

# Art Therapy and Confidentiality

Art therapy sessions are confidential. Through this, safety and trust develops within the therapeutic relationship. The art therapist will not disclose details of the sessions unless they have specific concerns. However general feedback on a child's progress will be provided to the multidisciplinary team. Images created during an art therapy session are also treated as confidential records of a session. If a child is being seen for a number of sessions their artwork will generally be stored by the therapist throughout the course of treatment. When therapy has finished the child will be given the opportunity to keep the artwork they have created.



# To Make a Referral

Children may be referred for art therapy by a member of a multidisciplinary team for brief or ongoing therapy on an outpatient basis, or for a session whilst admitted as an inpatient. Art therapy is available at the National Children's Hospital on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. To make a referral please complete a referral form and return via internal mail to Aimee O'Neill, Art Therapist, c/o Paediatrics OPD. Referral forms are available by emailing [aimee.oneill@amnch.ie](mailto:aimee.oneill@amnch.ie) or by contacting the Hospital Arts Office ex. 2076 or the Hospital Play Department ex. 3836

# Further Information

To find out more about the art therapy service and arts and health programme at the hospital please contact The National Centre for Arts and Health. The centre exists to improve patient care and to promote the benefits of the arts in health. Situated in The Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Incorporating the National Children's Hospital, the centre aims to improve the hospital experience for patients, to explore the therapeutic potential of the arts, to build positive links with the local community and to make the arts accessible to patients who cannot access traditional arts venues. The current arts programme includes exhibitions, live performances, creative writing classes, arts therapies, design projects and participatory art sessions on wards and in waiting rooms.

01 414 2076 / [hilary.moss@amnch.ie](mailto:hilary.moss@amnch.ie)  
[www.amnch.ie/Departments](http://www.amnch.ie/Departments)



The art therapy service is kindly funded by the National Children's Hospital appeal fund. To donate to the National Children's Hospital Appeal Fund or to find out more about all their fundraising campaigns see:

[www.thenationalchildrenshospital.ie](http://www.thenationalchildrenshospital.ie) / 014142375



Patient Information leaflet



National Centre for Arts and Health  
Adelaide and Meath Hospital Dublin  
incorporating the National Children's Hospital  
[www.artshealthwellbeing.ie](http://www.artshealthwellbeing.ie)

# Art Therapy



# At The National Children's Hospital



## What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy is an effective therapy that aims to help children and adolescents to address emotional and behavioural issues. It is a psychotherapeutic process, which can facilitate change within the child in a safe and therapeutic environment through the use of art materials. Art therapy uses a creative medium to allow children and teenagers an additional and alternative way to explore their feelings and life experiences with a professionally trained art therapist.

## Who is Art Therapy for?

Art therapy is suitable for children and adolescents experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. As a non-verbal form of communication art therapy is a safe and non-threatening way for children to explore emotions and experiences. It is particularly suited, though not limited, to children who have difficulty relating to others, articulating their feelings verbally, or those with speech and language difficulties. Feelings can be expressed and explored at the child's pace in a confidential setting.

## The Image in Art Therapy

The image in art therapy holds meaning for the child on many levels, conscious and unconscious. Feelings can be integrated through the art-making process itself, as well as through exploring the image with the art therapist. Through the image the therapist can respond and reflect back to the child, addressing their emotional needs, helping them feel acknowledged and understood. Art therapists generally do not analyse or interpret images. It is felt to be more beneficial to explore the image with the child in order to help them arrive at their own personal meaning or understanding.

***There is NO right or wrong approach. No artistic skill is necessary.***

## Medical Art Therapy

Medical art therapy is defined as the use of art expression and imagery with individuals who are physically ill, experiencing trauma to the body, or are undergoing aggressive medical treatments. For children, play and art making are natural modes of communication that help promote rapport and trust. Art therapy combines creative processes with self-expression and has been recognised for its therapeutic role in helping children overcome stresses and trauma associated with physical illness, medical procedures, surgery and hospitalisations, as well as addressing psychosocial issues associated with chronic illness.



***Images can speak for us when words fail or are difficult to find***

## Benefits of Art Therapy to Children and Adolescents in Hospital

- ✓ Provides space and a creative outlet to reflect on feelings around a new diagnosis, medical procedures and hospitalisation.
- ✓ Helps children express complex emotions without the need for words
- ✓ Eases anxiety and reduces stress
- ✓ Improves self-acceptance and self-esteem
- ✓ Enhances self awareness
- ✓ Assists with personal growth and reparation of emotional conflicts.
- ✓ Addresses body image and self-concept
- ✓ Assists with gaining a sense of mastery or control over difficult emotions and life experiences.
- ✓ Relationship building and fostering feelings of trust
- ✓ Promotes resiliency and enhances adaptive coping skills by finding creative solutions to problems and new ways to look at experiences.

