

# Distance Art Therapy: Maintaining the Therapeutic Relationship from Afar

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# Outline

Defining Distance Therapy

Benefits/Limitations

The Therapeutic Relationship

Integrating the art

Art experiential

A Therapeutic Relationship from a Distance

Closing discussion

# Objectives

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- ▶ Recognize how technology can influence the therapeutic relationship and work.
- ▶ Describe benefits and limitations to distance therapy.
- ▶ Identify ways in which art can be integrated into an online therapy practice.
- ▶ Visualize and reflect on the use of technology in therapy.

# Defining Distance Therapy

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... mental health services provided by a licensed mental health professional through use of technology, such as video conferencing, email, text, or phone.

... becoming a more widely used practice as technological advances are made.

... additional terms include online therapy, telepsychology, telehealth web-based therapy, and e-therapy.

# An evolving practice...



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# Benefits of Distance Therapy

Easily accessible

Flexibility

Can reach remote locations and  
individuals with physical limitations

Considered more affordable

Reduced stigma

# Limitations of Distance Therapy

Lack of non-verbal communication

Confidentiality

Issues with technology

Insurance coverage

Client level of care

Legal and ethical considerations

# Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB)

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## Providing art therapy by electronic means

*Art therapists must inform clients of the benefits, risks, and limitations of using information technology applications in the therapeutic process and in business/billing procedures.*

*When art therapists are providing technology-assisted distance art therapy services, the art therapist shall make a reasonable effort to determine that clients are intellectually, emotionally, and physically capable of using the application and that the application is appropriate for the needs of clients.*

*Art therapists must ensure that the use of technology in the therapeutic relationship does not violate the laws of any federal, provincial, state, local, or international entity and observe all relevant statutes.*

*Discuss time zone differences, and cultural or language differences that might impact service delivery.*



# American Art Therapy Association

*In a recent survey conducted by the American Art Therapy Association to assess the most challenging aspect of transition to telehealth, more than a quarter of respondents (28%), found the was the ability to incorporate art materials.*

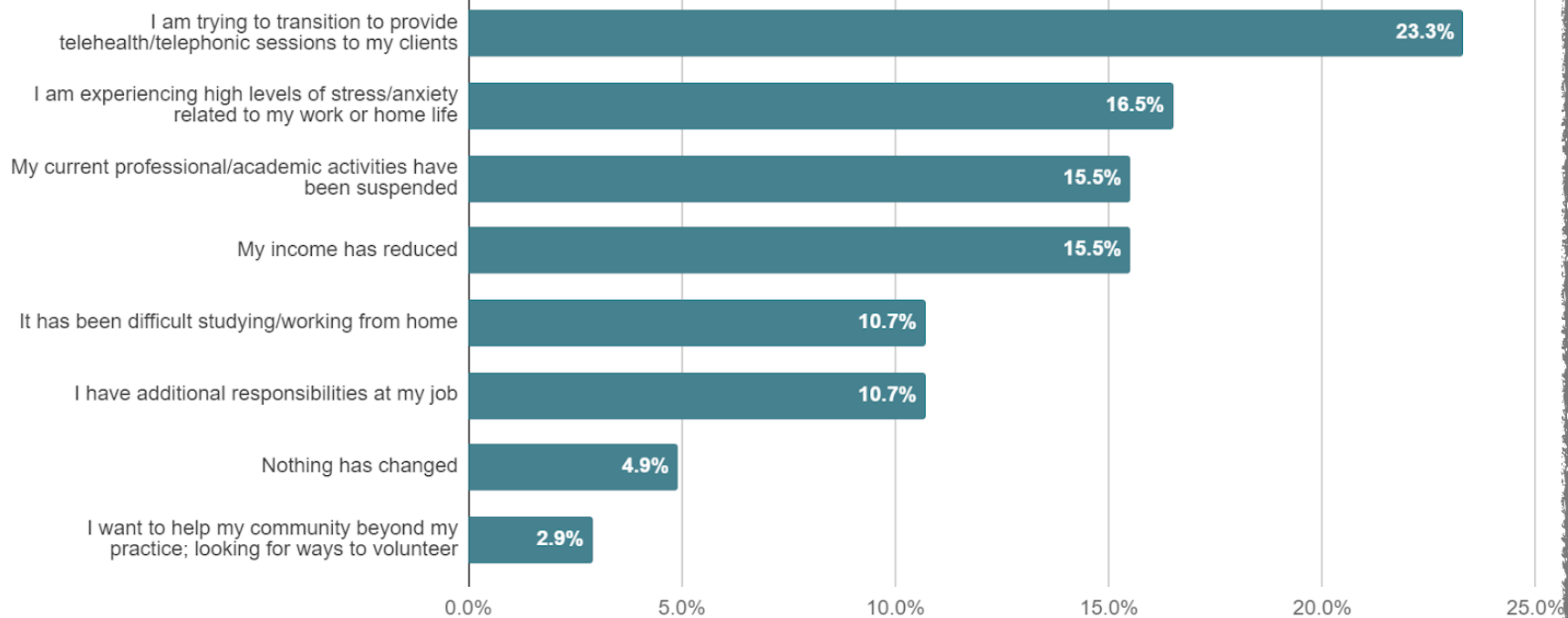
## Responses to COVID-19

*Nearly one in five respondents (19%) identified setting boundaries between work and home activities.*

*Other challenged reported were lack of personal space for telehealth away from distractions at home (14%) and their clients' lack of access or knowledge of technology (14%) as other challenges.*



*Our lives have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways. Please tell us what's been MOST concerning or challenging for you.*



# The Therapeutic Relationship

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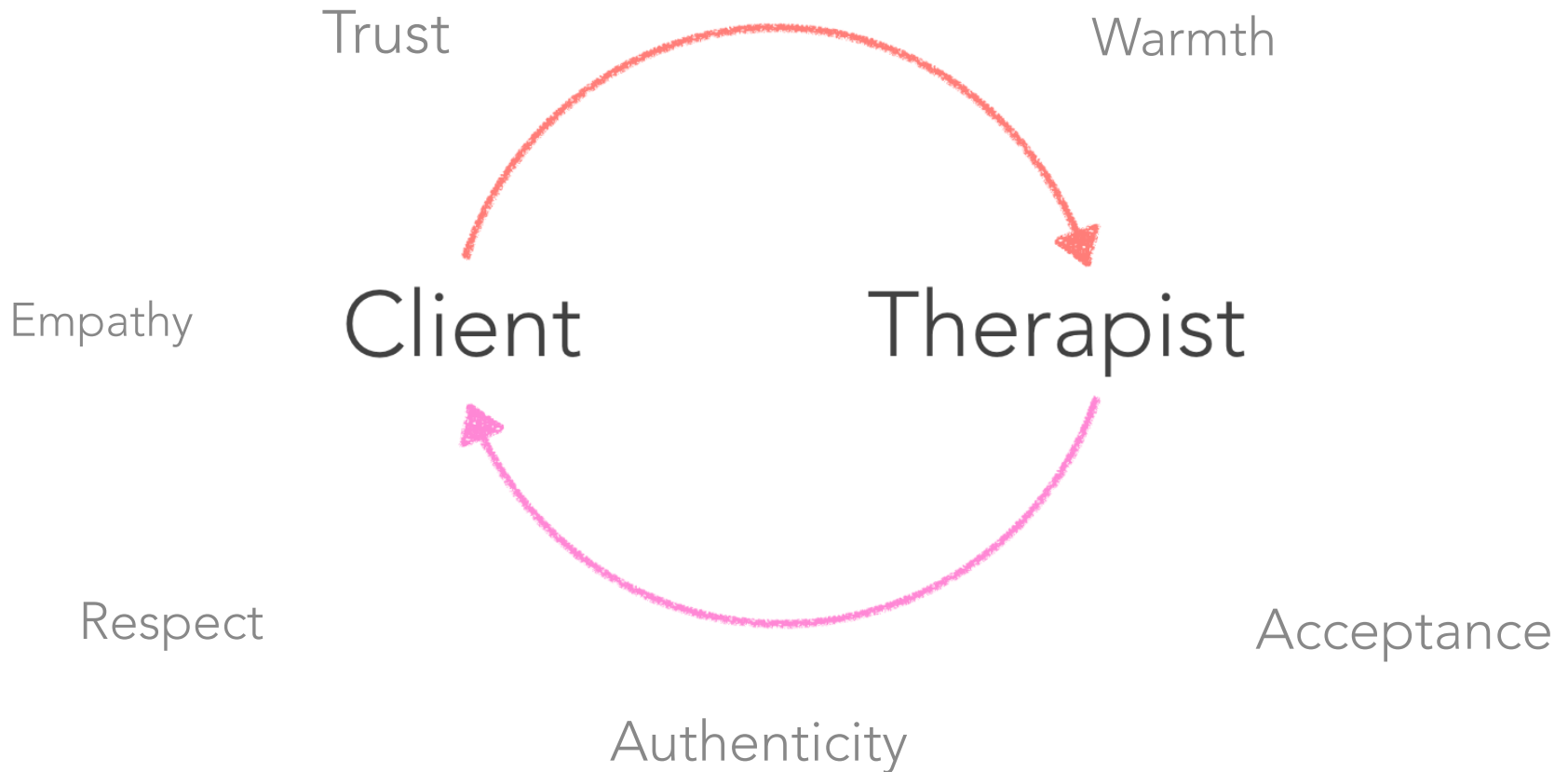
... also known as the therapeutic alliance or working alliance, this is the relationship between the therapist and client in order to support the clients' therapeutic goals.

... maintaining a positive therapeutic relationship it is a crucial part for successful treatment outcomes and overall experience for the client.

... indicators of a positive therapeutic relationship include self-awareness and insight, trust, respect, safety, acceptance, empathy, and mutual agreement.

# Components of a Therapeutic Relationship

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# Components of a Therapeutic Relationship

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Client emotional  
connection to the  
therapist.

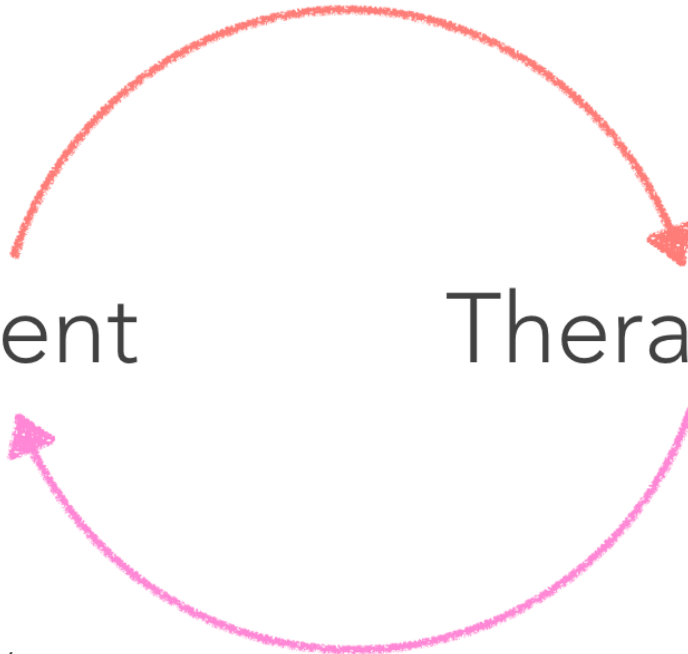
Therapist involvement  
and empathic  
understanding.

Client

Therapist

Client ability to  
work in the therapy.

Therapist and client  
mutual agreement on  
therapy tasks and  
goals



# The Therapeutic Relationship from a Distance

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May influence...

Commitment to Treatment

Transference - Countertransference

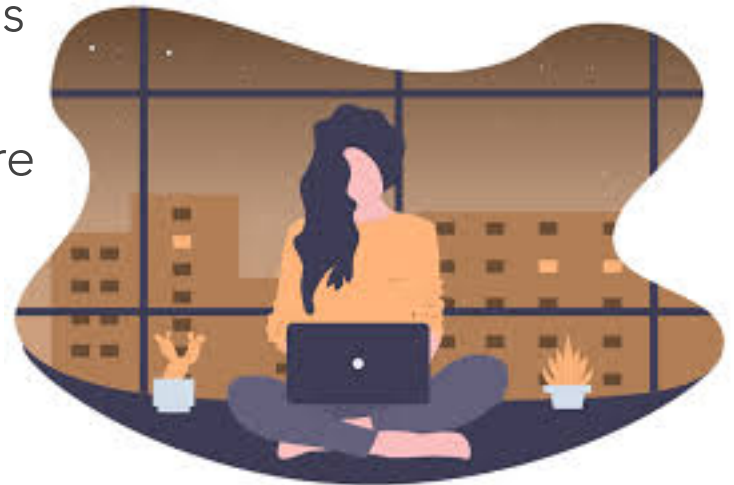
Non-verbal communication observation and cues

Ability to hold the space

Time, space, and location differences

Safety in crisis situations

Establishing boundaries and structure



# The Therapeutic Relationship from a Distance

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However...

Sharing and self-disclosure might come more easily

Clients feel comfortable in their own space

Could lead to traditional face-to-face therapy

Maintains consistency in treatment in client is away



# Integrating the art

## Art Therapy

a creative approach to psychotherapy that provides a space for non-verbal communication of thoughts, feelings, and experiences through imagery.

## Types of Materials

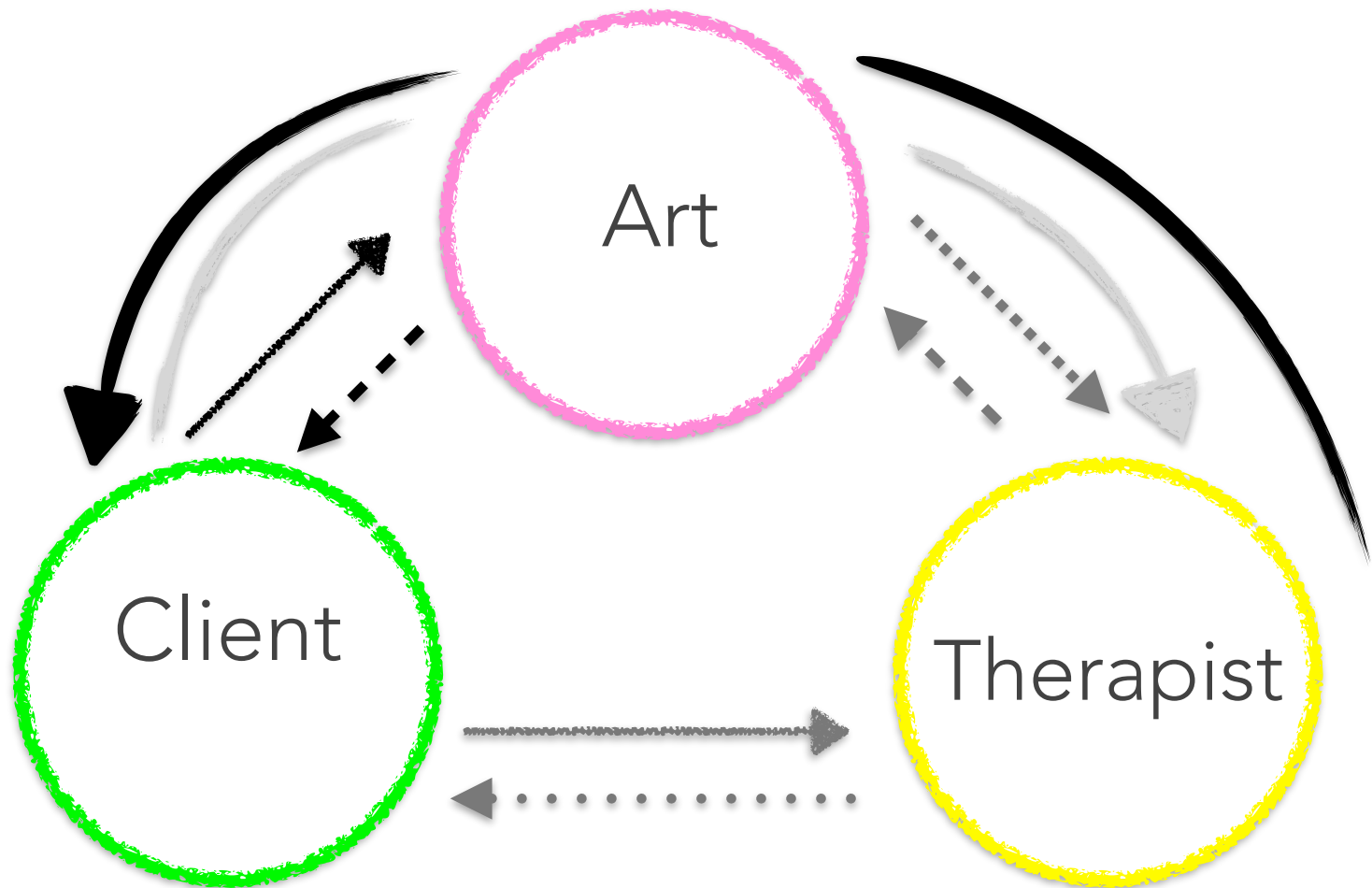
cray-pas, colored pencils, markers, found objects, collage, watercolor, paint, clay, and more.

## Benefits

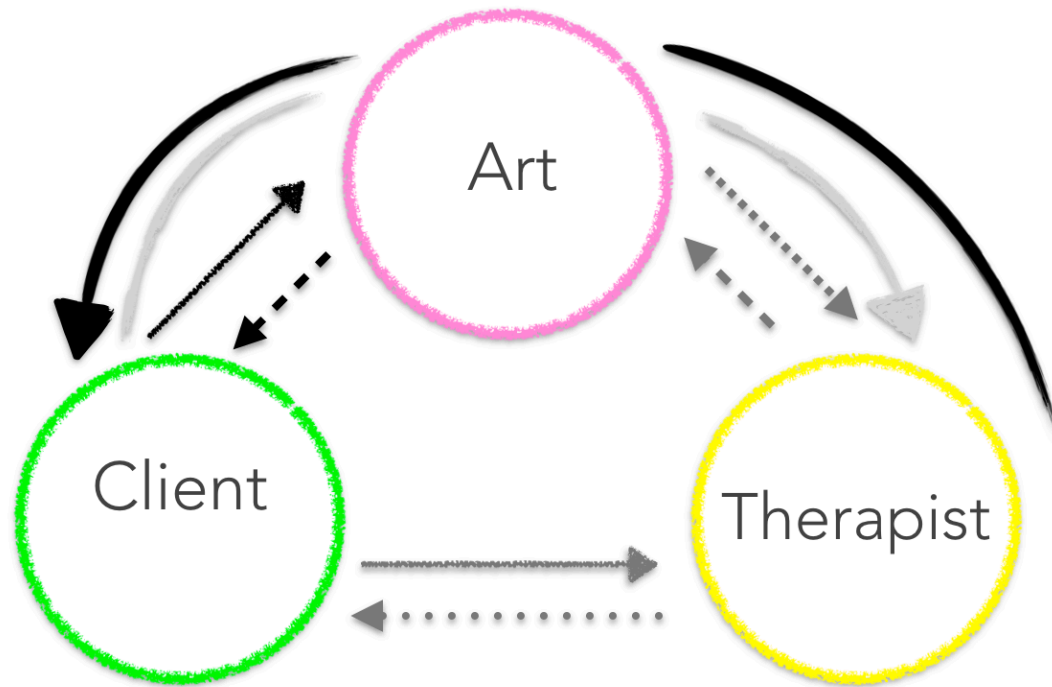
Working in the metaphor  
Non-verbal communication  
Visual reflection  
Stimulate other parts of the brain

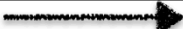













The triangular relationship between client, artwork, and therapist (adapted from Rubin, 2001).



|              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Artwork      |    | Clients expression                                |
|              |    | Clients impression (visual feedback)              |
|              |    | Therapists expectancies                           |
|              |   | Therapists perceptions                            |
| Artwork as   |  | Communication to client in response to artwork    |
| Mediator     |  | Communication to therapist in response to artwork |
| Direct       |  | Clients perception of therapist                   |
| Relationship |  | Therapists perception of client                   |

The triangular relationship between client, artwork, and therapist (adapted from Rubin, 2001).

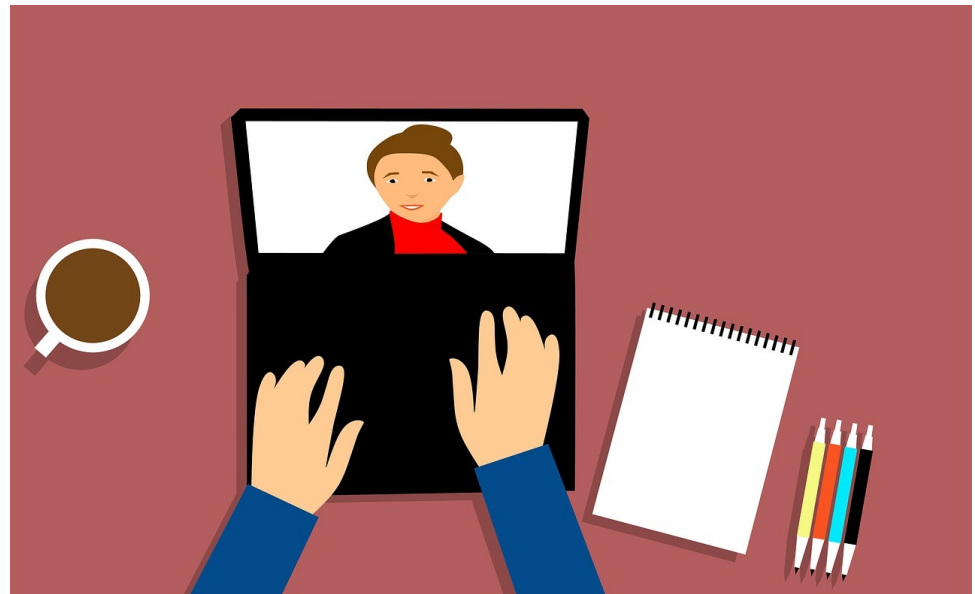
# Art Therapy + Distance Therapy

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Case examples

Session structure

Incorporating the materials



# Art Experiential

In order to understand how technology is used in therapy, let us reflect on our own professional and/or personal responses to technology and how we use it.

# Art Experiential

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Take the reflection you wrote before we began the presentation and create art in response to those thoughts and feelings.

Think about how you use technology in relationships, even today, right now.

What are the benefits for you?

What are your limitations?

*15 minutes for art-making.*

# Processing the art

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What was this like?

Meet in groups to share are work or write a reflection in response to your artwork.

*Processing 15 minutes*

# Closing Discussion

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Final comments:

- ▶ Always bring it back to the client needs and treatment goals
- ▶ Consider your population
- ▶ Research guidelines for ethical practice
- ▶ Assess your comfortability using technology as a therapist and with clients
- ▶ Get creative!

# Questions



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