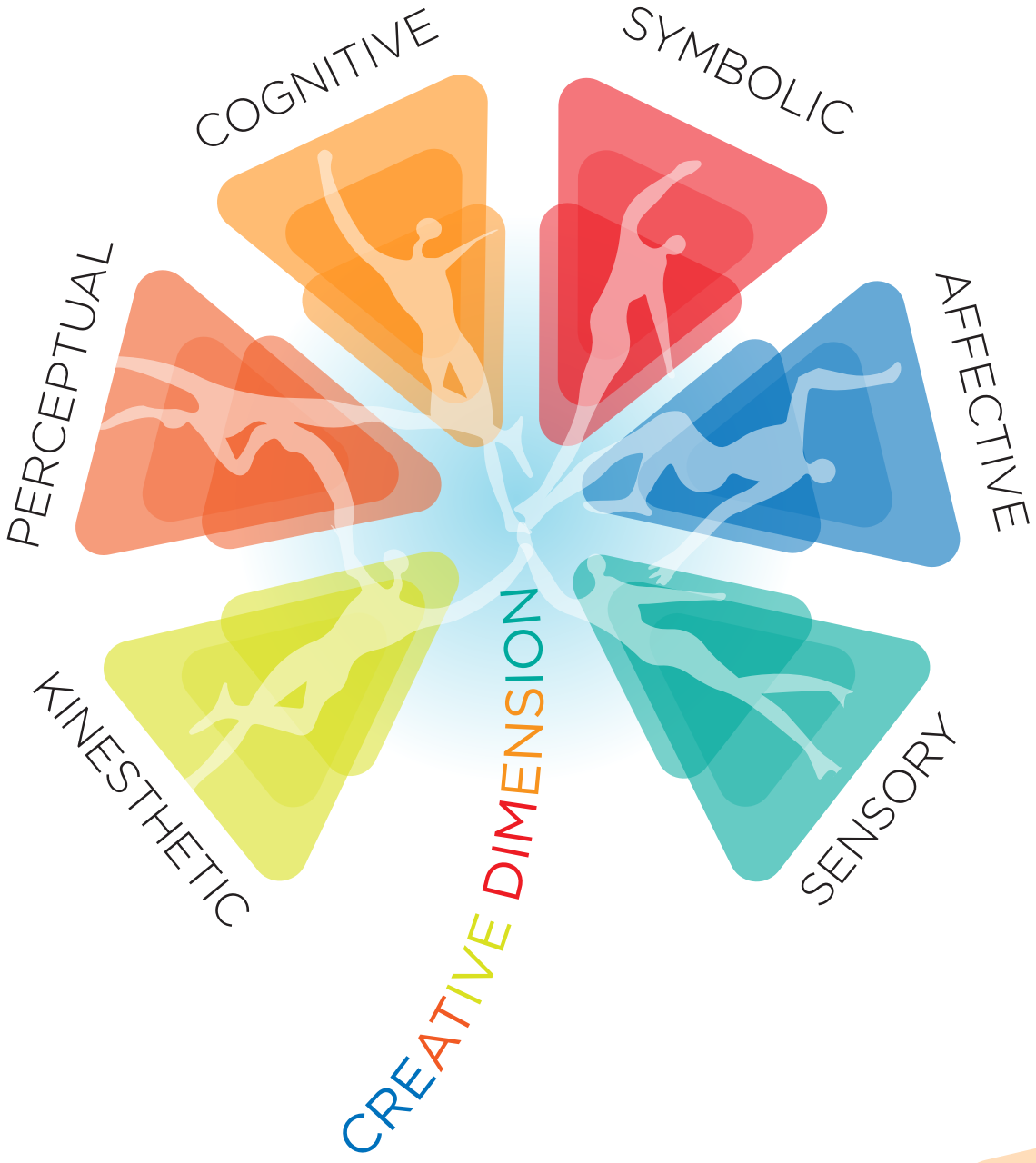
EXPRESSIVE THERAPIST SELF-INQUIRY SCALE



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 based on the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC) framework, created by art therapists Vija Lusebrink and Sandra Kagin in 1978, and later expanded by Lisa Hinz in 2009 and in 2019.

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.
   - Painting Materials with no Mediator: finger paint, foot printing, body stamping, etc.
   - Drawing Materials with Mediators: color pencils, markers, wax colors, pencils, wood burning tools (pyrography), etc.
   - Drawing Materials with no Mediator: chalk pastels, oil pastels, fine charcoals, etc.
   - Modeling Materials with or without Mediators: modeling clay, air-dry clay, polymer clay, plasticine, etc.
   - Assembling Materials: collage, mobile, installation, wood, beads, shells, corn kernels, bark, antlers, feathers, etc.
   - Sculpting Materials: wood carving, stone carving, etc.
   - Textile Art: weaving, knitting, sewing, crochet, and tailoring, as well as the tools employed (looms and sewing needles).
   - Performing art: film, video, photographic and installation-based artworks through which the action of artists, performers or the audience is conveyed.
   - Natural Art: ceremonial objects, land art, contemplation of nature, 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.

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)

	1	2	3	4	5
KINESTHETIC Vigorous movement / arousal of energy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SENSORY Involvement with sensual aspects of materials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PERCEPTUAL Involvement w/ increased engagement with the external environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
AFFECTIVE Accessed and/or expressed emotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
COGNITIVE Problem-solving or linear thinking was involved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SYMBOLIC Symbolic content or intuitive thought was important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CREATIVE Experienced satisfaction of self-Expression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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

	1	2	3	4	5
PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK COMPLEXITY I liked having multiple steps to follow in the instructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK STRUCTURE I liked having the freedom to create anything I wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR MEDIA PROPERTIES The media I used was fluid and flowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PLEASE RATE YOUR LEVEL OF REFLECTIVE DISTANCE I was able to reflect during the art experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PLEASE RATE YOUR USE OF MEDIATORS The use of brushes or tools separated my skin from the art media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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)

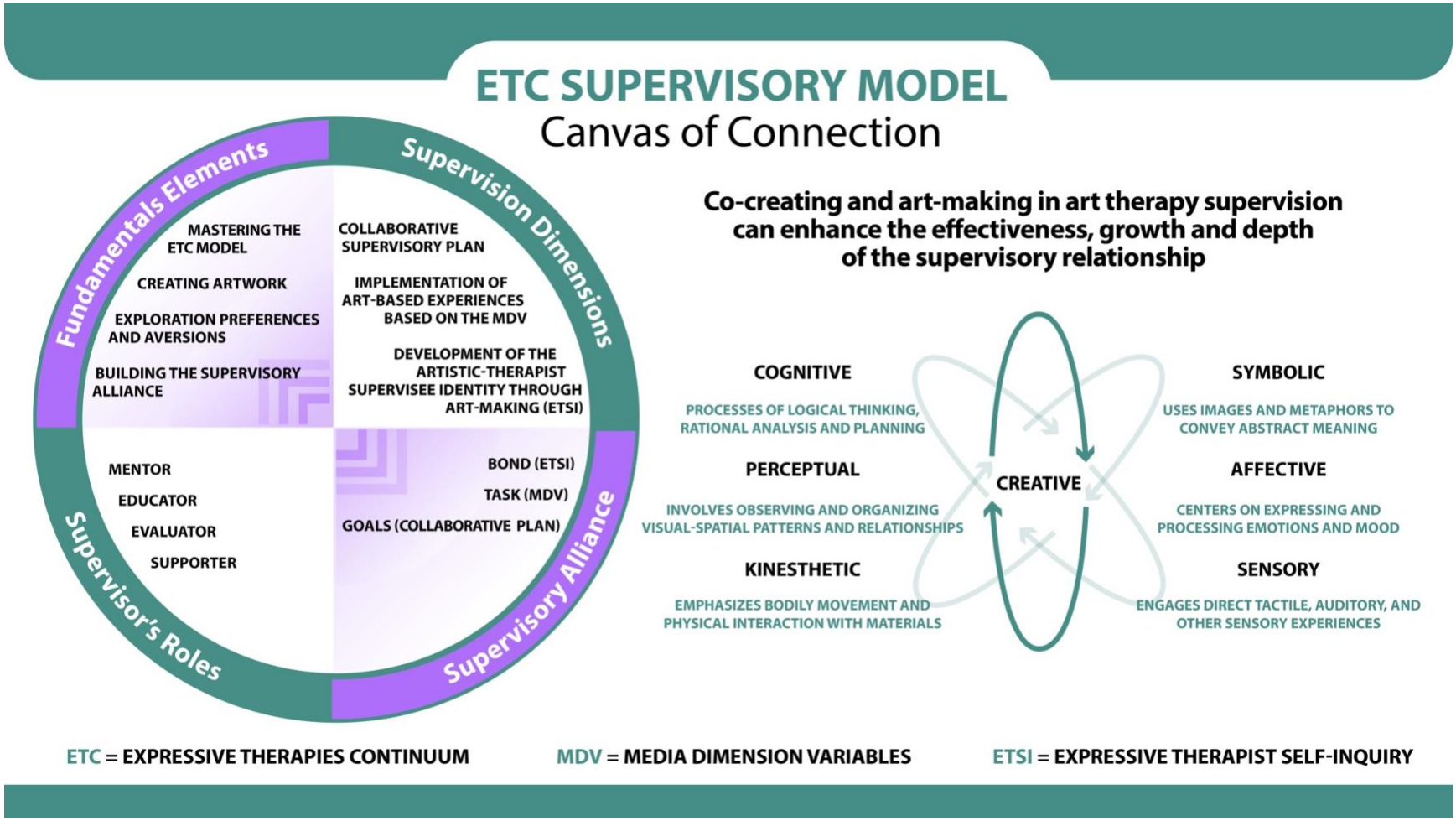
	1	2	3	4	5
KINESTHETIC Vigorous movement / arousal of energy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SENSORY Involvement with sensual aspects of materials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PERCEPTUAL Involvement w/ increased engagement with the external environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
AFFECTIVE Accessed and/or expressed emotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
COGNITIVE Problem-solving or linear thinking was involved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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INDICATE YOUR CHOICE FOR EACH ITEM FROM 1 (NOT TRUE) TO 5 (VERY TRUE)

	1	2	3	4	5
PLEASE RATE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR TASK COMPLEXITY I liked having multiple steps to follow in the instructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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PLEASE RATE YOUR USE OF MEDIATORS The use of brushes or tools separated my skin from the art media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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?



Note: ETC = Expressive Therapies Continuum; MDV=Media Dimension Variables; ETSI (Expressive Therapist Self-Inquiry

Riccardi, M., Hinz, L. D., Gingras, G., Nan, J. K., & Gotshall, K. (2026). Canvas of connection: An Expressive Therapies Continuum arts-based supervision approach. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *97*, 102411. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2025.102411

FUNDAMENTALS ELEMENTS			
Mastering the ETC Model	Creating Artwork with Supervisees	Exploring Preferences and Aversions	Building the Supervisory Alliance
SUPERVISION DIMENSIONS			
Collaborative Supervisory Plan	Implementation of Art-Based Experiences based on the MDV	Development of the Artistic-therapist Supervisee identity through artmaking (ETSI)	
SUPERVISOR'S ROLES			
Mentor	**Educator**	**Evaluator**	**Supporter**
Navigating art modalities	Teaching the ETC	Assessing therapeutic knowledge	Supporting creative growth

Notes:_____

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Processes of Logical Thinking, Rational Analysis, and Storytelling

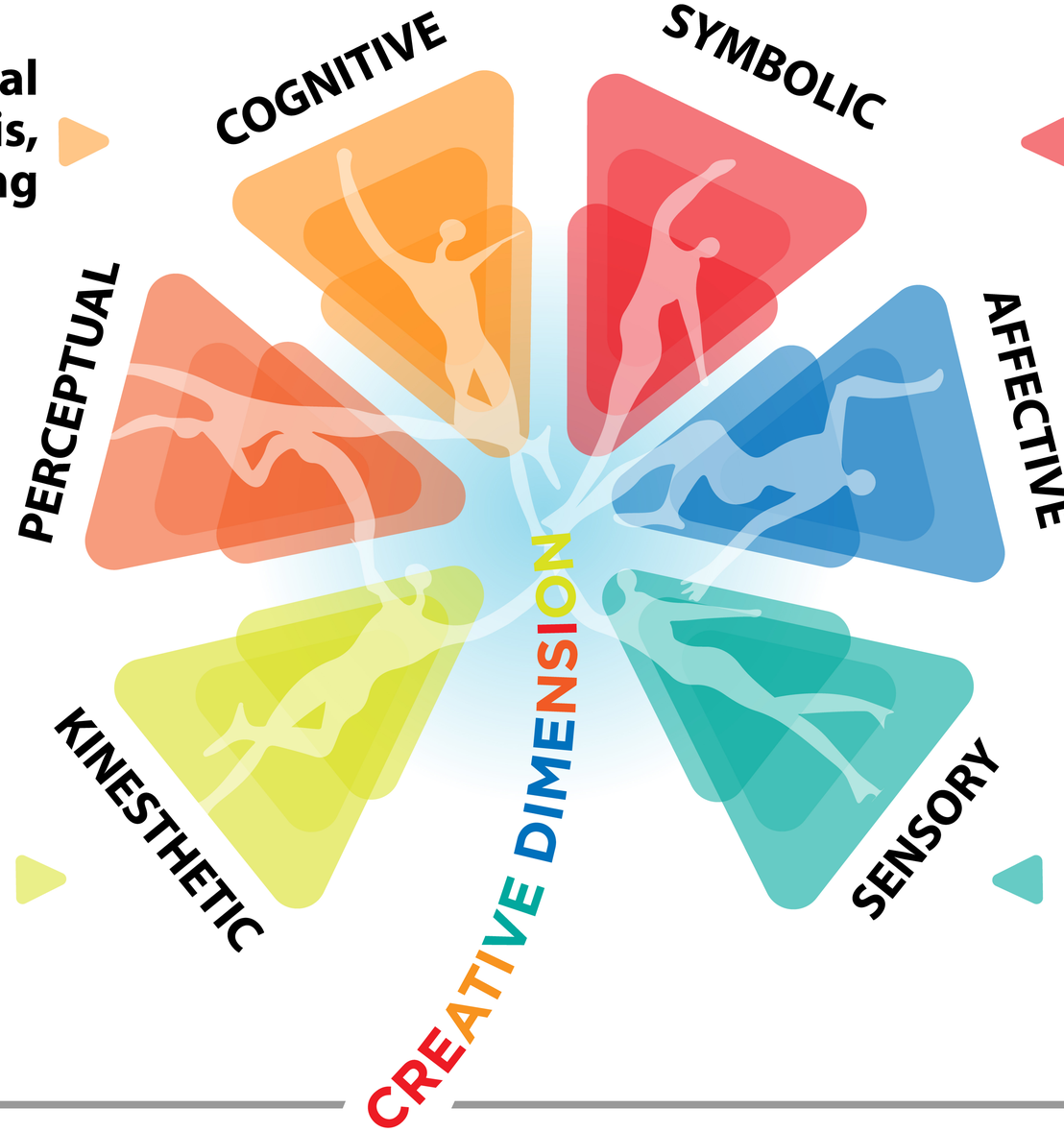
Uses Images and Metaphors To Convey Abstract or Personal Meaning

Involves Observing and Organizing Visual-Spatial Patterns and Relationships

Centers on Expressing and Processing Emotions and Mood

Emphasizes Bodily Movement and Physical Interaction with Materials

Engages Direct Tactile, Auditory, and Other Sensory Experiences



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