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Opportunities / *The art of therapy*

by Terri Mrosko

Mrosko is a free-lance writer

Gretchen Miller, MA, ATR-BC, is a registered and board-certified art therapist at Community Health Partners in Elyria where she practices art therapy in the children's bereavement program to help grieving children and teens cope with the death of a loved one.

"Being an art therapist can be a rewarding and meaningful career choice. You help people of all ages communicate emotions, thoughts, resolve conflicts, and cope with powerful personal experiences through art-making and the creative process," she says.

Q: What are the opportunities in this field of work?

A: Opportunities for art therapists are many and keep growing. Art therapists work in settings such as hospitals, shelters, schools, prisons, hospices, community-based or social services programs, and inpatient or outpatient mental health agencies.

Q: What are the typical requirements for employment?

A: Entry level requirement is a master's degree in art therapy from a program approved by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). Those entering a graduate art therapy program have a strong undergraduate background in studio art and psychology. Obtaining recognized art therapy credentials and additional licensure as a counselor can assist with the choices of employment opportunities available to art therapists.

Q: What are the frustrations?

A: Like many states in the U.S., art therapists are not licensed in the State of Ohio nor have title protection. Obtaining title protection and art therapy licensure assures consumers and the public that services they receive are from a qualified



art therapist with the appropriate education and training.

Q: What changes do you think are coming?

A: Many art therapists are becoming dual credentialed as both licensed and/or board certified art therapists and licensed as professional or mental health counselors. AATA is working with states on reciprocity of education and experience, as well as acceptance of the ATCB Certification

Examination, as the licensing vehicle.

Q: What does it take to succeed?

A: Being empathetic with the ability to develop rapport and carefully observe or listen to what a client is expressing through his/her art expressions and verbalizations. Flexibility, perseverance, professionalism, and self-care to avoid burn-out or professional distress due to the stressfulness of working with challenging populations and issues are equally important.