



GET TO KNOW YOURSELF: ART THERAPY

Despite what some may think, the concept of art therapy does not have its foundation in the notion that spraying red paint on your ex-boyfriend's favourite pair of Diesel jeans will make you feel a lot better and make him feel a helluva lot worse.

Art therapy encourages exploration and emotional growth and can be used as a relaxant, to promote creativity, insight, self-reflection and problem-solving skills. 'Self-expression is an essential ingredient in psycho-emotional development,' says Samantha Davis, a qualified art therapist based in Jo'burg. 'It provides an opportunity for adults to play.'

'The client comes in and we introduce them to the space and the art materials – they may use whatever they want.' These include sand, clay, collages, pastels, paint and koki pens. No formal training or knowledge of art is required.

'They may want to talk or do pictures first, or do both at the same time; it differs from person to person. Then we start talking about their artwork, or I ask questions. I don't direct the process too much.'

It's not only for those with major issues but for anyone who wants to discover their inherent creativity.

It is also a means of exploring what's in one's mind, thoughts and feelings. Together with the art therapist, you try to interpret the meaning of your art so that transformation can occur.

'People often come out of therapy feeling more enlightened to make life-changing decisions; they either change jobs, make changes in relationships or just change their experience of the world.'

Samantha also uses art-therapy techniques for corporate team-building. It enhances communication, interaction, brainstorming and working towards common team objectives. 'We do a group image. The positive thing is that they take it back to work and have that ongoing reminder and motivator – it becomes a focal point for people to have conversations about it.'

Sessions (not team-building) are each about 40 to 50 minutes long and cost R500, including all materials.

CONTACT Samantha Davis 083-326-6655, www.arttherapy.co.za and www.art-cafe.co.za (corporate workshops).

OTHER OPTIONS In Cape Town, Dr Makgathi Mokwena (community art therapist) 021-531-7684. In Jo'burg, the Art Therapy Centre has workshops and training, www.arttherapycentre.co.za ■