

Creative Arts Therapy in Afterschool Environments

Creative Arts Therapists and organizations like the Center for All Abilities (CAA) can serve as essential partners in afterschool settings. Through individualized and group-based interventions, therapists can support the emotional, social, and developmental needs of students in a culturally responsive and engaging way.

Services Offered by Creative Arts Therapists

1. Student Assessments (Short-Term Engagement):
 - 2–3 week observation period using art and music-based activities
 - Provide insight into students' regulation, social interactions, and communication
 - Share assessment summaries with educators to inform classroom strategies
2. Group Therapy Sessions:
 - Weekly creative arts therapy groups for students with similar needs (e.g., social-emotional development, self-regulation)
 - Can be cross-modality (art and music) or tailored to a specific modality
 - Includes skill-building, peer engagement, and emotional expression through creative means
3. Individual Therapy Sessions (1:1):
 - Weekly sessions to support students who benefit from individualized attention
 - Focused on emotional regulation, communication, executive functioning, and trauma support
 - Activities are adapted to the student's interests, goals, and developmental level
4. Staff Trainings:
 - Surveys are used to assess the needs and gaps of an afterschool program
 - Creative Arts Therapists design training to fit the diverse needs of the program and the students
 - Educators learn skills and techniques relevant to their students that can be integrated into their programming

Benefits to Afterschool Programs

- Supports students who may not otherwise receive therapeutic services
- Strengthens school-home communication through family updates and reports
- Provides a low-stigma, non-clinical space for emotional support
- Enhances program capacity to support neurodiverse youth and English Language Learners
- Builds collaboration between school staff and mental health professionals