Definitions of Expressive Arts Therapy from leaders in the field

“The expressive arts combine the visual arts, movement, drama, music, writing and other creative processes to foster deep personal growth and community development...By integrating the arts processes and allowing one to flow into another, we gain access to our inner resources for healing, clarity, illumination and creativity.” (taken off of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association website otherwise known as IEATA).

“The therapeutic power of art rests not in its elimination of suffering, but rather in its capacity to hold us in the midst of that suffering so that we can bear the chaos without denial or flight.” (Stephen K. Levine from Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy).

“We use the arts to let go, to express and to release. Also we can gain insight by studying the symbolic and metaphorical messages. Our art speaks back to us if we take the time to listen to those messages. Verbalizing or sharing these feelings furthers the process of self-insight and self analysis...one art form stimulates and fosters creativity in another art form and links all of the arts to our essential nature.” (Natalie Rogers from Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy).

“Through intentional movement, we bring awareness to habitual forms and responses, we release old charged or static structures and we send new messages to the nervous system about how we can respond to stimulation from a wider range of possibilities.” (Daria Halprin from Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy).

“When I sing, play instruments, move, dance, draw or write, I am involved on many levels. There are kinesthetic activities, emotional experiences, cognitive processes and interactional events. When I engage a creative act, I enter a world in which only the moment exists. This world is a timeless dwelling place, a magical realm where there is room for needs, for dialoguing longings, urges, wishes, whimsical ideas and consciously experienced feelings, as well as unconscious images that can carry me to unknown territory.” (Margareta Warja from Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy)

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