CREATE THERAPY INSTITUTE

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Course Title: Individual Expressive Arts Therapy Process

Instructor: Elizabeth Starnes, LPC-S, ATR-BC®, REAT

Delivery Format: Live online instruction on Zoom

Training Hours: 25 hours of live instruction and experiential learning

Attendance and Tuition Policy: Your certificate will document only the hours you attend live on Zoom. To receive all 25 training hours, you must attend every session in full. No make-up sessions are offered. Tuition is nonrefundable.

Course Description: This course introduces clinicians to foundational individual expressive arts therapy processes and the use of intermodal expressive arts approaches within one-to-one therapeutic work. Students develop skills in therapist presence, witnessing, attunement, intermodal movement, process tracking, metaphor and symbolic expression, trauma-informed expressive arts practice, and culturally responsive care. Emphasis is placed on following rather than directing process, supporting client autonomy, and facilitating meaning-making through creative expression.

Course Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Facilitate foundational individual expressive arts therapy processes using intermodal expressive arts approaches within a structured therapeutic framework.
2. Track, follow, and support client process as it unfolds across expressive modalities through verbal, nonverbal, symbolic, and somatic expression.
3. Apply safety, pacing, trauma-informed principles, and cultural humility within expressive arts therapy practice.
4. Use metaphor, symbolic expression, and client language to deepen clinical understanding and support therapeutic meaning-making.

Major Topics Covered:

- Foundations of expressive arts therapy
- Therapist presence, witnessing, and attunement
- Creativity as healing
- Structuring expressive arts therapy sessions
- Intermodal movement and process-led transitions
- Following process rather than directing outcomes
- Tracking verbal, nonverbal, symbolic, and somatic shifts
- Felt sense and nervous system awareness
- Metaphor and symbolic expression
- Resistance, uncertainty, and clinical decision-making
- Safety, regulation, pacing, and titration
- Choice, agency, and client autonomy
- Therapeutic relationship and creative reflection
- Responsive practice and cultural humility
- Following client meaning and supporting meaning-making

Experiential Learning Activities: Students participate in experiential expressive arts activities using visual art, movement, writing, sound, imagery, and other expressive modalities. Activities include intermodal exploration, witnessing practices, metaphor and dialogue work, creative reflection exercises, and independent expressive arts practices designed to increase self-awareness and clinical application.

Recommended Course Books

The books listed below are referenced throughout the course and recommended for further reading. No book purchases are required. If you choose to purchase one, I recommend Natalie Rogers's *The Creative Connection: Expressive Arts as Healing*.

Allen, P. B. (2005). *Art is a spiritual path: Engaging the sacred through the practice of art and writing*. Shambhala Publications.

Gendlin, E. T. (1982). Focusing. Bantam Publications.

Levine, P. A. (2025). *Waking the tiger: Healing trauma: The innate capacity to transform overwhelming experiences*. North Atlantic Books.

Malchiodi, C. A. (Ed.). (2022). *Handbook of expressive arts therapy.* Guilford Publications.

Malchiodi, C. A. (2020). *Trauma and expressive arts therapy: Brain, body, and imagination in the healing process*. Guilford Publications.

McNiff, S. (2004). *Art heals: How creativity cures the soul*. Shambhala Publications.

Rogers, N. (1993). The creative connection: Expressive arts as healing.