

Consumer Information

What You Should Know About Licensed Creative Arts Therapists and Their Services

What is creative arts therapy?

Creative arts therapy is a profession that uses active engagement in the arts to address mental, emotional, developmental, and behavioral disorders.

Creative arts therapy uses the relationship between the patient and therapist in the context of the artistic process as a dynamic force for change. It can also be used to manage stress and promote mental and physical health.

Creative arts therapists are trained in psychotherapy and in specific arts disciplines, which may include dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, music therapy, poetry therapy and art therapy. They have training in areas that include clinical practice and human development as well as the use of the creative arts to provide appropriate services, and multicultural and artistic traditions.

What services do licensed creative arts therapists provide?

By guiding patients to create and reflect on art and the artistic process, creative arts therapists help people increase awareness of self and others, cope with the symptoms of stress, illness and trauma, and enhance cognitive abilities. They help their patients improve self-esteem, develop more effective communications skills and relationships, gain insight into patterns of behavior, and create new options for coping with problems.

Creative arts therapists use assessment instruments and mental health counseling and psychotherapy to identify, evaluate and treat dysfunctions and disorders for the purpose of providing appropriate creative arts therapy services. Creative arts therapists help people with chronic illnesses, substance abuse problems, and physical or developmental disabilities; learning disabilities and other mental health needs.

How do licensees provide these services?

Creative arts therapists evaluate their patients to identify and provide needed services. They work in a variety of settings with people of all ages in groups, families or individually.

While therapeutic interventions vary according to the needs of the patient and the art discipline, the following are examples of creative arts therapy:

- using music, both listening and active music making, to facilitate change in mental, physical and social functioning
- employing art media, images, the creative process, and responses to art to reflect an individual's development, abilities, personality, interests, concerns and conflicts
- working with dance or movement to address feelings, cognitions, physical functioning and behavior and to facilitate change
- helping patients tell their stories through drama to solve a problem, achieve a catharsis, extend their inner experiences, and understand personal roles
- using poetry and other forms of literature in the healing process and for personal growth
- structuring psychodramas to recreate and enact scenes that lead to insight and an opportunity to practice new life skills

Consumer Information

What You Should Know About Licensed Creative Arts Therapists and Their Services

Where do licensed creative arts therapists practice?

The creative arts therapist may work as part of a team that determines and implements a program to address the patient's needs. They may work in a private practice or practice with other licensed creative arts therapists or in other settings authorized to provide professional services. In cases of sustained treatment of a serious mental illness (schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism), the patient must be evaluated by a physician. The creative arts therapist must consult with the physician regarding the illness, and the physician must advise whether any medical care is needed.

What credentials do licensed creative arts therapists have?

These professionals train in both creative arts and psychotherapy. Other than those creative arts therapists licensed under the special provisions established in law for those already practicing when the new law came into effect, each New York licensed practitioner has a master's or higher degree in a program of creative arts therapy or its equivalent, has passed a State-approved exam or assessment, and has completed at least 1,500 hours of clinical experience under supervision of a qualified, licensed mental health professional. Those licensed under the special provisions meet other standards specified in law and regulation. Individuals who have completed their education requirements may hold a *limited permit* to practice the profession while they work to complete the exam and/or experience required for full licensure. These individuals practice **under supervision** at a specific site.

Who may practice creative arts therapy?

Only licensed creative arts therapists, and certain others exempt under the licensing law, may practice the profession. None of these exempt individuals, however, may use the *title* of **licensed creative arts therapist** unless they are also licensed in creative arts therapy.

Are licensed creative arts therapists allowed to prescribe drugs or perform "invasive" treatments?

No, these professionals may not prescribe or administer drugs or use any invasive procedure. Examples of "invasive procedures" include surgery, therapeutic ultrasound, and electroconvulsive therapy.

Will my health insurance cover the services provided by a licensed creative arts therapist?

To determine whether creative arts therapy services are covered by insurance, review your plan's benefits with your insurance provider.

What records does a licensed creative arts therapist retain?

Your patient records typically contain your full case history. The therapist must keep these records for 6 years or until the patient turns 22, whichever is longer. Although there are exceptions, your records are generally confidential, unless you approve their release. Ask your

Consumer Information

What You Should Know About Licensed Creative Arts Therapists and Their Services

therapist about any exceptions. If you want a copy of your records, provide your therapist with a written request. You may be charged a reasonable fee to offset the cost of providing copies.

What questions should individuals with disabilities ask about accessing services?

Ask such questions as whether the service location is physically accessible (curb cuts, ramps, restrooms, etc.), as well as whether there is a Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD), parking for people with disabilities or homebound care.

How can I locate a licensed creative arts therapist?

When seeking help, consider the types of available therapies and ask if the practitioner has been trained specifically in the therapy being practiced.

- check with people you know for recommendations
- your primary care provider may be able to direct you to a creative arts therapist
- professional creative arts therapy organizations may have a list of members and their specialties
- the yellow pages of your telephone book may include a listing of "creative arts therapists" or "psychotherapists". The State Board for Mental Health Practitioners **cannot** direct you to a creative arts therapist.

Verifying a New York license:

New York licensed creative arts therapists must display a current New York registration certificate; this certificate lists the professional's name, address, and dates of the registration period. Licensed creative arts therapists must reregister every three years to practice in New York. Some professionals also display their original New York license, diploma, licenses from other states, and membership certificates. You may verify an individual's license and registration on this site. <http://www.op.nysed.gov/home.html>