

ATCBE Exam Specification Framework

Fifteen percent (15%, n=30) of the 200 items on each version (form) of the ATCBE are to be unscored items (field items). Of the 170 scored items 40% (n=68) are to be used as linking items. The distribution of items on each version (form) of the ATCBE is presented below.

Content Outline Category	Number of Tasks	Proportion of Tasks	Unscored Items	Scored Items			Total Items
				Linking	New	Total	
I. Theoretical Approaches	16	12.8 (13)	4	8.8 (9)	13	22.1 (22)	26
II. Intake and Evaluation	27	21.6 (22)	5	15.2 (15)	23	37.4 (38)	44
III. Assessment and Evaluation Instruments	12	9.6 (10)	4	6.8 (7)	10	17	21
IV. Diagnoses and Populations	21	16.8 (16*)	4	10.8 (11)	16	27.2(27)	31
V. Art Therapy Environment	8	6.4 (6)	4	4	6	10.2 (10)	14
VI. Professional Practice and Ethics	17	13.6 (14)	4	9.6 (9*)	15	23.8 (24)	28
VII. Clinical Skills and Application	24	19.2 (19)	5	12.8 (13)	19	32.3 (32)	36
Total	125	100	30	68	102	170	200

Note. Values in parentheses are rounded. In some instances, rounded numbers resulted in values that exceeded the parameters of the specification. In those instances, the value was not rounded to the next whole number and is identified with an asterisk (*).

ATCBE Content Outline, Implemented November 2017

I. Theoretical Approaches

Understanding of theoretical approaches in the art therapy treatment process

- A. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- B. Trauma-informed Therapy
- C. Humanistic
- D. Existential/Spiritual/Transpersonal
- E. Psychodynamic
- F. Family Systems
- G. Positive Psychology
- H. Solution-Focused
- I. Attachment Theory
- J. Developmental
- K. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- L. Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- M. Group Therapy Theory
- N. Art Therapy Theory
- O. Jungian
- P. Behavioral

II. Intake and Evaluation

Gathering and applying information needed for treatment planning and ongoing evaluation

- A. Evaluate reason for referral
- B. Collaborate with client regarding the treatment plan
- C. Observe dynamics of the session (e.g., affect, behavior, and/or, interpersonal interactions)
- D. Accommodate clients' communication and learning styles (e.g., language barriers, kinesthetic)
- E. Administer an informal art therapy assessment
- F. Evaluate art product, process, and other data derived from the assessment
- G. Analyze and interpret results (e.g., process, formal elements, content)
- H. Use projective drawing assessments (e.g., House-Tree-Person, Kinetic Family Drawing)
- I. Select the appropriate art therapy assessment
- J. Conduct mental status examination
- K. Determine the need for an art therapy assessment

- L. Determine current level of functioning and mental status
- M. Evaluate risk of harm to self and/or others
- N. Provide the client with clear guidelines for participation (e.g., use of materials, interpersonal behaviors, confidentiality, and other ethical/legal considerations)
- O. Obtain demographic information and relevant history
- P. Introduce the art therapy process
- Q. Evaluate appropriateness of art therapy
- R. Address the client's treatment needs by selecting initial interventions
- S. Formulate initial art therapy treatment plan and goals
- T. Refer for additional evaluations/services by other professionals
- U. Evaluate and address client's evolving treatment needs by continually adapting interventions
- V. Modify art therapy goals as necessary
- W. Determine client termination criteria
- X. Assess client's development phases (e.g., cognitive, psychosocial) through art and behavior
- Y. Coordinate treatment plan with relevant professionals
- Z. Obtain and review relevant records from other professionals
- AA. Review and obtain informed consent and release of information forms

III. Assessment and Evaluation Instruments

Knowledge and competence in the application of specific assessment and evaluation instruments

- A. Bridge Drawing
- B. Kinetic-Family-Drawing (KFD)
- C. House-Tree-Person (HTP)/Kinetic House-Tree-Person (K-H-T-P)
- D. Lowenfeld Developmental Stages of Art
- E. Person Picking an Apple from a Tree (PPAT)
- F. Bird's Nest Drawing (BND)
- G. Draw-A-Person-In-The-Rain (DAP-R, PIR)
- H. Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC)
- I. Draw-A-Story (DAS)
- J. Diagnostic Drawing Series (DDS)
- K. Road Drawing
- L. Administer a formal art therapy assessment

IV. Diagnoses and Populations

Knowledge of characteristics and needs of specific diagnoses and populations

- A. Anxiety Disorders
- B. Depressive Disorders
- C. Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders
- D. Bipolar and Related Disorders
- E. Disruptive, Impulsive Control and Conduct Disorders
- F. Personality Disorders
- G. Neuro developmental Disorders (e.g., ASD, ADHD)
- H. Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders
- I. Substance Related and Addictive Disorders
- J. Psychotic Disorders
- K. Medical Conditions
- L. Feeding and Eating Disorders
- M. Neurocognitive Disorders (e.g., Delirium, Dementia)
- N. General Population
- O. Trauma/Victims of Crime/Violence
- P. Grief, Loss, and Bereavement
- Q. Multi-cultural families
- R. Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Ally (LGBTQQIA)
- S. Dual Diagnosis/MICA
- T. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- U. Understand current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual diagnoses

V. Art Therapy Environment

Creating and maintaining a safe and secure therapeutic environment

- A. Management of created art therapy products (e.g., label, photograph, store)
- B. Maintain a physically safe environment regarding art materials (e.g., monitor sharps, select non-toxic materials)
- C. Select, organize, and maintain art supplies appropriate to setting
- D. Provide a therapeutic environment conducive to making art (e.g., create an inviting atmosphere)
- E. Seek to provide an appropriate physical space (e.g., proper ventilation, lighting and access to water)
- F. Provide secure storage for the created work
- G. Ensure that universal precautions are utilized in the work environment (e.g., body fluids)
- H. Develop risk assessment and emergency intervention procedures

VI. Professional Practice and Ethics

Art Therapy practice within the scope of legal and ethical guidelines

- A. Use research and additional resources to guide practice (e.g., professional literature, Internet)
- B. Participate in case presentation/clinical team meetings
- C. Prepare necessary reports for agencies, collaborating professionals, and funding sources
- D. Privacy and confidentiality
- E. Relationships and boundaries
- F. Responsibility to the art therapy profession
- G. Credential maintenance
- H. Multicultural competence
- I. Awareness of state and federal laws
- J. Record keeping and billing
- K. Use of/reproduction or exhibition of client art therapy data
- L. Electronic communication services
- M. Professional disciplinary procedures
- N. Advertising and social media
- O. Research and dissemination
- P. Maintain clinical documentation
- Q. Seek supervision and professional consultation as needed

VII. Clinical Skills and Application

Provision of services that encompass all aspects the therapeutic process

- A. Establish therapeutic relationship
- B. Provide empathy and validation
- C. Facilitate the creative process
- D. Apply general interviewing skills (e.g., reflective statements, summarizing, session closure)
- E. Promote client understanding of the art process and attainment of treatment goals
- F. Maintain an appropriate place for art therapy
- G. Manage group dynamics
- H. Facilitate termination of the art therapy process within the session
- I. Utilize concepts of fine arts in the art therapy process
- J. Provide crisis intervention
- K. User art therapy skills to facilitate expression and exploration of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors (e.g., witnessing, intention setting, art directives)
- L. Encourage client(s) to reflect on artwork
- M. Respond to non-verbal behavior and body language
- N. Observe and process the content of the art product through symbols, metaphors, and organization of images (e.g., Jungian, Gestalt)

- O. Observe and process the form of the art product (e.g., color, line, shading, perspective)
- P. Offer art media instruction as needed
- Q. Respond appropriately to images that suggest violence or other risk factors
- R. Connect symbols to personal, cultural and historic contexts
- S. Make art alongside client as a therapeutic intervention
- T. Evaluate clients' progress on a regular basis
- U. Assist client with aftercare planning
- V. Observe the art-making process
- W. Use of reflective art-making independently of client
- X. Select appropriate media to suit client needs