# An Interview with Wendy Cleary about Art Therapy

**When did you decide to do art therapy?**

I had thought about it a long time before I decided to get certification. I’ve been certified for ten years. I was always an artist, which I found therapeutic.

**What are your qualifications?**

I don’t have a clinical license, but I do have a certification. I am not licensed to do in depth art therapy. However, I can use art as a way of altering negative behavior without going too deep in anlysis.

**What ages do you work with?**

All ages. Sometimes it depends on the workshop and how it’s designed. For example, I do workshops for women, for veterans at the VA Hospital. I have worked with children as part of another type of program.

**How do you advertise art therapy?**

Mostly through social media and word of mouth.

**What types of subjects do you use in therapy?**

Some subjects involve transforming negative thought to positive thought, working on self-esteem and self-confidence, and anxiety and stress.

A program called Splatter, where paint is splattered on a canvas, was one that I led. It was about the release of energy more than about the painting itself.

Another program called Zentangles is a great way to create art using your imagination. The Zentangle Method is an easy-to-learn, relaxing, and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. You create tangles with combinations of dots, lines, simple curves, S-curves and orbs. These simple shapes are the "Elemental Strokes" in all Zentangle art. These patterns are drawn on small pieces of paper called "tiles." They are called tiles because you can assemble them into mosaics.

One other exercise I use is to I have people look in a mirror and draw what they see. It’s very introspective and helps to lead to further conversation.

**What other ways do you use art therapy?**

I like to talk about what a person is doing as they create and ask why they did it that way.

**Why art?**

Sometimes talking about things doesn’t work. People can’t always find the right words. If they can draw it, more comes out and they are often surprised at the outcome. It’s a way of processing feelings.

**Who Should Consider Art Therapy?**

Art therapy can be used with regular therapy as an additional tool. However, you don’t need to be in therapy to enjoy creating art and to learn something about yourself. Everyone can use and benefit from art therapy.