

Art Therapy in Schools

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Professional Art Therapist



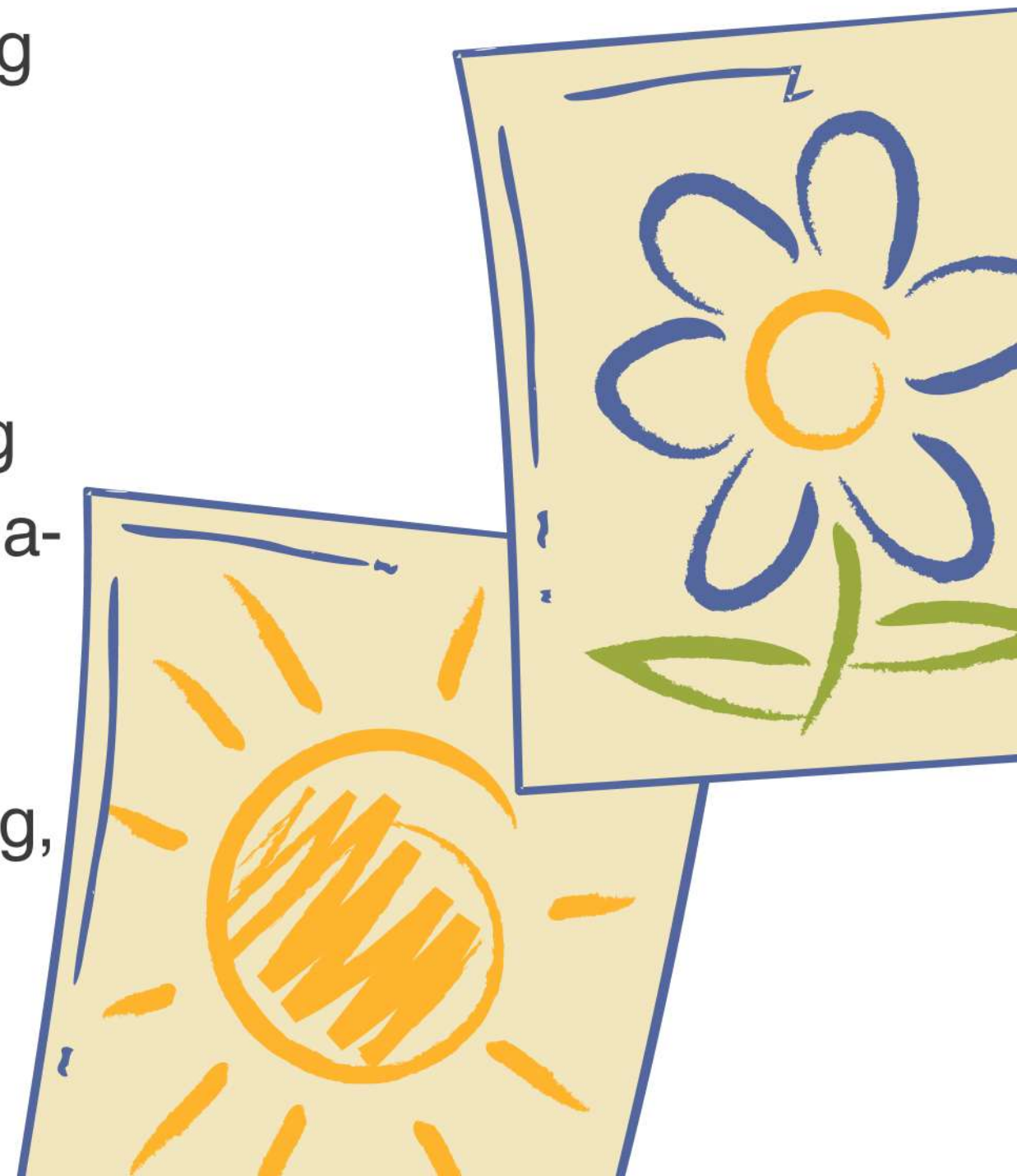
Introduction

Gabriella Rizkallah (M.Ed, RCT, CAT)

Founder of Nova Scotian Art Therapy, a Registered Counselling Therapist and Professional Art Therapist with a background in education, art, and psychology.

Specializing in supporting neurodivergent individuals, including children, teens, women and parents. Through a creative, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive approach.

Celebrating differences and identity, offering a space for healing, self-expression, and belonging.



Sensory & Comfort Needs

This space is meant to feel **safe** and **comfortable**.

If you need to **step out**, take a **bathroom** break, **stretch**, or grab **nourishment**, *please do so without explanation*

It's never "**rude**" to take care of yourself.

There's also a small space with **sensory** and **tactile** objects available for anyone who might find them grounding or helpful.

You're welcome to settle in however you need;
move, breathe, doodle, or unwind.

I invite you to relax and freely be yourself in this space.



Affirmation Card Exchange

Instructions

Take a card and write a message.

Imagine you're having a tough day and no one knows, what words of encouragement would you want to read?

When you're done, fold it and place your card in a pile.

Creative Toolkit

What's In My Kit?

A notebook

Multicolour crayons

A pencil

Watercolour

Playdough

extras: sour pop-it's

sensory sticker, bookmark



A notebook:

A space to pause and process. Writing or sketching supports reflection, insight, and the organization of thoughts that can otherwise feel scattered.



Multicolour crayons:

Color is a language of emotion. Engaging with different hues activates sensory pathways and invites expression beyond words.



A pencil:

A symbol of growth and possibility. You can erase and readjust, you don't always need the right answer every time. Creativity and healing are both ongoing processes.



Watercolour:

A reminder that not everything can be contained. The way colour moves and blends teaches us to let go of control, to adapt, and to find beauty in what unfolds unexpectedly.



Playdough:

A tactile medium for self-regulation. Molding and shaping engages the senses, releases tension, and restores calm through embodied action.



Weather Report

Instructions

If your emotions today were a type of weather, what would they be?

Draw your personal weather forecast.



NSTU HANDOUT

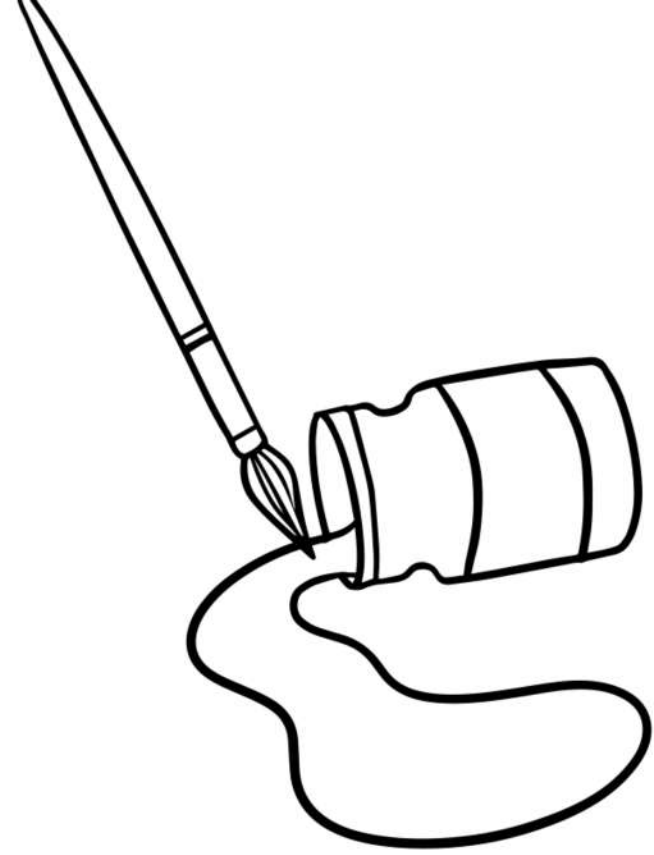
What is Art Therapy?

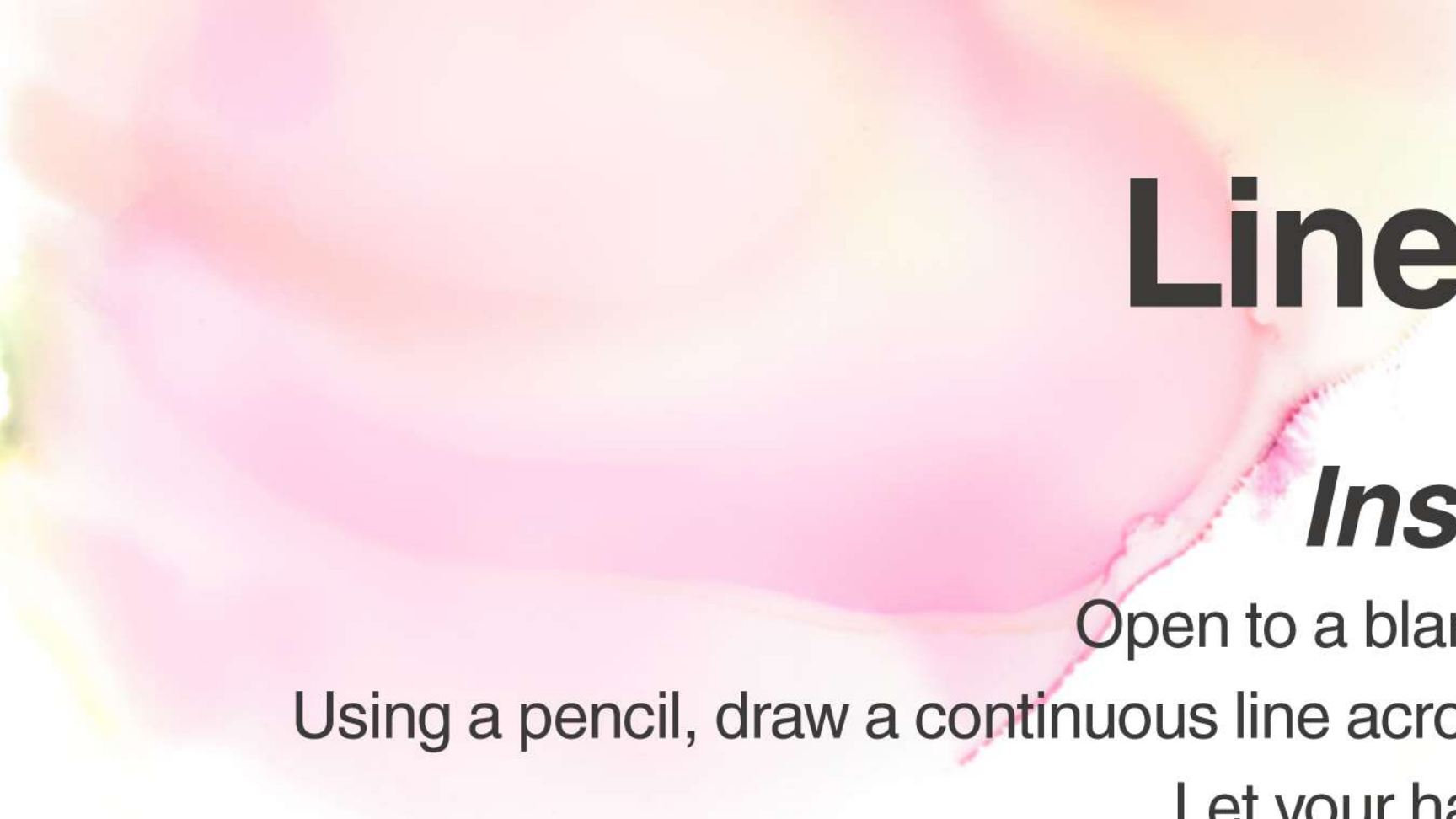
The Art-Making Process

Art therapy is a form of counselling that uses creative expression to explore thoughts, feelings, and emotions through art-making.

It focuses on the subconscious self, using symbols and metaphors to uncover meaning and connect with one's inner world.

It's not about creating "good" art, it's about the process of self-understanding, growth, and healing through creativity.





Line to Mind

Instructions

Open to a blank page in your notebook.

Using a pencil, draw a continuous line across your page for 30 seconds, without lifting your hand.

Let your hand follow your mood:

slow, fast, wavy, messy, calm, sharp, no right or wrong.

When you're done, look at your line.

Ask yourself: If this line represented my current state, what would it say?

Write one word beside it that captures that feeling.

Reflection

Notice what came up, was it hard to let go of control, or freeing?

Benefits of Art Therapy

Student Well-being

- **Emotional Regulation:** Creative expression helps students process and release emotions safely.
- **Self-Awareness:** Art allows reflection and personal insight beyond words.
- **Focus & Problem-Solving:** The art process builds patience, planning, and flexible thinking.
- **Confidence & Resilience:** Completing art fosters pride and a sense of capability.
- **Social-Emotional Growth:** Sharing art builds empathy and connection with others.
- **Inclusive Communication:** Provides a non-verbal outlet for diverse learners.

Shape Your Support

Instructions

On a blank page, draw any three shapes (circle, square, triangle, heart, etc.).

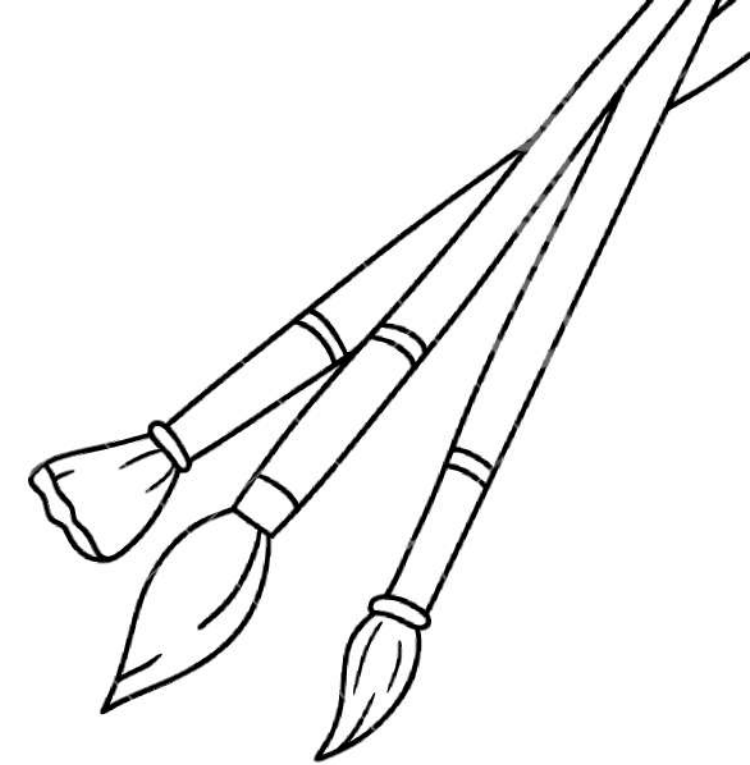
Inside each shape, write one word that represents something that supports your well-being or helps you show up as your best self.

Add a line or small symbol to connect the shapes, showing how these supports work together.

Reflection

Which word feels most active in your life right now, and which one could use more attention?

Art Therapy in Schools



Healing through creativity and expression

- **Group Sessions:** Build connection, teamwork, and shared emotional expression.
- **Bridges Communication Gaps:** Gives voice to thoughts and feelings that are hard to verbalize.
- **Sensory Outlet:** Uses tactile and visual experiences to support focus and regulation.
- **Supports SEL:** Encourages empathy, self-awareness, and emotional literacy.
- **Inclusive Practice:** Adapts easily for neurodivergent and diverse learners.
- **Early Support:** Helps identify emotional needs through creative expression.

Bridge of Connection

Instructions

On a blank page, draw a bridge in any style
two sides with a connection between

On one side, write a word that represents you.

On the other side, write a word that represents someone you support or work with
(e.g., student, colleague, child).

Along the bridge, write or decorate with words, symbols, or colours that represent what helps you
connect.

Reflection

What's one bridge word that stands out to you today?

BREAK

DON'T FORGET!

Please fill your watercolour
brush with water upon return



Tree of Strengths

Instructions

Explore

Walk around the room or down the hall.
Find 5–10 words that stand out, words that reflect your current energy, strengths, or season of life.

Ground Your Page

Turn your notebook vertically and use both pages as your landscape.
Draw a simple tree, roots, trunk, and branches.

Keeping it loose and symbolic.

Build Your Tree

Place your found words where they fit, as you saw them or as you interpret them.

Roots: What grounds or supports you

Trunk: What keeps you steady or strong

Branches: Where you're growing or reaching



Tree of Strengths

Reflection

Which part of your tree feels strongest right now?

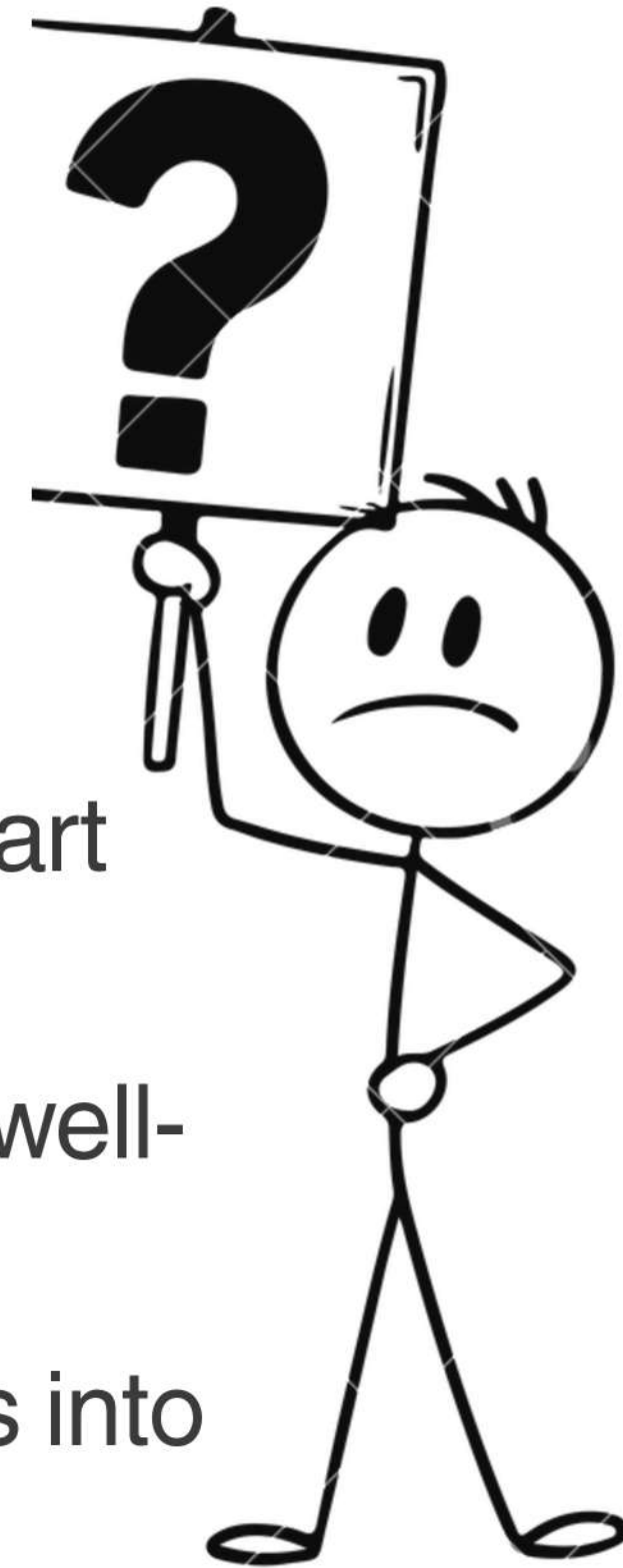
Did any words surprise you?

Describe your tree in one word.

Questions?

Ask Me Anything

- What resonated most with you today?
- What questions or curiosities do you still have about art therapy in schools?
- How do you see creativity supporting your students' well-being or classroom connection?
- What might help you bring more creative approaches into your role?



Thank you!

ON YOUR WAY OUT...

Affirmation Card Exchange

Take a card and read it when the time feels right.

Lets Connect!

Follow **@nsarttherapy** on social media for upcoming workshops, community events, and creative wellness resources.

www.nsarterapy.com | info@nsarttherapy.com



NOVA SCOTIAN
Art Therapy



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