

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



7 DAY VISUAL JOURNAL

For more information on the 7 day visual journaling practice, read our blog post at <https://bit.ly/47hHjyg>

DAY 1: SETTING THE FOUNDATION - Find your materials

EXERCISE:

- Gather your art supplies for the next 7 days. You may wish to peruse the supplies mentioned above and gather any similar items that you have in your current supplies. Keep your choices simple if you don't have access to many supplies.
- Use the first day to get familiar with your supplies. Open a page in your book and use it as a scratch pad to play with colours and different mediums in your supplies. Create marks, scribbles, patterns, or draw funny faces of expressions.
- Embrace the childlike nature of 'play' and the process of finding out what different art supplies do on the page. This session is about becoming familiar with your supplies as well as understand how the supplies interact with your journal.
- You may like to use our Visual Starter exercise as a prompt to play on your page. You can view the exercise, including a video on this blog post here. <https://arttherapyresources.com.au/introduction-to-art-therapy-book/>
- Give yourself at least 30 mins to play with your supplies. If time is limited, even 10 minutes can be beneficial.

DAY 2: EXPLORING EMOTIONS THROUGH COLOUR

EXERCISE:

- Take a few minutes to sit quietly before you start the exercise. You may like to sit with your eyes closed and use some breathing exercises. A great breathing exercise that can help regulate your breathing is the 4-7-8 method developed by Dr Andrew Weil. To undertake this exercise, inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds and exhale for 8 seconds. You may want to repeat this process for 4-6 times.
- Once you've finished your breathing exercise, ask yourself: *How do I feel right now?*
- As you entertain this question, look over your art supplies and see if an item or a colour grabs your attention. Would this colour represent how you're feeling? If not, look over your supplies until you see a colour that represents how you feel right now. Maybe it's 1 or 2 colours, or maybe it requires a rainbow of colour to express your mood. There are limits or rules – only what is instinctively sparking an idea for you.
- Grab those supplies and colours and begin to create some shapes on your page that reflects your current mood. This might be basic shapes such as square, rectangle, circle. It could be a combination of shapes or it could be shapes that morph in and out of other shapes.
- After you've finished creating, reflect on the colour choices you made. You may want to write some notes in a separate journal or on the same page to expand on the emotions you are feeling and the colours you chose to reflect those emotions.
- Give yourself at least 30 mins to play with your supplies. If time is limited, even 10 minutes can be beneficial.

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DAY 3: SHAPES AND SYMBOLS

EXERCISE:

This exercise is based on the statement: *I feel energetic and inspired to take action in life*

- Create an art piece in your journal based on the above statement. Build on the exercise you did in day 2 by choosing colours by instinct. Think about shapes and symbols that you might want to use to process the shapes and symbols that come to mind as you read the statement: I feel energetic and inspired to take action in life
- You may want to create a random collection of symbols and shapes that represent various aspects of the statement, or you may want to create a scene or storyline on your page that speaks to the statement. The choice is yours as you delve into your reactions to the statement.
- After you've finished creating, reflect on the choices you made. You may want to write some notes in a separate journal or on the same page to expand on your thoughts.
- Give yourself at least 30 mins to play with your supplies. If time is limited, even 10 minutes can be beneficial.

DAY 4: TEXTURE

EXERCISE:

NOTE: If you're creating your artwork in a journal, you may want to consider your choice of materials to include in this exercise so that your journal remains useable. If you prefer to use bulky textures that don't suit a journal/book, you can create this exercise on a loose sheet of paper instead.

Similar to the exercise on colour, this exercise starts in a similar way:

- Take a few minutes to sit quietly before you start the exercise. You may like to sit with your eyes closed and use some breathing exercises. A great breathing exercise that can help regulate your breathing is the 4-7-8 method developed by Dr Andrew Weil. To undertake this exercise, inhale for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 7 seconds and exhale for 8 seconds. You may want to repeat this process for 4-6 times. Once you've finished your breathing exercise, ask yourself: ***How do I feel right now?***
- As you entertain this question, focus on the idea of how you would describe this feeling in terms of 'texture'. Examples of texture words include smooth, rough, grainy, slick, slippery, bumpy, furry, fluffy, reflective, matte, flat, velvety, silky, prickly, fuzzy, jagged, spongy, crackled, shaggy, crinkled...just to name a few! What texture would represent how you're feeling? Look over your art and craft supplies until you see a texture that represents how you feel right now. If you cannot find an exact texture that feels like you do, then you may wish to draw something that represents that texture. For example, if you're feeling prickly, you could draw a cactus – a literal translation of your feeling.
- Grab those supplies and begin to create some textures on your page that reflects your current mood. Your creation could simply be a collection of textures, or you could create a collage that depicts a story that explains the connection of your emotions to the feeling of texture.
- After you've finished creating, reflect on the choices you made. You may want to write some notes in a separate journal or on the same page to expand on the emotions you are feeling and the colours you chose to reflect those emotions. Questions could include "How does the arrangement of textured elements contribute to the mood of the piece?" or "In what ways does the artwork reflect your emotional state?"
- Give yourself at least 30 mins to play with your supplies. If time is limited, even 10 minutes can be beneficial.

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DAY 5: COLLAGE AS A NARATIVE TOOL

EXERCISE:

This exercise was taken from the Developing Mindfulness guidebook in our store here: <http://bit.ly/2LN8sys>

You can read more about mindfulness including its benefits and how to explore mindfulness in our blog post: **5 Art Activities to Develop Mindfulness** <https://arttherapyresources.com.au/art-mindfulness/>

- What benefits do you think mindfulness can provide to you? Consider the impact on your thinking process, your emotional experiences and your physical health.
- Gather some collage images that are representative of how you feel about the questions above.
- Start arranging the items loosely on your page into an overall story that represents your thoughts. Once your happy with your composition, use adhesive to stick your images on to your page.

DAY 6: SELF-REFLECTION

EXERCISE:

A good exercise for this process of self-reflection was developed by artist Julia Cameron in the book The Artist's Way. <https://amzn.to/47J2XLM>

Julia created the idea of 'morning pages' where you sit down in the morning and write a stream of consciousness in your journal.

You can read more about the process of morning pages here: <https://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/morning-pages/>

- Once you've created your morning pages, you can use art to cover up the pages. By covering up the pages, this provides you with an avenue to vent your inner most thoughts on to a page with the knowledge that they will be protected by what you create on top of them.
- You can either set a timer with a set time limit of 30 minutes or an hour, or you can designate a set number of pages to write. Julia recommends 3 written pages in her morning pages process.
- Write your stream of consciousness writing on your page/s.
- Once you have finished writing, use your art supplies to cover up your writing. It is up to you how you choose to create art on top of your page. You can create without any preconceptions or you can choose to create art on top of your writing that transforms your writing in some way. For example, if your writing was sad you may wish to cover the writing up with bright and happy symbols.

DAY 7: WRAPPING IT UP

EXERCISE:

After reflecting on the pages that you have created over the past week, use this last page to create a summarised understanding of the insights you may have developed over the week. There may be a specific image in your mind that encapsulates your insights OR you may choose to create a variety of individual images that covers various things you may have discovered about yourself over the past few days.