

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: FERTILITY ISSUES

Isabella was referred to an art therapist from her medical doctor. Isabella had attended one session to date where her primary issues around her infertility were discussed. Isabella noted she felt emotionally disconnected in her first session and had discussed with the art therapist her desire to understand her emotions instead of ignoring them. She felt her emotions were holding her back from moving forward through the process of exploring other options to help her with her decision to become pregnant.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- This art therapy exercise is designed to help the client connect with their emotions. Often emotions can feel like an invisible alien. Some people may not understand an emotion without seeing the physical manifestation of that emotion in their lives.
- Ask your client to focus on a recent situation where they felt a difficult and uneasy emotional feeling. This might have been after receiving some news about their fertility. Or it may have been a difficult conversation with a friend or family member about their attempt to become pregnant.
- Ask your client to explore the facets of that emotion. Questions to your client may include:
 - Does the emotion have a descriptive feeling such as sharp, dull, foggy, searing etc?
 - Does the emotion have a colour?
 - Does the emotion feel large or small, or does any specific shape come to mind when you explore the emotion?
 - Is the emotion hidden or in plain view?
 - Is the emotion sitting alone or is it enmeshed in another part of you?
- Once your client has explored some of the possible facets of the emotion, ask them to use art supplies to recreate this physical representation of the emotion. Your client may want to use 2D materials such as pen, paper, collage etc, or they may want to use a 3D item such as clay or other sculpture. As the client is feeling disconnected from emotions, the art materials used can help bring a physical tangible feeling to the emotion through space, texture, smell, and touch.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE:

Isabella felt her feelings were intangible just like her physical 'illness' of infertility. Isabella had felt it difficult to accept her fertility issues because she could not see any physical manifestation of her infertility like a broken limb. Isabella felt her infertility was an unfixable part of her.

Isabella felt her creation gave form and a physical manifestation of her physical problems. Isabella felt this made her fertility issues feel real and tangible and something she could either accept or further address with her medical team. Isabella also felt her art work gave her a space in which to pour out her internal conflict.

Isabella noted she felt empowered after the art exercise as she now felt her infertility issues were not ingrained in her self-worth.



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