

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AS CATALYSTS: ELEVATING THERAPEUTIC MENTAL IMAGERY

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Abstract. This paper examines the essential role of design principles in creating captivating therapeutic mental imagery for self-help applications. It determines key design elements such as line, shape, color, texture, space, and form while examining fundamental design principles, including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, and unity. Through a complex analysis, the study demonstrates how these design components can significantly enhance self-help imagery's emotional and therapeutic effects, fostering personal development and improving overall well-being. By establishing the impact of specific design attributes on emotional responses, this paper emphasizes the potential of well-crafted visuals to support individual growth and enhance cognitive health. It also points to promising avenues for future research, highlighting the need to further explore the interplay between design elements and personal characteristics. This exploration adds to the existing body of knowledge and stimulates interest in optimizing therapeutic imagery for improved cognitive outcomes. In conclusion, the paper advocates for a more purposeful incorporation of design in self-help resources, emphasizing its potential to facilitate positive change in individuals' lives and promote holistic mental wellness.

Keywords: *design elements, principles of design, creative image design, self-help imagery, art in therapy, communication through design*

Introduction

This paper presents a unique perspective on the role of design elements and principles in creating compelling mental imagery. It underscores the significance of understanding and applying design fundamentals to craft images that are not just visually appealing but also emotionally resonant, thereby supporting personal growth. For art therapists, designers, and art creators, the practical implications of this research are significant. By influencing design elements and principles, they can make their work more engaging, motivating, and supportive of personal development. This paper establishes a framework for making informed decisions about using design elements and principles in self-help imagery, empowering them to ensure that their work effectively conveys the intended message and achieves the desired outcomes. Additionally, this paper contributes to the growing body of research at the intersection of visual art and self-help, offering new insights and perspectives on how design can support personal growth and well-being. It also identifies areas for future research, such as the specific psychological effects of different design elements and principles in self-help imagery and the potential benefits of personalized design approaches to enhance individual growth and well-being. This research underscores the significance of visual art in empowering individuals to make positive changes in their lives by highlighting the potential of visual imagery to foster personal growth and well-being. Its importance lies in the potential to inform and inspire designers, creators, and researchers to harness

the power of design in support of personal growth and well-being, ultimately contributing to a more positive and empowering visual culture.

Background of research

This paper discusses the contemporary pursuit of personal growth and self-improvement, which has become an essential aspect of many people's lives, as noted by McNiff (2004). Oster and Crone (2004) further highlighted that incorporating design thinking into self-help strategies presents a novel approach to personal development. This method offers a more structured and visually engaging way to navigate one's journey. The research paper titled "Elements and Principles of Design in Creative Self-Help Imagery" explores this intriguing intersection, demonstrating how design elements and principles can enhance the effectiveness of self-help imagery (Oster and Crone, 2004). The statement regarding incorporating design thinking into self-help strategies presents a forward-thinking approach to personal development. However, one could argue that this methodology may not universally apply to everyone seeking personal growth. Firstly, personal development is inherently subjective; what proves effective for one individual may not resonate with another. While visually engaging materials and structured approaches can assist some in navigating their self-improvement journeys, others might find them overwhelming or constrained by a rigid framework. Human experiences and emotions are often complex and cannot be neatly categorized or designed. However, the exploration of phenomenological observed includes visible, touchable, and audible belongs in the realm of mental experience (Rubin, 2012). Human experiences and emotions are intricate, often intertwined in ways that resist simple categorization or systematic organization. These complex feelings cannot be confined to predefined phenomenological frameworks or designed structures. Moreover, an excessive focus on the aesthetic and functional aspects of self-help resources can unintentionally divert attention from the essential work of deep introspection and meaningful reflection. This shift can lead to a superficial engagement, where individuals may skim the surface of their emotions without fully exploring the underlying complexities. Hence, an excessive focus on design elements in self-help resources may divert attention from deeper introspection and reflection. Proper understanding and personal growth emerge from thoroughly examining our inner landscapes-investigating the rich tapestry of our thoughts and experiences-rather than solely concentrating on self-help tools' visual appeal or usability. There exists a risk of prioritizing the aesthetics of self-help materials over their substantive content and emotional impact. This could lead to individuals becoming more engaged with the presentation rather than the meaningful aspects of personal growth (Moon, 2011).

Lastly, while the innovation introduced by design thinking in self-help strategies is commendable, it is essential to acknowledge that traditional methods of self-improvement-such as therapy, mentorship, or self-reflection-have demonstrated their effectiveness (Malchiodi, 2022; 2003). An emphasis on design thinking may overshadow these well-established practices that hold significant value for those on their personal development journeys. Integrating design thinking into self-help can provide fresh perspectives. Recognizing the diverse needs and preferences of individuals pursuing personal growth is crucial. Striking a balance between innovative approaches and time-tested methods may yield a more inclusive and practical framework for self-improvement (Granim and Fox, 1999). By examining how visual aesthetics impact our understanding and motivation, Barrett (2002) highlights the

potential of creative expression to encourage deep personal reflection and lasting transformation. This research aims to reveal the crucial role of visual imagery in enhancing the appeal of self-help materials and fostering a stronger connection to the transformative process of personal growth. Visual art therapy has long served as an effective medium for communication, persuasion, and promoting social change. By captivating the viewer's attention through various shapes, vibrant colors, and intricate textures, visual art uniquely conveys complex emotions and ideas that words often fail to articulate. In recent years, there has been a significant surge in interest surrounding the application of design principles to cultivate personal growth, enhance well-being, and facilitate healing. Among these, self-help imagery has emerged as an increasingly popular form of expression, delivering powerful messages aimed at motivating, inspiring, and empowering individuals on their journeys toward self-improvement and resilience.

This case study research thoroughly explores the design elements and principles essential for crafting impactful self-help imagery. By skillfully applying aspects such as color, typography, composition, ornaments, and other design components, the researcher significantly enhances an image's emotional and psychological effects, making it engaging, memorable, and highly supportive of personal growth. While previous research has examined the role of design across various fields, including advertising, education, and healthcare, there remains a considerable gap in studies explicitly focusing on applying design principles to self-help imagery. Given the increasing popularity of self-help imagery, it is vital to investigate how design elements can be effectively utilized in this context. Art therapy, for example, exemplifies a versatile and inclusive approach to mental health care that significantly benefits individuals of all ages and backgrounds (Malchiodi, 2011). This study aims to bridge that gap by identifying the design features and principles that are most effective in creating self-help imagery that fosters personal growth and well-being. The research is built upon a solid theoretical framework integrating design theory, psychological concepts, and self-help literature. It rigorously examines how various design elements and principles can be employed to develop self-help imagery that resonates emotionally, captivates the audience, and supports meaningful personal development.

Problem statement

In the modern landscape of personal development, the role of visual elements in communication has gained increasing recognition. However, a profound disconnect persists in understanding how specific design elements and principles—such as line quality, color theory, typographic choices, and compositional balance—directly influence self-help imagery's emotional and psychological impact on viewers (Meggs, 2016). This lack of nuanced comprehension limits the potential effectiveness of these resources, which could otherwise serve as powerful catalysts for personal growth and overall well-being. Many self-help materials must pay more attention to or inadequately apply fundamental design principles. As a result, the imagery utilized in these resources often needs more visual engagement to resonate profoundly with users. For instance, poorly chosen color palettes may fail to evoke desired emotions, while disorganized layouts might distract rather than inspire. This underutilization of essential design elements not only diminishes the aesthetic quality of the materials but may also hinder their capacity to facilitate positive change, leaving individuals needing more support on their personal development journeys.

Compounding this issue is the evident shortage of comprehensive research focused on exploring the intricate relationship between thoughtful design choices in self-help imagery and their specific effects on individual mental health outcomes and personal growth trajectories. Without solid evidence to guide the creation of visually impactful self-help materials, we find ourselves restricted in developing practical, evidence-based guidelines. In due course, this lack of knowledge stalls progress in crafting appealing and strategically designed visuals to promote and enhance emotional well-being, leaving many individuals needing more resources to thrive. In the realm of self-help and personal development, the effectiveness of visual imagery plays a crucial role in engaging individuals and fostering a supportive environment for growth. However, there is a lack of understanding regarding how specific design elements and principles contribute to creating imagery that resonates emotionally with the audience. As a result, many self-help resources may fail to connect with individuals on a deeper level, leading to a diminished impact on personal growth and well-being. This design knowledge gap affects the quality of self-help materials. It limits the potential for positive and empowering visual culture, ultimately impacting the lives of individuals seeking support and enrichment in their journeys. The challenge lies in identifying and articulating the design fundamentals that can enhance the emotional resonance and effectiveness of self-help imagery, thus ensuring that visual content effectively supports personal development and fosters a more enriching experience for diverse communities.

Significant of the research

This paper provides an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted significance of leveraging design principles in creating self-help imagery, emphasizing its remarkable potential for transformation. It discusses the intricate ways in which various design elements—such as color palettes, typography choices, visual hierarchy, imagery styles, and overall composition—can be thoughtfully selected and combined to enhance the effectiveness and resonance of self-help resources significantly. By systematically elucidating these strategic design approaches, the paper empowers designers and creators to extend the impact of their work beyond aesthetic appeal, resulting in imagery that engages the audience on a deeper level. This engagement can ignite motivation and encourage personal growth, ultimately fostering a profound sense of development and self-improvement within individuals. Central to this investigation is a well-defined framework that assists art practitioners in making informed decisions about integrating key design elements and principles into their self-help imagery through expressive symbols and images. Langer discusses how the concepts of symbols and abstraction express forms, feelings, and relationships tied to art aesthetics. In this context, illusion and interpersonal impressions serve essential functions. Previous study stated: “*An expressive form created for our perception through a sense of imagination, and what is expressed is human feeling*”.

This theoretical framework is built upon research and best practices, ensuring the creators' intentions are articulated clearly and communicated effectively through their visual work. By adhering to these guidelines, art practitioners can create imagery that resonates deeply with viewers, allowing the intended messages to penetrate the psyche and assist individuals on their journeys toward self-improvement and self-realization. This clarity enhances viewers' understanding and emotional connection to the content, ultimately guiding them toward the desired outcomes. In the growing body of research at the intersection of design and self-help, this paper offers critical insights into the

importance of design in fostering personal growth and well-being. It highlights the potential of thoughtful design to act as a catalyst for positive change, demonstrating how effectively crafted visual communication can bridge the gap between artistic expression and psychological empowerment. By presenting compelling evidence and case studies, the paper enriches the discourse surrounding the role of design in self-help, demonstrating its power to influence behavior, emotions, and personal narratives. This contribution advances academic understanding and encourages practitioners to consider the profound implications of their design choices on individuals seeking to improve their lives.

Additionally, this paper identifies many promising research avenues that merit further investigation, particularly regarding the psychological effects of specific design elements and principles within self-help imagery. It invites researchers to explore the nuances of personalized design strategies that cater to diverse individual needs, preferences, and experiences. Investigating these areas closely, future research can enhance the effectiveness of self-help resources, create more targeted interventions, and promote a holistic approach to well-being that considers design's psychological and emotional dimensions. This forward-looking paradigm contributes to academic scholarship and paves the way for innovative applications in the self-help field, encouraging a more tailored approach to personal empowerment. Ultimately, the paper underscores the transformative potential of design as a vital tool for personal growth, emphasizing the crucial role that visual art plays in empowering individuals. It articulates that well-executed and deliberately designed imagery can inspire and motivate individuals to initiate significant, positive life changes. This reinforces the perspective that design transcends mere aesthetics and utilitarianism; it is a powerful medium that can influence thoughts, feelings, and actions. By making these connections, the paper affirms that design profoundly impacts individuals' journeys toward self-improvement, resilience, and personal transformation, with the potential to create lasting positive change in their lives.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a matrix chart to analyze the Fourteen Elements and Principles of Design. It involves a cohort of 100 students aged 18 to 20 currently enrolled in a Visual Communication course. The participants come from computer science backgrounds and do not possess any prior knowledge or experience in art and design. The artworks of sixteen students were selected based on their knowledge (identifying and recalling), application (demonstrating illustration), and Synthesizing (compose / create / design / invent). The images associated with the design elements were meticulously examined utilizing the seven stages of Bloom's Taxonomy-a systematic revision of the art practice. An interpretative art methodology was employed to analyze the evidence collected and to assess the impact of matrix element activities on participants' cognitive and creative development, in accordance Barrett (2002).

Participants were asked to choose three contrasting elements and design principles to create their identities. This selection process involved comprehensively assessing the student's creative cognitive abilities. By transforming the chosen elements into visual representations of themselves, the evaluation offers valuable insights into how diverse backgrounds and varying performance levels affect visual literacy skills in self-expression. The selected elements and principles are grounded in visual knowledge and

identification, conveying messages associated with observation, memories, and imagination. These concepts correspond to different levels of consciousness: observation pertains to the conscious mind, memories relate to the subconscious, and imagination connects to the unconscious. The pictorial content was thoroughly analyzed by identifying and listing each section's design elements and principles. This analysis often involved utilizing elements that expressed principles through cognitive interpretation, integrating the formal components of art as therapeutic (*Figure 1*).

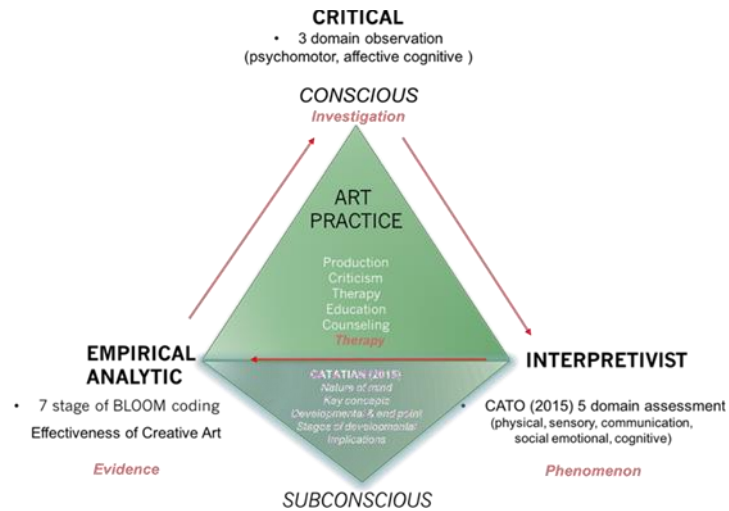


Figure 1. Creative Art Therapy Outcome (CATO) theoretical framework revised from Terry Barrett's *Criticizing Art*.

Source: Barrett (2002).

Results and Discussion

The art matrix is a dynamic tool for visually exploring art's fundamental elements and principles. Each cell within the matrix is thoughtfully designed with various patterns, textures, and colors, creating opportunities for in-depth analysis of how these artistic concepts interconnect and influence one another (Edwards, 2012). Hence, in this matrix, images examine the frequencies of elements-such as line, shape, form, space, color, value, and texture-and principles such as balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, and unity. This exploration is conducted through the lens of cognitive perception, allowing us to understand how viewers interpret and engage with art emotionally and intellectually. The image showcases a student's artwork, likely created as part of an art class assignment. It highlights their creativity and understanding of art's essential elements and principles, reflecting their growth as emerging artists. This student's work encourages viewers to appreciate the intricacies of artistic expression and how foundational concepts can be uniquely and personally interpreted. Each square in the matrix symbolizes a distinct combination of an element and a principle. However, when integrated into their final profiles, challenges emerged in exploring the elements and principles that could enhance physical, sensory, and cognitive skills. The students used simple doodles, gestalt images, and drawings to express their understanding of visual elements through association. For instance, the square representing "line" and "balance" demonstrates an initial effort to improve physical skills. It incorporates "texture and patterns" to enrich sensory experiences and emphasizes "color and unity"

to support cognitive development, all framed to convey a sense of symmetry. Elements of Art includes:

Lines: Represent fundamental elements of visual art in various forms (straight, curved, thick, thin). Convey movement and establish boundaries. Align with the Gestalt principle of Prägnanz, which suggests that the eye quickly interprets simple line structures.

Shape: Defined as a two-dimensional area enclosed by lines or outlines. Includes a wide variety of forms, both organic and geometric. The closure principle illustrates the brain's ability to synthesize missing information in incomplete shapes, enhancing cognitive engagement.

Form: Refers to three-dimensional objects with volume and depth. Recognition of form activates spatial awareness and depth perception, utilizing the figure-ground principle. Aids in distinguishing the form from its background, facilitating clear differentiation.

Color: Encompasses hue, saturation, and value attributes, contributing to visual interest. Vivid colors stimulate the visual cortex and limbic system, evoking emotional responses (Lusebrink, 2004). The strategic use of contrasting colors emphasizes the principle of contrast, generating visual tension that captures attention.

Value: Pertains to the relative lightness or darkness of a color. Creates an impression of depth, realism, and dimension through variations in light and dark values. Aligns with the principle of similarity, organizing comparable tones to produce a cohesive visual experience.

Texture: Refers to the surface quality of an object, describing its tactile characteristics. Representation of texture (smooth, rough, or patterned) activates the sense of touch and engages the brain's somatosensory cortex. Prompts viewers to visualize the tactile experience, activating the haptic sense.

Space: Denotes the area between, around, and within objects. Perception of space, facilitated by perspective or overlapping elements, encourages interpretation of depth and distance. Consistent with the principle of proximity, suggesting that objects positioned closely are perceived as belonging to the same group.

The principles of art are include:

Balance: In the context of principles and art therapy, it is fundamental to both the creation and interpretation of art, influencing emotional and psychological well-being. Visually, balance relates to the distribution of visual weight within a composition, where artists may employ symmetry to evoke a sense of order and calmness or asymmetrical elements to create a dynamic tension that invites more profound engagement. In art therapy, this concept extends beyond visual elements; it embodies the emotional stability individuals seek through artistic expression. Creating balanced artwork can mirror the pursuit of equilibrium in one's personal life, as symmetrical patterns often reflect a drive for stability. At the same time, asymmetrical designs allow students to explore chaos and complexity. Engaging with balance therapeutically can lead to enhanced self-awareness and coping strategies as clients learn to articulate feelings related to control and imbalance. Moreover, the cognitive aspect of balance stimulates responses or reflections within the viewer; a balanced artwork can evoke positive emotions, while an unbalanced piece might provoke discomfort and deeper introspection regarding one's life. Ultimately, balance bridges visual principles and emotional health, enabling individuals to navigate their inner worlds and fostering a sense of peace and equilibrium through artistic expression.

Movement: as a principle of design, plays a crucial role in directing the viewer's gaze and creating an emotional response. In visual arts, it can be achieved through lines, shapes, colors, and patterns that evoke a sense of motion or flow. For instance, diagonal lines often suggest action and dynamism, while curvilinear shapes can create a sense of calm or softness. The strategic use of these elements draws attention and can guide the viewer through the composition, leading to a deeper engagement with the artwork. In the context of art therapy, movement takes on an additional layer of significance. Engaging with art that embodies movement can be a powerful therapeutic tool, as it taps into the body's motor functions and encourages physical expression. Creating art that reflects movement can stimulate the brain's motor cortex, activating areas associated with movement and emotion. This can help individuals process feelings, release pent-up energy, and foster a sense of vitality and connection to their bodies. Moreover, movement in art therapy is not just about the finished artwork; it also encompasses the art-making process. Activities like painting with broad strokes, dancing while creating, or using gesture-based techniques can facilitate a more embodied experience. This can help clients loosen physical tension, improve coordination, and promote freedom and fluidity. Ultimately, incorporating movement into design and therapeutic practices enhances aesthetic engagement and supports emotional and physical healing.

Rhythm: Repetition of elements to create a visual pattern. Rhythm in visual design is a tool for aesthetic appeal and has psychological implications that can influence perception and emotional responses. When elements are repeated consistently, they create a sense of order and predictability. This structured repetition can evoke feelings of comfort and familiarity, which is comforting to viewers. For instance, patterns in nature, like the rhythmic waves of the ocean or the repeating patterns of leaves, can trigger positive emotional responses, promoting a sense of tranquility and well-being. In a design context, this rhythmic quality can lead to increased visual engagement, as the mind naturally seeks out and anticipates the repetition of elements, creating a sense of flow. Furthermore, rhythm can highlight specific design aspects, guiding the viewer's attention and influencing their interpretation of the message. By manipulating the pace and frequency of the repeating elements, designers can evoke different feelings—more rapid patterns might create excitement or urgency. At the same time, slower rhythms can suggest calmness and stability. This intricate relationship between rhythm and psychology underscores the powerful impact of visual design on human emotions and cognition.

Contrast: an essential design principle that effectively utilizes differences between elements to create visual interest and guide the viewer's attention. By strategically highlighting these differences, designers can enhance the overall composition and improve communication. One way to apply contrast is through color, employing opposites on the color wheel, such as black and white or complementary colors, to make elements stand out and evoke different moods. Size contrast also plays a crucial role in establishing a hierarchy, where a prominent headline paired with smaller body text directs the viewer's focus to the most critical information, facilitating comprehension. Mixing geometric shapes with organic forms generates a dynamic visual experience that engages viewers and contributes to a more complex design. Texture contrast, achieved by blending different textures like smooth and rough, adds depth and richness, making the visual experience more engaging. Finally, varying font styles and weights can clearly distinguish different types of information, with a bold font for headings alongside a lighter font for subheadings efficiently organizing content and enhancing

readability. In conclusion, contrast is a powerful design tool that fosters organization, clarity, and visual appeal. By thoughtfully employing contrast, designers can improve communication, highlight essential messages, and create engaging and compelling compositions

Pattern: The repetition of visual elements. Patterns typically involve the repeated use of shapes, lines, colors, or other design elements, creating a sense of order and predictability that can be comforting and visually appealing. They help structure a composition by organizing elements repeatedly and linking different design parts cohesively. Patterns can be categorized into geometric, which use shapes like squares and circles, or organic, which feature irregular, natural forms, with each type evoking different feelings and responses from the viewer. Additionally, patterns can create a sense of movement or rhythm within a design, guiding the viewer's eye across the composition and making it more engaging. While patterns serve decorative purposes, they can also have functional roles, such as enhancing usability by indicating areas of interaction in a user interface. Furthermore, patterns often carry cultural significance and can evoke specific emotions or memories, depending on their context and application

Emphasis: The principles of design are crucial for creating a focal point within a work of art, as they direct the viewer's attention to specific areas, allowing artists to communicate messages, evoke emotions, and guide interpretations. This can be achieved through various techniques such as contrast, color, placement, size, and texture; for instance, a bright color in an otherwise muted palette can draw the eye, while a larger object can naturally attract attention over more minor elements. In art therapy, emphasis takes on additional significance; clients can highlight certain aspects of their artwork to facilitate self-expression and explore their emotions. When individuals focus on specific colors or shapes that stand out, it may reveal feelings or thoughts that are difficult to articulate, thus providing insights into their psychological state. Therapists often encourage clients to create works emphasizing particular elements of their lives or feelings, fostering meaningful conversations about what those aspects represent. By making deliberate choices about what to emphasize in their art, individuals can explore their identities and processes of healing safely and creatively, allowing emphasis to serve as a design principle and a valuable tool for understanding and personal growth within art therapy.

Unity is a fundamental principle of design that fosters a sense of harmony and cohesiveness in a work of art, creating a feeling of oneness and wholeness. It can be achieved through various techniques such as repetition, proximity, alignment, and variety. For instance, using similar elements throughout the artwork reinforces connections, while placing elements close together enhances their relationships. Alignment along a common axis provides organization, and incorporating variety maintains interest and attention while achieving a cohesive feel. In art therapy, unity is crucial to emotional and psychological well-being, allowing individuals to express feelings of wholeness and balance. Creating unified artwork can reflect an internal equilibrium, helping individuals establish a stronger connection to their identities and experiences. Furthermore, the process encourages mindfulness and focus, enabling clients to navigate their thoughts more effectively. Unity also aids in narrative building, allowing clients to connect various elements of their life stories and facilitating discussions about complex emotions and experiences. Thus, unity contributes to

aesthetically pleasing designs and offers significant therapeutic benefits, promoting understanding and connection between the artwork and the artist's experience.

In art and design principles, line, shape, form, color, value, space, and texture are crucial in achieving unity—a principle that encourages harmony and completeness within a composition. These elements convey personal imagery that is often instilled with meaning. When thoughtfully integrated, they contribute to a cohesive whole, enhancing the viewer's cognitive engagement. Within art therapy, each design element plays a vital role in improving therapeutic outcomes and nurturing emotional well-being. Lines, in particular, can function as powerful tools for expression. Students produce line drawings to communicate feelings or moods that are challenging to express verbally. The direction and style of the lines—whether smooth, jagged, thick, or thin—can reveal a person's emotional state. By examining these lines, practitioners can gain invaluable insights into a client's mindset, establishing a visual narrative that encourages self-understanding and emotional release. Shapes and forms in the artworks symbolize various aspects of a person's life or feelings. For instance, circular shapes often evoke feelings of safety and unity, while sharp-edged forms may suggest conflict or tension. Encouraging clients to explore different shapes allows them to process their experiences, helping them become more familiar with their emotions and better categorize their thoughts. This practice has transformed overwhelming feelings into more manageable forms. Color is profoundly significant in art therapy as it beautifully influences emotional expression and aids in mood regulation. Each color can evoke different feelings; for example, blue can provide a sense of calm and tranquility, while red may stir excitement or even anger. By thoughtfully choosing their colors, clients can explore their emotions more deeply, creating visual representations of their inner experiences. Therapists can gently guide clients in reflecting on these color choices, fostering greater emotional awareness and encouraging heartfelt discussions about underlying feelings.

Incorporating value and contrast in artworks allows students to highlight what truly matters to them, drawing attention to significant aspects of their journey. This process helps identify key emotions or experiences that may need exploration during therapy sessions. For instance, using stark contrasts can symbolize internal conflicts, offering a supportive space for clients to express and confront these complexities. Negative space is also essential in both design and art therapy. It creates breathing room within a piece, mirroring the need for mental space during emotional processing. By inviting clients to include ample negative space, therapists cultivate a sense of clarity in their work. This clarity can ease feelings of overwhelm and help focus on essential emotions and thoughts, facilitating a more structured approach to understanding and navigating complex feelings. Texture enriches the artistic experience by adding a sensory dimension to the therapeutic process. Creating texture through collage, painting, or other media engages students deeper, nurturing a vivid connection to their emotions. Textures can evoke powerful physical sensations and memories, leading to an immersive experience that supports emotional healing and helps retain valuable insights related to their therapeutic journey. A thorough understanding and intentional application of design principles in art therapy can significantly enhance the creative process for both therapists and clients. This enhancement improves communication and fosters deeper self-exploration and emotional healing. Therapists and art practitioners can guide individuals toward better mental wellness by establishing a meaningful connection between artistic expression and emotional experiences. The interplay of

various design elements, particularly the principle of unity, is crucial in this context. Unity ensures that artistic works are aesthetically pleasing and supportive of cognitive understanding. By presenting information coherently, designers and therapists can facilitate improved learning outcomes and memory retention. This clarity allows viewers to engage more deeply with the content, making the therapeutic experience more impactful. Incorporating symbols into personal representation adds an essential layer to the healing process, mainly when focusing on physical improvement. Symbols are powerful tools that enable individuals to reconnect with their bodies while navigating their emotional landscapes. This connection is essential for fostering a sense of well-being and balance in life. By establishing this foundation, the profiling matrix promotes transformation and self-discovery, encouraging mental and emotional resilience while enhancing physical vitality and health. This comprehensive approach highlights the intricate relationship between achieving emotional equilibrium and improving physical wellness. Ultimately, the therapeutic journey through art becomes a holistic pathway to healing, empowering individuals to mentally and physically thrive.

The findings present a comprehensive assessment of the elements and principles of art, clearly demonstrating how these components are seamlessly integrated into the student's work. Each element is articulated precisely, fostering a deep understanding of their unique attributes and the intricate relationships that shape artistic expression. The matrix format enhances clarity and facilitates meaningful comparisons and analyses of how various elements interact with core principles. The data powerfully illustrates the student's adept application of these concepts, showcasing a solid command of artistic techniques. The deliberate focus on viewer engagement through strategies such as movement and contrast reflects a thoughtful approach to creating art that profoundly resonates with its audience. The artwork exudes emotional depth, skillfully employing color and texture to evoke powerful feelings and responses from viewers. Furthermore, balance, rhythm, and unity are prominently highlighted, underscoring the artwork's well-structured and cohesive nature, essential for a lasting impression. However, there are clear opportunities for enhancement. A more in-depth analysis of specific examples within the artwork would elevate the understanding of how these principles are visually manifested. Examining particular sections that exemplify these concepts will yield valuable insights. Additionally, integrating contextual information about the artist's background and the intended audience will enrich the evaluation, providing a more holistic perspective on the significance of the artwork.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the essential role that intentional design plays in enhancing the therapeutic benefits of art therapy. It highlights that art therapy extends beyond simple creative expression; it is a sophisticated practice that can be significantly enriched by the careful selection of materials that are both aesthetically pleasing and emotionally resonant. By consciously incorporating a diverse palette of colors and relatable imagery that evoke strong emotions, art therapists can create self-help resources that foster a profound personal connection with their clients. This intentional engagement is crucial, as it encourages individuals to feel more at ease while exploring their vulnerabilities. When clients perceive a meaningful connection between their experiences and the art materials, they are more likely to open up and engage in productive discussions about their feelings and

challenges, ultimately enriching the therapeutic experience. Additionally, the research emphasizes the substantial impact of thoughtfully designed visual content on the therapeutic process. It characterizes art therapy not merely as a means of creating art, but as a powerful catalyst for initiating change and enhancing individual well-being. When art experiences are strategically developed, therapists can effectively empower their clients to confront emotional or psychological obstacles that arise in their everyday lives. Moreover, this study advocates for the continuous exploration and implementation of design strategies within the field of art therapy. By consistently applying these strategies, practitioners can cultivate environments that are not only supportive of creative expression but also deeply meaningful to clients. Such customized approaches enable therapists to better address the diverse needs and varying emotional states of their audiences, resulting in more effective mental health interventions. In summary, the thoughtful integration of design principles into art therapy practices can significantly elevate the quality and impact of therapeutic encounters. This approach has the potential to foster lasting change and promote healing for individuals on their mental health journeys, reinforcing art as a powerful medium for personal empowerment and growth.

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