

Book review

The CBT Art Activity Book

100 illustrated handouts for creative therapeutic work

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

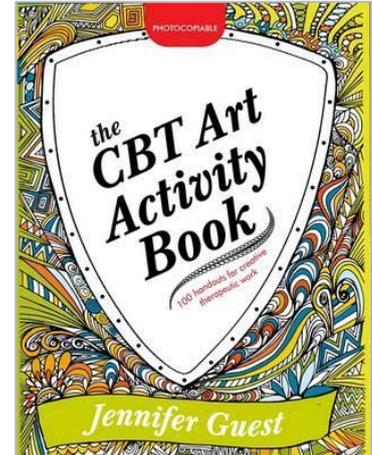
Author: Jennifer Guest

Year: 2015

Publisher: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, UK

ISBN: 9781849056656

Audience: Supporting Myself



Summary: Colouring activities accompanied by tailored worksheets to aid in the work of self-reflection in CBT therapy

Mindfulness colouring books are all the rage at the moment, so when I saw this book I was curious to see if it was different from others on the market. There are similarities, but the difference with *The CBT Art Activity Book* is that there are tailored worksheets to use in therapeutic situations with support by a qualified professional. Author Jennifer Guest notes this respectful and compassionate support from a professional is important as emotional disclosure can be challenging and leave you feeling vulnerable. Time needs to be committed to the therapy process, especially if you have been through a traumatic experience.

Guest has a background in fine arts and designed the worksheets herself, incorporating cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and art therapy principles, initially using them in her therapeutic work as a counsellor.

Are these therapies effective?

CBT has a solid research base, and art therapy is an emerging modality with limited high quality studies. That said, a 2015 review notes that art therapy has significant positive effects, such as a sense of personal achievement, expression of feelings, increased knowledge of self, future goals, and aiding relaxation. The results also highlight the need for a skilled therapist, and that art therapy may not be everyone's cup of tea due to the creative aspect.

Each worksheet has a visual design that can be coloured and a series of questions to prompt self-reflection, a skill which is key to the CBT process. Self-reflection is when you become more aware of how your thoughts and feelings affect your behaviour. Guest hopes readers will be inspired by the images and they will help people communicate visually.

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A tool for a therapeutic environment

The worksheets initially seem quite basic, but are intended as an additional tool within an existing therapy environment. Guest notes the worksheets provide an opportunity for people to aid and accelerate their personal learning by doing. They also give you another way to approach an issue you are working on.

While this workbook provides another tool for a practitioner to use with clients, how much it would get used totally depends on the client – not everyone is catching on to the colouring craze!

Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Resources Specialist at the Mental Health Foundation

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