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## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER Factsheet

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### What is creative art therapy?

Creative art therapies allow thoughts and feelings about trauma to be expressed non-verbally. Visual and musical artistic expressions, as well as the body itself, are used to recall the traumatic memory and to symbolise the pain and suffering resulting from trauma. Proposed mechanisms by which creative art therapies may improve PTSD include relaxation, expression of memories and emotions that are difficult to put into words, containment of traumatic material within a creative art product may provide a sense of control, symbolic expression may make progressive exposure more tolerable, and creation may build self-esteem and reduce emotional numbness.

### What is the evidence for creative art therapy?

Low quality evidence is unable to determine any benefit of creative art therapies for PTSD symptoms. Review authors conclude that trials with greater scientific rigor are needed in this area.

For more information see the technical table

### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

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*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 PTSD and its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*