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# How art, music, dance can help combat stress

by [Faye Peterson](#) 3 min. 20.08.2021

**Arts therapy is used as a complementary remedy to help treat issues such as depression and chronic stress**



Painting is one form of art therapy  
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Music, dance, drama and visual arts are being used in Luxembourg to help adults and children combat stress and anxiety and increase their self-esteem.

Arts therapy is often used as a complementary remedy to help treat issues such as depression and chronic stress.

“The arts are a natural medium and ally for therapy,” said Christiane Baltes, committee president for Luxembourg art

therapy association, [Association Luxembourgeoise des Art-thérapeutes Dipômés](#) (ALAtD).

Arts therapists are trained in a variety of disciplines, each one specialising in a particular method, from the visual arts to music, dance or drama. Although well-versed in their specific field, therapists are not art teachers but rather understand the clinical and psychological needs of their clients' issues and how to best respond to them through the arts.

Many arts therapists work in hospitals and clinics such as the Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg in Strassen (CHL), Kirchberg hospital and the Centre Hospitalier Neuro-psychiatrique (CHNP).

The outcome of arts therapy is not measured on a scale, but on the patient's goals and objectives at the end of each session and at different times in the process.

A practitioner is an empathic, self-reflective person and responds creatively to patients' needs, said Maria D'Elia, the association's vice-president.

There is no off the peg plan and everything is tailored to the individual's needs. Although clients can choose their artistic approach, restrictions can apply if a therapy is considered counter-indicative for a certain condition. A session using art materials for a patient suffering bipolar disorder may be too stimulating, for example.

"Decisions involving both individual and group therapy depend on the therapeutic indication or the patient's demand," said association secretary, Nora Hengen.

Art therapists in private practices have not seen a steep rise in the number of people seeking therapy since the start of the pandemic, Baltes said. But over recent years, there has been a rise in demand from hospitals and childcare services, she said.

### Artistic licence

The profession of arts therapist is state-regulated in only a handful of European countries, including the UK, the Baltic States, Finland and, to a degree, Austria.

“Luxembourgish authorities are presently reluctant to formally recognise and regulate the profession,” Baltes said. “Specific supervision is missing and the lack of sound professional exchange can be very frustrating.”

Arts therapy is often misunderstood for a form of creative occupational therapy and people often use the terms educator or psychomotor therapists because of this lack of understanding and recognition, Baltes said.

As it stands today, arts therapy is not recognised by the national health service, Caisse Nationale Santé (CNS), and is therefore non-refundable for patients who are not using the therapy at a hospital or clinic.

“It is sad to see that patients, who wish to have art, music or dance therapy continue after a hospital stay, cannot often afford the services of an arts therapist in private practice,” said treasurer Saphira Schintgen.

A study commissioned by Luxembourg’s health ministry in 2019, concluded that various professions, including arts therapies, would benefit from being regulated under the framework of the health sector. The art therapy association is carrying out a survey to establish the number of active arts therapists, their profiles and the problems they face in the field in a bid to push for professional recognition.