

ART MEDIUMS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED HEALING PROPERTIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE THREEFOLD HUMAN BEING

Art helps people to explore their emotions, develop self-awareness, cope with stress, boost self-esteem, and work on social skills. It can assist with decision-making, finding solutions and self-regulation.

Art-making and the creative process allows for a variety of sensory experiences. It involves movement and includes the senses of sight, smell, touch, and sound. Art mediums have a central role in the healing possibilities of art-making.

The way a person interacts with art materials - their material interaction - differs. Different mediums can bring up different emotional states triggered by the sensory experience.

The chart below organises mediums in terms of the threefoldness in spirit, soul and body - thinking, feeling and willing - graphic, painting and sculpture. The realms are interlinked and there is much crossover between the mediums and the realms. Essentially any medium, depending on how one chooses to work with it can engage the different realms. Firstly, personal research through experience is key to understanding the impacts and effects of working with the different mediums has on one, as we are essentially dealing with something that is non-verbal. Secondly, we need to develop an understanding of the specific healing properties of mediums and their application for healing. There are no recipes. This chart is an attempt to share some basic observations with you. Some of the qualities of the different mediums and suggestions around their healing properties have been outlined. Emphasis has been placed on the mediums that are explored in the Early Beginning Module. Hold these suggestions lightly, as that is what they are, suggestions. While there are general commonalities, everything is subjective and affects people in different ways.

* The chart is a work in progress and will grow as it is developed.

REALM	DESCRIPTION	MEDIUMS	TYPE	METHOD	QUALITIES	SUGGESTED HEALING PROPERTIES & CAUTIONS
THINKING - GRAPHIC nerve-sense-system TRUTH and PAST are the realms of thinking. SPIRIT	Art making that engages the thinking realm is about line, black & white and structure. Drawing is the main discipline. Drawing implements have a point which brings about ideas or focus and control. Often becomes about representation. Helps engage the mind and develop intellect. Aids with developing focus and concentration. Form drawing can be used to strengthen thinking and the life forces. Observational drawing grows observation skills and an awareness for the world around us. Free drawing fosters imagination and creative thinking. Drawing is good for hand-eye coordination.	PENCIL		Draw, shade & smudge.	Deliberate; specific; structured; focused; conscious. Becomes about representation. Requires a certain level of skill. Not permanent; can be rubbed out.	+ Helps to engage and develop the intellect. - Some might find it too rigid. - It requires skill and control so can bring up feelings of inadequacy. - Can cause frustration around not being able to reproduce what is in one's head.
		PEN		Draw & shade.	Deliberate; definite; specific; structured; focused; conscious. Becomes about representation. Permanent. Requires skill and confidence.	+ Helps to engage and develop the intellect. + Can be good for building confidence if the person is ready. + Recommend to work with it once people have developed skills and drawing confidence, otherwise it can have the opposite affect. - Some might find it too structured and rigid. - Some might find it too definite and get nervous that they can't rub it out.
		PENCIL CRAYON		Draw and shade.	Permanent.	+ Helps to engage and develop the intellect.
		WAX CRAYON		Draw and colour.	More childlike. Less intellectual.	+ Can help with anxiety and to loosen up.
		CHARCOAL <i>Similar to Chalk Pastel (See Feeling)</i>		Draw, shade, smudge and work reductively.	Monochrome. Easy to blend and manipulate. Not permanent; an be rubbed out.	+ Good for working with polarities. + Can be used to challenge binary thinking with the black of the charcoal, the white of th paper and and all the greys that can be created in between. Exploring the greys can help find nuance. + Good for addicts and working with trauma. + Working reductively helps: ° develop flexibility ° challenge perceptions and established ways of doing things ° explore nuance and subtly
		MIXED MEDIA			Freedom; open-ended; decisiveness; play; experimentation.	+ Encourages exploration and experimentation. + Demonstrates that there are many ways to do things, and can help people open up to new ways of doing things. - People who lack confidence, might struggle with this. - Working with numerous mediums can be intimidating. - Can be challenging for people who struggle with making decisions.
			<i>COLLAGE</i>	Selecting, ripping/tearing/ cutting, gluing & sticking.	Deconstruct to reconstruct. Selecting; gathering; decision-making; recreating; giving new purpose.	+ Magazine/ found images can be a powerful way to: ° work with symbolism and meaning ° enter in a dialogue with images + Good for people who are afraid of art. - People are easily distracted when looking through magazines for images. One can limit the number of images people must find or give them a strict timeframe.

REALM	DESCRIPTION	MEDIUMS	TYPE	METHOD	QUALITIES	SUGGESTED HEALING PROPERTIES	
FEELING - PAINTING rhythmical system LOVE and PRESENCE are the realms of feeling SOUL	Accessing the heart space through working with colour and painting. Colour speaks to the feeling world and strengthens the middle space of the human being, which is needed to nurture empathy for the world and others, despite all the hurt and pain experienced. Helps people connect to their hearts, and get in touch with their feelings and emotions. Can sooth and heal the heart and bring about feelings of love.	PAINT	WATERCOLOUR	Wet on wet	Free flowing. Little control and spontaneous. Easily accessible.	+ Helps with accessing the heartspace and emotions. + Aids with: ° emotional release ° learning about control and letting go ° developing empathy - Some struggle with the lack of control. It can be premature for some in terms of where they are in their emotional process, and they could potentially get overwhelmed.	
			ACRYLIC			Immediate. Dries quickly. Can paint over. Can scratch into it. Requires skill.	- Some don't like it because it dries quickly and they can't control that. - Requires skill, and this can bring one's inner critic to the fore.
		PASTELS	CHALK	Smudge & draw	Direct. Can control. Can work in layers. Can be sensitive and subtle. Easy way to work with colour, and blends easily. Requires skill. Accessible, transportable and minimal clean-up.	+ Using ones hands and fingers directly can help people connect to their heart. As a result it's a good way to get to help people get in touch with themselves and their emotions. + Creating a border can help to create feels of containment, and can allow people to open up and possibly express something that might be difficult to contain. - Some might struggle with pastel because of the dust it creates and/or if they experience tactile difficulty/ defensiveness. One can use gloves, tissue paper, ear buds. - It requires skill and control so can bring up feelings of inadequacy and the inner critic. Can cause frustration around not being able to reproduce what is in one's head.	
			OIL		Direct. Fluid viscosity/ moves nicely. Can work quickly. Easy way to work with colour. Accessible, transportable and minimal clean-up.		
		MIXED MEDIA	OIL & WATER RESIST <i>Medium: oil pastel or crayon & colour dye, ink, watercolour or food colouring.</i>	Draw & paint	Surprise; resilience; trusting; relief.	+ Good for building trust, resilience and risk taking.	
			COLLAGE		Can be used as a way to work with colour.	+ Good for people who are afraid of art.	
		HANDCRAFT (Fabric, felt, thread etc)	SEWING, KNITTING, EMBROIDERY & CROQUET		Rhythm; repetition; joining; binding; growing.	+ Repetitive activities improve mental and emotional wellbeing because they increase serotonin levels. + Good for fine motor skills development. + Helps to: ° stabilise moods ° reduce depression ° regulate anxiety	

REALM	DESCRIPTION	MEDIUMS	TYPE	METHOD	QUALITIES	SUGGESTED HEALING PROPERTIES
WILLING - SCULPTURE metabolic-limb system FREEDOM and FUTURE are the realms of Willing BODY	Involves the physical body and will. The art making requires movement and force, and the capacity to act. The principle art discipline is sculpture. Good for stabilising and grounding, and developing will power.	CLAY		MOULD & SCULPT	Connection to earth, water and fire. Requires physical labour; need to exert energy to knead, work and shape and mould.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Helps to stabilise and ground. + Helps people get out of their heads and bring them into the present. Therefore develops mindfulness. + Feelings can arise. + Good stress reliever. + Good for fine motor co-ordination as it exercises the muscles in the hands. + Develops spatial awareness. + Good for self-regulation. - Some don't like clay because it's messy. - Some are very self-conscious and aware of their appearance, and want to look clean. - Those with tactile sensitivity might not enjoy the sensation. - Some may not be comfortable with moist or fluid-like materials. - The act of molding clay can be overwhelming for some. - Some might feel uncomfortable because of the feelings that arise. - Some people might not be ready and might be too weak for active action. + Encourage people to hold it lightly. Acknowledging the difficulty they are experiencing. + Have a basin of warm soapy water to hand. + Be Sensitive to what comes up. + Good for addicts, as it is about will power and challenges their resistance. + Useful for posttraumatic stress disorder.