

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



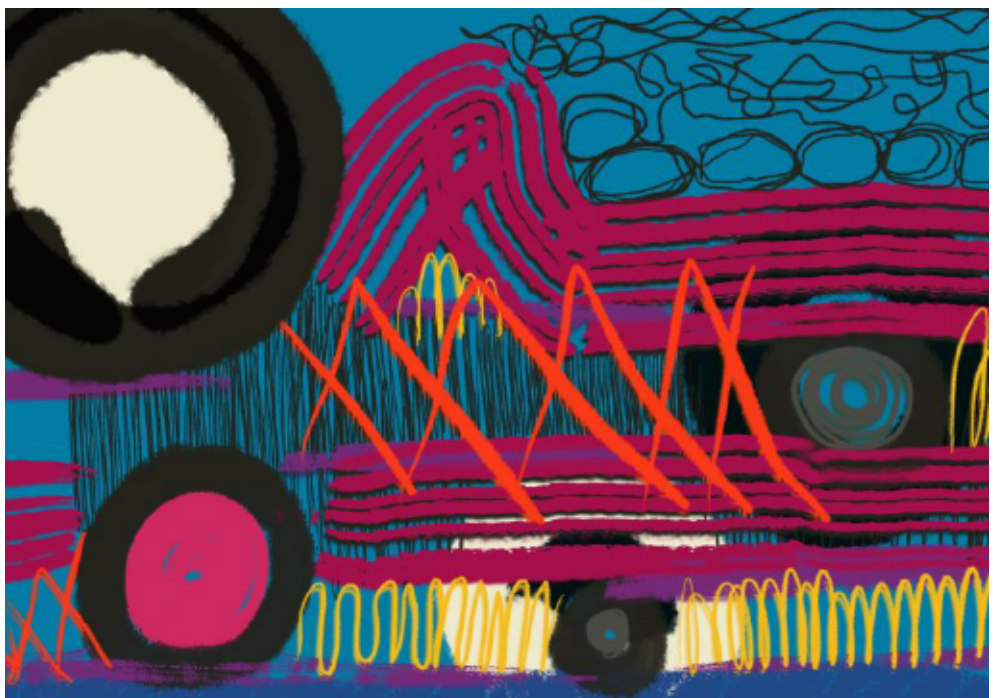
ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: CODEPENDENCY

Blake has been experiencing bouts of depression recently. Blake's girlfriend tells him that he isn't supporting her enough with her level of stress while studying at university. She is constantly yelling at Blake which Blake says is understandable given her stress levels. Additionally, Blake's mother has also told him that he isn't helping her around the house as much since he moved in with his girlfriend. Blake feels guilty that he is not helping his mother enough. Blake's girlfriend has told him that he needs to choose who he spends time with or their relationship is over. Blake recalls this same conversation with his previous girlfriend who asked Blake to move in with her but he knew his mother wasn't ready to be on her own.

This exercise is aimed at helping your client identify the emotions that are linked with current circumstances in their life. Often when someone is going through a difficult period, they may detach from their emotions so they can persevere through the moment. By ignoring important emotions, clients run the risk of ignoring their needs and developing negative beliefs and coping methods which can compound an already difficult situation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Ask your client to recall an experience or situation they are currently experiencing. Your client may want to discuss some of the details of the situation to help them identify present emotions.
- After some discussion, ask your client to create an artwork that consists of layers. They can create the layers as part of the building blocks of the artwork, or they may want to create actual layers that identify different emotions.
- The first layer could focus on a colour that would describe the overall feeling they have about the situation. For example, it may be a dark foreboding situation, or a vague feeling, or an intense feeling. All of these feelings invoke different colours.
- The second layer should focus on the shape of the emotion. Examples might include large and circular and never ending. Another example might be sharp and erratic and unpredictable.
- After these two layers, ask your client to add any other identifying features that might further detail the emotions they are feeling. There may be texture, smell, or a transition of emotion from one to another.
- Use this time to discuss with your client any emotions they feel can't be described or represented. Is there a consistent emotion that appears throughout the artwork or does the artwork contain many representations of emotions?



NOTE: more details can be found at www.arttherapyresources.com.au/codependency