



art soul

Creative therapies have become an effective way to treat wounds that medicine just can't reach. By LUCILLE KEMP

art therapy

what it is... Art therapy gives the child a chance to express and explore their thoughts and feelings through producing their own artwork. Using art as a means of communication and self-expression is less threatening than using just words. The child's artwork forms the focus of discussions between the child and therapist as it represents the child's thoughts and feelings. The sessions should be led by the child at their pace so that they have the chance to explain what their artwork means or represents.

case in point... Johannesburg-based art psychotherapist Samantha Davis tells how art therapy helped a seven-year-old boy with emotional and behavioural problems to identify his emotions in a useful way – as he found he could control the art materials he was using, he also found control of his emotions. Another eight-year-old boy living on the autism spectrum learned to communicate non-verbally through his free play with the art materials.

who it helps... Art therapy provides an opportunity for children to play; it is confidence building and self validating. Insight, self-awareness and self-reflection develop as the child is given the freedom to experiment or creatively test ideas. Art therapy teaches the child creative problem solving, especially when they feel their artwork has turned out "wrong". It has proved to be helpful for children with depression, emotional and behavioural problems, autism, ADHD, developmental delay and those with learning difficulties.

for more information... visit arttherapy.co.za