



# **Expressive Therapist Self-Inquiry (ETSI)**

## **How did it come to life?**

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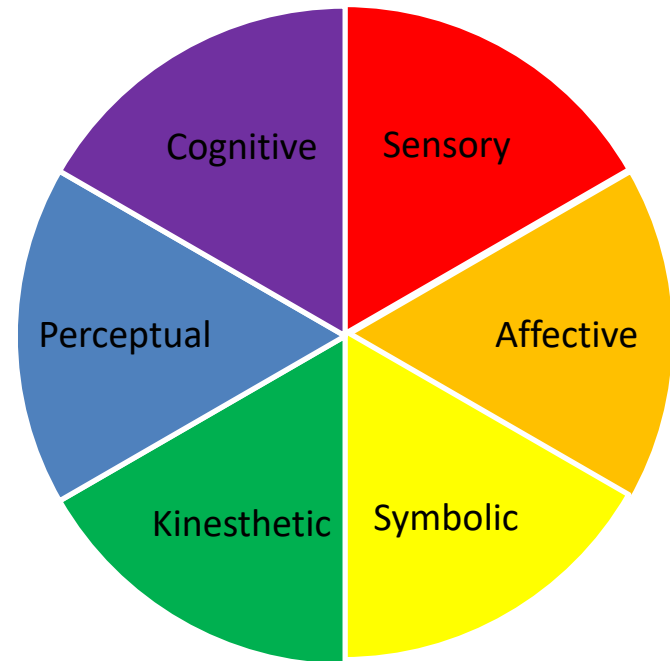
## SELF ASSESSMENT

Art therapists can be invited to assess themselves to see how their own preferences and aversions for materials and processes might affect art therapy

# The Art of Developing Distinct Professional Skills

Expressive therapists apply the ETC framework to guide and enrich the therapeutic process.

Art-making helps us explore the continuum, deepening self-awareness and professional growth.





## Art as a source of knowledge through the ETSI

Self-inquiry through art media is essential for expressive therapists.

*Ongoing exploration of feelings, attitudes, and reactions during and after sessions.*

Self-awareness through art making helps therapists understand how their personal experiences might influence.

- their therapeutic relationships
- and their choices of interventions

# Research



- The therapist-client relationship is essential for positive outcomes (Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000).
- Reflexivity and art-making help therapists explore their own biases and creative processes (Gavron, 2022).
- The ETC framework (Hinz et al., 2015) allows for personal reflection on artistic preferences and biases.
- The ETSI, presented by Hinz et al. (2015), guides therapists through reflective actions and self-awareness.
- Poon (2017) highlighted the role of art materials in the therapeutic relationship.
- White (2020) used an Indigenous paradigm to explore acculturation through this framework.
- Riccardi, Gingras, and Hinz (2024) researched the effectiveness of the assessment in promoting self-care and attunement.

# Attunement ETSI & ETC



# ETC Guided Process

**Therapeutic Alliance** forms the basis of a safe, supportive, and constructive supervision process.

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Using the ETSI can foster **creativity** in how creative therapists are encouraged to think about their work.

By **making art** about their experiences and responses to their work, creative therapists can gain deeper insights.

The ETSI aligns well with **a holistic** approach, as it considers the full spectrum of human experience and expression.

Therapists' role in **being aware** of their own reactions and biases, and how these can impact the therapeutic alliance.

# Artistic Self-Expression

A person wearing a blue jacket, white shirt, and light blue jeans is captured in a dynamic dance pose. They are standing on a paved surface, possibly a sidewalk, with their arms extended and one leg bent. The background features a large concrete bridge structure with multiple arches, and the underside of the bridge is visible, showing red metal supports. The scene is set outdoors during the day.

Strong relationships thrive on trust and open, honest communication.

As expressive therapists, we use creative forms—art, music, drama, or dance—to foster self-exploration and healing.

Clear communication is vital to repair disruptions in both therapeutic and supervisory relationship.

# Personal Growth and Professional Development

Creating art provides a space for both personal and professional growth.

The ETSI framework deepens our understanding of the ETC, helping to maintain a safe, supportive environment.

In this space, we can identify strengths, address weaknesses, and reflect on how values and beliefs shape therapeutic relationships.





## Ethical Guidance

Encourage reflection on feelings, thoughts, and reactions before and after therapy sessions, while guiding ethical decision-making.

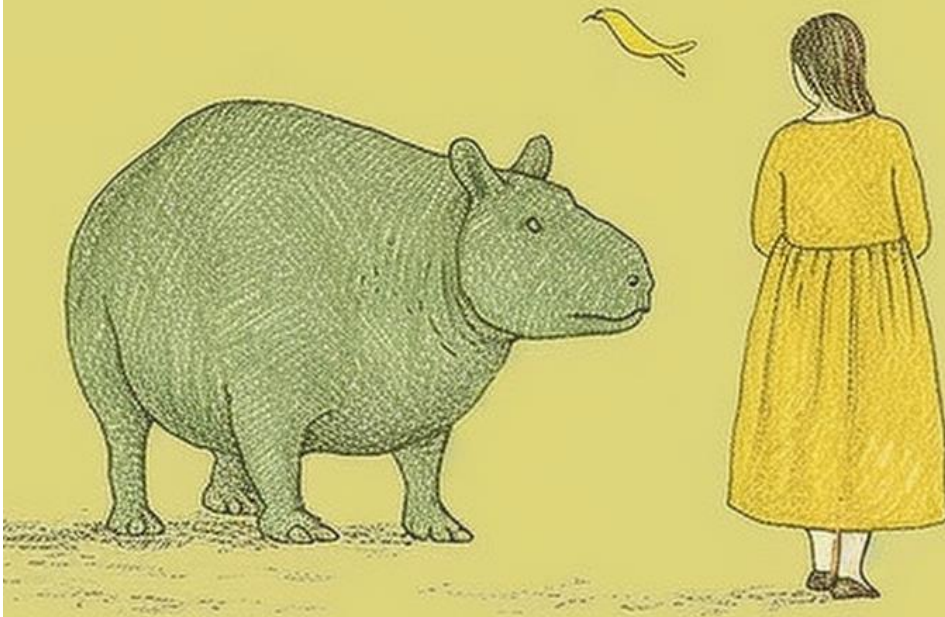
Art can explore sensitive cultural or social issues, where managing power dynamics becomes essential for fostering healing and repair.

# Promoting Self-Care

Encourage leveraging strengths and creativity while also addressing areas of challenge.

Encourage taking care of physical, emotional, and mental health.

Discuss strategies for managing stress, setting boundaries, and maintaining a balance between work and personal life.



# Being a Humble — Therapist

- A way of doing, but most importantly, a way of being.
- The therapeutic relationship is a genuine connection, often charged with emotion.
- Therapists must embrace the unknown, continually questioning themselves and their assumptions about clients.
- The creative process and artwork hold mystery, revealing themselves in their own time (Duschastel, 2022).
- Humility is key in addressing therapeutic ruptures.





Create an Image



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# ETSI

Evaluate the integrative physical, emotional, and intellectual structures of individuals and their artistic experiences, based on the ETC theory.

The ETSI uses a variety of artistic media, from fluid to highly resistive and culturally sensitive, to facilitate free art tasks within an artistic practice.

Choices of media, paper sizes, and tasks help expressive therapists assess preferred methods of information processing, including overuse, underuse, and blocked or disconnected functions of the ETC.

For creative arts therapists, supervisors, and students, being conscious of their creative process is important.

This awareness helps organize therapeutic assessments and overcome personal bias.

It fosters self-awareness and provides guidance.

The focus of the assessment includes:

- Interaction with the media
- Preferred medium and aversions
- Style of the final product
- Narrative evaluation



# ETSI for Self-Care

Framework for investigating the expressive therapist's creative process and the supervisory relationship

Uncover the client's needs and therapist's role

Offers suggestions on which level of functioning might be further explored, which level fosters creative liveliness, and which media should be experienced further

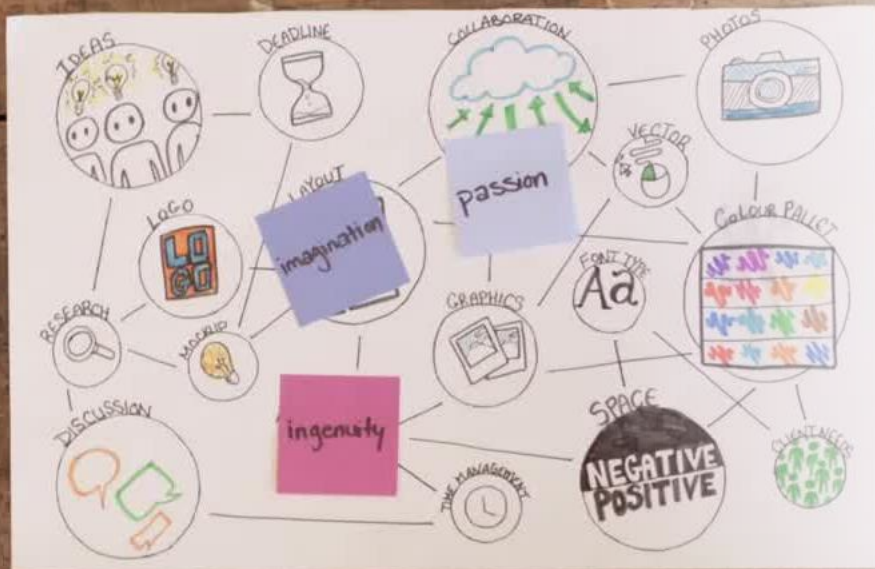
Encourage artist therapists to master unused techniques, experiment with unfamiliar materials, and forge a multi-layered understanding of the ETC

Can provide a framework for self-exploration

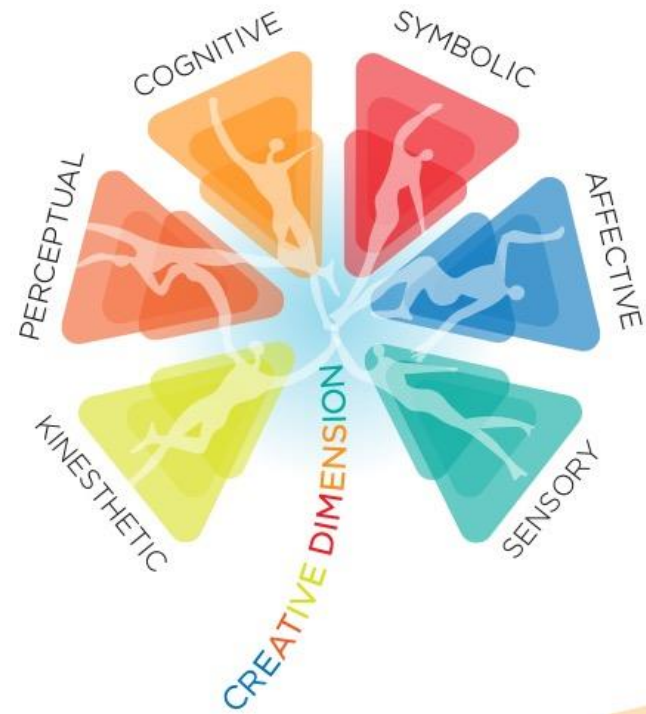


# Self- Assessment

Complete ETC self-assessment in relation to the artwork created



## EXPRESSIVE THERAPIST SELF-INQUIRY SCALE



# GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURE

The Expressive Therapist Self-Inquiry Scale (ETSI) evaluates the physical, emotional, and intellectual integrative structure of the human and the artistic experience. It is grounded in the theory of the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC).

The ETSI involves using a range of artistic media, from very fluid to highly resistive, from traditional fine arts to non-traditional and culturally sensitive, to create free art tasks in the scope of an artistic practice.

Choices of media, paper sizes, canvases and tasks aid expressive therapists in assessing their preferred methods of information processing: overused, underused, and blocked or disconnected ETC component functions.

When working with clients or supervisees, it is important to better understand how we function (ETC levels) in relation to the other – this understanding can become the road to the therapeutic alliance.

## **1. The expressive therapist chooses materials and completes a free art task from:**

- a) A continuum of media that have been arranged from the highly resistive on one side to very fluid on the other end.
- b) A selection of paper or other canvases in different sizes, colors, and thicknesses.
- c) Art mediators such as paintbrushes and sculpting tools.

### **Selecting the suitable art medium for each task or a combination of media:**

- |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| - Painting Materials with Mediator: watercolor on wet paper, acrylic, tempera paint, etc.                               | - Sculpting Materials: wood carving, stone carving, etc.                                                                                                                       |
| - Painting Materials with no Mediator: finger paint, foot printing, body stamping, etc.                                 | - Textile Art: weaving, knitting, sewing, crochet, and tailoring, as well as the tools employed (looms and sewing needles).                                                    |
| - Drawing Materials with Mediators: color pencils, markers, wax colors, pencils, wood burning tools (pyrography), etc.  | - Performing art: film, video, photographic and installation-based artworks through which the action of artists, performers or the audience is conveyed.                       |
| - Drawing Materials with no Mediator: chalk pastels, oil pastels, fine charcoals, etc.                                  | - Natural Art: ceremonial objects, land art, contemplation of nature, etc.                                                                                                     |
| - Modeling Materials with or without Mediators: modeling clay, air-dry clay, polymer clay, plasticine, etc.             | - Digital Technology: use of images, sound animation, video, websites, or gallery installations. Computer generated, scanned, or drawn images using a tablet and a mouse, etc. |
| - Assembling Materials: collage, mobile, installation, wood, beads, shells, corn kernels, bark, antlers, feathers, etc. |                                                                                                                                                                                |

- 2. The time for the completion of the works of art can last from a few minutes to an entire session..**
- 3. Video recording or/and photographing art materials interactions and other processes are suggested.**
- 4. Use the ETSI Assessment Form with journaling to record an art-making session.**
- 5. You can then compare the artistic process and product of the day to your typical preferences and aversions.**

# EXPRESSIVE THERAPIST SELF-INQUIRY SCALE

## PLEASE RATE YOUR ARTISTIC PROCESS AND PRODUCT TODAY

INDICATE YOUR CHOICE FOR EACH ITEM FROM 1 (MINIMUM) TO 5 (MAXIMUM)

<b>KINESTHETIC</b> Vigorous Movement / Release of Energy	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SENSORY</b> Involvement with Sensual Aspects of Materials	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b> Involvement w/ Formal Elements of Artistic Expression	1	2	3	4	5
<b>AFFECTIVE</b> Accessed and/or Expressed Emotion	1	2	3	4	5
<b>COGNITIVE</b> Effortful or Linear Thinking was Involved	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SYMBOLIC</b> Symbolic Content or Intuitive Thought was Important	1	2	3	4	5
<b>CREATIVE</b> Experienced Satisfaction of Self-Expression	1	2	3	4	5

INDICATE YOUR CHOICE FOR EACH ITEM FROM 1 (NOT TRUE) TO 5 (VERY TRUE)

<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK COMPLEXITY</b> I had to keep a list of instructions in mind	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK STRUCTURE</b> I had to make a specific art product	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK PROPERTIES</b> The media I used was fluid and flowing	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF REFLECTIVE DISTANCE</b> I was able to step back and think about my process	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR USE OF MEDIATORS</b> The need for brushes or tools revealed in the task completion	1	2	3	4	5

# EXPRESSIVE THERAPIST SELF-INQUIRY SCALE

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR **TYPICAL PREFERENCE FOR/AVERSION TO THE ARTISTIC PROCESSES**  
(WHAT DOES YOUR RECENT PORTFOLIO LOOK LIKE):

INDICATE YOUR CHOICE FOR EACH ITEM FROM 1 (MINIMUM) TO 5 (MAXIMUM)

<b>KINESTHETIC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Vigorous Movement / Release of Energy					

<b>SENSORY</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Involvement with Sensual Aspects of Materials					

<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Involvement with Formal Elements of Artistic Expression					

<b>AFFECTIVE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Accessed and/or Expressed Emotion					

<b>COGNITIVE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Effortful, Linear or Analytical Thought					

<b>SYMBOLIC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Symbolic or Metaphorical					

<b>CREATIVE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Experienced Satisfaction of Self-Expression					

INDICATE YOUR CHOICE FOR EACH ITEM FROM 1 (NOT TRUE) TO 5 (VERY TRUE)

<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK COMPLEXITY</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I had to keep a list of instructions in mind					

<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK STRUCTURE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I had to make a specific art product					

<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK PROPERTIES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The media I used was fluid and flowing					

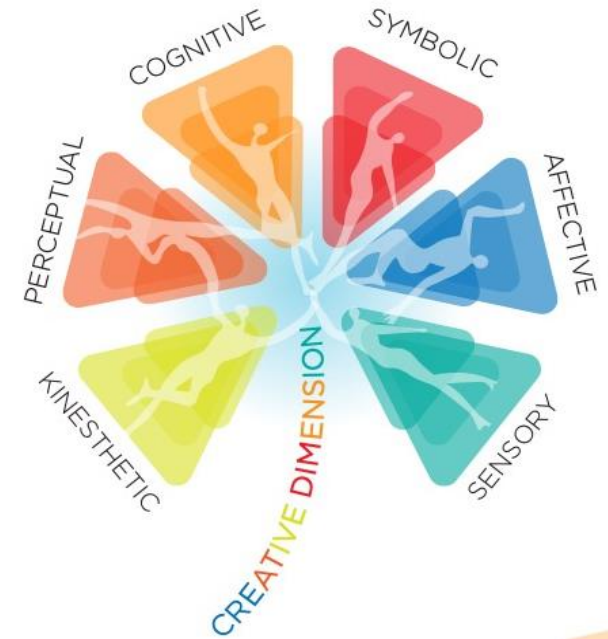
<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF REFLECTIVE DISTANCE WHEN CREATING</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I was able to step back and think about my process					

<b>PLEASE RATE YOUR USE OF MEDIATORS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The use of brushes or tools in the task completion					

# EXPRESSIVE THERAPIST SELF-INQUIRY SCALE

## LEARNING FROM THE ARTWORK CREATED: SELF-REFLECTION ON STUDIO AND PRACTICE

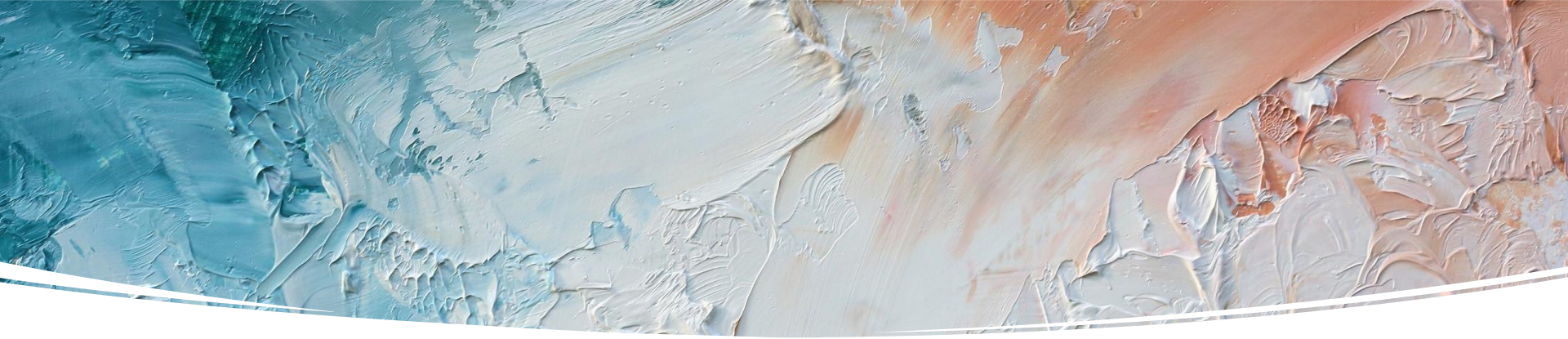
1. What did I learn from my expressive experience in relation to who I am?
2. What do my preferences and aversions tell me about my expressive practice?
3. Which materials are missing in my studio or sessions?
4. With which unfamiliar materials/techniques should I experiment further?
5. How does my adaptability demonstrate itself in my typical practice? How did it demonstrate itself today?
6. What will I keep in mind as I formulate future art therapy interventions?
7. What materials, if any, resonate with me due to my cultural background?
8. If my preferences/aversions are inflexible, what potential ruptures, could emerge in the therapeutic relationship?  
How will I address repairs?"
9. What will I need to keep in mind when developing culturally appropriate collaborative goals, interventions, and relationship?
10. What did I learn from the comparing my typical practice with today's practice?



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A source of knowledge about the use of art materials in the therapeutic relationship.

A tool to develop awareness of the therapeutic relationship.

Can serve as an implicit and multidimensional source of knowledge.

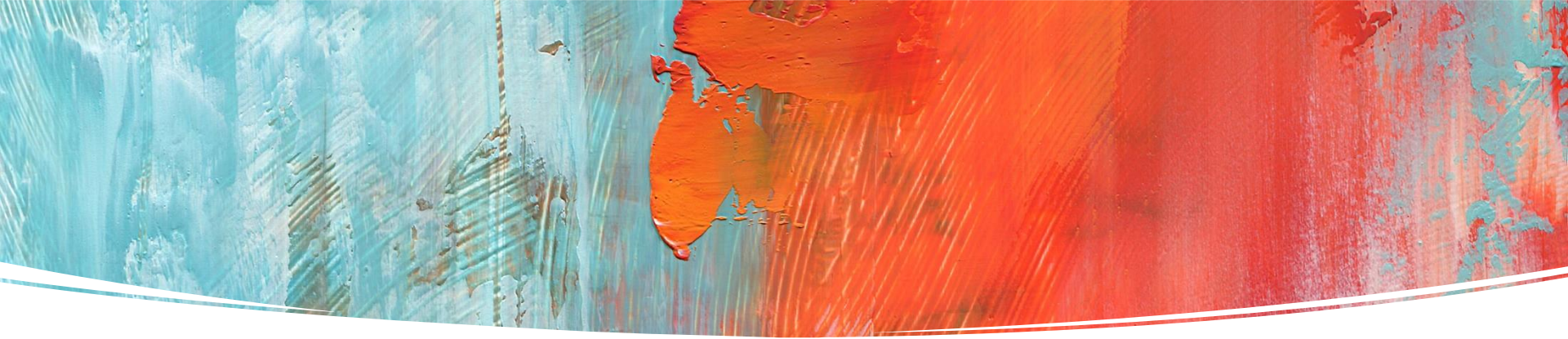
Allows art therapists to explore key issues in the therapeutic studio.

Examines their experiences with diverse artistic tasks.

Promotes an enriched life through the artistic process.

Ensures effective use of all ETC components by a balanced therapist.

## Therapeutic Implications: Research



The way we create art mirrors how we navigate life.

Expressive therapists who haven't created art can use the ETSI as a reminder.

Filming ourselves during art-making helps observe our interactions with materials.

Recognize aversions to materials and address them using ETSI questions to restore our connection to art.

Illuminating the theoretical aspects of artistic experience can enhance the artistic process.

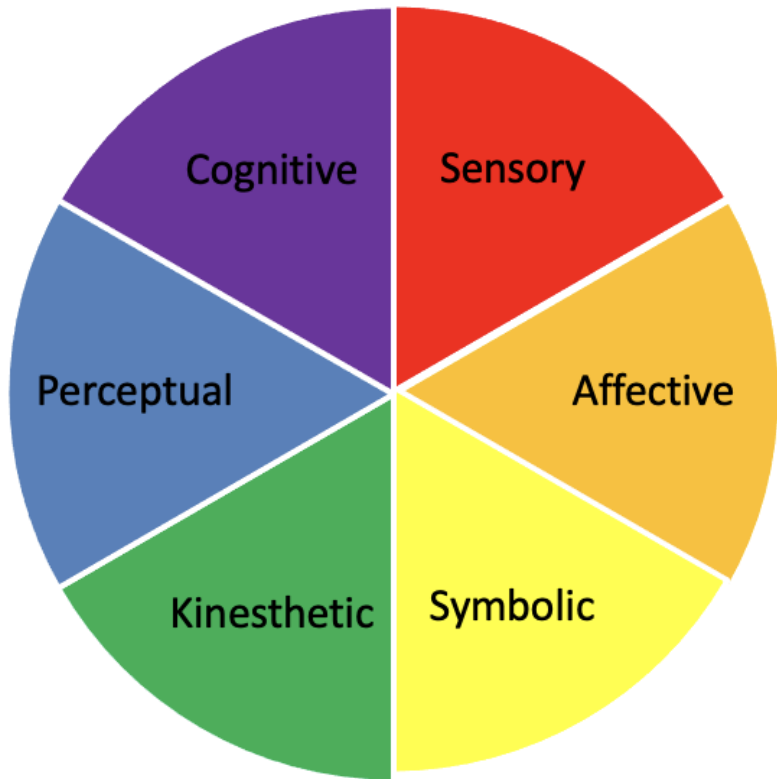
This deeper understanding facilitates a more informed and reflective practice in art therapy.

## Feedback on the Assessment Experience

# Please Explore Expressive Therapist Self-Inquiry Scale



<https://imagesetc.ca/expressive-therapist-self-inquiry-for-self-care-and-community-care/?lang=en>



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## Conclusions

We are “assessing” ourselves, our clients and our supervisees all the time !

This method can help us be more proactive in strengthening the therapeutic alliance.

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