

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: ANOREXIA

Cassie had been attending art therapy sessions for the past 2 weeks and has been exploring the impact her eating disorder has on her life. She understands that it controls her behaviours and thoughts every day. She feels exhausted by the ongoing demands of her eating disorder and is eager to break this feeling of being controlled. Cassie attended her next session and discussed with her therapist the feelings of exhaustion she had about her eating disorder. She felt mentally and physically depleted and wanted to break the cycle. This feeling was making her aware of how demanding her eating disorder had become on her life and she wanted to be free. Cassie felt that she had failed many things in the past week. In discussion with her therapist, she realised her feelings of mental exhaustion came after she had criticised herself about a perceived failure.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This art therapy exercise is extracted from *Developing the Self Guidebook*.
<https://arttherapyresources.com.au/shop/art-therapy-guidebook-self/>

- Discuss with your client the type of art supplies they may like to work with in this session. This exercise involves constructing two comparative images. Collage, drawing and painting supplies will be useful for this exercise.
- Ask your client to split the page in 2. On one side create a representation of the negative impact of self-criticism. This impact may be on mental health, physical health, interpersonal relationships or other aspects of your client's life.
- On the opposite side of the page, ask your client to reframe how these negative outcomes would be different if self-criticism was removed.
- After your client has completed the art therapy exercise, discuss the differences between the two sides of the artwork. Discuss the impact self-criticism has on your client and the benefits to your client if self-criticism is avoided.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE:



This exercise is designed to provide your client with insight into the negative outcomes of self-criticism. Self-criticism is based on an unfair assessment of character and generally ignores any positive individual traits. Self-criticism encourages emotions of shame, guilt and anger.

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