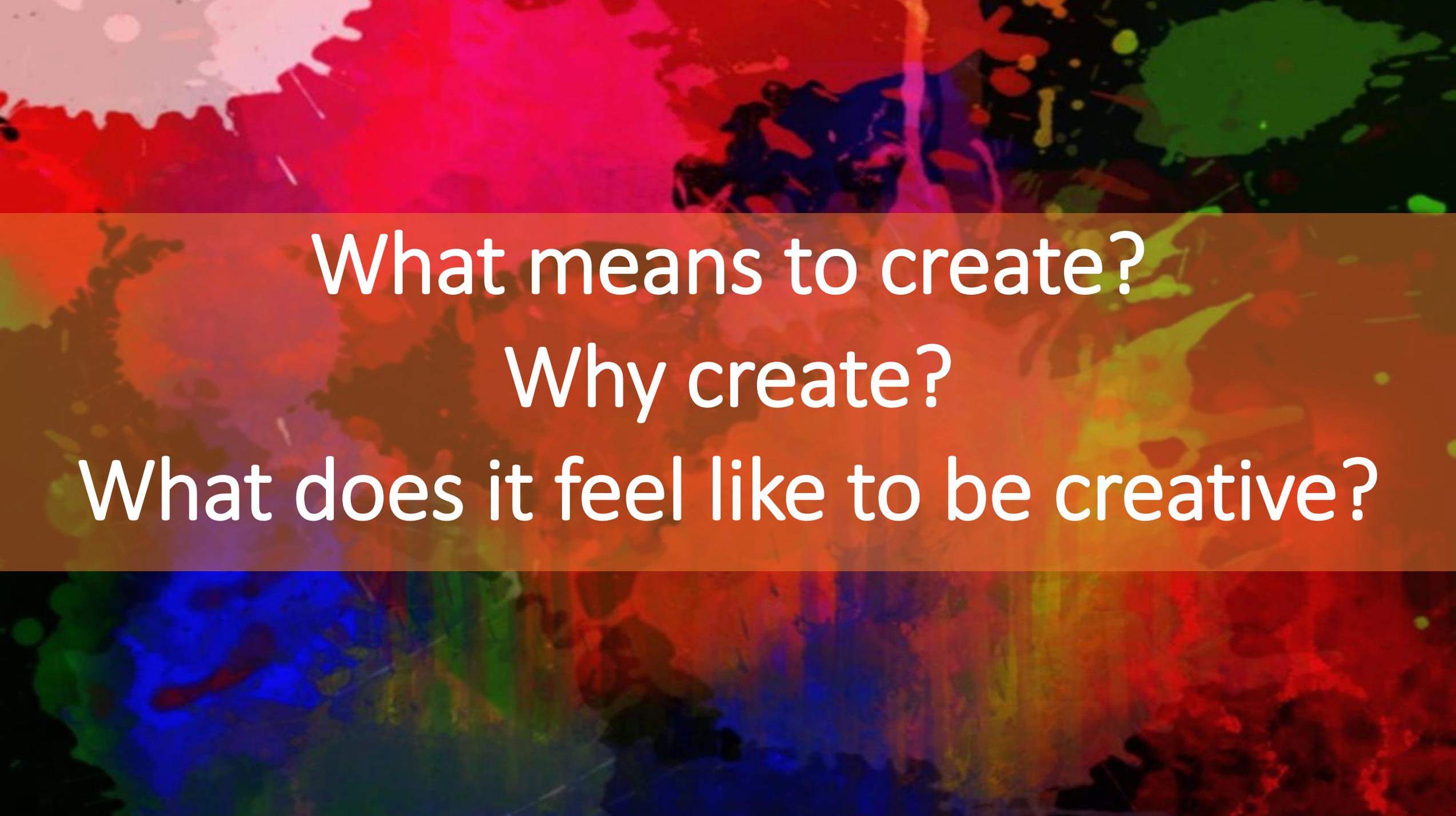




APPLICATIONS OF ART THERAPY

FOR CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS
AND SPECIAL NEEDS

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of various colors including red, orange, yellow, green, and blue, with a central horizontal band of semi-transparent orange. The colors are blended and splattered, creating a dynamic and artistic feel.

What means to create?

Why create?

What does it feel like to be creative?



Why art in therapy?

Who benefits from art therapy?

What are the different art therapy forms?

THE ART MATERIALS

- **Hard:** Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, wood, etc...
- **Soft:** Paint, watercolour, ink, cloth, cotton, etc...
- **Semi:** Clay, pastel colours, charcoal, wire, cardboard, etc...
- **Mixed Media:** Magazine cuttouts, tape and glue, rope, needles, thread, glitter, makeup, found objects, etc...
- **2-Dimensional**
- **3-Dimensional**

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Rubbing, wiping, tying, tearing, bending, caressing, shaping, binding, separating, wrapping, problem solving, feeling blocked, feeling insecure, daring, trying out, experimenting, playing, accepting, feeling frustrated, anger, fear, excited, sad, discovering, playing, letting go, controlling, flowing, breaking, pounding, repairing, making a mess, cleaning, picking-up, scratching, taking off/away, smelling, hearing, remembering, tactile experience, connecting, erasing, smoothing out, covering, uniting, clenching, moulding, hanging, constructing, changing, adding, taking away, hesitating, mixing, dividing, re-arranging, mark-making, defining, expanding, reducing, repeating, observing, transforming...

It is in the process of “doing” that we
“become”.

Merleaux-Ponty, 1964

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

It is in the making of something, that is in the in-between the visible and invisible, that a person `becomes` and in making something, an individual contributes to what is in the world and therefore becomes connected (M. Ponty).

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By drawing attention to visual and tactile experiences, the client becomes to inhabit their body more by interacting with it.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- When the creative experience is lost, feelings of a real and significant life becomes lost (Winnicott, 1971).
- The potential space as a facilitator of the creative process, where working through difficulties within creation means working through one's own struggles and potentials (Winnicott)
- Creation is in its truth the re-creation of something loved (M. Klein).
- The creative impulse as a facilitator of reparation through sublimation and symbolization (Segal).

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- Art offers a medium which facilitates at the same time communication with others as well as a confrontation with the self (Laing, 1974).
- Art is a means of connecting human experiences by creating equivalents to these. Here choices can be made, varied or repeated. It is in the creative act, where the conflict is re-experienced again, resolved and integrated (T. Dalley, 1984).
- Art is a place where contradictions can coexist, merge and separate (Fiorini).
- Those surface preoccupations and realities which we falsely call life, and from which art will lead us to return „to the depth, where what has really existed lies, unknown“ - in darkness and silence – waiting to be rediscovered (Proust).

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- **The initial Phase:** the capacity to confront the task.
- **Searching for form:** new forms or old forms, empty spaces, chaos, timelessness and search for solutions.
- **Ending:** sense of solution or difficulty completion, feelings of loss of all that couldn't arise, finding that what was lost.
- **Seperation:** distancing from the art work and sharing the looking with others in order to gain insight, process of recognition, reflection self-discovery, identifying, etc.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS in Groups

- Roles and Identity exploration
- Interactions, collaborations and group dynamics
- How do the images connect with each other?
- A safe space for “rehearsal”.

THE IMAGE in ART THERAPY

A mirror, self-perception, distance, symbolic meaning,
narrative, representation, projection,
Transitional object, dream, concrete form, containment,
a talisman object, a register, a testimony, a tangible
record of the experience, a place to be seen,
observation (looking together), achievement, failure,
expectations, the unexpected, (relational) mediator,
tool for non-verbal communication, etc.

THE IMAGE

in ART THERAPY

The Diagrammatic Image

THE IMAGE

in ART THERAPY

The Embodied Image

THE IMAGE in ART THERAPY

Describe what you see with adjectives and adverbs

Think about associations while looking at metaphors and symbols.

Observe: composition, gesture, texture, structure, layers, foreground and background, lights and darks, spots and lines, filled and empty spaces, what are the emerging themes? what does it say if it could speak? How does this image relate to the previous images? What feels familiar and what feels foreign? What does this image remind you of?

Link these observations to aspects of the client.

WHAT IS ART THERAPY?

Art therapy is a mental health profession that also has application in social, educational and medical fields. Art therapists enlist the creative process of art making to enhance the mind/body connection, foster personal development and improve psychological, and/or affective, cognitive and relational well-being of individuals, groups and families of all ages and backgrounds. Art therapy is based on the premise that the creative process generated in artistic self-expression, when practiced by a professionally trained art therapist, fosters the growth and development of the agentic sense of self. This art-making process involves personal exploration with visual/tactile art materials (drawing, painting, sculpture, and other expressive art forms, etc.) where imagery may or may not result.

Art therapy involves a tripartite relational structure: patient/client with art image; patient/client with art therapist; art therapist with art image. We use the term art image to refer to what we call the art product resulting from the individual's interaction with the art materials, whether or not a discreet image results from an exploratory, often playful, process.

The discipline of Art Therapy encompasses a spectrum of clinical and non-clinical practice of art therapy and art psychotherapy. It comprises a variety of modalities adaptable to specific client/patient needs and populations. Practiced in the safe, non-judgmental therapeutic setting, the aims of Art Therapy include the following: help individuals reduce anxiety and depression, improve relationships, work through conflicts, emerge from traumatic life experiences, develop a sense of personal agency, regulate affect, and increase self-reflection and awareness. Making affective connections with imagery within the therapeutic setting of the art therapy relationship helps individuals to accept themselves for whom they are.

Art Therapy integrates the fields of human development, visual art, and the creative process. The language of Art Therapy or specific approach evolves from a combination of theoretical and experiential bases. Based upon an understanding of early and later psychological and psychosocial developmental processes that include the cognitive, affective, and relational, Art Therapy enables individuals to discover their internal worlds as expressed via imagery and to strengthen their sense of self. The Art Therapy process fosters mind/body integration by working also with kinesthetic and sensory-perceptual apparatus, thus building up the neural connections (European Federation of Art Therapy/www.arttherapyfederation.eu)

HOW DOES ART THERAPY APPLY TO OTHER SOCIAL/CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS?

- Understanding emotional response to creative process' and art materials
- Sensitive image analysis is based on content versus technical excellence
 - Images as a means of communication
 - Awareness of boundaries
 - Group dynamics
 - Defining goals for (therapeutic) intervention