

Art Therapy Counseling

What is Art Therapy Counseling? Art therapy counseling is a mental health profession that combines the therapeutic uses of art making with the skills of a professional counselor to improve or restore a client's functioning and her or his sense of personal well-being. Art therapy counselors have knowledge of and skills in the usage of visual art and the creative process, as well as the theories and techniques of psychology, human development, and counseling. Art therapy counselors work with people of all ages: children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, groups, and communities, and an art therapy counselor could provide services in a broad number of settings, such as mental health centers, hospitals, rehabilitation, forensic institutions, community outreach program, wellness centers, schools, nursing homes, open studios and independent practices.

How are art therapy counselors trained? Art therapy counselors are trained in both art and therapy, and a master's degree is required for entry-level practice. There are graduate programs across the country in Art Therapy, and those studying to become art therapy counselors learn about the theories of art therapy, counseling, and psychotherapy; ethics and standards of practice; assessment and evaluation; individual, group, and family art therapy techniques; human and creative development; multicultural issues; research methods; and in order to complete a graduate program would have to complete internship experiences in clinical, community, and/or other settings. (American Art Therapy Association, arttherapy.org)

How to get into a graduate program in art therapy counseling? Admission to most graduate programs in Art Therapy Counseling expect that applicants have completed a bachelor's degree that includes at least 18 hours of studio art, and 12-18 hours of psychology. For example, most will require coursework in Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, and a 3D medium such as Sculpture or Ceramics, as well as courses in Developmental Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology, and some will require Theories of Personality. A portfolio of your artwork is expected for most graduate programs.

What Psychology courses should you take at Westfield State University if you want to become an Art Therapy Counselor? There are a lot of ways you can fulfill the coursework you need to get into a graduate program in Art Therapy. You can either double major in Psychology and Art, Major in Psychology and Minor in Art, or Major in Art and Minor in Psychology... or even just major in Art or Psychology, and take the appropriate classes in the other. The objective is to take the appropriate classes here at WSU that will get you into the appropriate Master's program.