matter what they are going through (Malchiodi, 2015).

These are the only things that art therapy can help someone with. There have been studies that show a decrease in depression and fatigue in people that go through chemotherapy, it helps strengthen positive feelings, lightens the distress on others, helps people clarify existential questions that they may have about certain situations, the list goes on to what the use of art therapy can do for a person (Malchiodi, 2015).

Research has shown that children that have cancer and engage in drawing, painting, etc. can help them reduce their anxiety, give them positive feelings on their quality of life, and it strengthens the self-concept in them. This will not only be helpful with people that are going through cancer treatment this <https://assignbuster.com/how-substance-abuse-addicts-can-benefit-from-art-therapy-and-spiritual-nourishment/>

can also help people that are suffering from substance abuse addiction as well. Just think that something that is as simple as art is effective enough in order to help people heal (Malchiodi, 2015).

Art therapy is can be used by people of all ages, but it is usually most helpful when it comes to counseling children. There are many different assessments and techniques that clients can participate in with their therapist, but I will list off three of them just to give an idea of these assessments. One of the techniques is the use of doll building. With doll building you will have a client refurbish a doll from whatever frayed image that it is and this could help the client find a deeper meaning on what it means for their own life when building the doll. What I mean by that is that the client will than see their doll in such a terrible shape but with hard work and time that doll can be reshaped and turned into something new (The Ranch, 2015).

The unfurnished doll can help represent the client at their lowest, and over time that doll will begin to heal the way in the way that the client themselves wants to heal and how they view themselves as healing. The second technique that can be used in art therapy is with road drawing. Having a client participate in road drawing can be interpreted many ways when it comes to the client. The use of drawing a road can reflect the client's life path that they are on and how far they see themselves going on this life path. A road drawing can help interpret many things, like how they view their life, their life choices, and if it will be a smooth or bumpy road along the way as they continue the transition into recovery (The Ranch, 2015).

This type of assessment seems really effective for adults as they go through addiction. Many of the adults are older so they will be able look back on then versus now to see where they will possibly be heading on their future endeavors. This type of assessment may not be effective in teens that are addicts, because they are most likely to still be figuring out who they are before they try to figure out where they are going through life. Not to say that you cannot try this assessment on them you would just have to phrase it in a way that better suits them. Again this is a great technique and it sounds really helpful (The Ranch, 2015).

The third and final technique that I will list is called the altered book. This assessment is quite similar to the doll building exercise and you will know why in a minute. With the altered book exercise a person is expected to kind of catalog their life in a way as they take their journey on the road to recovery. This technique will have the client create a catalog that will show them through the beginning stages through their addiction and the transition they are making through their road to recovery. The client can then choose to have the book go along with how their recovery is going, or they can alter the book to skip ahead to where they feel they want to be in the future. Either way this is a great technique that should work well with adults and teens that are suffering from substance abuse (The Ranch, 2015).

Art therapy is something that can really help you get in touch with your inner self, and get closer to that higher power that some people may have been looking for. This technique is truly interesting and researching it has shown me some of the things that I have least expected to see or know about art

therapy. To think that with people that are suffering through addiction they will be able to work through the things in their life with the help of some creativity. This is something that a lot of people can relate to, like music, if they are not inclined to turn to religion for guidance.

Many people that are suffering through addiction may feel if they have not had a religious, mystical, or peak experience that they may not be worth saving. Telling them that art therapy will help them through their spiritual journey will be just as effective for them if they have not found a specific religion that they want to dedicate their faith to, yet or at all if they are thinking about it, or any group of religions that I want to draw any beliefs from.

As strange as it may sound it seems for me to start talking about why a person suffering through addiction may want to find a belief in a higher power in order to get through life just take a look at this quote. In James Forsyth Chapter 3 it was said that “ William James seemed to have been unable to adopt either the strict Calvinism of his grandfather or the Swedenborgian mysticism of his father. This lack of faith seems to have been the source of much inner turmoil and desperation throughout his life” (Forsyth, 2012). People that are going through counseling may feel lost at a time like this and they may feel that searching for a religion that is best for them may help them through dark times. This is not a bad thing to do but it would be better for a person to practice many different spiritual techniques to become one with themselves, instead of running themselves ragged

looking for things that are not there. Art therapy sounds like a great way to start this process that will push them forward on the long road to recovery.

Art therapy is truly an amazing technique that can help people through the tough times that they are having and it is a good thing that such a technique exists. Not everyone can talk out their problems the way that they want them to, and now with the use of art therapy they can. This is something that is really effective, and if I would have to choose a technique to use for my therapy sessions I would choose this one.