

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: CHRONIC ILLNESS

Samuel had started to attend group art therapy sessions as part of his rehabilitation treatment through the local hospital. Samuel was attending this 3rd session of an 8 week program. Samuel had a workplace accident that injured his back. Samuel had been off work for 9 months and was still experiencing daily pain. Overall his pain levels had decreased however, they now felt a part of Samuel's everyday life. He seemed to have a daily routine that focused entirely around this pain and injury. Samuel was feeling the loss of his past life when he enjoyed activities in life including his garden and car restoration work.

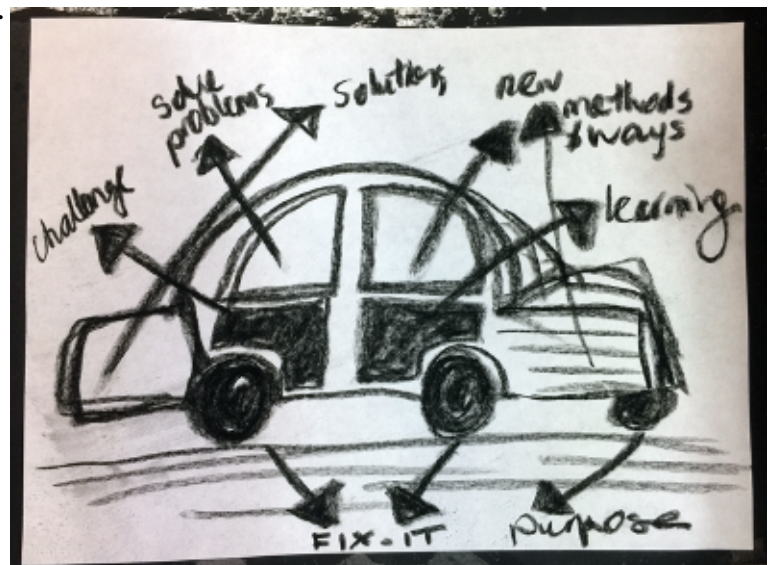
INSTRUCTIONS:

- Ask your client to bring to mind an activity or hobby they participated in before they were ill. This should be something that the client previously viewed as important and gave meaning to themselves.
- Ask your client to reflect on the specific meaning that the activity held for them. You may want to ask your client some specific questions to prompt your client to explore the meaning. (*specific questions can be found on the website version of this Case Study*)
- As your client reflects on the meaning that the activity represents for them, ask them to create an artwork to reflect this meaning. They may want to use colours, shapes, and patterns to reflect the specific meaning of this activity.
- Discuss with your client the importance of meaning in the activities that we do. This may help your client understand that while the old activity may have been enjoyable, the benefits that the activity provided can be felt in establishing new activities that the client can undertake with any current physical limitations they may have with chronic pain.
- Discuss with your client the possibility of finding new activities to enjoy if they are physically limited to continue with old activities that they previously participated in.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE:

Samuel felt that car restoration gave him the feeling of accomplishment in turning something old into something new. Samuel felt challenged by car restoration and enjoyed problem-solving difficult parts of the restoration process. Samuel felt a sense of pride in the methods he had created to sourcing supplies that he needed for his restoration projects.

Samuel gained insight into specific meaning that his hobby had given him. Samuel could see that some of the research and problem-solving components of car restoration gave him purpose and interest in his hobby. Samuel was interested in exploring how he could continue to be involved in restoration projects in the future by mentoring other car restorers. He also wanted to approach his local car club about contributing articles to their newsletter about car restoration and the methods he had used in his process. Samuel felt positive about exploring these new avenues while remaining connected to his love of car restoration.



NOTE: more details can be found at www.arttherapyresources.com.au/case-study-chronic-illness