

Testimony submitted via email.

I am writing to object to the amendments of this bill that would allow for non-art therapists to use the title of art therapy in their practice.

I have seen the healing power of art therapy. With anything that truly has power comes great responsibility. Art therapy is not adding water color or crayons to other modalities of treatment, it is a therapeutic approach all its own that required me to go to two years of graduate school full time including research papers, fieldwork, practicum, thesis papers and weekly supervision to begin to recognize the power and complexity of art therapy. I am still paying off my debt for this degree I earned and constantly defending this field as more than touchy feely additions to other therapy. Even after graduation, I spent years in weekly supervision as I gained my hours necessary to become a registered art therapist. I have also done my 2,400 hours required to become a licensed clinical counselor. I want to serve as a bridge between these two modalities of traditional talk therapy and art therapy. I see myself as bi-lingual in the therapeutic world and have witnessed my clients emerge from their trauma and loss through art therapy approaches that talk therapy could not address. When words are not enough, art connects and heals.

With my education and experience comes a great ethical responsibility to protect art therapy as a legitimate field of its own. The use of art can often bring up and expose vulnerabilities, trauma, emotions and thoughts that talk therapy leaves covered or hidden. Therefore, it is highly important for the person administering the art to be trained in art assessment, diagnosis and use of material to ensure that the client remains as protected and safe as possible and not overexposed. I have worked with people who tell me they “do art therapy.” They have no formal training; they do not know the ethical guidelines for art therapy and are not under art therapy supervision. This would be as if I liked to talk to people about their feelings and had no training and went around saying I was a psychologist.

Yes, I believe art is for everyone and is innately healing. No, I do not support this bill that would minimize all of the work, time, money I have put into the field of art therapy as its own legitimate entity. Please do not approve this bill that would force art therapists like me to pay for **another** annual fee to practice without any benefit, as it will still allow non-art therapists to use the term without any training or fee. Without changing the amendments, this bill does not make sense; it further confuses the difference between art and clinical art psycho-therapy.

Thank you for your time and reading this.

If you have any further questions please contact me at whitnehall@gmail.com

Best,

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