



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Client Information Leaflet: Art Therapy

Please read this document carefully. It has been prepared to help you decide whether or not art therapy is right for you and contains important information about what this form of therapy involves.

What is art therapy?

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy aimed at exploring, through image making, the underlying thought processes and conflicts causing emotional distress. Art therapy may be offered individually or in a group. In either case, the aim is to help you use image making to express and think about your problems.

Within the reliable and confidential relationship offered by the art therapist you will have the opportunity to explore your memories, feelings, dreams and fantasies in order to link past life events with your present difficulties. Through using art to explore these formative experiences you may arrive at a better understanding of yourself, your relationships with others and the nature of your distress. This may lead to positive and enduring changes in your mental health.

How can art therapy help?

There are a number of reasons why art therapy may be particularly helpful for people experiencing emotional problems.

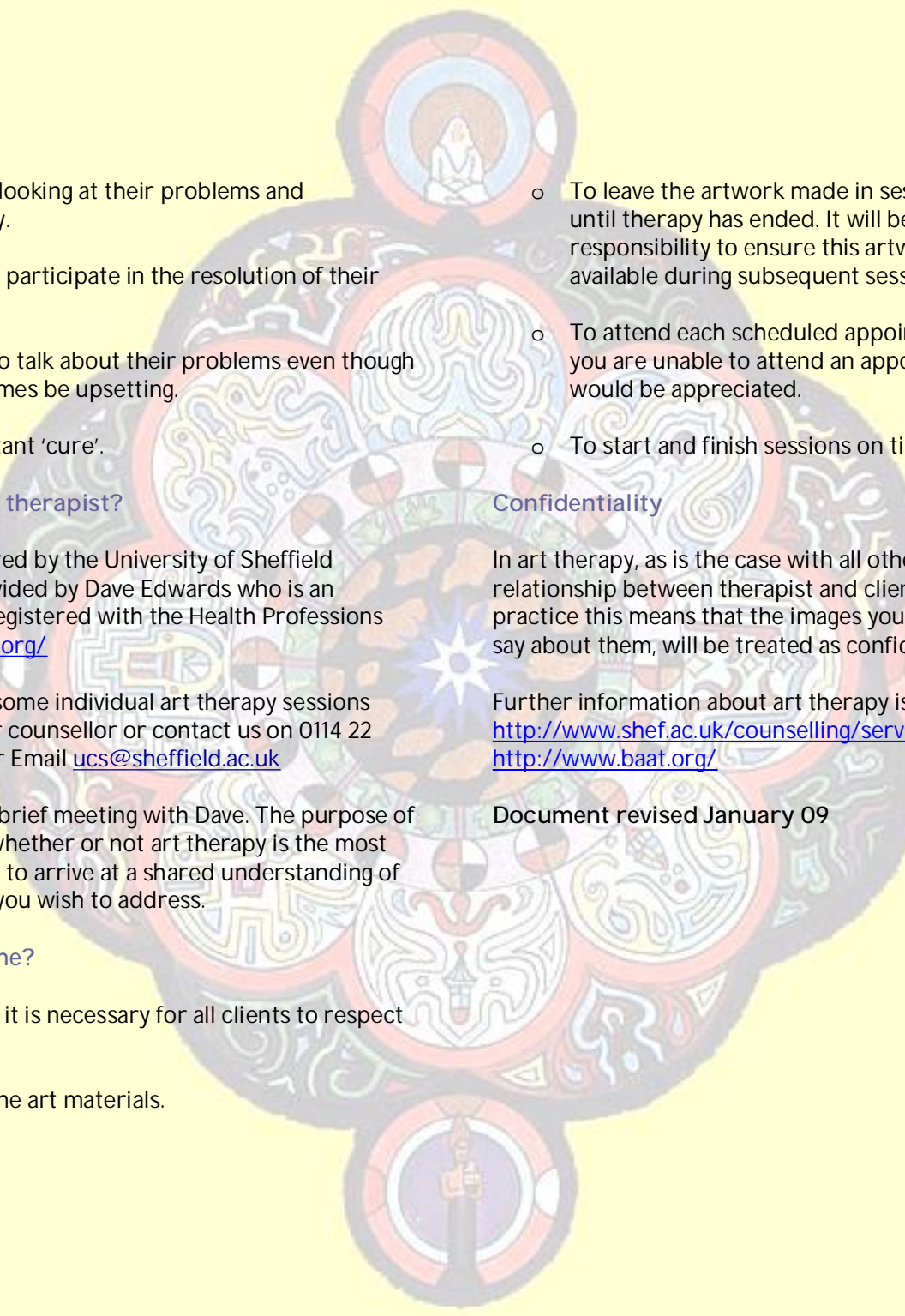
- Firstly, making images offers a means of enabling a person to give form and expression to troubling thoughts and feelings they are unable to express in words.
- Secondly, in the context of a supportive relationship, making images can facilitate emotional growth, increase self-esteem, psychological and social integration.
- Thirdly, as with dreams, aspects of the self are often expressed through images in a symbolic form. These personal symbols are not always easily understood, but their expression through art may have significance for, and provide the basis for further self understanding by, the individual who made them.
- Finally, the permanence of artworks may be especially useful in enabling the art therapist and the individuals with whom they work to follow and reflect upon changes occurring during the course of therapy. This helps establish a sense of focus and continuity that might otherwise be lost or prove difficult to maintain.

Although it is often assumed to be so, it is **not** the case that only those individuals who are 'good at art' are able to make use of art therapy.

Who is art therapy most suitable for?

Art therapy is appropriate for individuals who;

- Want to use as a means of exploring and resolving their problems.

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- Are able to consider looking at their problems and difficulties differently.
 - Are willing to actively participate in the resolution of their problems.
 - Are able and willing to talk about their problems even though doing so may sometimes be upsetting.
 - Do not expect an instant 'cure'.
 - To leave the artwork made in sessions with the art therapist until therapy has ended. It will be the art therapist's responsibility to ensure this artwork is stored safely and is available during subsequent sessions.
 - To attend each scheduled appointment. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend an appointment early notification would be appreciated.
 - To start and finish sessions on time.

How do I get to see the art therapist?

All art therapy sessions offered by the University of Sheffield Counselling Service are provided by Dave Edwards who is an experienced Art Therapist registered with the Health Professions Council; <http://www.hpc-uk.org/>

If you would like to arrange some individual art therapy sessions please discuss this with your counsellor or contact us on 0114 22 24134 (internal ext. 24134) or Email ucs@sheffield.ac.uk

You will then be invited to a brief meeting with Dave. The purpose of this meeting is to establish whether or not art therapy is the most suitable form of therapy and to arrive at a shared understanding of the problems or difficulties you wish to address.

What will be expected of me?

For art therapy to be helpful it is necessary for all clients to respect the following 'ground rules'.

- To be willing to use the art materials.

Confidentiality

In art therapy, as is the case with all other forms of therapy, the relationship between therapist and client is based on trust. In practice this means that the images you make, and what you may say about them, will be treated as confidential.

Further information about art therapy is available at http://www.shef.ac.uk/counselling/services/art_therapy.html and <http://www.baat.org/>

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