

The Benefits of Art Therapy in Addiction Treatment

What does it mean to heal? More importantly, what does it take to heal? Addiction is a complex disease; therefore, it requires a complex and personalized approach to recovery. An unconditional support group provides understanding and inclusion. Prescribed medication aids in coping with physical symptoms. However, where do you turn for some of the more abstract or psychological conflicts you may be facing? Art therapy serves as an avenue for self-discovery and quite literally gives you a blank canvas to better express or communicate emotional uncertainties stemming from addiction.

To learn more about [addiction treatment programs in Orange County](#), reach out to our compassionate clinicians at [Oceanfront Recovery](#).

What is Art Therapy?

As a form of experiential therapy, art therapy aims to address emotional needs through a creative outlet. This can be done individually or within groups and helps those who have trouble expressing themselves better convey deeply personal experiences.

Art therapy can include any of the following activities:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Sculpting
- Music
- Poetry

When Words Aren't Enough

At its core, art therapy is expression. Before one can begin coping with addiction and seek recovery, they must first understand their addiction. This process may not always be comfortable through conversation. Due to art's inherently non-verbal nature, it affords people the freedom to explore and better understand the ideas and emotions they are feeling. This is especially helpful for those dealing with psychological issues associated with their addiction, such as abuse.

Whether using the artwork as an introduction to deeper conversation or simply as a free association-type exercise, anxieties and complex emotions are visually represented and become *tangible*. This is a crucial step in the introspective process and for understanding any affliction.

Art Therapy and Addiction

As it relates to addiction specifically, art therapy can work wonders for those facing difficult realities. For example, *incident drawings* can help illustrate feelings of chaos or self-destruction which may lead to the desire for more control.

According to the [Journal of Addictions Nursing](#), art therapy contributes to the recovery process by confronting denial, inspiring motivation, providing an outlet for painful emotions, and lessening shame associated with addiction. Additionally, when performed in a group setting, art therapy promotes a safe social space where people can better understand each other's feelings and are free to discuss their work.

Art therapy provides a much-needed break from intensive talking sessions. As a low-stress, personal activity, drawing or painting allows the subconscious room to breathe, which in turn, can help new memories or emotional discoveries to surface. Keep in mind, talk therapy is still an invaluable aid in the recovery process. Programs such as art therapy ultimately complement traditional therapy rather than replace it.

Orange County Rehab and Recovery

Recovery can be an intimidating destination. At [Oceanfront Recovery](#) we are committed for the entire journey. Nested along the Pacific Ocean in Laguna Beach, California, Oceanfront provides an environment to promote comprehensive wellness. We are a licensed Substance Abuse Disorder and Dual-Diagnosis Treatment center with a team of passionate care providers. If you or a loved one are seeking drug or alcohol addiction treatment in Orange County, do not hesitate to [get in touch with us](#) at your earliest convenience. We're here to listen.