

AI in Art Therapy

A Hybrid Toolkit for Therapists & Clients

Created by Dr. Lavanya Seshasayee

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Exercise 1: AI Mandala Creation for Mindfulness

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Goal: Reduce anxiety, build inner calm, and foster focus.

Clients use AI to generate a mandala from a chosen word or phrase, then engage with it through coloring and reflection.

Steps:

- 1. Choose a word or phrase that reflects your current state (e.g., peace, confusion, hope).
- 2. Therapist inputs the word into an AI image generator with a mandala prompt.
- 3. Observe the generated mandala carefully.
- 4. Color it digitally or on paper.
- 5. Reflect on how the mandala mirrors your state.

Workbook Reflection:

1. What word did you choose?
2. How does the mandala reflect your state?
3. Which colors did you add and why?
4. Did you notice any shift in your emotions during the process?
5. What title would you give your mandala?

Therapist's Notes:

Note any emotional regulation, symbolic themes, or resistance. Observe whether the mandala helped reduce anxiety.

Exercise 2: AI Journaling with Reflective Dialogue

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Goal: Encourage verbal-symbolic integration and self-reflection.

This exercise blends journaling with AI imagery. Clients write about emotions, view an AI-generated image based on their words, and engage in dialogue with the image.

Steps:

- 1. Write a short journal entry about your current mood.
- 2. Therapist inputs a summary into an AI image generator.
- 3. Observe the AI-generated image carefully.
- 4. Write a dialogue between yourself and the image.
- 5. Share and reflect with your therapist.

Workbook Reflection:

1. What did you write in your journal entry?
2. Describe the AI-generated image. What stood out to you?
3. If the image could talk, what would it say?
4. Write your response to the image.
5. Did the dialogue reveal any new insights?
6. How do you feel after this exercise?

Therapist's Notes:

Track the client's engagement with the AI imagery. Look for symbolic projections, narrative shifts, or therapeutic breakthroughs.

Exercise 3: Image-to-Poetry Healing Ritual

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Goal: Transform visual expression into symbolic narrative healing.

Clients generate or select an AI image and write a short poem inspired by it, turning imagery into words for empowerment.

Steps:

- 1. Select or generate an AI image that reflects your mood.
- 2. Observe the image carefully and notice symbolic elements.
- 3. Write a short poem (3–5 lines) inspired by the image.
- 4. Read your poem aloud to the therapist.
- 5. Discuss how the poem reflects resilience or struggle.

Workbook Reflection:

1. What image did you choose or generate?
2. What symbols or themes stood out?
3. Write your poem here:
4. Which words feel empowering?
5. How does this poem mirror your journey?

Therapist’s Notes:

Note emotional expression through poetry, shifts from despair to resilience, and language-symbol connections.

Exercise 4: Digital Collage Therapy

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Goal: Reconstruct identity and integrate fragmented self.

Clients generate multiple AI images representing different parts of themselves, then combine them into a digital collage for discussion.

Steps:

1. Generate AI images representing different aspects of yourself (e.g., joy, anger, inner child).
2. Use collage software to arrange them together.
3. Notice which images dominate and which are hidden.
4. Give your collage a title.
5. Share your reflections with the therapist.

Workbook Reflection:

1. Which aspects of yourself did you represent?
2. Which part felt hardest to include?
3. Which part feels strongest in the collage?
4. What story does your collage tell?
5. Title your collage.

Therapist's Notes:

Observe identity integration, symbolic placement, and emotional reactions. Note therapeutic themes for future exploration.