Social Worker with Creative Arts Therapy - Informed Practice

Who am I?

My name is Karin Hansen, and I am a qualified and registered social worker. I have over 12 years of social work experience in different roles within the Buller Region. I am working for Homebuilders West Coast Trust.

I completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Arts Therapy and am studying towards a Master's Degree in Creative Arts Therapy [CAT]. I hold a Certificate in Professional Trauma Training. Although I work with the Arts Therapy Model, I am not a qualified clinical Creative Arts Therapist yet. I base my sessions on a humanistic approach to person-centred therapy.

What is Creative Arts Therapy?

CAT Creative Arts Therapy is a form of psychotherapy, and differs from traditional arts-making or performance in that the emphasis is on the process of creating and making meaning, rather than on the end product. We use the creative processes to help clients explore feelings that may be hard to put into words. Creative Arts Therapists help clients to reduce anxiety, improve self-awareness, and find new pathways to healing.

What Creative Arts Therapy is not? FAQ

- CAT sessions are not teaching lessons or art classes.

- Clients don't need any experience in making art. We work by accessing imagination and creativity – qualities that all human beings possess.
- CAT is not purely limited to art making; although our focus is on expression through creation, we will talk.
- I work in a collaborative manner and ask clients to reflect on their own creative work, aiming at empowering the person to discover their own sense-making and to reach their fullest potential.
- CAT is evidence-based and has proven its effectiveness through practice-based research.

Who can benefit from Creative Arts Therapy?

While young people can often benefit from counselling to deal with life's challenges, they may find it difficult to properly express their fears or worries within talking therapies. When creating artworks using CAT, they externalize their inner feelings. Young people are naturally creative and playful, two components that are fostered within the creative art therapy process. CAT can help to enhance a sense of well-being and assist with a young person's learning, behavioural, emotional, and social problems.

However, Creative Arts Therapy is not limited to children and is also suitable for individual and group therapy for youth, adults, and for couples and families.

Creative Arts Therapy can be used to provide relief from overwhelming emotions, crises, or trauma.

Creative Arts Therapy is not a "magic bullet."
Like any process of change, it requires intention and active participation. Each session is individualized to match the client's needs. The structure might look like this: check-in and grounding, intention setting, gathering ideas and materials, followed by creation time, and ending with 'harvesting'. Harvesting means we might talk about your object/creation, and find meaning or new insight in it.

You will find more information on the professional website of the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association: https://anzacata.org/About-CAT