

7 Art Therapy Ideas for Teens

MANDALA PAINTING


Mandala painting involves creating intricate patterns using small paint dots on paper, stones or other smooth surfaces. This meditative activity encourages teens to focus on the present moment, promoting mindfulness and relaxation.

Teens can choose colors and patterns that resonate with their emotions and experiences, allowing them to express themselves creatively.

DRAWING

Drawing is a classic art therapy activity that allows teens to communicate their thoughts and feelings through images.

Whether sketching simple doodles or creating detailed illustrations, drawing provides teens with a non-verbal outlet for self-expression and exploration. Make it easier by providing a prompt or theme to inspire teens' artwork and facilitate deeper reflection.

 **TIP: Consider playing relaxing music during drawing sessions. This has the dual potential of calming clients and providing inspiration.**

ALTERED MAGAZINE PICTURE

In this activity, teens can **enhance magazine photographs** with paint, stickers and other magazine cutouts.

This activity is both therapeutic and fun, particularly for clients who may feel too much pressure in drawing or sketching activities. By altering magazine photographs, teens can express themselves with graffiti artist-like abandon.

WORDS-TO-LIVE-BY COLLAGE

In this activity, prompt the teens to choose a phrase or set of phrases that exemplify their “**words to live by**.” They can then build an artistic collage around these words to depict their lives, internal worlds, and histories, using magazine cutouts, old wrapping paper, confetti, and even photographs of themselves or significant people in their lives.

To facilitate this activity and reduce the chances of alienating some participants, have a few iconic or meaningful phrases ready for the teens to sample. Avoid creating a scenario in which teens are required to come up with their own phrases.

VISION BOARD


Creating a vision board involves compiling images, words and symbols representing teens' aspirations, goals and dreams.

Teenagers can use magazines, photographs, and other materials to construct vision boards. They envision their desired future and reflect on the steps needed to achieve their goals. This activity is designed to inspire motivation, visualization and self-reflection.

COLOR SWATCHES

This activity involves associating different emotions with specific colors and creating swatches or color charts to represent these feelings visually.

Teens can explore the range of emotions they experience and reflect on how each color represents a unique aspect of their inner world. This activity promotes emotional awareness and self-expression.

 **TIP: Allow teens to create their own associations between colors and emotions.**

PAPER BEAD JEWELRY

Making paper bead jewelry is a creative and tactile activity that allows teens to repurpose paper into wearable art pieces.

Teens can roll paper strips into beads, apply colors and patterns that reflect their personal style and preferences, and even write self-affirmation messages on the paper strips. This activity promotes fine motor skills and creativity while providing a tangible outcome that teens can proudly wear or share with others.

Creating jewelry can also be calming and therapeutic, offering teens a sense of accomplishment and self-expression.

