

# ART THERAPY RESOURCES



## ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: COMPULSIVE SPENDING

Imogen recently had breast cancer and a mastectomy as part of her treatment. It has been 12 months since her operation and she feels low about the experience. Imogen is currently single but doesn't feel it is worth finding a partner since her mastectomy. Imogen enjoys watching the Lifestyle shopping channels. She enjoys the banter between the hosts and often sees items that she wants to buy in every show. When Imogen turns the TV off and resumes her activities, she feels down again and starts to worry about how many packages are coming to her. She is also becoming stressed about her credit card balance but feels she has plenty of time to pay it off. When the packages arrive, she often feels excited again but sometimes what's inside isn't what she expected after seeing it on TV. This art therapy exercise is focused on identifying the course of emotions that occur before, during, and after an event where the client is exhibiting maladaptive behaviours. The concepts of time 'before, during, and after' don't have to refer to a limited time period of 5 minutes, or hour etc. Instead, the concept of time refers to the period of time that the client is impacted by their maladaptive behaviours. This might occur in a short period of time or over 24 hours.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Ask the client to recall an experience where they purchased a non-essential item. The purchase should represent something that is not related to daily living such as groceries, utility bills etc.
- Ask the client to reflect on how they felt in the time before the purchase.
- Ask the client to reflect on how they felt in the time during the purchase.
- Ask the client to reflect on how they felt in the time after the purchase.
- Can the client identify a change in emotion during those times?
- Ask your client to express any change in emotion in an artwork.
- Discuss with your client how these changes may have been triggered.
- What can your client learn about the way in which their emotions change?



NOTE: more details can be found at [www.arttherapyresources.com.au/compulsive-spending](http://www.arttherapyresources.com.au/compulsive-spending)