

# Art Therapy: An Overview + Art Activity

The Dear Jack Foundation x Twist Out Cancer

Presentation By:

Callie (Cullinan) Ludwig, LPCC-S, LPAT, ATR-BC

Jackie Carmody, LCPC, ATR-BC, ATCS

A close-up photograph of an artist's workspace. In the foreground, a white watercolor palette is open, showing various colors of paint including red, pink, yellow, and green. Several brushes are visible, some in a glass jar. The background shows more art supplies and a wooden surface.

## Agenda

- Defining Art Therapy
- Benefits of Creative Art Therapies
- Twist Out Cancer Programs
- Art Class vs. Art Therapy
- Art Activity: Scribble Drawings
- Accessing Art Therapy Resources

# What is Art Therapy?

- The American Art Therapy Association (AATA) defines Art Therapy as a mental health profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship (AATA, 2022)
- According to research, art therapy helps people feel more in control of their own lives and helps relieve anxiety and depression symptoms.
  - AATA highlights individuals diagnosed with cancer as a population that benefits from Art Therapy in this research. (AATA, 2022)



# Benefits of Creative Art Therapies as a Healthy Emotional Outlet

- Improves & enhances physical, mental, and emotional well being.
- Tap into feelings & emotions without the need to use words to describe an experience.
- Explore & rebuild trauma experiences/narratives.
- Relax a hyper-aroused limbic system.
- Disconnect from stressors and reconnect to self.
- Engage in self-care and experience holistic fulfillment.
- Feel competent through the act of creating & experimenting with something new.
- Allows individuals to reflect on who they are and see themselves in unfortunate situations differently.

*(As reported by Twistshop Participants)*





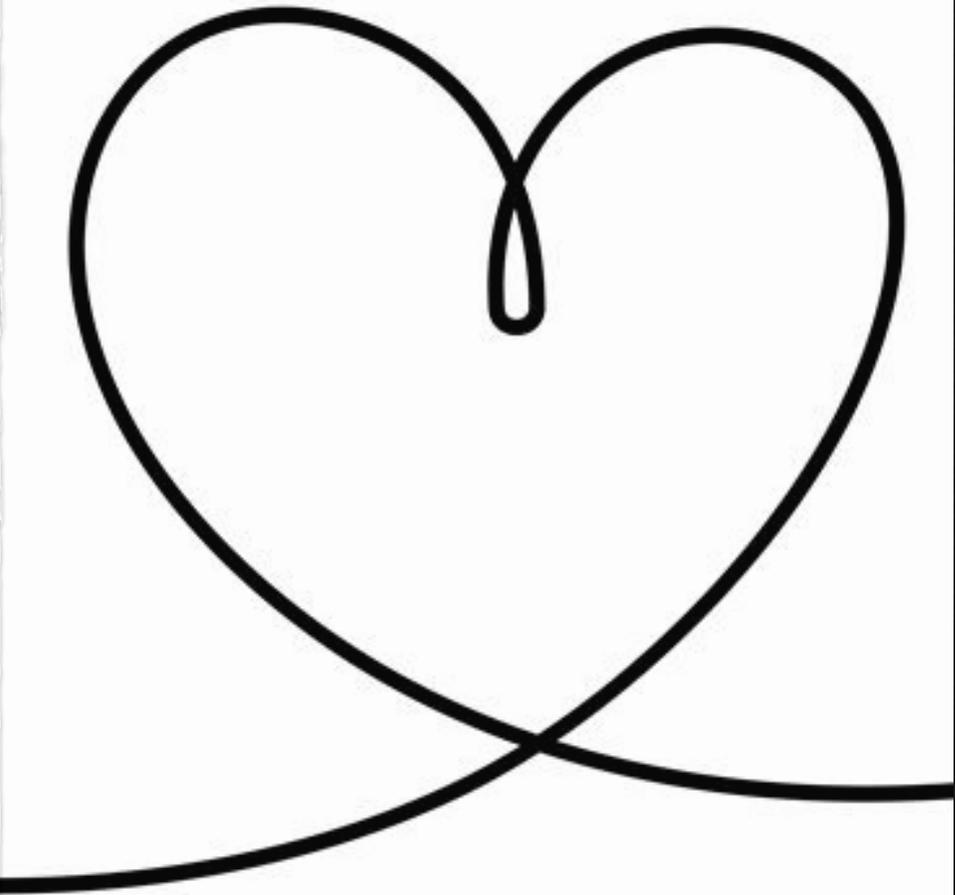
## Twist Out Cancer Programs

- Brushes with Cancer
  - A unique and transformative program that pairs artists with individuals touched by cancer to create meaningful pieces of art that reflect their journey, emotions, and experiences. Through this collaborative process, Brushes with Cancer aims to provide healing, support, and empowerment to both the artist and the individual affected by cancer.
- Twistshops
  - Art therapy-focused workshops that promote healing, relaxation and emotional recovery through art therapy based interventions that are designed to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress related to cancer.

# Art Class vs. Art Therapy

- Licensed Art Therapist vs. Art Teacher/Instructor
- Therapeutic Relationship vs. Student/Teacher Relationship
- Process-focused vs. Product-focused
- Art focuses on self-expression/reflection vs. skill level
- No “right or wrong” way to use materials vs. learning specific skill set or technique



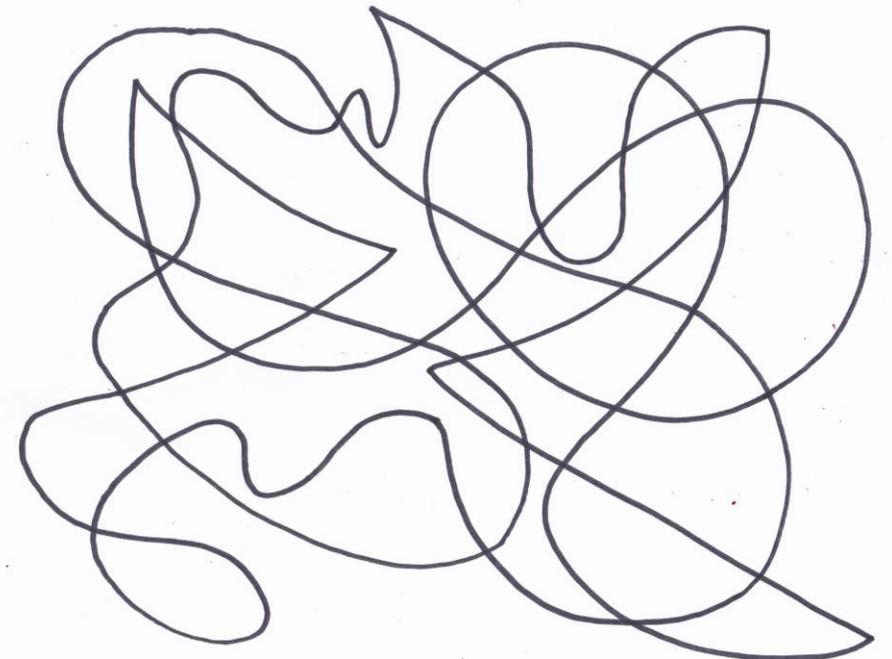
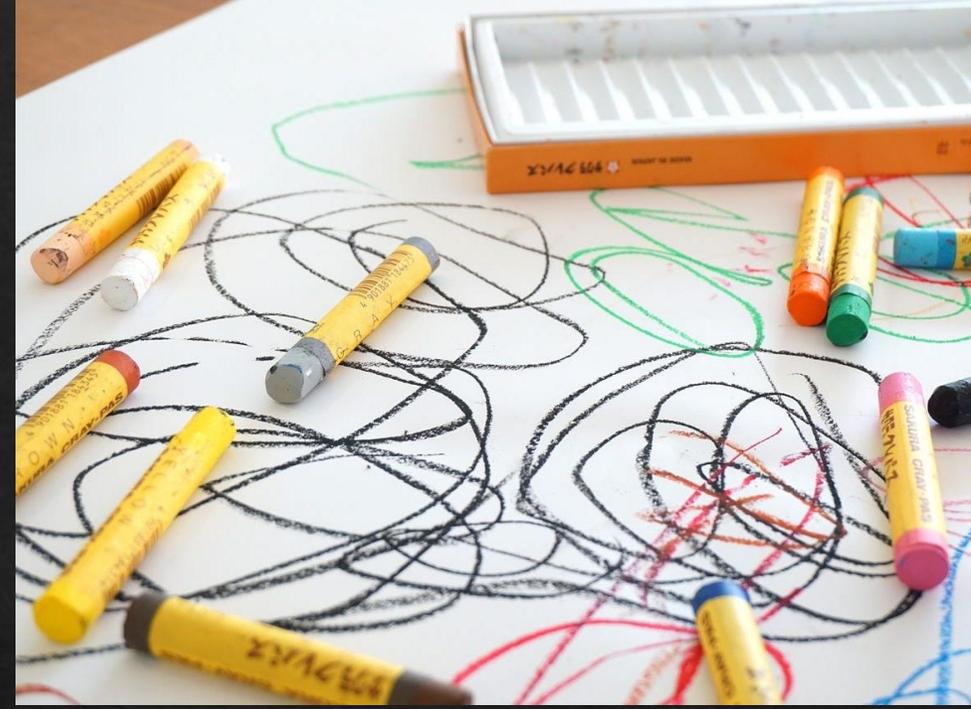


## Art Activity: Scribble Drawings

- Pre-Activity Self Check-In
  - How am I feeling? Physically? Mentally? Emotionally?
  - Reflect- What do I need more of? What do you want more of? Less of?
  - Get comfortable – Do I need to reposition? Stretch? Stand? Sit?

# Art Activity: Scribble Drawings

- Using a drawing tool of your choice and paper, create a scribble (a spontaneous uninterrupted line across your page)
- Next, examine your scribble – you may want to turn it upside down or rotate it
- Look for shapes, figures, or outlines
- Now, turn your scribble into “something” – Do you see an animal? face? environment? scene? something abstract?
- Use any additional materials to complete your artwork





# Art Activity: Scribble Drawings

- Post-Activity Self Check-In
  - How am I feeling now?
  - How was this activity for me?
  - What did I enjoy?
  - What was challenging?
- Sharing and Connecting

# Accessing Art Therapy Resources

- ◆ Finding an art therapist in your area:
  - ◆ The American Art Therapy Association: <https://arttherapy.org/art-therapist-locator/>
  - ◆ State Associations:
    - ◆ Colorado Art Therapy Association: <https://www.arttherapycolorado.org/colorado-art-therapists-1>
    - ◆ Illinois Art Therapy Association: <http://www.illinoisarttherapy.org/find-an-art-therapist.html>
- ◆ Look for licensed, credentialed mental health professionals (ATR, ATR-BC, LPAT); Additionally, many art therapists are dually licensed (Counseling, Social Work, or Marriage and Family Therapists)