

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Susan had originally been diagnosed with PPD. Susan worries about the health of her baby Liam. She reluctantly puts him to sleep and then spends at least an hour checking into his room regularly to see if he is ok. She then goes to bed and listens intently to the baby monitor to ensure he is breathing. She feels exhausted and obsessive about this activity and is starting to resent Liam for creating such disruption. This art therapy exercise is primarily focused on helping the client to reduce feelings of anxiety which are presenting as obsessive behaviours. The goal at this time is to help the client achieve relaxation goals so that she can start to change her anxious and obsessive behaviours. The client will benefit from using artwork to help reduce feelings of anxiety so that other therapeutic work can take place.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Check in with your client as to their current level of anxiety so that you obtain a self-reporting baseline of how your client currently feels.
- Explain the concept of mandala's to your client and ask them to choose some art materials they would like to use to create a mandala. This mandala can represent the beginning of healing to your client through a process of relaxation, self-care, and creativity.
- Ask your client to take a few minutes before creating their mandala. The client can use some deep breathing techniques to help reduce feelings of anxiety. The client may also like to use this time to visualise a process of letting go and exploring their creativity through the art exercise. Ask your client to create their mandala. Encourage your client to create while letting go of expectations and preconceptions.
- After the art exercise is completed, discuss with your client how the process of creating the mandala impacted their levels of anxiety. Check in with your client as to their current level of anxiety so that you obtain a self-reporting affect of how your client currently feels after completing the exercise. Discuss with your client the prospect of anxiety reducing techniques and how this can positively impact behavioural changes.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE:

On a scale of 1-10, Susan felt her anxiety levels were 8 prior to completing the art exercise. After the exercise, Susan felt her anxiety levels had reduced to 5.

Susan could see that a self-care activity such as art could help her regulate her emotions. The art exercise did not feel difficult for her and she felt she could also engage in other self-care activities to help reduce her anxiety.

Susan felt it was important to remember that these activities could be simple and yet have an impact. The mandala that Susan created felt like a strong reminder of the power of how she could heal from her anxious feelings.



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