

Working with Art

Practitioner Guide to guiding Therapeutic Art with Clients



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Feminine Embodiment Practitioner Templates

Understanding Art Therapy

Primarily Art therapy uses the creative process & pieces of art created in a therapy setting; to help clients develop self-awareness, explore emotions, address unresolved emotional & spiritual conflicts, improve relational skills, and raise self esteem.

Art has been used as a means of communication, self-expression, group interaction, diagnosis, and conflict resolution throughout history, for thousands of years. It stands the test of time.

Art Therapy can offer clients:

- Release of Physical & Emotional Tension
- Integration of Life Challenges & Experiences
- Increased Clarity, Alignment & Connection
- Increased Emotional Integration & Emotional Insight
- Assisted Regulation of the Nervous System

Art Therapy can be useful in:

- Crises & Transition
- Accidents or post trauma
- Unprocessed experiences
- Cognitive development
- Processing emotions
- Relational development
- Anxiety/Depression
- Self esteem
- Brain & Learning difficulties
- Body image & Eating Disorder
- Boundaries exploration

Application of Art Therapy

Colour is the language of the spirit.

Exploration with Colour and different Mediums, offers space for an exploration of Emotions through one's art.

In the selecting & witnessing phase consider Symbols, Colour, Flow, and Movement. The Medium selected can influence a client's experience, and also assist in generating insights through both tactile experience and visual interpretation.

Common Mediums used in Art Therapy:

- Art mediums
- Acrylic & oil paints
- Watercolours
- Fabric paints
- Oil & soft pastels
- Ink & Dyes
- collages
- Femo modelling
- Wet sand play
- Symbols and Metaphor exploration
- Storytelling
- Doll play
- Masks/Puppets
- Sand tray
- Sculpture
- Clay
- Dance & Movement
- Music & sound
- Carving/Crafting
- Satir sculpting
- Rituals & Rites of Passage
- Family Constellations
- Transpersonal Counselling

The Power in Art Therapy:

Art allows the space for the individual to find their own healing and own meaning, without a therapist imposing ideals onto a clients experience.

The process of art therapy facilitates an integration of feelings, and can deepen Insight into one's inner and outer lives. Where a client can remain trapped by their own verbal narrative, art can instead offer a fresh perspective or method of enquiry. Art offers the ability to bypass the story, expressing intuitively and the intuitive approach disengages the barrier of story and language.

Art work is the voice of the subconscious and can be viewed objectively, offering opportunity for new insights and perspectives. Artwork provides a map that allows one to view Past, Present and Future, allowing insight into patterns & themes and reflection in art of life relevance.

Art also allows space for the subconscious to emerge, for what is unknown to surface and be explored. Whilst creating art raw emotions, unfiltered by the brain have the potential to present and speak the truth, beyond the distraction of words.

The healing role of art is the ability to express emotions through a variety of mediums without the need for words, constructed sentences or limiting beliefs.

Play provides space for insight, exploration and movement potential.

Creating art allows the intuitive brain to be activated, with symbols, colours and image, providing a language for the soul's expression.

ENERGY & RELEASE

Not only can art be used to explore meaning making in life, but *the art process can be therapeutic in how the client expresses the emotion, for example they may throw paint on violently, rip up a drawing and set fire to it or pound clay.*

This process can allow the client to release an emotion and integrate it.

In therapy, words can be helpful in accepting something through their mere repetition, though one can't always do anything with one's experience. Words can complete themselves in 20 minutes, after that's its repetition. Art however can be 'physicalised' and an action can be done with it, we can turn it around/burn it/cut it up etc – and this can be healing and therapeutic by its very nature of engagement and release.

The Healing Elements of Art Therapy:

EXPRESSION - Freedom of & experience of expression

MEANING MAKING - Insights generated through reflection

PRESENCE - Client & Therapist's therapeutic presence

Accessing the Unconscious:

- A different part of our brain is used when we do art, compared to when one talks.
- Neuroscience proves we will "believe what we see, over what we hear". We are more inclined to believe something when we 'see' something in a process, rather than when we are 'talking' about with someone.
- Different mediums can be used to stimulate different areas of the brain.
- We can work with different parts of the artwork (story). We allow the client to re-engage with their artwork from that experience. This in addition accesses & activates different areas of the brain.
- "It feels like this" – the action of "up stroke, up stroke" can broaden perspectives.
- We use the 'language of the art to explore the experience', as opposed to using the 'art work as a reference'. How the *client* makes sense of this is where the insight may appear. For example: "You did this line here.... Is that relevant? If we were to extend this line, how would that look like?" rather than direct languaging about the problem involved.

How to facilitate with Art during Feminine Embodiment Sessions:

Through the development of intuitive and practical based tools, a transpersonal art therapist acts as a visionary in the shamanic sense. Some of these tools can be incorporated into Feminine Embodiment sessions.

As a practitioner you are able to guide your client into their inner realms using art in order to shift, extract and externalise the issues at hand.

Art therapy is a Client Centred Process, meaning your client leads their healing. The Alchemy of Support, Self Expression, Guidance, and Acceptance offers clients the Tools to initiate their own healing.

Art therapists facilitate Journeys that gently peel away layers of consciousness, to reveal a deeper story. The focus of an art therapist is to apply a non judgemental approach, holding space to support your client in finding their own insights and inner qualities.

Holding space is a skill a good art therapist must learn to embody well, to be present with a person and their art process.

Holding space requires a balance of 'challenge with care', 'comfort with discomfort', and always asks of the therapist an attitude of acceptance, observation and confidentiality.

Essentially this means offering a strong enough presence that a client feels supported, yet at the same time being able to step back to enable the client space to emerge themselves in their own process.

As a Feminine Embodiment practitioner just as an art therapist might; we facilitate healing, we do not attempt to cure, fix or remove their challenge or experience.

We do not necessarily attempt to heal.

We provide a space for people to find meaning in their experience.

Using art therapy techniques in Feminine Embodiment sessions can assist people to clarify goals, as well as generate new perspectives.

Asking your client what they observe in their art: *"What do you see?"*
This enables the use of metaphors to create a story *about* the art, that will inform how your client holds their own life story.

Exploring art therapeutically can generate somatic resonance and the surfacing of memories.

The recall of memories can happen during a creative session. If this occurs validate your clients emotions and experience and guide them to what they notice in the *art*, rather than focussing on their story or mental details. This will give them insights beyond their known story.

Explore: Symbols, Colour, Flow, and Movement in the art.

Encourage your client to stay 'present' to their art work and bodies, attuned to their sensations and breath, whilst these emotions integrate. Allow the exploration of the *art* to facilitate the healing, rather than the temptation to over analyse. This allowing of emotion to be felt whilst welcoming the healing energy of working with the art itself, creates space for release and the integration and insights that naturally follow.

Take time to explore the art from different perspectives and view points.

"What new information do you receive when you view your art from different perspectives?"

Supporting your Client

POTENTIAL PHASE	CLIENT	FACILITATION
<p>PHASE 1 Intension & Introduction</p>	<p>Welcome your client and offer connection and a comfortable place to sit and connect. Establish session Intension. Introduce Principles and Benefits of using art therapeutically.</p>	<p>Attune to your client to see how they are. Hold presence, simplicity and a body centred approach to the session.</p>
<p>PHASE 2 Therapeutic Art Practice</p>	<p>Select a medium that will suit your clients intension for the session. Begin Art on selected topic.</p>	<p>Hold presence and gently guide the flow when/if client feels stuck with guidance back to the art primarily.</p>
<p>PHASE 3 Exploration & Integration</p>	<p>Ensure adequate exploration & integration time through art and sharing.</p>	<p>Provide plenty of space for art integration & perspectives with the art.</p>

During a session there may be particular parts of the art that will draw the attention of the client more, or feel of greater importance to the person. Allow the art and these sensations to guide the direction & flow of the session. Trust there is an innate intelligence with in this, and redirect the client to stay present to this rather than becoming caught in any known 'stories'.

During the arising of strong sensation or emotion enquire with your client what they can see, feel & sense within their art? Allow time to explore any awareness of colour, shape, size, texture or sound, and how this relates to their topic of exploration. Actively listen & reflect and provide an environment for non evaluative enquiry.

Ensure you allow time to guide your client in exploring their art from different perspectives (above, below, and rotational). Allow plenty of space for insights and integration - through talking, journalling & contemplation.

The Language of Art Therapy

Pay attention to inconsistencies & body language:

- What isn't been spoken?
- What does your client's Art & Body express?

A client's different types of nonverbal communication:

- *Gestures*
- *Eye contact*
- *Touch*
- *Space*
- *Voice*
- *Facial expressions. The human face is extremely expressive, able to convey countless emotions*
- *Body movement and posture*

Potential Questions in Art Therapy:

- *What do you notice?*
- *What do you see now that you didn't see before?*
- *What do you notice that you didn't intend to create in your art?*

- *If you make this picture 'unknown' to yourself what do you see?*
- *If you make this picture 'blurry', does it look like something else?*

- *Now rotate the image one-quarter turn, and ask yourself these questions again.*
- *Repeat quarter turns until you return to the original orientation.*
- *Coming back to the upright picture (original) afterwards, ask self "What do I need in the picture to make peace with this situation?"*

- *Can you make sense of any of these observations in the story you have drawn?*
- *When you are ready, perhaps add this to the image.*
- *Carefully consider your art making and the process that followed.*
- *How is this art healing for you?*

Therapeutic Steps:

Supporting clients with Therapeutic Art within Feminine Embodiment Sessions:

1

Meet & Greet

Create an environment where your client feels safe, supportive and comfortable; personally & professionally. Check for any allergies.

2

Intention

Discuss with your client their intentions for the session; how they currently are, what they may wish to work on and with in your session.

3

Educate

Gently introduce the mediums you will be working with - explaining the context, meaning & benefits of working with art therapeutically and how it offers access to the subconscious realms.

4

Connect In

Before beginning the session take a few moments to relax, ground and centre your client into their bodies and intension, before expressing through art.

5

Presence

During your session ensure you bring your full presence and attentiveness to the therapeutic space. Practice deep listening, reflective communication and mindfulness in regard to facilitation of 'wisdom' or 'insights' from within your client, rather than imposing one's own ideas, advice and beliefs.

6

Integration & Follow Up

Guide your client with methods to assist in integration of their session. eg Art dialogue, perspective altering, journal writing, dream exploration, meditation and reflection etc.

Holding a Healing Space

Art therapy activates the self-healing tendencies and so it is the client's felt experience of the process which holds the potential for healing, rather than any logical interpretation of memories or stories.

Any insights or gains made come from within the client and can be clearly recognised by the client as their own internal power.

Working with therapeutic art has all the ingredients of healing:

- Safe Containment (of therapeutically held space)
- Deepening of Presence (both clients & practitioner)
- Non-judgemental awareness (both clients & practitioner)
- Choice & Self direction (within the art)
- Relaxation of Nervous System (facilitated through creative expression)
- Essential Integration time (through reflection and guidance)

Using Expressive Art in Groups

There are indeed ways to use Art in groups.

It is highly recommended to have an assistant or helper within the group to assist with materials set up, clear up, and assistance with participants within the session. You are not a university qualified Art Therapist, so you are not entitled to use the title Art therapy. However you may make reference to Healing Art, or Therapeutic Art in your sessions. This ensures you have the necessary skills in guiding groups of this nature, and in the emotional flow and regulation of a therapeutic space.

Begin with only small groups of a few participants at a time with support, and always have experienced helpers in the space who can be present for individuals if participants experience large sensations and/or emotions.

When holding a space remember to stay grounded and present to where the energy needs to naturally flow and align, and give plenty of space for integration for participants, whether through sharing or journal writing.

FEMININE EMBODIMENT

Expressive Art Client Record Sheet

CLIENT NAME:

DATE:

INTENTION:

MEDIUM:

INSIGHTS & OBSERVATIONS:

NOTES:

FOLLOW ON:

Feminine Embodiment Arts Session Record Sheet:

Client Name:

Date & Session: _____
Intention: _____
Modalities: _____
Follow-on: _____

Date & Session: _____
Intention: _____
Modalities: _____
Follow-on: _____

Date & Session: _____
Intention: _____
Modalities: _____
Follow-on: _____

Date & Session: _____
Intention: _____
Modalities: _____
Follow-on: _____

Date & Session: _____
Intention: _____
Modalities: _____
Follow-on: _____

Therapeutic Principles

Holding Space is an Honour

Apart from Skilful Presence, the primary tool of a Feminine Embodiment Mentor is an attitude of love and truth.

Feminine Embodiment Mentoring honours the unique, subjective experience of each individual.

Changes and insights are generated largely through the discovery, recognition and validation of what 'is', rather than through some 'fix it' mentality.

In this way the Feminine Embodiment Mentor and the client come into a relationship that is mutually honouring, respectful and empowering.

Benefits of Expressive Art & Feminine Embodiment practices:

- An expanded experience of love and self acceptance
- Enriched experience of aliveness, expression & presence
- The engagement with play, creativity and self expression
- Improved clarity, insight & empowerment to follow intuition and self generated insights
- Connection with one's true, inner nature and values
- Increased ability to create, express and integrate life's experiences

Feminine Embodiment principles assist in deepening one's understanding of self, releasing held experiences, opening to greater vitality & direction, and assisting in facilitating more inner love, peace, happiness, freedom, aliveness, femininity & well-being.

As a culture we are often 'emotionally stifled' from childhood. Generally we are taught growing up to suppress most of our feelings and innate impulse and in-tuition. In Feminine Embodiment Mentoring participants can learn how to feel & express previously held emotions and sensations to enhance personal power, effectiveness & potential.

Typically the emotions of sadness, anger, & fear that are suppressed, once felt and recognised can be freed to move through the body, enabling integration and release. Suppression of feelings, does not equal freedom. On the contrary, it seems that the more we suppress feelings, the harder they pursue us or we numb out.

Feminine Embodiment Mentoring can assist us in releasing some of these unexpressed sensations and emotions, so that we may return to our natural state of peace, joy and creativity.

Embodiment as Healing

Engaging the Authentic Self

Embodiment practice gives us an opportunity to develop emotional freedom, safety and emotional intelligence for life.

In a safe and supportive environment we can gently release & integrate our feelings.

This often leads to feelings of lightness, relief and deep release; leading to feelings of inner peace, harmony, love, joy for life, and a freedom to be who we truly are.

At the time of releasing suppressed emotions we gain an opportunity to become aware of the release of limiting decisions about ourselves, others, and life.

These pivotal decisions are the basis of our *beliefs* and usually reside in our subconscious. Though we may be unaware of them, they inform and affect virtually everything we do.

By becoming aware of the '*context*' where a core wounding may have initiated, where we anchored in a limiting decision about ourselves, then providing a space to release the emotional charge encircling it, we have the power to make new, life enhancing, decisions.

Engaging with ongoing embodiment practices often leads to a deep connection with the very core of our being.

This leads to understandings of ourselves, our purpose in life and our place in the universe at a very deep level.

Somatic practices ground us in our bodies as they are, not as they could or should be or as we wish them to be. It is from this platform of feeling into right 'now' that we build a bridge between our mind, our body, and our heart.

Engaging in somatic work is about becoming an 'integrated' human organism and in this way somatic practices are inherently healing and stress relieving.

We develop a relationship with the swell of our impulses, needs and desires, according to how these are met.

When we ignore our vital impulses, we also lose communication with the wisdom of our bodies, leading to disconnection with our healthy desire and will.

Since our bones, muscles, organs & tissues carry the imprinted memories of experience, when we engage in practices that stimulate these different systems, these stories can move to the surface to be re-experienced, looked at anew and even healed.

Energetics of a Practitioner

Holding space for Others

To 'hold space', one must become aware of habitual responses within ones mind - and instead 'empty out' to listen from your heart space.

Qualities of an effective Practitioner:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respond-ability
- Presence
- Respect

Feminine Embodiment Pillars:

- Intention
- Enquiry
- Exploration
- Expression
- Integration

Creating a “Solid” Container

As a Practitioner your responsibility is to hold a safe, feminine container that is inviting, nurturing and supportive of growth and authenticity.

To successfully offer this you will need:

Integrity - This is created when we show up when we say we will show up, say what we mean and mean what we say. This is critical to establish trust within the relationship, for trust and so clients are safe to bring their own integrity. Connections go deeper when there is trust and integrity.

Accountability - In sessions, we are doing work to come into alignment with ourselves and be congruent so our appearance to the outside world is congruent with who we are inside. This is about being real, authentic and true.

Responsibility - This is the ability to 'respond' instead of simply 'react'. Triggers and woundings can come up in therapeutic settings. In sessions, women learn to respond to these sensations and experiences by communicating without judging, blaming or shaming. This creates trust and healing.

Creating a “solid” container

TIME: Running on time with sessions is a very important agreement. It comes from mutual respect for one another's time. If sessions start late, they may end late. Keeping with the time shows each woman that her time is valuable.

NOT GIVING FEEDBACK: When establishing safe space there is no direct feedback or evaluation; only acknowledgement, presence beaming (an attitude reflecting love and support) and quality questions to assist a client's line of enquiry. This helps create a safe space for women to open up and share without worrying about what judgement or 'incorrect' responses.

Clarity: Presenting clear intentions at the beginning of sessions is a great way to clear the space and create safety for all involved.

Commitment vs. Rigidity: It's important to be committed to an outcome without forcing it. A client will generate their own insights and reflections.

Receptivity: You may have an agenda for each meeting, and yet remain open and receptive to what might be needed that is 'off the agenda' but in alignment with the client's overall intentions.

Respect: Be mindful of how you “bend” any structures, and model by example not control, maintaining integrity of agreements. For example, if you are running over time, never keep going without stopping at the end time, asking the client's permission for more time and giving the option to leave if they have another obligation. Ask women to be on time, but also make sure you are also honouring their time.

Holding space means when someone is going through something, simply means you support their foundation with your presence and love for them to have their own time and space to work out whatever they're going through.

You provide stable, solid ground for them to be completely where they're at; without judgment, criticism or blame. A neutral territory for the other to just be. You have faith in their intelligence to figure it out on their own and resist any temptation to problem solve, rescue or offer external advice. Instead you encourage participants back to their own expression, insights, responses and embodied resources and you serve as a guide to support them. In time individuals learn to listen for this inner feedback system, rather than seek validation. Personal practice will deepen this capacity.

Cultivating Presence:

The more attuned one is, the more present one can be to our body sensations whilst at the same time read the surrounding energies.

In stillness and openness we can develop the skills to pick up on the energy in the room, and be sensitive to other's energies.

The sacred feminine deeply appreciates being witnessed and sessions are about holding this space of open presence providing healing on many fronts.

A Practitioner masters the art of congruence in body and being, of being mindful of how we are showing up in our own presence and body language. Communication occurs with our body and is 80% of subconscious communication. Being mindful of posture, a facilitator communicates with their body that they are attentive with good posture, an open stance & open heart.

As a facilitator your role is to create space and stillness for the allowance of expression, witnessing and insight.

Do not to fidget or play with anything as you hold a space of presence.

Stay fully present to your own sensations, and attuned to your intuition.

Anchor in your breathing, slowing down and focus on taking deep breaths to come into full presence to enable the client/s in the space to do the same.

When someone is in expression, maintain gentle, open, eye contact.

This will show them that what she has to express matters, & that she matters.

The main components or holding space are:

- Letting go of judgment
- Opening one's heart
- Allowing another to have whatever experience they are having; therefore giving her "space" without the impulse to rescue or change her.
- Allowing another to talk about her pain without 'fixing'.
- Giving your complete undivided attention to the situation/other person and being fully present in heart and body.
- Dropping down from your 'mind' space into your 'heart' space
- Emptying yourself and becoming a vessel for something larger than you
- Allowing a situation to unfold; allowing the therapeutic space to weave its magic without feeling overly controlling or responsible.
- Trusting that everyone can heal themselves with time and space
- Less is more. There is a force greater than our own.

Deep Listening:

Trust your intuition. Trust your gut.

Listen to your higher self's voice as it guides you. Check in with your body.

Allow yourself to be in the moment and respond to what comes up. If you are present in your own body, you can tune into what your own desires and needs are in the moment and see if others are also having that same feeling arising in them. You'll start to hear and sense more deeply, seeing how things are resonating when you trust your feelings and intuition of what is arising in the space.

Breathe & Relax, staying connected to your body & you will hear with a deeper listening, enabling you to be present to both your needs & the needs of others.

Maintaining your own energy:

How you clear and channel your energy can make or break a session.

Continue to care for your energy and the energetics of the space you provide.

Ensure you are clean, clear and light before your session begins and that your energy attracts, and not repels, your soul clients.

Your energy is most magnetic when you are authentic, clear and well nourished.

Your job, above anything else, is to keep clearing out all of your concerns, limiting beliefs and projections so you come into alignment with the intentions of those you are holding space for.

This is the part where you are doing your own work. It's what calls in the right people and creates the glue for your sessions to be divinely guided.

A true leader has done her work and will continue to do her work. She is constantly looking within herself to find where she is connected, accountable and in integrity, whilst supporting others in this journey.

A good Practitioner does not take on the energy of others, but actively empties out anything she might be holding. Her intension is to maintain her own sovereign energy and refresh her own frequency in order to be a vessel of support for others.

Whatever changes we make in our own lives, this will filter down to our clients.