



# NeuRA

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## SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

September 2020

### What are art and drama therapies?

Art therapy is defined by the British Association of Art Therapists as “the use of art materials for self-expression and reflection in the presence of a trained art therapist. Clients who are referred to art therapy need not have previous experience or skill in art, the art therapist is not primarily concerned with making an aesthetic or diagnostic assessment of the client’s image. The overall aim of its practitioners is to enable a client to effect change and growth on a personal level through the use of art materials in a safe and facilitating environment”.

Drama therapy is defined by the British Association of Drama Therapists as “the use of drama and theatre as a therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity, imagination, learning, insight and growth.” Art therapy uses artwork to create a relationship between therapist and patient. The artwork may act as a buffer which reduces the intensity of the relationship between patient and therapist, which may be more productive for schizophrenia patients. Any benefit of drama therapy may come from the fundamental ‘make-believe’ aspect, which distances participants from the subject matter, allowing them to work with material that may be sensitive to them.

### What is the evidence for art and drama therapies?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds no differences in long-term symptoms or functioning (1-2 years) between art therapy and an activity control or standard care. There may be some benefit of art therapy over standard care for symptoms in the shorter-term (6 weeks), and following 2-6 months of Chinese calligraphy.

Low quality evidence from one very small study is unable to determine the benefits of drama therapy.

**For more information see the technical table**



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*NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.*

*Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.*

*Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.*

*While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*

### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at [neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia](http://neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia).

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