

IMPLEMENTATION OF ART WORKSHOP FOR PERSONS WITH ASD

Objectives of the Art Workshop:

- To gain knowledge and experience working with different art materials
- To form different art products (sculptures, paintings, paper collages)
- To observe and address problem areas of each individual during the sessions (communication, cognitive and sensory problems, social skills, challenging behaviour)
- To provide another (nonverbal) channel for participants to express their feelings and emotions
- To raise public awareness about ASD, about capabilities of people living with ASD, their creativeness and view of the world

Participants:

- 5 participants with ASD and co morbid intellectual disabilities (severe or profound mental retardation)

Staff:

- 1 academically educated artist
- 1 psychologist
- 1 special education teacher

Duration of Workshops:

- Prior preparation + 10 sessions, each lasting 1 hour

Space and equipment:

- Room (20-25 square meters)
- Tables for individual and group work; chairs; water sink; shelves for storing the final products

Materials:

- Clay and modeling boards, wooden modeling tools of various shapes for shaping the clay
- Water colors, drawing paper, paintbrushes, glasses for preparing the colors
- Colored paper, pencils, scissors, glue

Prior preparation:

- Gathering information about the participants (clinical diagnoses; psychological and defectologists reports; adaptive behavior reports, individual education plans, etc.)
- Preparation of participants for new activities, less known materials, new teachers and different social situations
- Structuring the environment for the workshops (formation of consistent work stations for each individual; placing necessary visual cues for orientation in the room, placing the materials in an organized and accessible way, enabling space and materials for sensory breaks, etc.)

SESSION 1-3: Working with clay

	Activities
Session 1	Getting to know the material: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• feeling the texture and quality of clay• pressing clay with hands and fingers• shaping balls using both hands• rolling the balls on the surface exchanging hands
Session 2	Using wooden modeling tools of various shapes for shaping clay: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cutting mass of clay in smaller pieces• making notches into mass of clay• polishing clay
Session 3	Formation of final products: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• forming simple sculptures (large and small balls, rolls, pyramids) with hands and tools• putting the products to dry

Skills addressed: learning to work with clay and tools for shaping clay; stimulating imitation of motor movements and actions with materials; stimulating fine motor skills, pressure regulation and hand-eye coordination; learning to pay attention and follow simple verbal or nonverbal directions; learning to accept new teachers, less known materials and different social situations; strengthening self-care skills (to wash and clear up after the session), etc.

During formation of final products teachers are always fostering own creativity and expressiveness of the participants.



SESSION 4-7: Painting

	Activities
Session 4	Getting to know the materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• preparing water colors in small glasses (squeezing the colors from the tubes into the glasses, mixing them with water, stirring them with paintbrushes)• drawing vertical and horizontal lines and spots on dry paper
Session 5	Painting on wet paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• coloring whole surface of the paper with 1 color• coloring half of the paper with one color and half with a different color
Session 6	Painting on wet paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• coloring simple shapes (circles, squares) with different colors• interchanging colors on the paper
Session 7	Formation of final products: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• paintings on dry and wet paper using elementary colors (with teachers help)• placing the paintings on the shelves to dry

Skills addressed: learning to paint with water colors on dry and wet paper; strengthening attention span; strengthening fine motor skills; learning to pay attention and follow simple verbal or nonverbal directions; learning how to accept help; strengthening self-care skills (to wash and clear up after the session), etc.

During formation of final products teachers are always fostering own creativity and expressiveness of the participants.



SESSION 8-10: Paper Collage

	Activities
Session 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• drawing simple shapes with pencils on the colored paper (with teachers help)
Session 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cutting out the shapes with scissors (with teachers help)
Session 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• putting the glue on the shapes and sticking them on a common larger piece of colored paper (group work)

Skills addressed: learning to work with scissors and glue; strengthening fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination; learning to pay attention and follow simple verbal or nonverbal directions; learning how to accept help; increasing social interchange; strengthening self-care skills (to wash and clear up after the session), etc.



Monitoring and evaluating our success:

During the workshops we can observe and evaluate the participants' interest in the tasks, progress in managing different tasks and progress of different skills being addressed during the sessions. The evaluation process is always accompanied with positive reinforcement (verbal or nonverbal praise; sensory breaks, etc.).

Including parents or caregivers:

In the workshop plan we could also include some activities with participants' parents or caregivers. Parents can act as mentors to their child and guide them through different tasks. Teachers can also arrange team meetings with the parents and inform them about the art activities going on and about the progress of the participants.

The final products:

- sculptures
- paintings
- paper collages



We must also consider organizing small local exhibitions, where the final products could be seen by broader public.

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