

How Art Can Improve Your Mental Health

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By **Cindy Jenkins**, Extension Assistant Professor



Popular author and researcher, Brene Brown, said: “Art has the power to render sorrow beautiful, make loneliness a shared experience, and transform despair into hope.” (Brown, 2017) Practicing art can be beneficial for people of all ages. From painting to performing, here are some ways practicing art can help improve your mental health:

1. **Calming effects:** Creating art helps reduce stress and give opportunities for self-expression (Gallant, 2017). This has been shown to be very helpful with children when sessions are fun, playful, and enjoyable (McDonald, 2020). The calming effect may come from moving from shallow to deep levels of concentration (van Lith, 2015).
2. **Increased confidence:** Like many things in life, practicing art means one will be increasing in skill and persevering through struggle, which helps improve confidence. Another confidence builder is that once some art has been created, this can be something that you and others value (Chilvers, 2021).
3. **Healing:** Working with art can help uncover and heal masked emotions. In addition, it is a safe space to create a secure connection when art is done solely for the experience of creating art – not for anyone else’s benefit or to make money. This kind of secure attachment can be helpful for those who did not create secure attachments in childhood (van Lith, 2015).

4. **Coping skills:** Those who create art tend to have a more positive view of themselves (Chilvers, 2021). It also lends itself to a greater ability to resolve inner conflict (van Lith, 2015). Lastly, it can help decrease tendencies towards obsessive dwelling by giving opportunities for choices, like types of paper or colors. (Blomdahl, 2021).

As there are many benefits that come from practicing art, this can be a great way to get some mental health benefits. If art as a means of improving mental health is of interest, find a form of art that will be enjoyable to you. This can be anything from creative writing to finger painting at home with the kids. Once you’ve discovered what you like, try to make time for art in your schedule as there may be many helpful benefits.

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