

Paper Mosaic Art Therapy Intervention
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KYATA Intervention Exchange

Modalities: Individual, Family, Group

Populations: Successfully used with various levels of severely mentally ill adults and adolescents. Easily modified for higher functioning individuals, and for younger children. With high or higher functioning individuals this intervention lends itself to fascinating insight-oriented processing.

Target areas: emotional regulation (especially good for OCD, anger, an alternative to cutting, and/or a Gestalt approach to emotional regulation)

Materials:

1. Brightly colored construction paper, lots of colors
2. 9 x 12 white paper, 60lb. is recommended but not a necessity
3. Glue sticks (lots, this requires probably 1-2 sticks per person and you will use it up, so bring extra). If you prefer Modge Podge you can use it but you may lose some of the relaxation of the gluing process and that liquid sticky white stuff is often a trigger substance (of past trauma) for some people.

Procedure:

1. Pick a focus area (depression and hope, how I see myself now- how I want to see myself, self-acceptance, substance abuse, anger-sadness-fear, etc. Really, whatever the client/patient 'brings to the table' is fodder. In order to have more time to process and not lose cohesiveness it's best to limit the focus area to three or less. If doing this intervention as a series in individual sessions then absolutely expand as necessary, groups reduce because then everyone can have a chance to share.
2. Have client/patient pick a different color for each element of the focus area(s), and tear the paper into ¼" to ½" MOSAIC pieces. I insist that the paper be torn as individual pieces so as not to lose the impact healing of simply tearing paper repeatedly.
3. Make piles of colored paper and ask them to glue to a larger piece of paper in any shape or design they want as long as it reflects something about the focus area. Typically someone will have difficulty getting started and I instruct them to simply choose a color and start gluing. Once they start the gluing also becomes relaxing.

- When done in a group format they all glue on the same large piece of paper.
4. When applying the glue it is best to put some glue on larger paper first then affix mosaic piece to larger paper. After several pieces are placed take glue stick and use like a sealer as well. When dry the finished paper is stiff and durable and has a sheen (but isn't sticky).
 5. Depending on what arises during process and what your goals in therapy are the processing afterwards can address
 - a. What it was like as an activity (tool for relaxation)?
 - b. How do the paper mosaic tiles interact to symbolize facets of their (trauma, depression, feelings, etc.)?
 - c. How do other group member's experiences mirror or differ from theirs?
 - d. How does their behavioral response in daily life mirror or differ from what was represented in the mosaic?

Modifications:

1. Tear the paper ahead of time if time is an issue.
2. Limit the colors to reduce the emotive power of the intervention.
3. Assign emotions/ ideas/ events to a color to direct intervention (the projective and interpretive power of intervention may be reduced however)—this modification is often helpful if working with geriatric populations
4. Limit the size of the paper on which the mosaic pieces are placed to contain emotions more easily.
5. Increase/ decrease the thickness of the ripping paper to provide more resistance for individuals who need more effort to release emotions.