

Counselling Team Weekly



Let's express our emotions through creativity
When words aren't enough

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Do you know this week 13-19 March is the National **Creative Arts Therapy Week**? Let's take this opportunity for use of the arts and creative processes to explore and express our emotions. It can be a wonderful tool for people to use on their own as a way of relaxing, reducing stress and to engage in personal reflection.

Expressing emotions can be challenging and there is another way beyond talking to understand and express your emotions. Engaging in creative behaviors improves your brain function as well as mental and physical health. It can help us tap into our emotions and make sense of them, especially when we can't put into words.

Let's find a way to unwind, de-stress or engage in some self-care, creative expression is a therapeutic tool well-worth trying. Here are two exercises we can practice from:

1. Linking emotions to bodily sensations

List the emotions that you feel most often and then assign a color to each emotion. Take a minute to think about each emotion, imagine the last time you felt it, and think about how you feel that emotion in your body. Color the outline of the body where you feel each emotion.

It can help us to gain awareness of how we actually experience emotions in our body, instead of thinking of emotions and thoughts as somehow disconnected from our bodies. E.g. Some people feel their stomach hurt when they are worried.



2. Emotions as weather

Metaphors and imagery can be powerful ways to convey feelings and gain new insights into them. Think about what weather would express how you are feeling today and do an image of the weather. You can simply just draw it on a piece of paper.

When we are experiencing distressing feelings, it can be easy to feel stuck and think that these emotions will last forever. However, just like weather is always changing, our emotions can always change as well. We can't change the weather, we can only accept the reality of it and do our best to cope through it.

Reflection:

What was it like to try to present your emotions as weather?

Was it easy or challenging to decide how to do this?

What did it feel like as you worked on your image and how does it feel to look at it now?

Does the metaphor of weather change anything about the way you think of emotions?

What can you do to help yourself during this particular emotional weather?

