

# Coloring books for adults

*Creativity applied to fear (Activity 10/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

Art therapy is a proven way to tackle strong negative emotions, including fear. It is a way to relax and make your mind free from worries. This is a technique recommended by psychologists for people who suffer from various problems, such as fear. This activity does not require any drawing or painting skills – an elaborated drawing is already prepared, and what the person has to do is to fill it with colors according to their imagination.

Why does this activity have to be performed? While we are doing this activity, attention flows away from ourselves. A simple act, such as coloring, takes your attention away from yourself (and those things that are stressing you out!) and onto the present-moment event. In this way, it is very much like a meditative exercise. It relaxes the brain. When thoughts are focused on this simple activity, your brain tends to relax. You're not disturbed by your own thoughts and appraisals, the doctors say.

In a 2006 study, researchers found that mindfulness art therapy was helpful to people coping with such conditions as depression, fear, anxiety, addictions and trauma.

## OBJECTIVES

1. This activity will help participants to relax, feel calm and peaceful
2. It will help them distract from things that produce fear
3. It will help develop their creative skills in painting, color combinations, etc.
4. As a result, they will have beautiful paintings created by themselves that can be placed in their rooms, and, for sure, will cheer them up any time they look at it

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

1. Sheets of paper (to try out markers, etc.)
2. Coloured pencils, pens, markers...
3. Special colouring books for adults

## IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

In the beginning, it will be crucial to create a friendly atmosphere, as a prerequisite for participants relaxation. The moderator can put on some music (classical music or some ballads, but these must be soothing and relaxing.)

Then the colouring books should be handed out. Timing to color it will depend on the picture, it might take from 2 to 8 hours, so in case really sophisticated sketches, two sessions should be provided.

The participants should paint with tranquility and without rush, with some soothing music in the background. The length of the session should not be more than 2 hours, and it will be useful to provide a break after one hour to perform a quick physical exercise, and share impressions from the painting activity.

## POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

A modification of this activity can be a more advanced coloring book that contains not only sketches to paint, but also motivating quotes. An alternative to painting can be clay molding – though this is a more advance activity, and needs a moderator who can explain how to do it.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- We expect the participants to get more relaxed during this activity
- They will be distracted from the constant thoughts on the source of their fear, and look at it from another angle
- They will develop creativity
- They will produce a beautiful picture



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