

Art Therapy



More and more people with cancer are turning to art therapy to cope with their disease, both physically and emotionally. The art therapy sessions available at the Swedish Cancer Institute introduce people with cancer to the uses of art-making as a way to express emotions, which can reduce the pain and anxiety one might experience while dealing with cancer. The class is also open to family members and caregivers.

What is art therapy?

Art therapy is a healing modality intended to integrate physical, emotional and spiritual care by facilitating creative ways for patients to respond to their cancer experience. Through the use of visual media such as painting, drawing and sculpture, people with cancer find ways to express emotions, reduce side effects, increase relaxation and improve their emotional well-being.

Benefits of art therapy

Art therapy is useful as a complementary therapy to help people with cancer deal with their emotions. A recent study found that art therapy reduced symptoms related to pain and anxiety in patients with cancer. Other benefits include:

- Provides an outlet for feelings
- Explores feelings that are difficult to put into words

- Aids in communication
- Increases self-awareness and self-discovery
- Reduces stress
- Helps build positive coping skills

What to expect

During art therapy, patients work with various art materials including pastels, paint, clay and construction paper to create everything from a sculpture to a painting to a collage.

Art therapy does not require any prior artistic training or experience. Swedish provides all materials needed for the sessions. Art therapy sessions are 45-minutes long, and patients meet one-on-one with the therapist.

For more information or to take part in an art therapy session, please call 206-386-3200.