



CREATIVE ARTS THERAPIES FACT SHEET

As part of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Recreation Therapy Service, Creative arts therapies are direct-care programs and services in Art Therapy, Dance/Movement Therapy, Drama Therapy, and Music Therapy.



CREATIVE ARTS THERAPISTS

Creative arts therapists are human service professionals who use arts modalities and creative processes to promote wellness, recovery, rehabilitation through unique personal interactions.

Each creative arts therapy discipline has its own set of professional standards and requisite qualifications. Creative arts therapists are highly skilled, credentialed professionals having completed extensive coursework and clinical training.



(Photo courtesy of Larry Marchionda)

TREATMENT PLANNING

Qualified creative arts therapists develop treatment goals, provide clinical interventions, monitor and document progress, and serve on interdisciplinary teams.

Therapists plan and carry out treatment interventions to facilitate sensory integration, ambulation, community reentry, and reality orientation; to diminish emotional stress, muscular dysfunction; and to treat psychosocial dysfunction; while providing a sense of achievement and progress and channeling energies into acceptable forms of behavior.

RESEARCH

Research supports the effectiveness of creative arts therapies interventions in many areas, including overall physical rehabilitation and facilitating movement. Creative arts therapies further help patients to increase motivation to become engaged in treatment, provide emotional support for Veterans and their families, and create an outlet to safely express feelings.

Research findings and clinical observations attest to the positive outcomes that can result from creative arts therapies, and especially for those who may be resistive to other treatment approaches.



CARE STANDARDS

Creative arts therapists adhere to standards of care that promote optimal outcomes for patients. Creative arts therapists utilize a wide range of techniques in clinical interventions that emphasize the healing potential and influence of the arts for rehabilitation, recovery, and improved quality of life.



POPULATIONS SERVED

Creative arts therapists create non-threatening group and individual artistic experiences for individuals of all ages who confront life challenges related to physical and mental health conditions, on a daily basis. Creative arts therapists provide and promote creative self-expression that is personally driven and individually focused.



THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

Creative arts therapists use the techniques, tools, and materials of their unique discipline for therapeutic purposes that promote creative self-expression in order to treat chronic pain, facilitate relaxation, facilitated physical rehabilitation, encourage communication and socialization, and to facilitate cognitive retraining for Veterans with neurocognitive disorders or traumatic brain injury.

In the treatment of substance abuse, art-based techniques provide a unique opportunity to help Veterans break through barriers to the recovery process.

CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

Each year, VA sponsors the National Creative Arts Festival for U.S. military Veterans who are served at VA medical centers nationwide.

This program enhances the physical, social, and emotional well-being of veterans who participate. The event is co-sponsored by VA, Veteran Service Organizations, and civic groups.



CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY ORGANIZATIONS

The following are links to creative arts therapy organizations.

- American Music Therapy Association
www.musictherapy.org,
- American Art Therapy Association, Inc.
www.arttherapy.org,
- American Dance Therapy Association
www.adta.org, and
- National Association for Drama Therapy, Inc.
www.nadt.org.

