

Expressive Arts Psychotherapy

Engaging in the Arts as
Original Health and Healing
Practices in Early Relational
Health



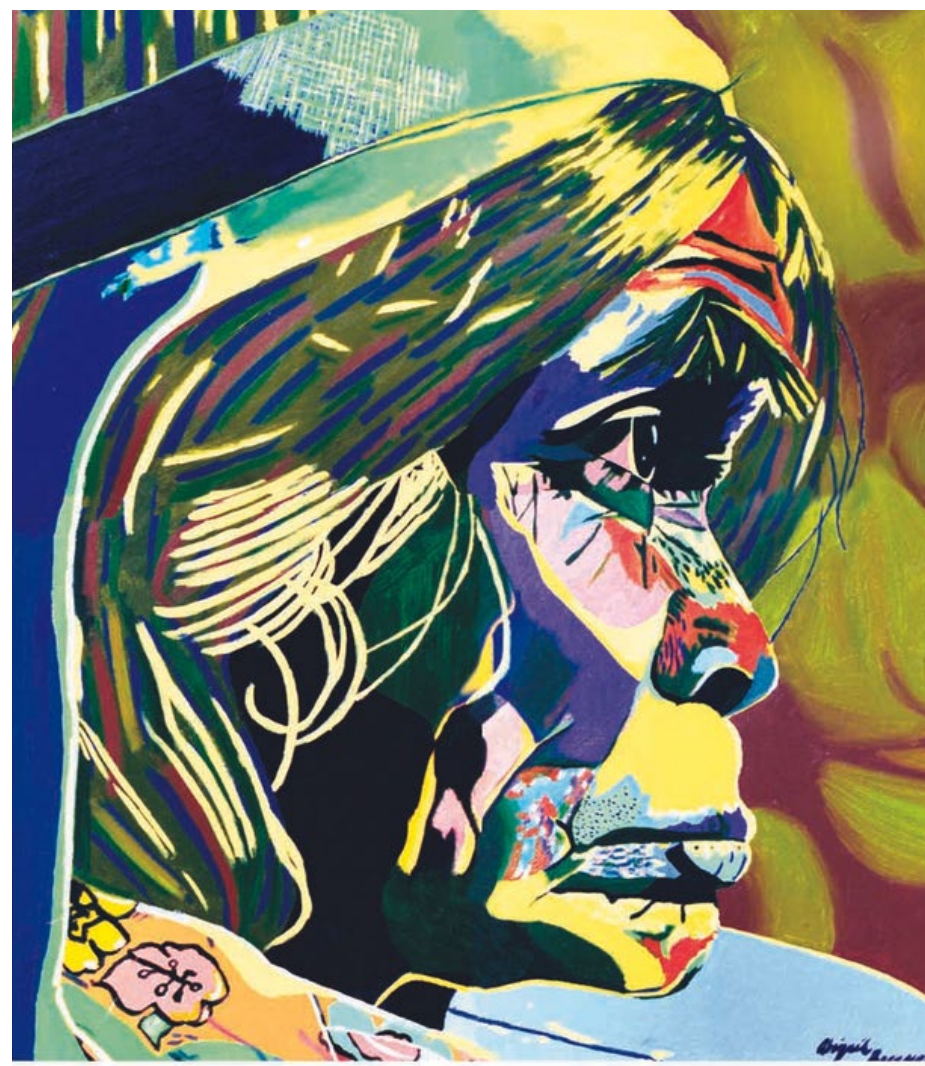
Exploring the Sun 2023

ROOTS: IN XOCHITL IN CUICATL

Lineage in the Arts



Early Childhood



Latency/Adolescence



Early Adulthood

Mi Abuela



Decolonizing Expressive Arts Therapy

No word for 'art' in Indigenous languages

Integral to our identity and lifeways

The arts as a sacred or holy practice and as a method of expressing/healing



Dreamtime

“Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders always stepped in to help interpret any visions or dreams that come to us.

If a family member who passed visits you in your dream, or another being visits you and they speak to you, you are taught to listen and pay attention. We are gifted dreams by Creator to help us understand our world, in a way that we can grasp it. Your ancestors are trying to show you something or tell you something, listen and pay attention. Seek the knowledge keepers out there to help you properly interpret your visions/dreams. Pay attention to your dreams - animals are telling you to do something or showing you something.” - The Heritage Manual: Developing a Competent Colville



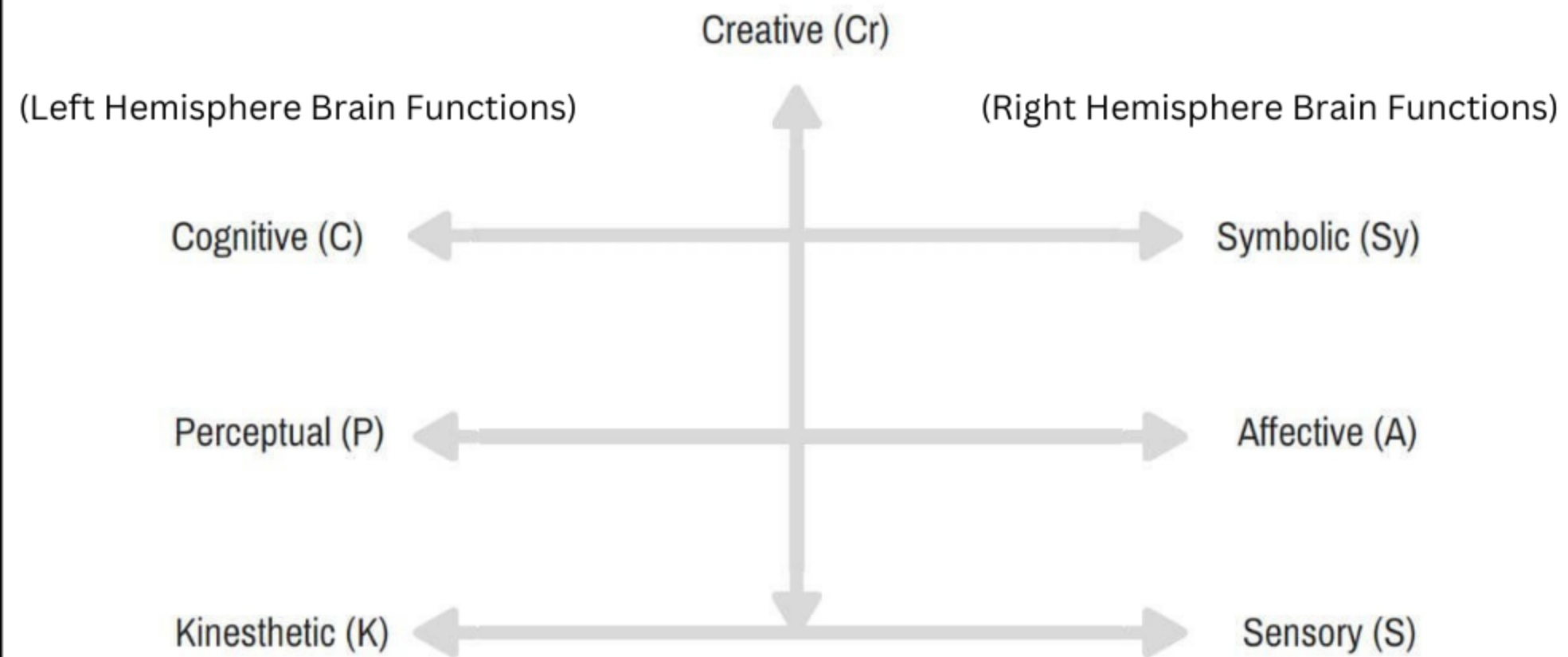


INTEGRATIVE Expressive Arts Therapy

Dance, music, drama, poetry, symbol/metaphor, dreamwork, imagery, storytelling, visual arts, expressive forms used intermodally.

- working with the arts in sequence
- using the arts simultaneously
- carefully transitioning from one art form to another.

The Expressive Therapies Continuum (Kagin & Lusebrink, 1978)



ETC Theoretical Model:

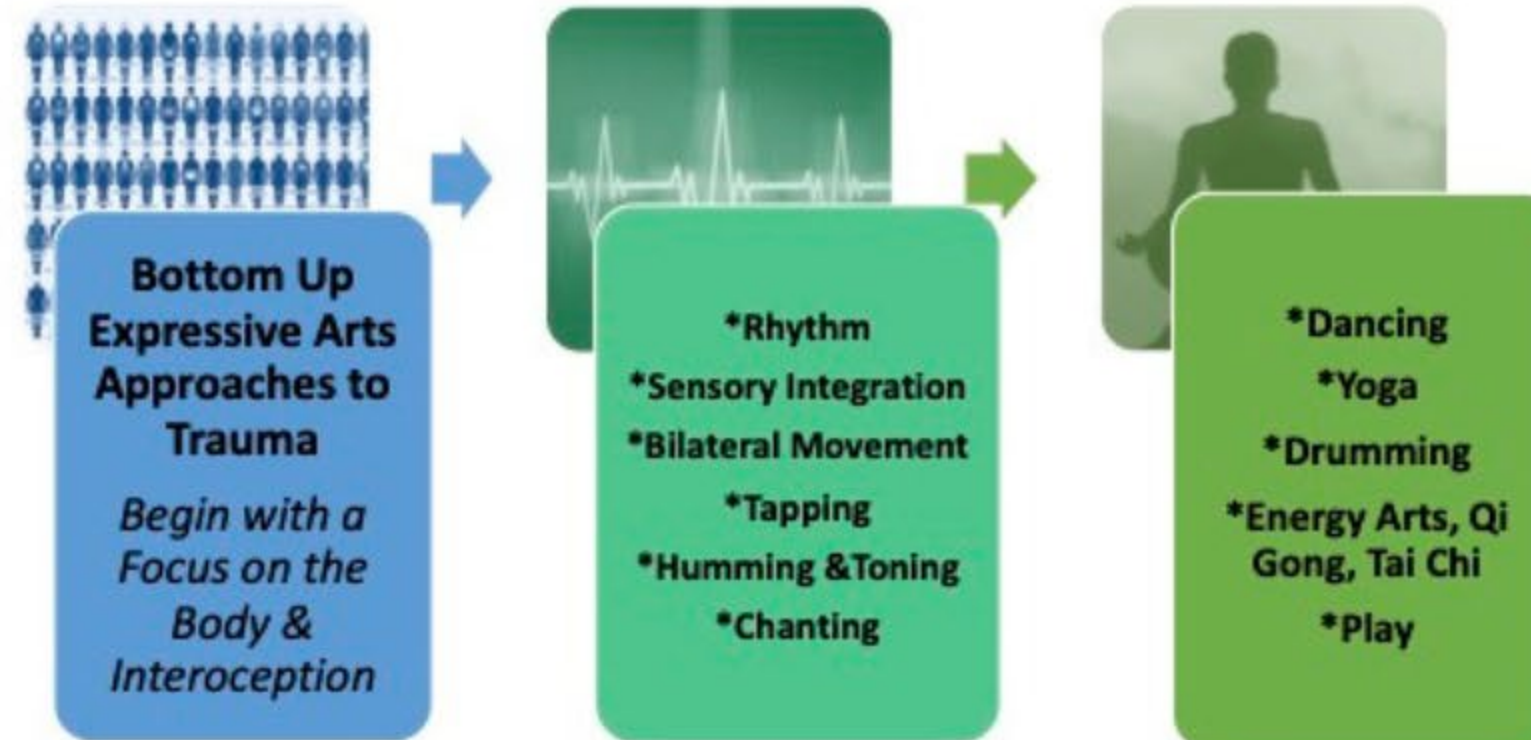
Explains how clients characteristically process information as they work with creative media to form images.

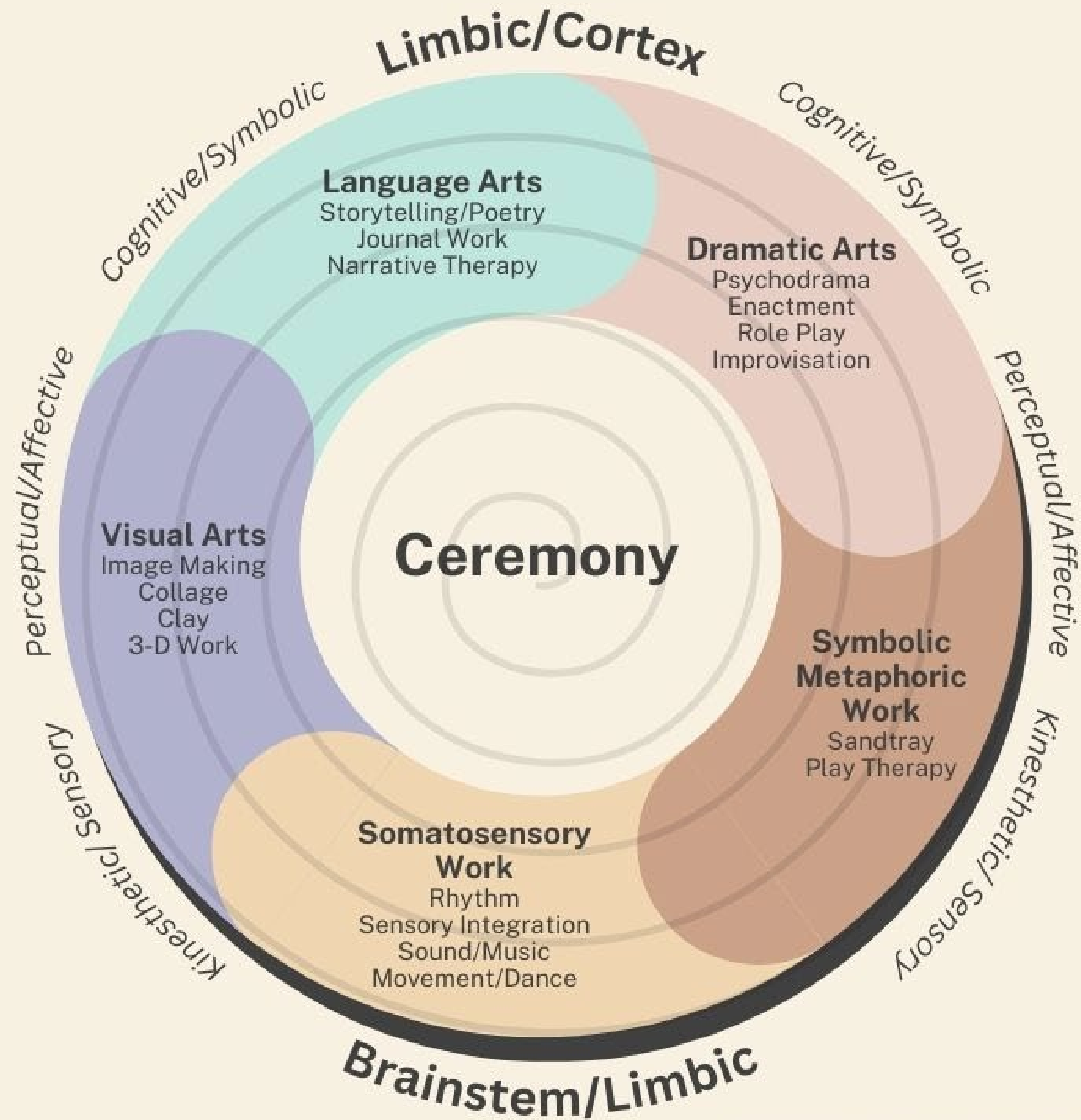
- **Take it in**
- **Organize it**
- **Process it**

Regulation through Expressive Arts

Adapted from *Trauma and Expressive Arts Therapy: Brain, Body, and Imagination in the Healing Process* | Cathy Malchiodi, PhD

This graphic illustrates the two basic concepts of “top down” and “bottom up” strategies to address traumatic stress using the expressive arts as a core approach. In applying arts-based approaches we always have a choice, depending on the goals and needs of the individual, to begin with a “brain-focus” or a “body-focus” to support repair and recovery.





Neurodevelopment and Arts Therapies

Age of Most Growth	Sensitive Brain Area	Critical Functions Being Organized	Primary Developmental Goal	Organizing experiences (examples)	Therapeutic and Healing Experiences (examples)
0-9 Months	Brainstem Kinesthetic/Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation of arousal Sleep and fear states, Regulation of sensory input Attunement Attachment Stress Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State regulation Primary attachment Flexible stress response Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhythmic and patterned sensory input (auditory, tactile, motor) Attuned, responsive caregiving Touch or Reiki 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self/Co-soothing arts experiences (water, soil, fabric, play with variety of textures/shapes) Rhythm (e.g. drumming, singing, rocking, swaying, patting) Body work, Energy work (traditional medicine) Ceremony and Ritual: Baby Welcoming and Name Giving Ceremonies (experiences of connection and belonging) Ceremonial Dances (baby wearing)/Sweatlodge/Tamazcalli
6 Months-2 Years	Diencephalon Midbrain Kinesthetic/Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of multiple sensory inputs Fine Motor Control Attunement Attachment Stress Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensory integration, Motor control Relational flexibility Attunement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More complex rhythmic movement Simple Narrative Emotional and Physical Warmth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self/Co-soothing arts experiences (water, soil, fabric, play with variety of textures/shapes) Rhythm (e.g. drumming, singing, rocking, swaying, patting) Learning skills via art and play Music and movement (crossing midline - hand clapping, drumming) Body work, Energy work (traditional medicine) Equine or animal interactions Repetitive lullabies Stories with repetitive rhythmic language Ceremony and Ritual: 4 Directions Ceremony
1 Year-4 Years	Limbic Perceptual/Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affect Regulation Relationships Pleasure Attunement Attachment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional regulation Empathy Affiliation Tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex Movement Narrative Social Experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play and play therapies (indoors and outdoors) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks, puppets for projection and relational play Arts for self-soothing, expression and skill building (art-making, dancing, music) Parallel Play Symbolic Play (Sandtray) Ceremonial Dances/Sweatlodge/Tamazcalli
3 Years-7 Years	Cortex Cognitive/Symbolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognition Executive Function Communication Social-emotional integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstract reasoning, Creativity Respect Moral and spiritual foundations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex Conversation Social Interactions Exploratory Play Solitude, Satiety, Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling, Story Listening, Narrative therapy Drama/ Role Play Cognitive-Oriented Behavioral Interventions Symbolic Play (Sandtray) Ceremony and Ritual - cultural rites of passage to increase tolerance of life-challenges' Age of Reason Ceremony (age 7)

Note: Based on the expressive therapies continuum (ETC) in Lusebrink (2010), Malchiodi (2012c), and Perry (2006)
Adapted from the Neurodevelopment and Arts Therapies, Creative Arts Therapy Approaches to Attachment Issues.

The Expressive Arts Therapy Room

Safety

- Introduction to the room
- Organization of Art Materials
- Communication: How to talk about the artwork
- Reinforcing expression not talent



The Expressive Arts Therapies

Dance/Movement Therapy
Kinesthetic/Sensory

Rhythm, Sound, Music Therapy
Kinesthetic/Sensory

Art Therapy
Sensory/Affective

Drama Therapy
Affective/Cognitive

Storytelling
Affective/Cognitive

Dance/Movement Therapy

Kinesthetic/Sensory

Dance/Movement Therapy

A psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process that furthers the emotional, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual and influences changes in feelings, cognition, physical functioning, and behavior.

Considerations

- In human development, movement, and touch underpin all the other senses.
- Our earliest experiences of movements and touch leave an imprint on the way we engage in relationships and environment interactions, from early attachment and throughout our lives
- Safety, predictability, nurturance, and attunement are principles of core regulation and can be established in therapeutic relationships through prosody and playful movement, and touch experiences. (Fearn,Troccoli, 2017)

Our earliest experiences of movements and touch leave an imprint on the way we engage in relationships and environment interactions, from early attachment and throughout our lives



**Neurosystems are designed to change
in response to repetitive activity.**



**Culturally Connected,
Relevant and
Meaningful Rhythmic
Repetitive **Music****



**Culturally Connected,
Relevant and
Meaningful Rhythmic
Repetitive **Movement****



**Storytelling through
imagery**

Rhythm, Sound, Music Therapy

Kinesthetic/Sensory

Music/Sound/Rhythm Therapy

Uses music perception, production, and reproduction to effect positive changes in the psychological, physical, cognitive, or social functioning of individuals with physical, behavioral, social, emotional, or educational challenges.

It enhances integration of sensation and emotions and supports self-regulation through arousal reduction, externalization, containment, and healthy attachment between the individuals in treatment.

Considerations

- Rhythm and musicality are contained in the very first relationship between the infant and the primary caregiver, providing the infant with a level of attunement and reciprocity that allows for healthy growth and development.
- Reparative experiences of empathic attunement through the use of music and rhythm can bring about change at a neuronal level where there has been relational trauma. (McGrath, 2017)



Infant-Directed Singing

**"To sing and hum while a child is in the womb."
Kalispel Tribal Elder**

Hyper-Prosodic Vocalizations

**"Mother sings to help her babies feel better."
Kalispel Tribal Elder**

A La Ru Ru - Traditional Mexican Lullaby



Acoustic Features and Emotional Impacts of Lullabies

**Sana Sana Colita de Rana - Traditional
Mexican Tending the Wound Song**



Temazcalli

House of Heat

Whole Family Participates

Medicine songs are sung to children that convey protection, love and guidance.



Art Therapy

Sensory/Affective

Art Therapy

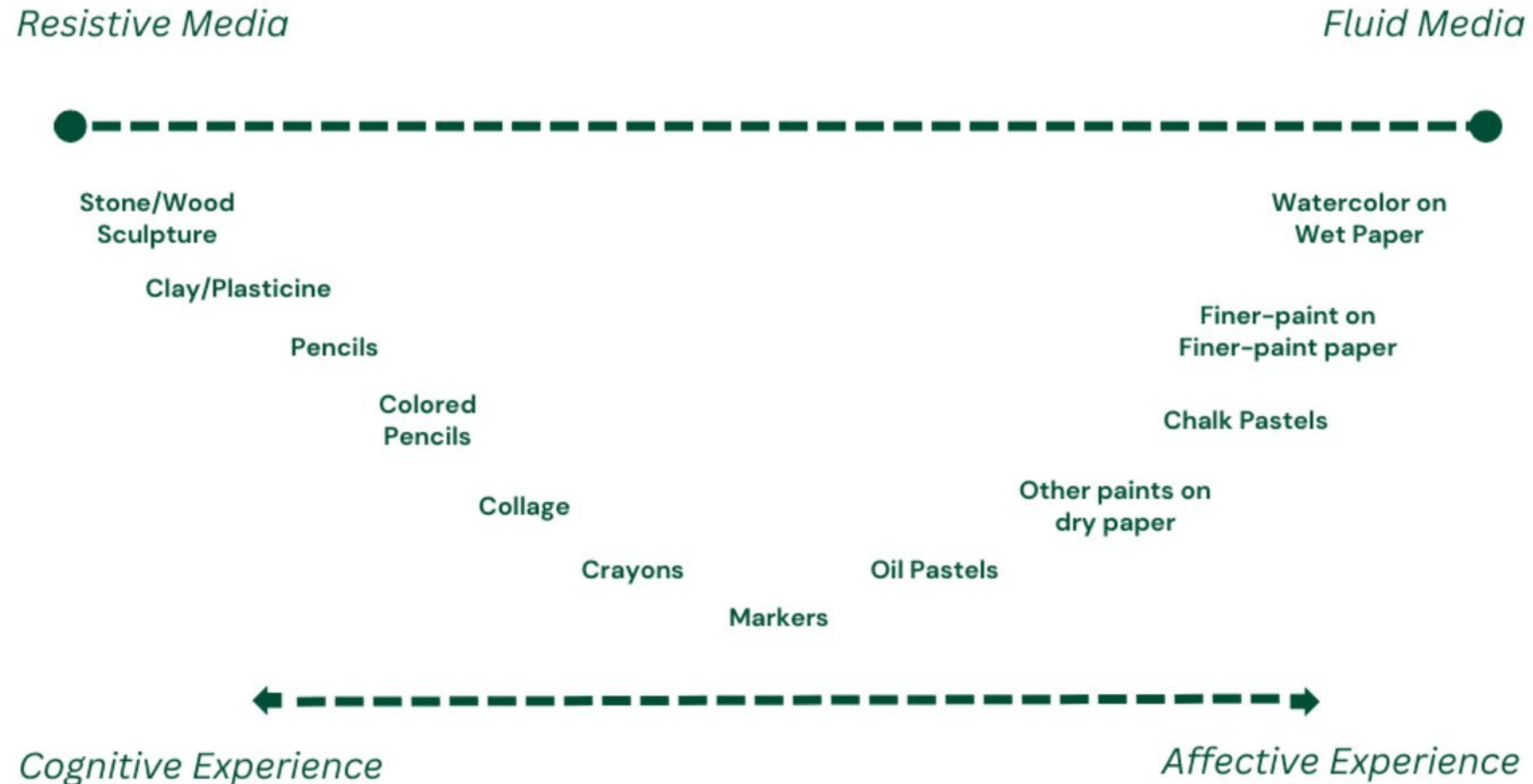
Purposeful use of visual art materials and media in intervention, counseling, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation: used with all ages, families, groups.

Considerations

- Art psychotherapy affords therapists opportunities to attune to clients and to gain limbic resonance with them.
- It is a means of self-expression, making visible the client's story of identity.
- It facilitates self-awareness and insight, making sense of experiences.
- It is an aid to emotional growth and development, helping clients articulate and name a range of emotions.
- It builds empowerment by allowing the client to exert control and gain mastery over artwork and by analogy, personal difficulties.
- Through the rhythmic use of materials with calming properties, it allows for somatosensory self-soothing.

Media Dimension Variables

(Kagin and Lusebrink 1978)





QUESTIONS FOR ART PROCESSING

CONSIDERATIONS IN METAPHORICAL/SYMBOLIC WONDERINGS



ENTRY POINT 1: THE BIRD

"I notice there is a bird in on the branch. What is the bird doing? Where is it looking toward?"

"If the bird were to turn his head the other way, what would he see?"

"When the bird is not on the branch, where is the bird?"

"If the bird could use words, what would he say?"

ENTRY POINT 2: THE TREE

"What kind of tree is this? There are red dots on the leaves, what are they?"

"It seems like there is something inside the tree. I wonder what that is?"

"What's it like for the tree to be exactly in the place it is?"

"If the tree could speak to the bird, what would it say to it?"

ENTRY POINT 3: THE ENVIRONMENT

"Is the bird alone or are there other animals or people around?"

"I notice a sun, what time of day is it and where is this tree located?"

"What is the bird thinking or feeling?"

"What's it like for the bird to be atop the tree?"

"If the bird could have anything and anyone else in his environment, what would it be?"

Drama Therapy

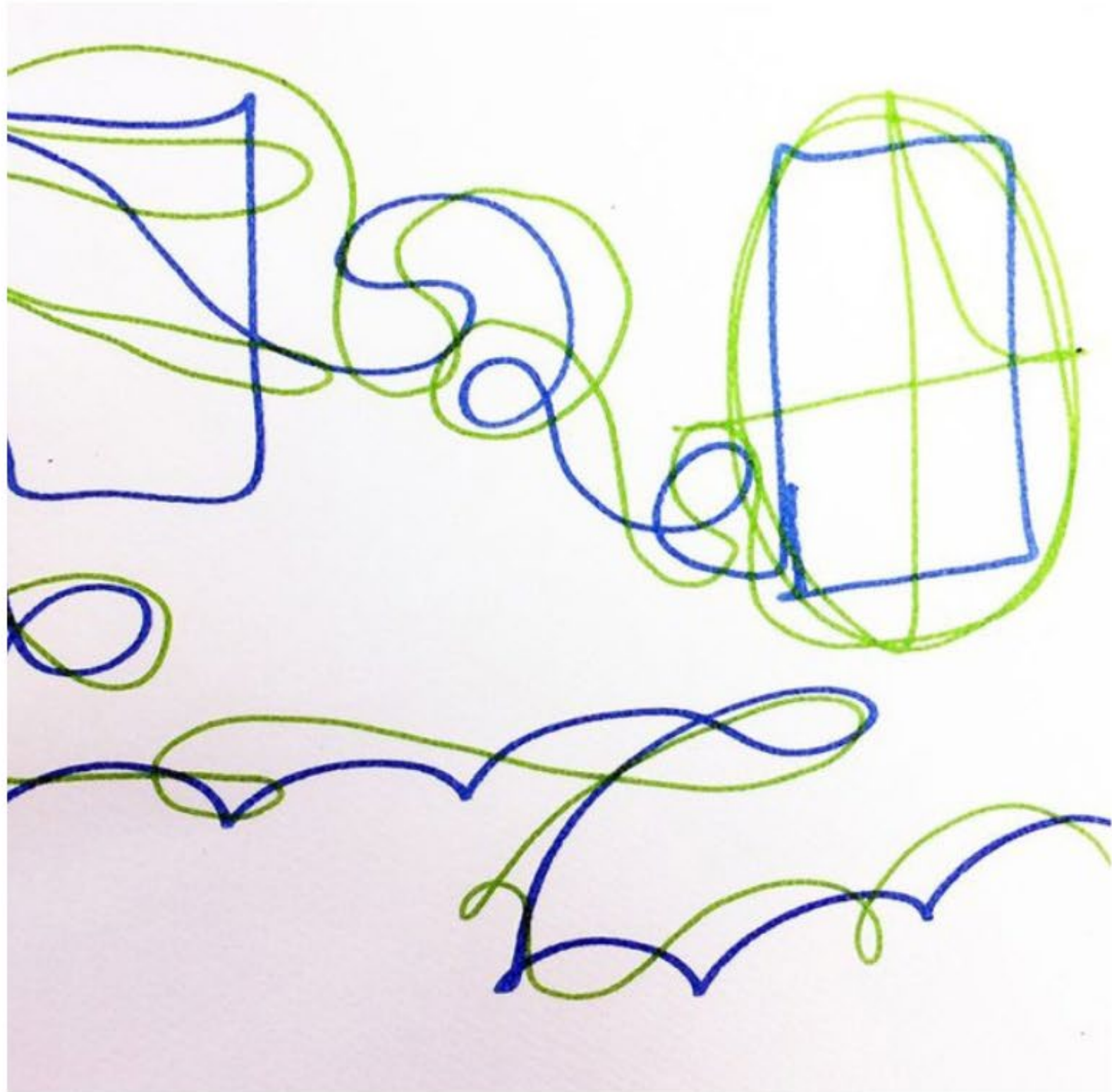
Affective/Cognitive

Drama Therapy

Defined as an active, experiential approach to facilitating change through storytelling, projective play, purposeful improvisation and performance. It uses the body as a medium, capitalizing on voice, prosody, facial expressions, and gestures to help individuals tell their stories and resolve problems, achieve catharsis, and strengthen ability to empathize with self and others.

Considerations

- Drama therapy emphasizes spontaneity, creative expression, and affect enhancement.
- Has the potential to access constricted energy and cause release, to oxygenate the body, and to allow for self-initiated personal momentum to lead the way into discovery and internal concerns.
- Safety and emotional distance of dramatic material will need to be continuously reassessed.





Storytelling/Poetry Affective/Cognitive

Story/Poetry/Biblio Therapy

Storytelling as a way to teach and heal is ancient. Stories in all cultures explain creation, recount journeys that overcome obstacles, offer teachings and lessons for individuals across the lifespan. The use of story/poetry/literature in therapy is its own discipline. Through these mediums, emotional distance from pain is created, emotions are more fully expressed than direct dialogue, and hope is instilled in relationships.

Considerations

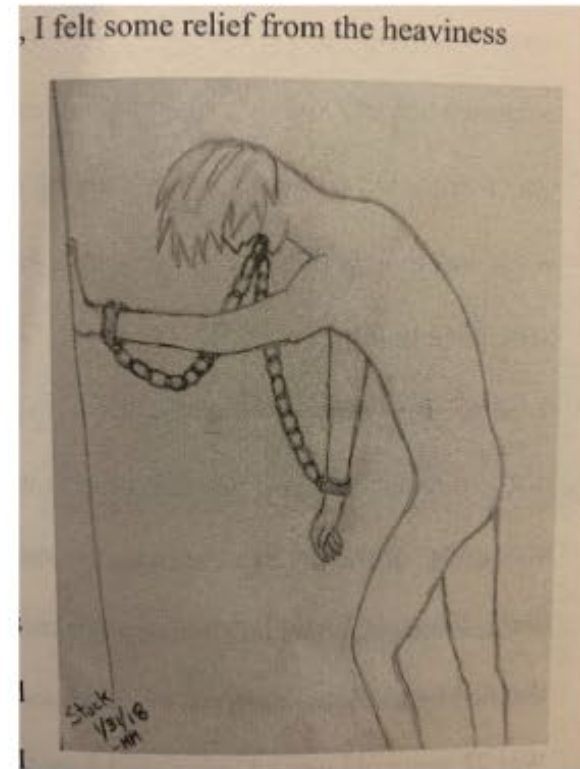
- Storytelling and narrative support the development of the limbic and cortical systems.
- Wordless storytelling precedes verbal storytelling.
- The high-functioning cortical system manages the limbic system by piecing together a coherent narrative, bringing integration.
- Choosing an intervention at this level assumes either that interventions have already targeted the lower brain regions or that the development of previous systems in the sequence had not been compromised.



2019



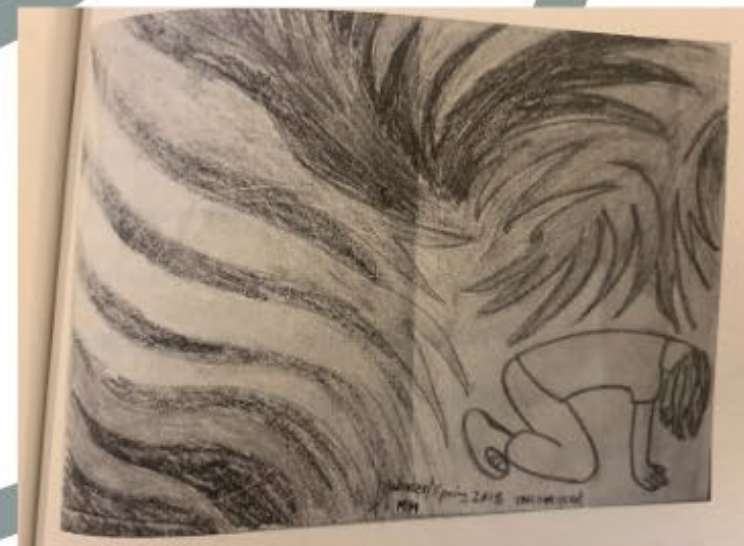
Fearful/Lost
12/2018



Stuck: 1/2018



Sub-Selves 2/2018



Incoming 12/2018

STUCK

"My body had always felt like a rather strange place to exist.

I couldn't see myself clearly and I felt...distortion. I began to feel my inner body for the first time. It was painful and overwhelming. I wanted to exist anywhere else except within myself."

SUB-SELVES

"I did my best to manage the turbulence of my inner world...I was fascinated and alarmed by the fragmentation of my psyche, and the many sub-selves that needed to be seen and heard... through journaling and reflecting on my drawings... little by little I found aspects of myself that were buried during my first 7 years of life..."

INCOMING

"I began to allow, feel and release emotions that were...subdued in what felt like a volcano about to erupt."

FEARFUL/LOST

"Damaged was caused by...fear, control, sexism, patriarchy, and anger...this led to decades of suppressed emotions...survival mode early in my childhood...I'm in physical pain..I am helpless...I expressed emotion and my father beat me...my soul left my body... I froze at two and a half years old."



2020

MOVEMENT AND DRAMA

“I learned that authentic emotional expression was no longer life threatening... I remembered how to be a human being by remembering how to feel. The art of practicing and acting my emotions allowed me to stay present and grounded enough to write a book about my experience...I needed to see the beauty in the complete embodiment of emotions, while staying aware of the experience. They are sacred and are honored. I was seen for who I was...all parts of me. I wanted to create change in myself, and by saving myself, I felt like I somehow saved the whole world.”

