

Mental Health Matters: Strategies for Teens

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AutismONTARIO

Presenters



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Agenda

- Lifestyle strategies
- Collaborative Problem-Solving strategies
- Brain and body strategies
 - Sensory strategies
 - Mindfulness
 - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
 - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Creative arts strategies

Strategy Considerations

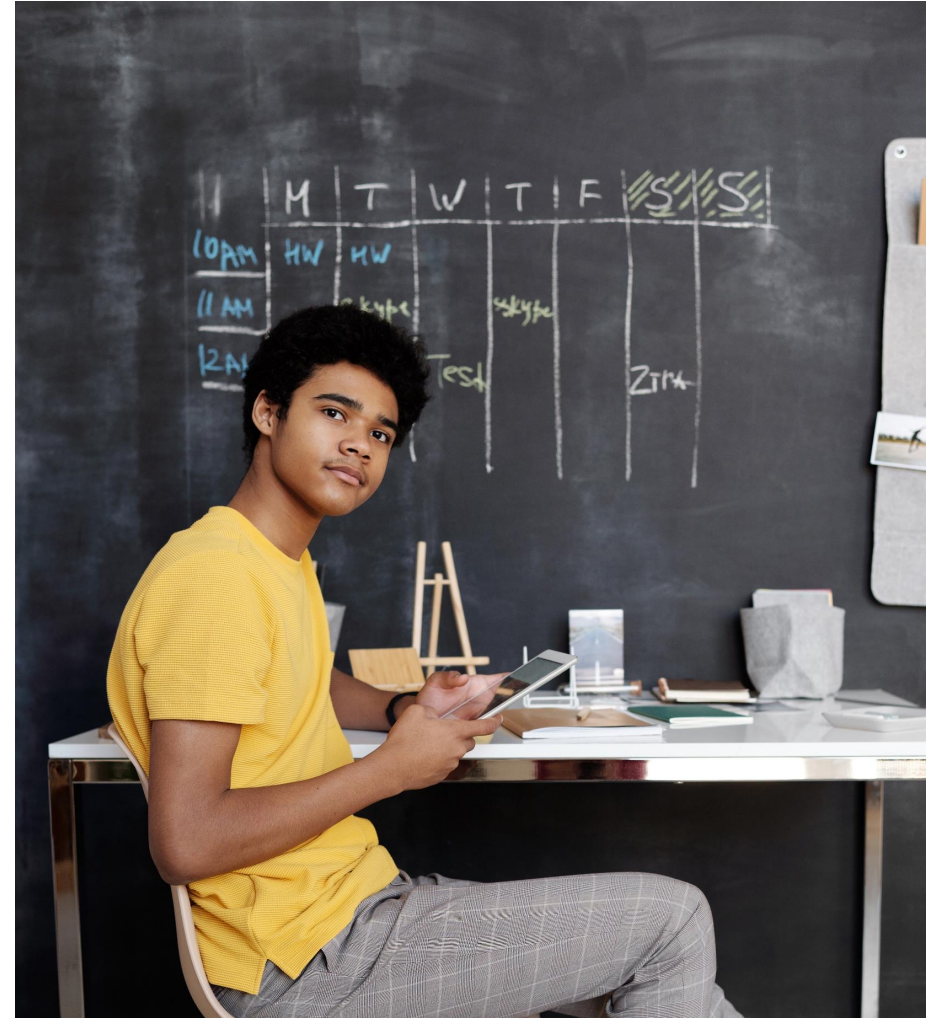
- Lifestyle strategies vs. brain and body strategies
- Record keeping

Keep in mind, that change takes time!



Lifestyle Strategies

- Predictable schedule
- Visuals:
 - Communicate clear expectations
 - Changes in schedule



Lifestyle Strategies

- Planning our day:
 - High energy vs. low energy activities
- Managing transitions:
 - Clear communication
 - Planning ahead



Lifestyle Strategies- Screen Time

Considerations:

- Type of screen time
- Content quality
- Engagement and participation with family and friends
- Length of screen time



Collaborative Proactive Solutions



Gather Information

Define Your Concerns

Agree on a Solution

For more information on
Collaborative and
Proactive Solutions:

- [Understanding
Challenging Behaviour
Webinar](#)

Brain/Body Strategies- Sensory

“Sensory strategies can help teens “stay calm and self-regulated in order to focus, attend, listen, and participate”

(Biel, 2017)

- [What is Stimming?](#)



Mindfulness Strategies

Mindfulness: an approach to mental health where people are trained to pay attention to the moment and bring awareness to their bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts, and senses.



Mindfulness Strategies

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Use this calming technique to help you reconnect to the present by exploring the five senses.

5

Things you
can **SEE**



4

Things you
can **TOUCH**



3

Things you
can **HEAR**



2

Things you
can **SMELL**



1

Thing you
can **TASTE**



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

ACT: an emerging field of practice for autistic individuals and their family where the goal is for people to embrace their thoughts, feelings, and experiences



Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

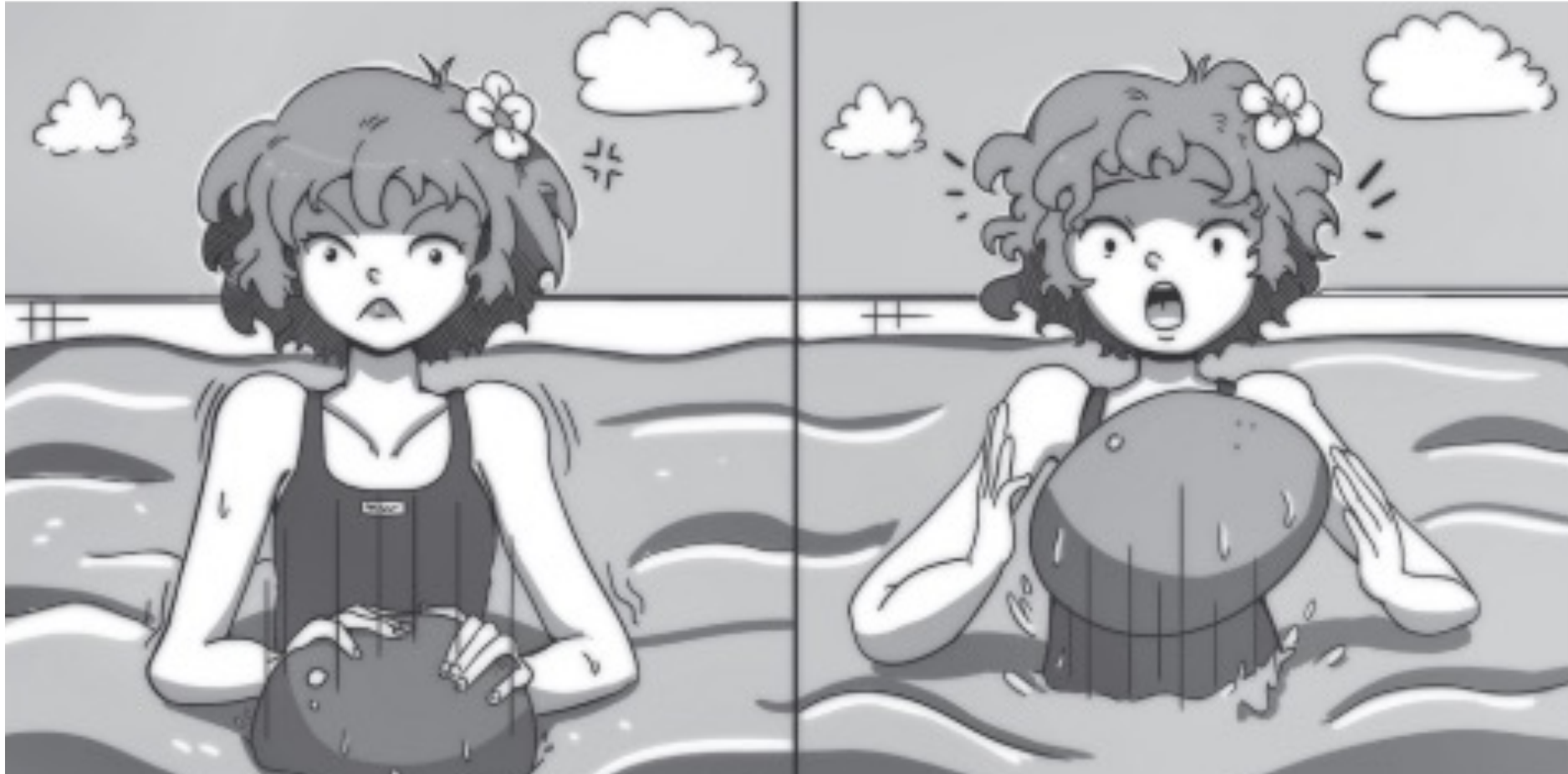
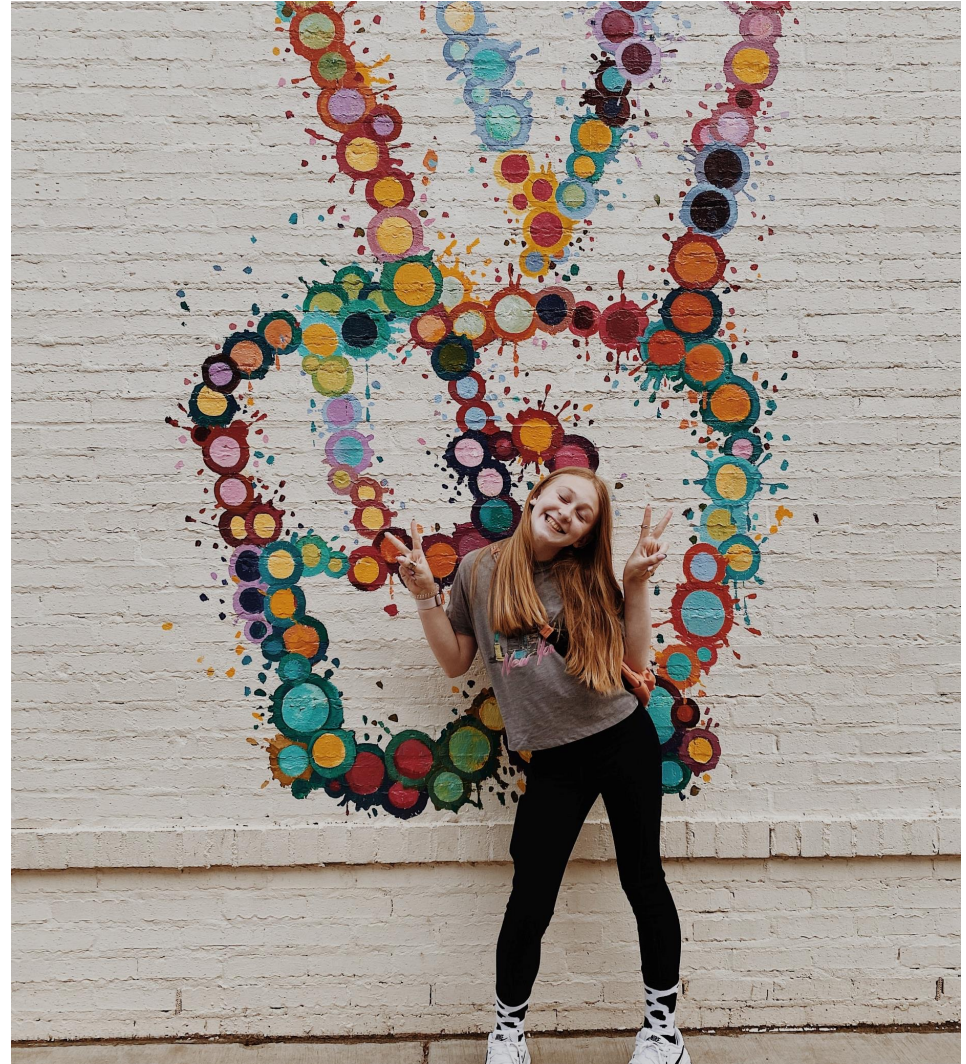


Image from “Helping Autistic Teens to Manage Their Anxiety: Strategies and Worksheets using CBT, DBT, and ACT Skills” by Theresa Kidd

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

CBT: teaches people to pay attention to their thoughts and feelings, noticing when things are escalating, and using strategies to change their behaviour



Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

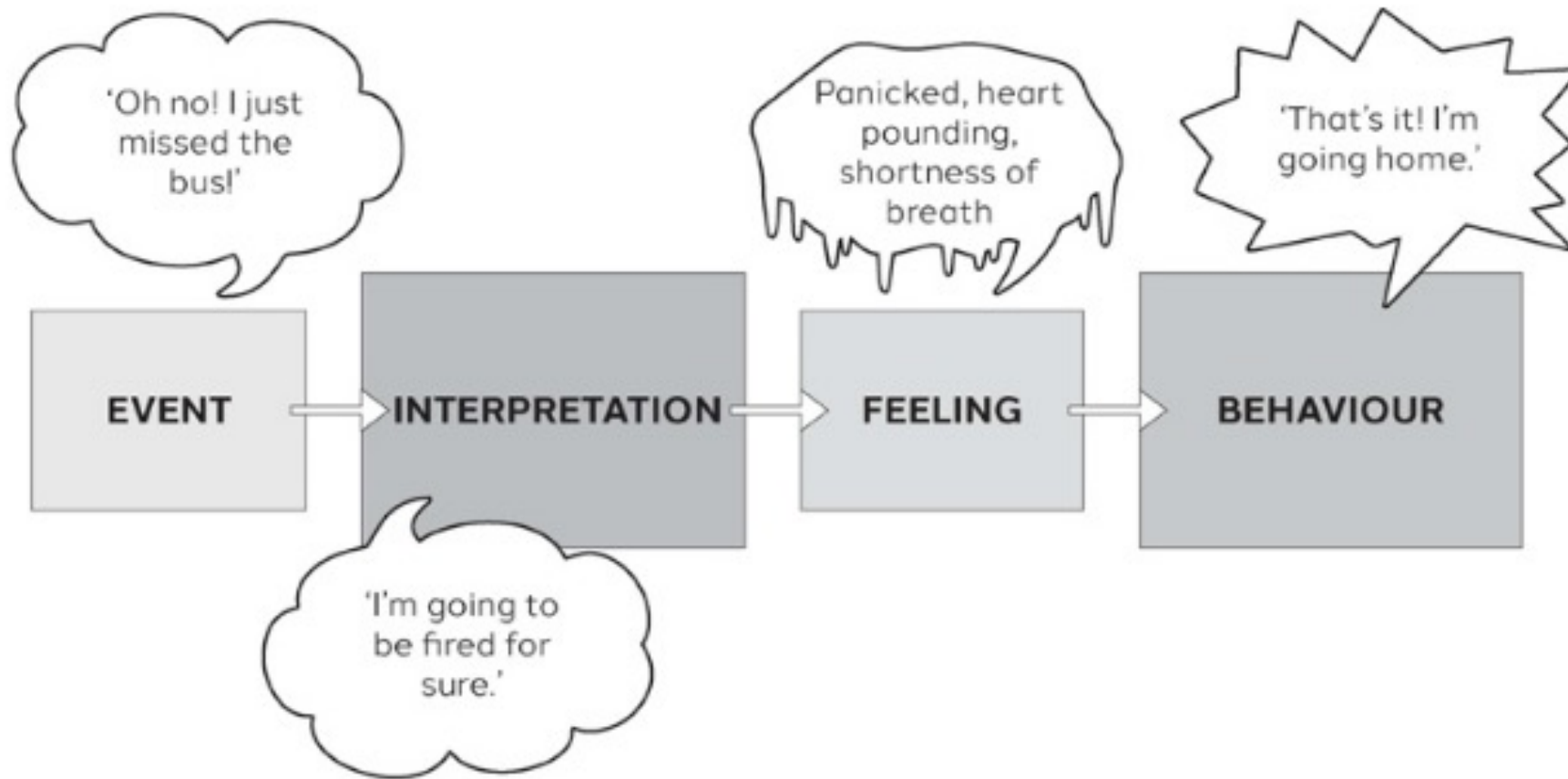


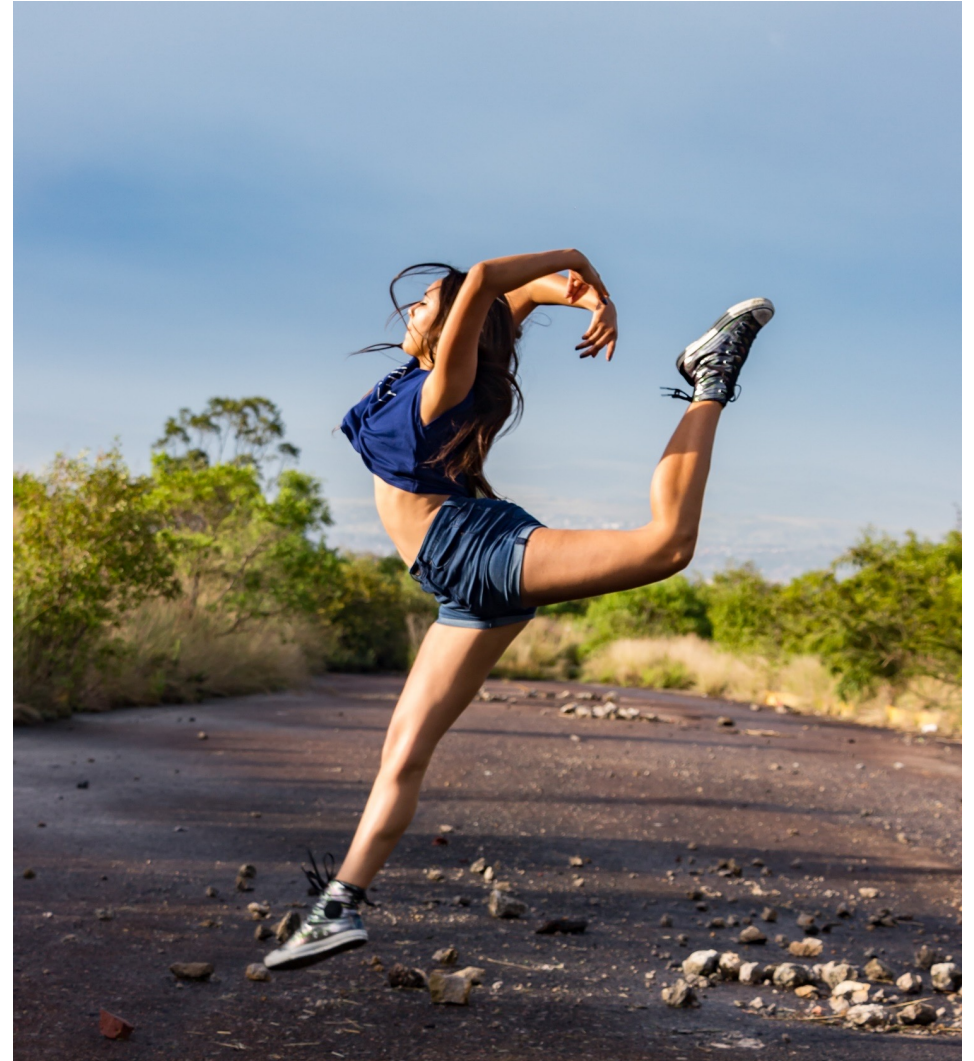
Figure 5.1: The way that we interpret an event impacts on how we feel about it and how we respond

Image from “Helping Autistic Teens to Manage Their Anxiety: Strategies and Worksheets using CBT, DBT, and ACT Skills” by Theresa Kidd

Creative Art Strategies

Art therapies: aim to improve self-esteem and coping skills and minimize stress

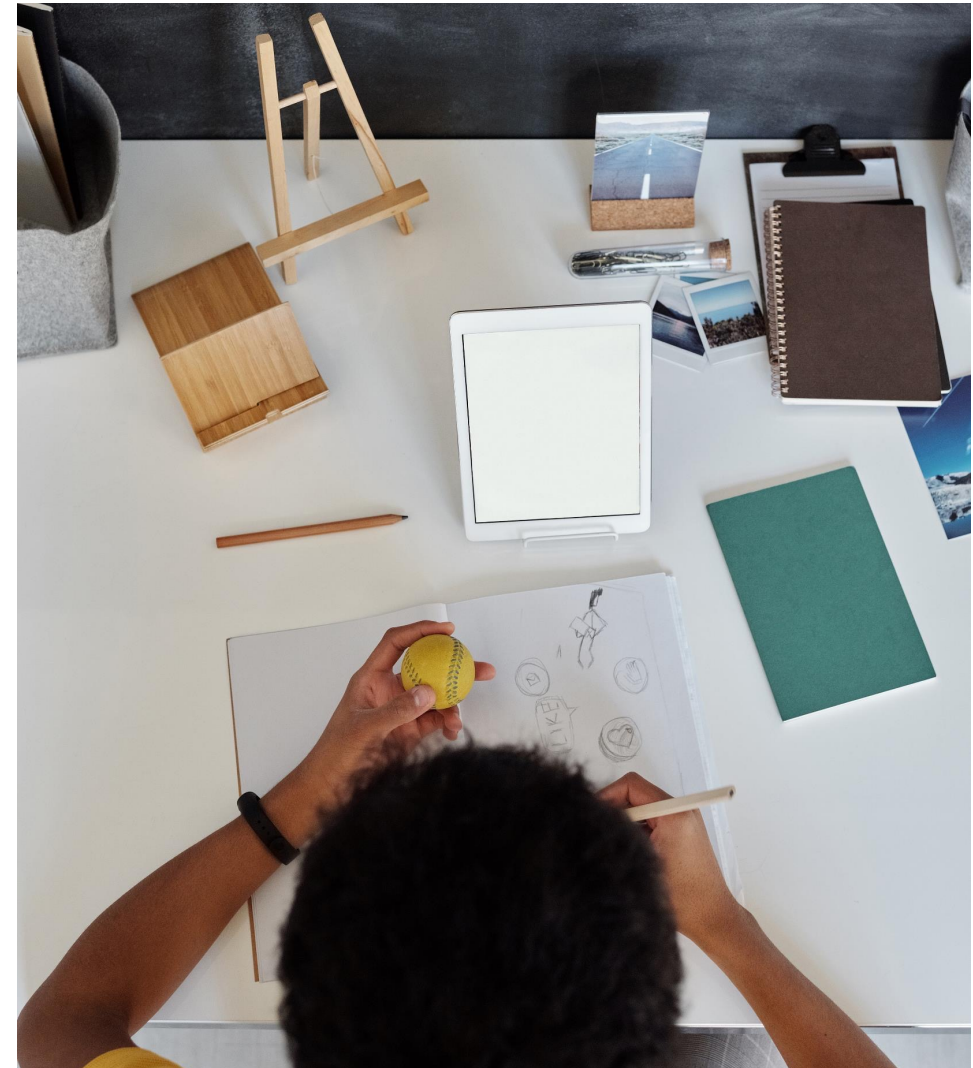
- Creative art therapies include drama, music, dance, photography, and visual arts



Creative Art Strategies

Things to try:

- Journaling
- Mandalas
- Taking pictures
- Drawing/sketching



“The word ‘autistic’ is not placing limits on my abilities- it’s giving me permission to continue to be as different and as creative and as genuine as I can be, knowing that is who I was meant to be in the first place”.

– Abigail Balfe

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