

FOSTERING
THERAPEUTIC
PRESENCE
IN ONLINE
ART THERAPY
PRACTICE

Presented By:
Amy Lister

World
Art Therapy
Conference
2024

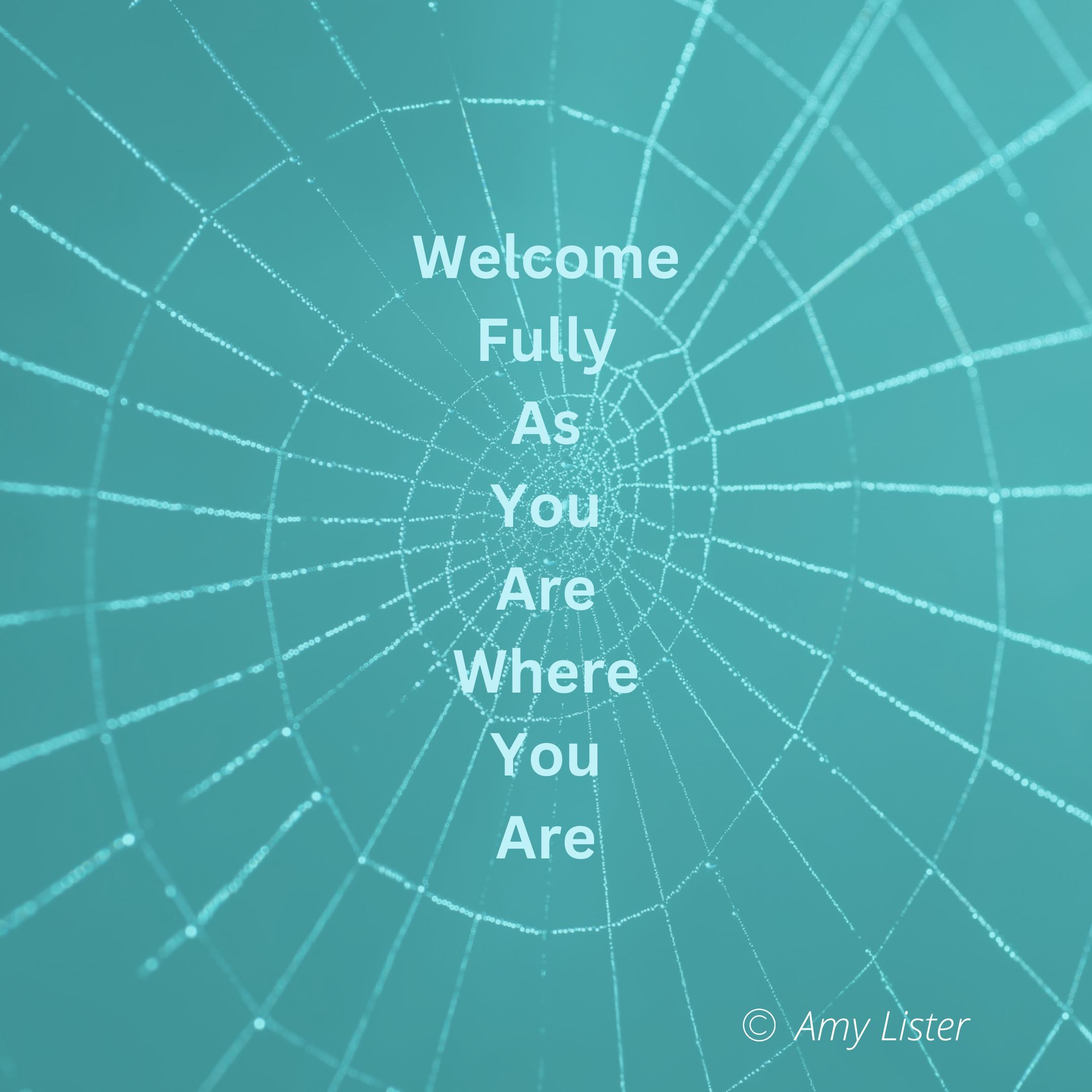
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Amy Lister

- Registered Psychotherapist
(Qualifying)
- Art Therapist
- Educator &
Thesis Advisor
- Artist-Researcher-Therapist

Outline

- who - student art therapists
- what - wondering about TP
- how - data gathering
 - data analysis
 - results & learning
- so what?
 - shifts in practice
 - recommendations



**Welcome
Fully
As
You
Are
Where
You
Are**

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**A moment
to notice and attune to
...this land holding me...
...this land holding you...
...this planet holding us...**

A moment of thanks

**...to this land, body, space,
technology & imagination...**

**...to my root teachers...
alive on earth & in ancestral form**

**...to my clinical supervisors,
peers, & specifically, Dr Sheri
Geller, Patricia Ki, the TATI Online
Clinic & clients**

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What is Therapeutic Presence?

Therapeutic presence is a way of being with a client that optimizes the doing and technique of therapy. It involves therapists bringing their whole self to the encounter with clients and being fully in the moment on a multitude of levels: physically, emotionally, cognitively, relationally and spiritually

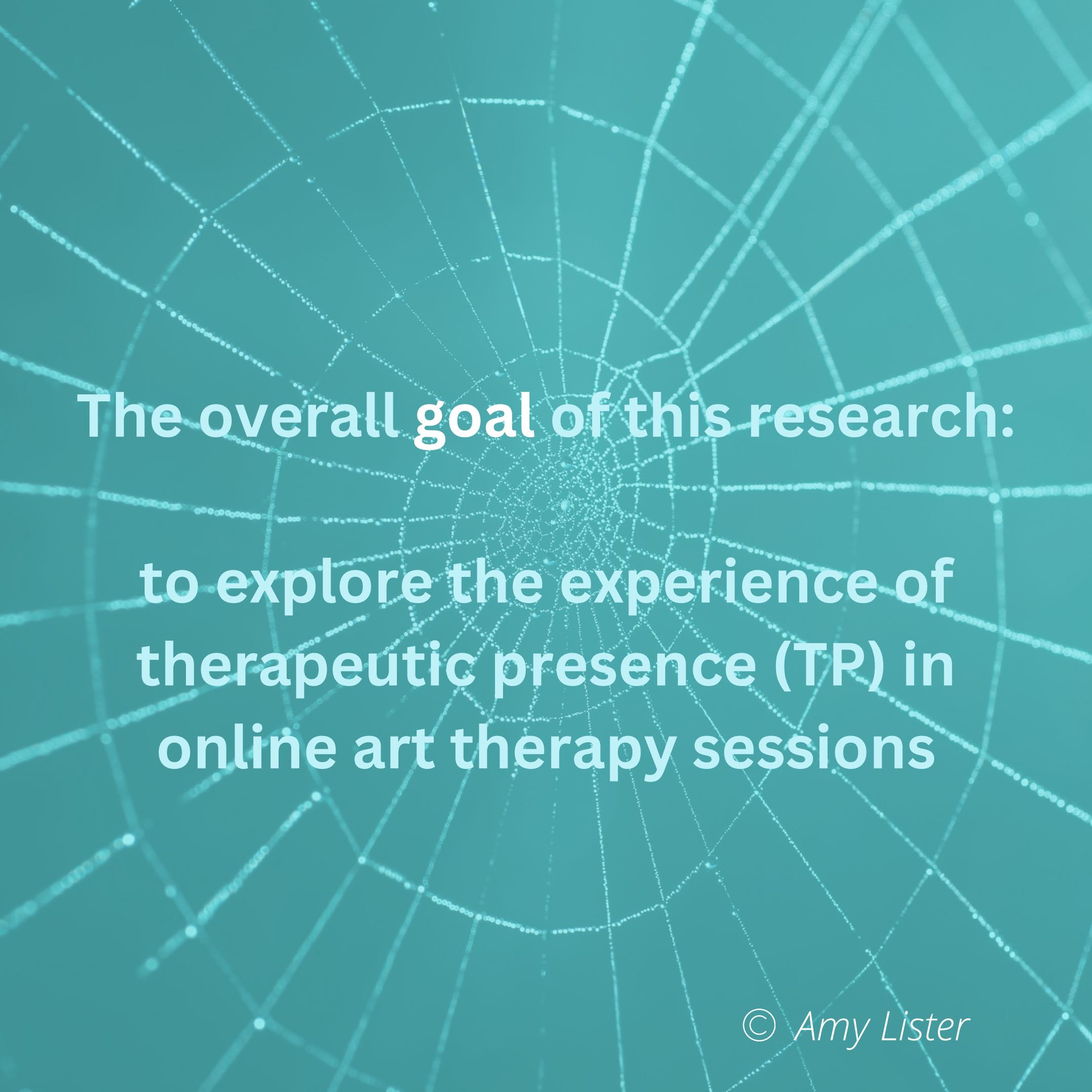
(Geller, 2020, p.2)

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Terms

Online Therapy - virtual therapy, telepsychotherapy, telehealth therapy, online counselling, distant/remote therapy, etherapy, itherapy

Therapeutic Presence - co-presence, co-location, therapist offered conditions, mindfulness, affective digital presence



**The overall goal of this research:
to explore the experience of
therapeutic presence (TP) in
online art therapy sessions**

Specifically....

a) to help expand understanding and contribute to literature about how TP is experienced by art therapists and clients during online therapy;

b) to inform the development of frameworks and practices for building and sustaining TP in art therapy sessions within an online environment.

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Research Question:

**What helps or hinders
'therapeutic presence' when
practicing art therapy online?**

||

Ethics

Risks: uncomfortable feelings arising; increased stress during pandemic conditions; potential for students to withdraw from study due to fears of consequence

Benefits: opportunity to pause and reflect; chance to contribute to student and client learning; opportunity to contribute to improving online art therapy practices

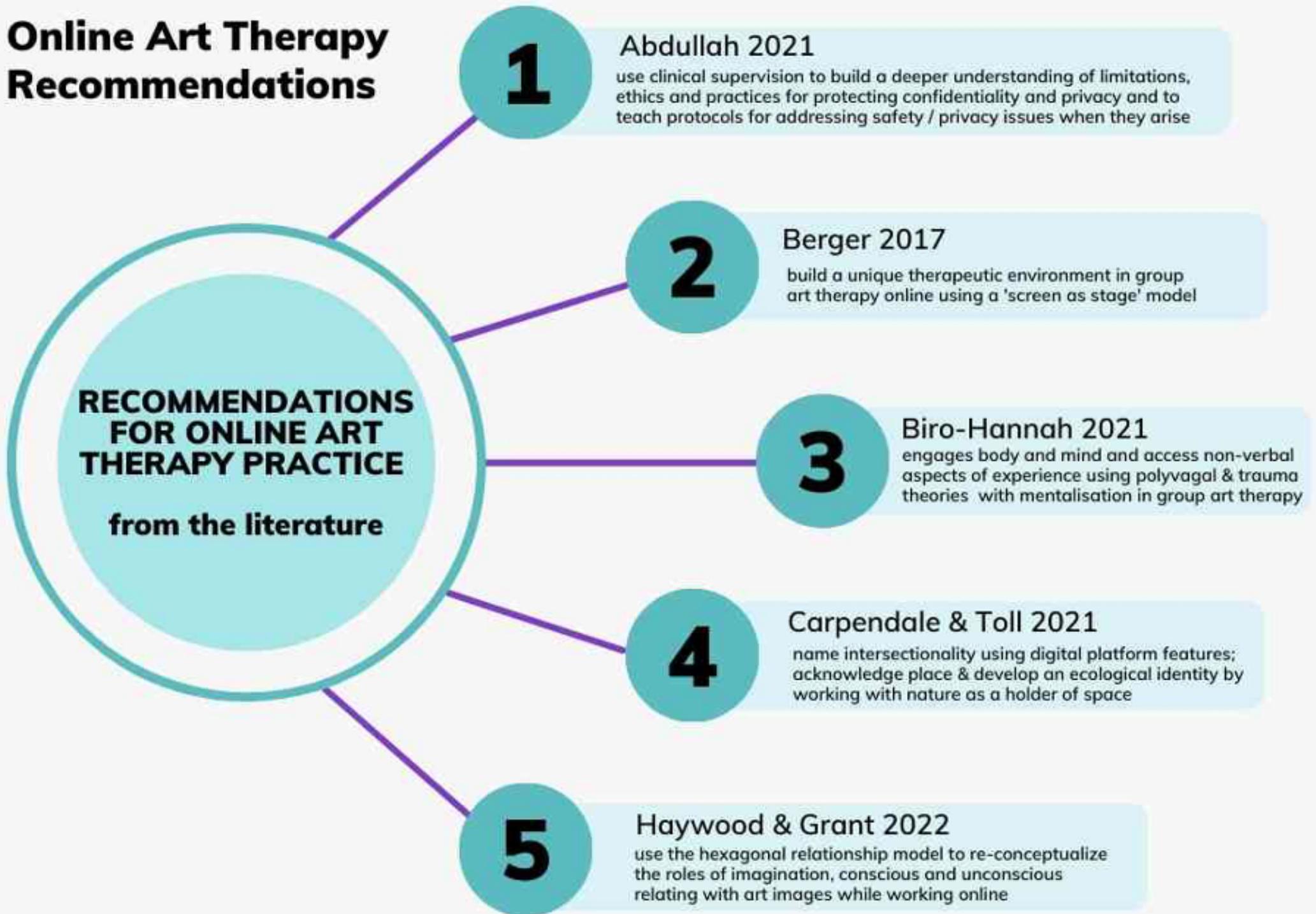
Literature Review

AT & TP - Schwarz, Snir & Regev 2018

AT Online- Keaveny 2020; Biro-Hannah 2020; Collie, 2022; Barker & Barker 2020; Datlen & Pandolfi 2020; Usiskin & Lloyd, 202; Zubala & Hackett, 2020; Arslanbek, 2022; Haywood & Grant, 2022;

Canadian Perspectives AT Online - Carpendale & Toll, 2021, Kerekes-Rinn, 2020; McBride & Worrall, 2021, Proulx, 2022, Whitiker, Shaw & Winkel, 2022; Winkel, 2022

Online Art Therapy Recommendations



Online Art Therapy Recommendations





Methodologies

Sequential Mixed Method Study

Theory of Therapeutic Presence

Phenomenology

Action Research

Grounded Theory

Arts Based Research

THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE

PANDEMIC CONTEXT

ONLINE CONTEXT

PEOPLE

PRACTICE

Contextualizing the Phenomenological Focus of this Study

Research Design

- **surveys (Therapeutic Presence Inventory + practice questions) to student art therapists practicing art therapy online**
- **interviews with student art therapists practicing online**
- **response art created as an arts based analysis**

Moments With TP Online



Moments Lacking TP Online



Data Analysis Process

- read survey results
- made word clouds
- designed questions to add to interviews
- listened to interviews/transcribed them
- member checked interview summaries with participants to validate accuracy
- mapped out categories for each interview answer
- cross referenced with categories from surveys identifying patterns & connections
- noted core themes
- tracked which themes linked to hindering and helping TP
- returned to literature & data analysis process sketching out visual connections
- created a visual to represent a framework for practice

Results

28 categories

body, verbal, focus on art making,
comfortable space, safety supports,
power dynamics, materials, session notes
review, preparing, mindfulness practice,
inspiration, spiritual practice/rituals for
creating sacred space, information,
awareness, connection, grounding in the
body, holding space for self, holding
space for other, physical presence, space,
technological issues, art making,
therapist presence, paying attention
differently, connection, trust,
transformation, self-care

5 concepts

artmaking

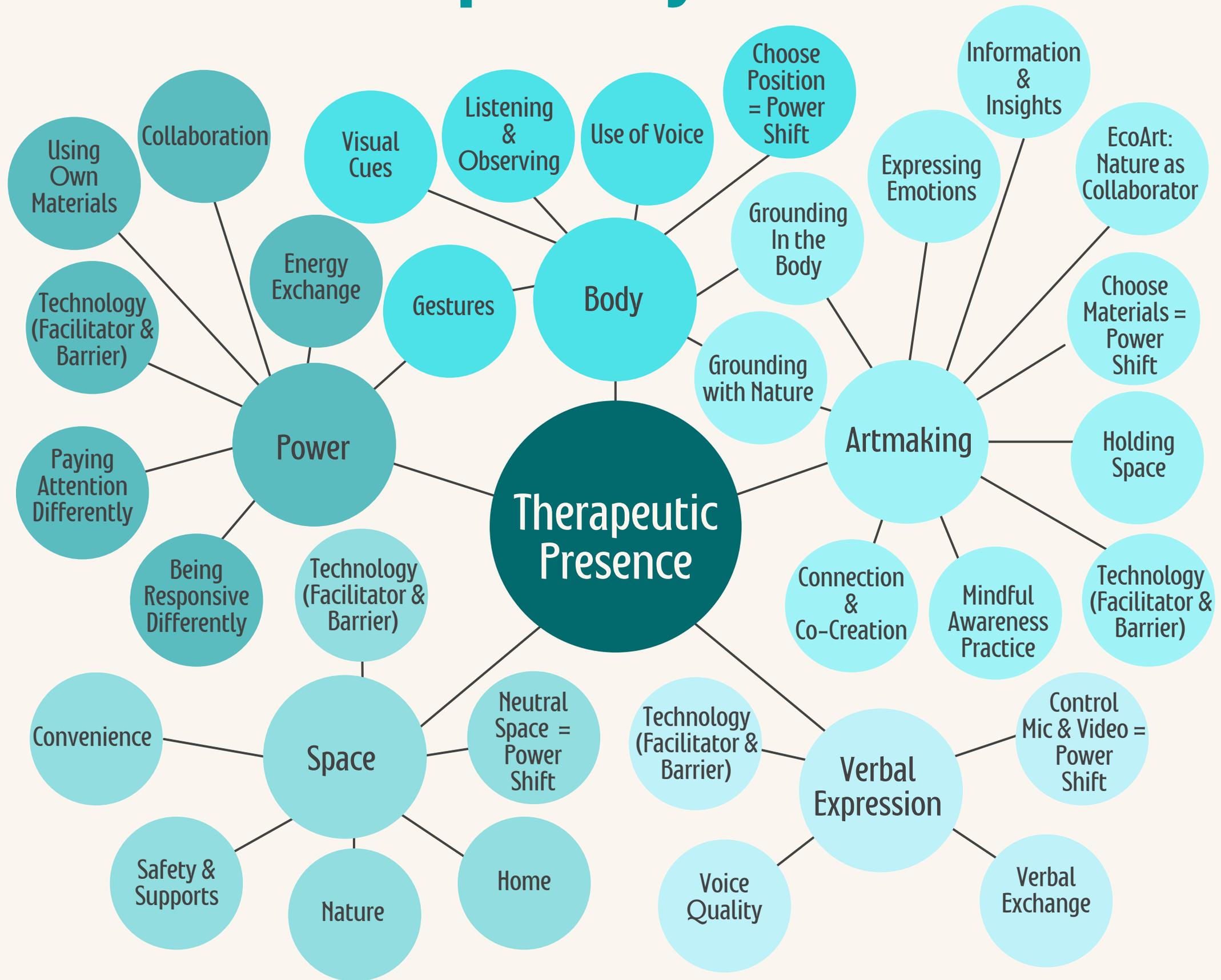
verbal expression

body

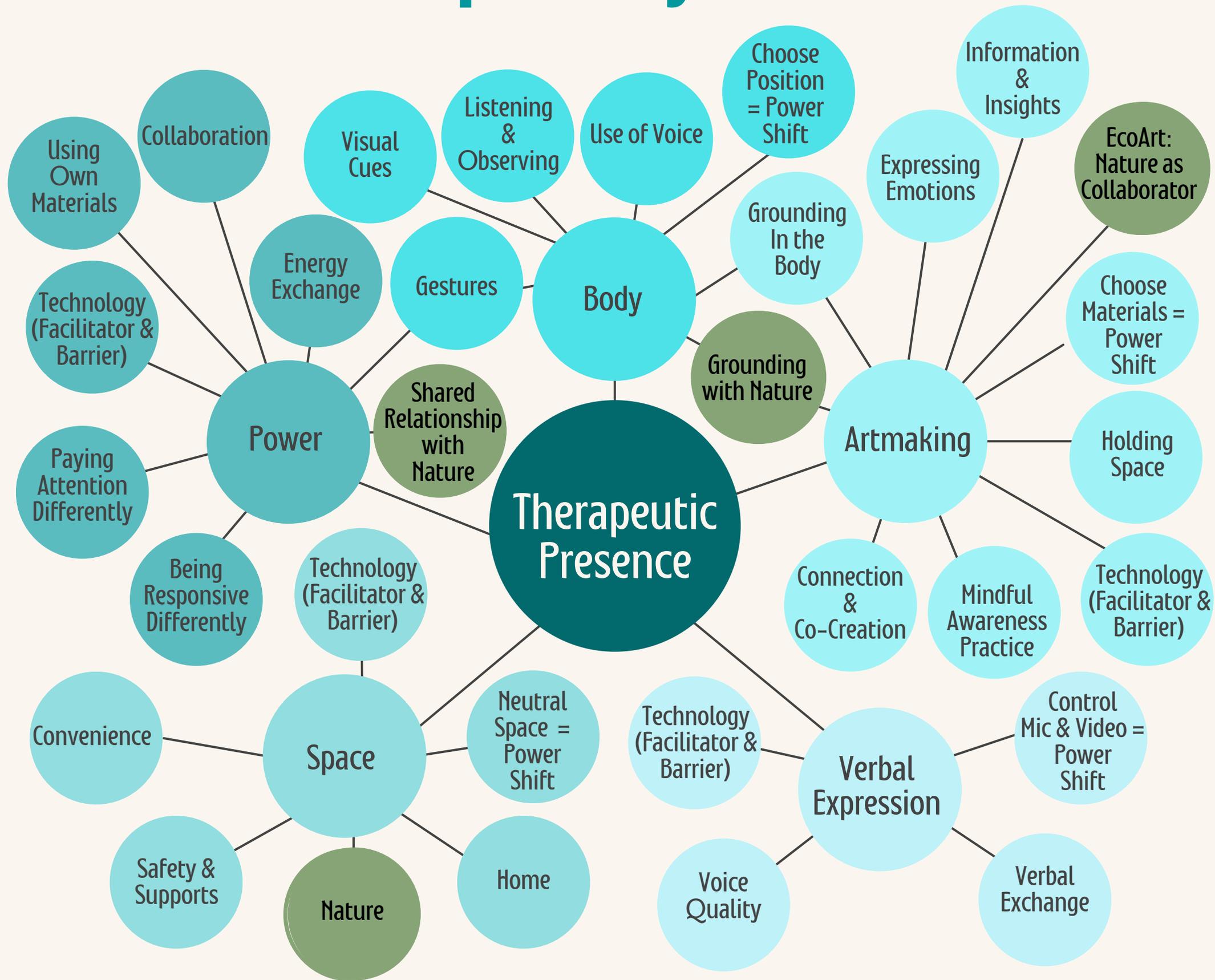
space

power

Mindmap of Key Themes



Mindmap of Key Themes



A relationship with Nature emerged is an element connected with 4 of the 5 key themes.

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In Person (Physical Space)

Being like a rock,
quiet, weighted, steady, still,
noticing the client,
being like water,
flowing, moving,
making impressions
facilitates TP
in this space

Online (Digital Space)

Being like water,
making sound, moving, flowing,
over and around the client,
being like rock,
quiet, weighted, steady, still,
facilitates TP
in this space

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How Therapists Can Facilitate TP

New Question

How do we assess and identify, both clients and therapists, who is best suited to provide and to receive art therapy online and who is not?

Shifts in Practice:

- use/role of power
- use/role of technology
- use/role of physical space
- use/role of digital space
- use/role of body
- use/role of artmaking or art materials
- use / role of verbal expression & communication

Shifts in Power:

in-person

vs.

online

**T
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t**

use of power



use of technology



use of physical space



use of digital space



use of body



use of art materials



use of voice



**C
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Therapist Role Shift

In Person

- Therapist owns the process
- Therapist controls physical space
- Therapist is provider of materials
- Therapist leads the artmaking process

- Therapist invites the client into the office/studio space
- Therapist receives ongoing client feedback during therapy session
- Computer is a service delivery tool

Online

- Therapist trusting the Client to own their process
- Therapist & Client share ownership of physical space
- Client and therapist as provider of art materials
- Therapist & Client share agency over artmaking process

- Client welcomes the therapist into the space / artmaking process if/as comfortable through technology settings
(mic on/off; video on/off)
- Therapist may receive very little feedback from client in a session
- Computer is holder of digital space

"The role of therapist online shifts from leader to collaborator, where both client and therapist share agency over the therapeutic space, art materials, the artmaking process and the quality and quantity of sharing during therapy. This power shifts creates a fertile ground for fostering therapeutic presence"

-Amy Lister

Lister, 2023





VIGNETTE 1



'ART AS A WINDOW TO CONNECTION'

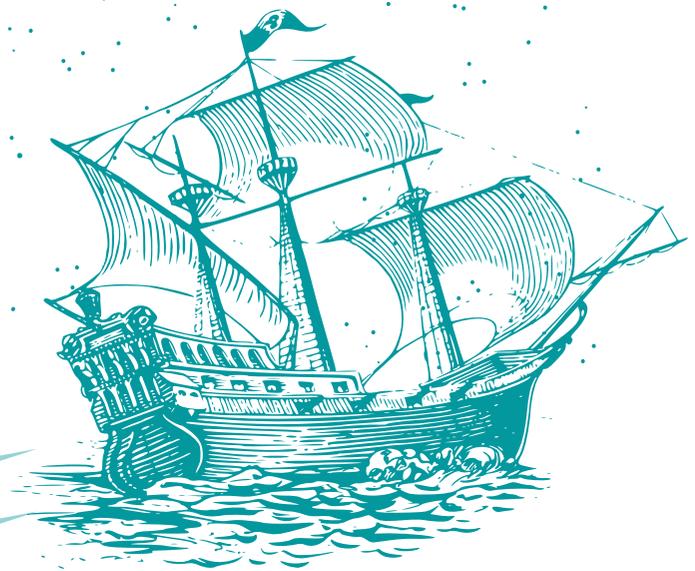
a window offering connection to:

Self, Other, Therapeutic Presence & to the World Around Us"

- **Client feels present when:** "they are doing artmaking...I see their posture, facial expressions...when they look up to make eye contact which I call "screen contact", there is a type of presence shown"
- **Indications of therapeutic presence:** "eye contact...asking questions... conversation has flow... facial expressions...artmaking"
- **Online context helps by:** "[the client] are coming from a more comfortable position because they are in their own space...the screen can act as a buffer and offers a layer of comfort and safety"
- **Online context hinders by:** "distractions in the space outside of the therapist's control can impact TP... blurred boundaries... in our houses...its a bit muddled...challenging [to trust] if TP is present due to gaps in what I'm able to see...I don't know if there is anyone else in the room [the client] is paying attention to"
- **Practices to cultivate TP:** "I like to really slow breathing to settle my nervous system... to focus again and be able to fully be there for the next client...I usually close my window...to make my surroundings as quiet as I can""
- **Role of artmaking in TP:** "Art [acts] as metaphor- a window to connection and bridge to therapeutic presence..."
- **Other:** "a difference in personal circumstance might make the online context contribute to somebody's presence or take away from it...I think online and in person both have pros and cons for therapeutic presence..."



VIGNETTE 2



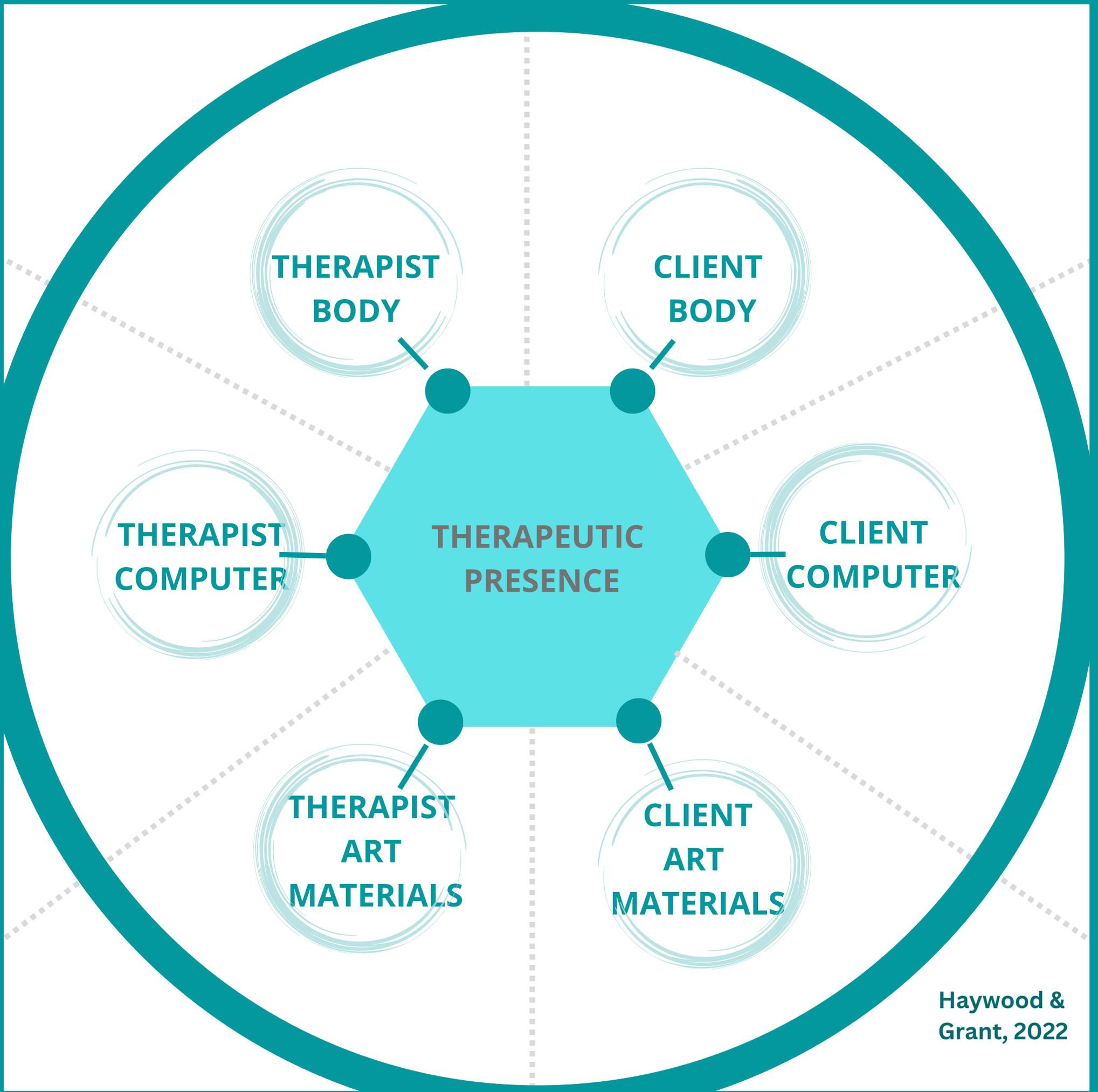
'TWO SHIPS PASSING IN THE NIGHT' (ORIENTING VIA ARTMAKING)

- **Client feels present when:** "their attention to their artwork and their ability to be present with the artwork in order to find some sort of insight" is present.
- **Indications of therapeutic presence:** "client shoulders drop, breath slows down, and vocal pitch lowers"
- **Online context helps by:** "there is comfort and joy by being in their own physical space....in being able to meet people from my own space...[clients] has greater comfort using materials ...no fear of using too much...skips the dread and anxiety around travel to and from the session...able to be more fully present and show up"
- **Online context hinders by:** "limited access to art materials limits what you can do...interruptions...every time it happens I have a sense of chaos...you have to really pay attention to body language and verbal cues in order to pick up on [client's] energy"
- **Practice to cultivate TP:** "review notes, feel into them, prepare questions, have a directive in mind, use poetry and music to call in inspiration,do mindfulness visualization practice"
- **Role of artmaking in TP:** "connecting people with their art process is a forum for psychoeducation...I explain how using all of the senses at once brings us back into our body"
- **Other:** With technology issues "I dont have a way to help them troubleshoot"

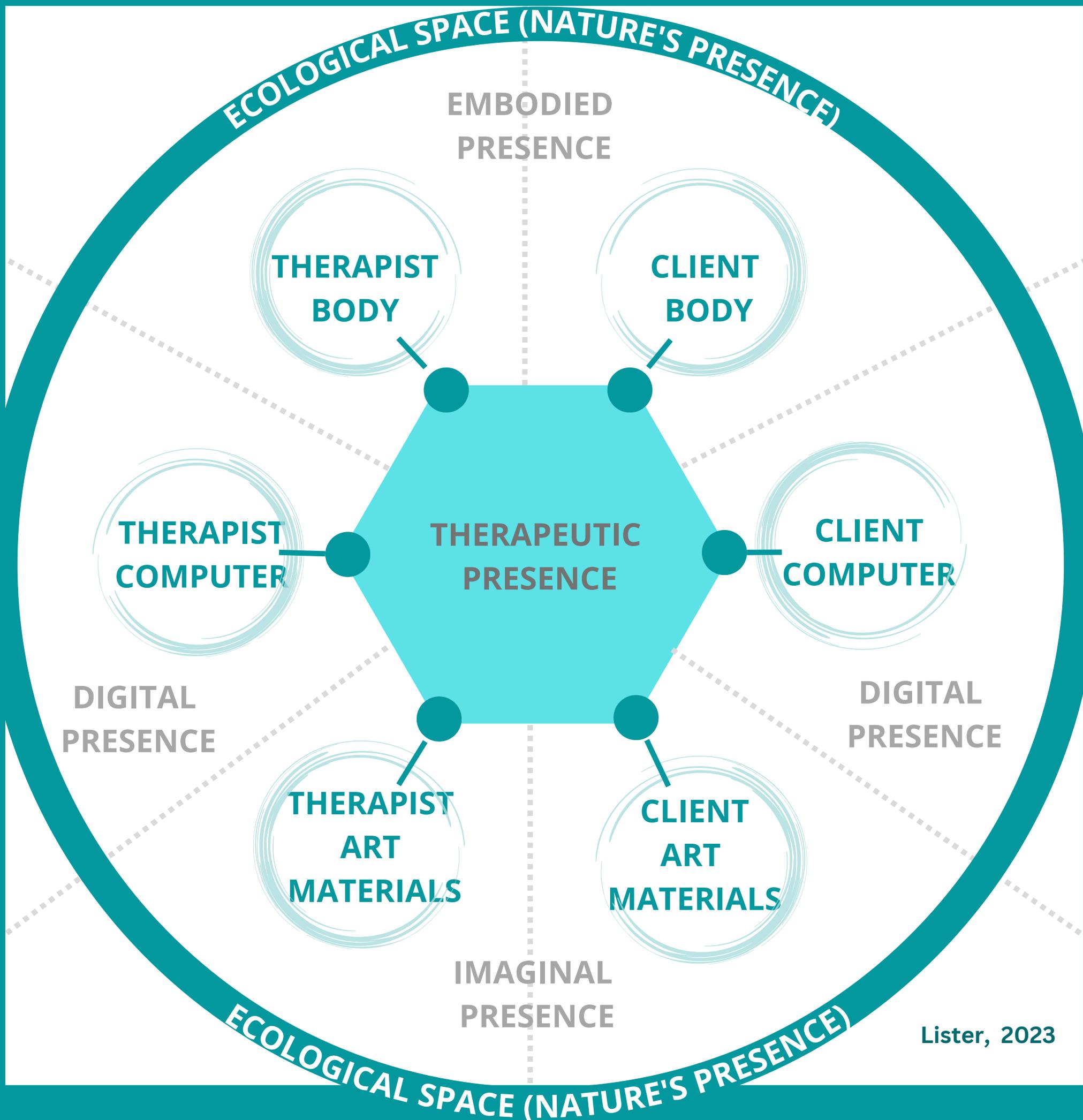


'TWO MUSICIANS RIFFING'

- **Client feels present when:** "..its like we are reaching through time and space to connect by gesturing to one another"
- **Contributes to TP:** "visual cues, gesturing, using the body to connect - glancing up at the screen while artmaking, checking in verbally...art as diving in point..."
- **Online context helps by:** "using camera as a keyhole...and using the screen as a stage can create levity and engagement...levelling the power between client and therapist...seeing somebody in their home and them seeing me in my home is a balancing....we have two humans meeting in a space...a huge contributing factor to my therapeutic presence"
- **Online context hinders by:** "art invitations need to be tweaked according to the materials that [the client] has on hand...limited use of body for supporting the client...unable to use the Third Hand in the traditional ways..[instead I] share screen or create a slideshow"
- **Practice to cultivate TP:** "sit still, hold a grounding rock. do a breathing practice 'in for me, out for you',look at whimsical things from nature for inspiration"
- **Role of artmaking in TP:** " artmaking...when we are working it is like we are two musicians riffing..it really helps with TP because we cannot it involves...[being] fully present and fully listening to what the other is saying"
- **Other:** May require different approaches to making art alongside & physical presence online vs in person.



Haywood &
Grant, 2022



THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE - Spheres of Space



THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE

DIGITAL SPACE

IMAGINAL SPACE

PHYSICAL SPACE

BODY

ART MAKING

DIGITAL SPACE

IMAGINAL SPACE

PHYSICAL SPACE

BODY

VERBAL EXPRESSION

ECOLOGICAL SPACE

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Online-Onland Art Therapy Therapeutic Presence Framework

SHIFTING ATTENTION FOR
FOSTERING THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE
IN ONLINE ART THERAPY

BEFORE SESSION

- Prepare ecological space
- Prepare embodied space
- Prepare physical space
- Prepare digital/mind space
- Prepare imaginal space

DURING SESSION

- Connect through ecological space
- Connect through embodied space
- Connect through physical space
- Connect through digital/mind space
- Connect through imaginal space

AFTER SESSION

- Attend to imaginal space
- Attend to digital/mind space
- Attend to physical space
- Attend to embodied space
- Attend to ecological space



PRACTICES FOR FOSTERING THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE IN ONLINE ART THERAPY

BEFORE SESSION

- Prepare physical space
- Prepare mind
- Prepare body
- Ground with Nature
- Call in inspiration

DURING SESSION

- Exploring nature/ physical /digital spaces
- Use of music or nature sounds to hold space
- Mindfulness & breathing practices
- Using objects for sensory stimuli
- Artmaking
- Co-creating / sharing power when informing session design

AFTER SESSION

- Make response art
- Breathing practice to recalibrate energy & body
- Writing notes
- Walking or being outdoors in Nature

CANADIAN ART THERAPY (AT) FRAMEWORKS FOR ONLINE PRACTICE - COMPARISON CHART

FEATURES	WHITAKER SHAW & WINKEL 2022	CARPENDALE & TOLL 2021	MCBRIDE & WORRAL 2021	PROULX 2022	WINKEL 2022	OATTP
Body	✓			✓	✓	✓
Mindfulness & Compassion Practices						✓
Verbal Expression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Artmaking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature	✓	✓				✓
Digital Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

AMERICAN ART THERAPY (AT) FRAMEWORKS FOR ONLINE PRACTICE - COMPARISON CHART

FEATURES	MILLER & MACONALD 2020	SNYDER 2021
Body		
Mindfulness & Compassion Practices		
Verbal Expression		
Artmaking		
Nature		
Digital Space		

EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST ART THERAPY (AT) FRAMEWORKS FOR ONLINE PRACTICE - COMPARISON CHART

FEATURES	SHAMRI-ZEEVI & KATZ 2021	HAYWOOD & GRANT 2022	DATLEN & PADOLFI 2020	HARROP-ALLIN & POLLARD 2021	BIRO-HANNAH 2020
Body	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mindfulness & Compassion Practices					
Verbal Expression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Artmaking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature				✓	
Digital Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Limitations

- **No input from clients**
- **Only student art therapists**
(limited in person experience)
- **Limited diversity in participants**
- **Used the same online platform**

Recommendations

- **Repeat with clients & experienced therapists**
- **Diversified participants**
- **Use different online platforms**
- **identified other questions**

It is noteworthy that 100% of respondents reported that art making and verbal responses contributed to their experiences of therapeutic presence during art therapy online

SHIFTS IN PRACTICE (ONLINE TO IN PERSON)

- **Making art alongside:** "I don't know how I'm going to be in person. I create art while my clients are creating art and I don't know how comfortable I will be to do that [in person]"
- **Shifting physical presence:** "lots of expression and energy output [is needed] to create therapeutic presence online and perhaps in person, it will require less expression and energy output...I have a big presence online...how will that translate to being in person ...I may have to sit back and calm down and ground and be a little more solid...I'll have to relearn how to be a therapist on site"
- **Shifting focus of attention:** "when I'm online clients are focused on their work and they're not feeling into my presence with their peripheral vision. But in person, I may have to be much more still, because they will be aware of minute movements in my body in way that they are not while online...and i have been practicing recognizing when something I cherish does not work and letting it go"

PRACTICES FOR FOSTERING THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE IN ONLINE ART THERAPY

BEFORE SESSION

- Connect with nature / natural elements
- Move/connect with the body
- Remove/limit distractions, protect privacy etc.
- Mute notifications on devices, check notes, etc.
- Call in inspiration via music, poetry, visualization etc.

DURING SESSION

- Grounding using natural objects for sensory stimuli
- Breathing mindful practices
- Space orientation exercises to calm the nervous system
- Use of music or nature sounds to hold space during artmaking
- Art making & objects to tap into playful and creative energy

AFTER SESSION

- Making response art
- Writing notes
- Putting away materials, notes, devices or clearing the space/ resetting between sessions
- Breathing practice to reset energy body
- Holding natural element/object or going outdoors to ground in self.

THERAPEUTIC PRESENCE

Online

FIELD GUIDE

Onland

IN ART THERAPY

Questions?

Thank you!!

Get in touch!

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