

October 10, 2019

Art Therapy: Who is required to be licensed and who isn't?

A license is needed if:

- You engage in the practice of art therapy or purport to be engaged in the practice of art therapy, unless an exception applies; **or**
- You use a title, word, or abbreviation, including “art therapist,” to indicate or imply that you are authorized or qualified to engage in the practice of art therapy, unless an exception applies.

“Art therapy” means the integrated use of psychotherapeutic principles, visual art media and the creative process to assist clients in increasing awareness of self and others, coping with symptoms, stress and traumatic experiences, enhancing cognitive abilities and identifying and implementing therapeutic interventions to meet developmental, behavioral, cognitive and emotional needs.

Below you will find examples of needing an Art Therapist license versus not needing an Art Therapist license.

You **DO** need a license if:

1. You engage in Art Therapy or advertise the title “Art Therapist,” you need to be licensed unless an exception to licensure applies.
2. You have another health-related professional license in Oregon, but you want to advertise that you are an “Art Therapist”. This is true even though you already have a license from another medical professional health care Board.
3. You practice Art Therapy and call yourself an “Art Therapist” and hold no other licenses or certifications in a profession or occupation, unless an exception applies.

You **DO NOT** need a license if:

1. You are a student in a course of study in Art Therapy and as part of that curriculum you practice art therapy.

For example, if you are attending a program at a college to receive any diploma in Art Therapy and as part of that course you practice Art Therapy, a license is not required.

2. You hold a master's degree in art therapy and are a person in a program where Art Therapy is practiced under supervision as part of a clinical training program and the practice fulfills the experience requirement to become credentialed as a registered art therapist. “Registered art therapist” means a person who is credentialed by the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc., or its successor organization, as a registered art therapist.

For example, you have a master's degree in art therapy and perform art therapy under a supervised training program at a college in an effort to obtain the experience needed to become a registered art therapist, a license is not required.

3. You are a person licensed in Oregon in another profession or occupation other than Art Therapy and use art therapy in an incidental manner to your practice.

For example, if you are a licensed professional counselor in Oregon and have a client do drawings while you provide ongoing treatment as part of your scope of practice of your LPCT license, a license is not required.

4. You are a certified professional who has genuine training and national certification and you do not represent yourself as an “Art Therapist.”

For example, if you are practicing your certified profession and your profession employs elements of art therapy into the practice that may go beyond mere incidental use of art therapy, provided you are not representing yourself as art therapists, a license is not required. This could include nationally certified psychologists, professional counselors, addiction counselors, and social workers, but also might include occupational therapists, physical therapists, or recreation therapists. This license exemption captures many individuals who have often been most concerned about an art therapist license restricting their ability to use art materials in rehabilitative therapy with clients.

5. You are a person employed by a state, local or federal government agency or an Oregon authorized community mental health program or drug and alcohol program, if services are within your scope of employment and you do not use the term “Art Therapy” in connection with services.

For example, you work at DHS as an investigator and talk to children who have been abused. If you ask them to draw to keep their minds off of scary topics to get them to warm up to you while interviewing them, then a license is not required.

6. You are a person authorized by Oregon to provide mental health services within your authorized scope of practice and you do not use the title “Art Therapist” in connection with your services.

For example, if you are a counselor for Oregon State Hospital or another government agency that uses art therapy in connection with services provided and you do not use the title “Art Therapist,” then a license is not required.