

Professional Practice Overview

Here is a broad brushstroke describing the relationship, overlap, similarities, and differences between Art Therapy (AT), Expressive Arts (ExA), and Expressive Arts Therapy (ExAT) in Canada. In addition, we have included important information on the context of our AT/ExA/ExAT training within the field of therapeutic arts, and how we interface with the regulatory and non-regulatory bodies impacting our work, as well as the associations and organizations that actively represent therapists by building solid relationships with regulators and government.

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1. What is Art Therapy?

Art Therapy is a mental health profession and healing approach that combines the development of a therapeutic relationship with the creative process inherent in all forms of visual art-making. The inherent expressive, symbolic, and reflective functions of the creative process are central to the practice of art therapy, where individuals explore arts media, the creative product, and the process of creating, as means to generate resources, process life material, and uncover and recover

strengths and gifts. Integration is supported, healing is enhanced, and development and wellness are optimized.

Art Therapy is a growing professional field in Canada, yet the use of symbol, metaphor, image, and art making as ceremony, is as old as time immemorial. Many First Peoples and cultures have used art making in many forms, including the use of the visual imagery as medicine and for healing purposes. WHEAT graduates are supported to connect to their own unique gifts and ancestral and cultural knowledge to develop their therapeutic practice and their final research projects/theses. Students' practicum and research experiences steer their professional development and careers in exciting and unique ways. Many graduates have gone on to establish successful private practices, worked in agencies, and participated in creative, collaborative, projects within the intersection of Education, Health, and Community Wellness across Canada and North America!

The WHEAT Art Therapy Diploma and Dual Art & Expressive Arts Therapy Diploma support students in learning the foundational knowledge and competencies necessary to practice as confident and capable Art Therapists. The coursework at WHEAT meets the requirements set by The Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA), which is a Professional Association that oversees the education and practice of Art Therapy across Canada. To be a Professional or Registered member of CATA, one must have graduated from an art therapy program that meets CATA'S education standards. Read further about CATA here:

<https://www.canadianarttherapy.org/>



2. Art Therapy Framework and Canadian Art Therapy Association (CATA)

Professional Associations like CATA act in the best interest of their professional members by representing the profession in the workforce in a positive light. Regulatory Colleges/bodies act in the best interest of and serve the public. Professional Associations are not Regulatory Bodies; each differs in purpose, structure, and governance.

Membership with a Professional Association, like CATA, is voluntary but strongly encouraged to grow professional representation in the field across sectors; it provides its members with opportunities for networking and professional development, and welcomes student members. Professional Associations like CATA ensure that members adhere to a certain set of professional and ethical standards of practice and are governed by a board of directors across regions or provinces who are associated with the professional field (not lay members of the public); they do the important work of creating standards of practice and ethics, and lobbying with policymakers for the advancement of the profession.

A student studying Art Therapy at WHEAT may register as a Student Member with CATA, which includes benefits like being part of the larger professional group of Art Therapists, access to the CATA Bi-Annual Academic Journal and British Art Therapy Association Journal, as well as reduced fees to the annual Art Therapy Conference that CATA hosts. Once a student has graduated successfully from WHEAT, with completion of all outstanding practicum hours, clinical supervision, and final project or thesis, one can apply to be a Professional Member of CATA.

Professional art therapists are those who have completed an art therapy postgraduate training that meets the education standards of CATA-ACAT. They abide by the CATA-ACAT Standards of Practice. These members usually receive supervision from an RCAT Member for their professional development, growth, and eventual registration. They may also purchase liability insurance through CATA.

CATA Categories of Membership:

<https://www.canadianarttherapy.org/membership>

Once you are a Professional Art Therapist working in the field, you can begin working towards accruing practice hours and clinical supervision post-graduation to apply towards becoming a [Registered Canadian Art Therapist \(RCAT\)](#) with CATA. This requires a Professional Member with CATA to have accrued 1000 direct client contact hours and associated 50 clinical supervision hours, post completed studies in a recognized Art Therapy Diploma program or Graduate program. As a Registered Canadian Art Therapist, you can use RCAT as a post-nominal designation. RCATS have a designated registration number and abide by the CATA-ACAT Standards of Practice. Registration with a professional association is increasingly being requested for employment in health practice. Registration indicates you are a Professional Member in good standing, have received additional training in your profession, received clinical supervision (50 hours for 1000 client contact hours) beyond graduation, display involvement in the art therapy community, and are committed to ongoing professional development.

CATA offers an annual conference:

<https://www.canadianarttherapy.org/conference>

3. What is Expressive Arts and Expressive Arts Therapy?

Expressive Arts includes intermodal arts-based approaches that engage and support participants through a process of creative expression to help them reconnect with their inner resources. The field includes two separate but related disciplines of Expressive Arts and Expressive Arts Therapy. Both fields offer

interventions that integrate the use of visual arts, creative writing, drama, music, voice, and movement as catalysts for personal inquiry, discovery, and growth. Expressive Arts Therapists' training includes an expansive array of courses providing grounding in practice as a therapist including history and theory, ethics, assessment, and documentation to name a few, and includes a final project or thesis, as well as an extensive supervised practicum experience. Expressive Arts graduates are not trained to be therapists.



The Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association (OEATA) provides support for both Expressive Arts Practitioners and Expressive Arts Therapists who can become members of their associations.

4. ExA/ExAT Framework

The framework of Expressive Arts Therapy finds roots in many modern modalities such as: humanistic, arts-based, experiential, phenomenological, relational, Rogerian, person centred, existential, transpersonal, and post-Jungian archetypal psychology amongst others. The Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association and the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association support students and practitioners in this field with professional development opportunities, conferences, and networking by becoming a member. IEATA also provides a


registration process whereby applicants can be assessed to receive either the REAT or REACE credential.



5. Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association (OEATA)

OEATA Categories of Membership:

<https://oeata.ca/membership/membership-fees/>

	<p>Membership Categories & Fees - Ontario Expressive Arts Therapy Association</p> <p>OEATA Membership Categories and Fees All Professional Member Categories – \$85 Expressive Arts Therapist (ExAT) Refers to one who has fulfilled the requirements of an OEATA recognized EXAT training program, who may or may not perform the regulated act of psychotherapy and who is actively working in the field as an EXAT in Canada. Creative Arts-Based Therapist Refers to ... Membership Categories & Fees Read More »</p> <p>oeata.ca</p>
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ExA or EAP = Represents an Expressive Arts Practitioner and reflects a brief training of less than a year. A professional with registration in a College that falls under the Regulated Health professions Act may use ExA in their title. Community based artists with this level of training can use this descriptor in their title.

ExAT = Represents Expressive Arts Therapist and reflects a comprehensive psychotherapy training (2 years +). This designation qualifies the student to register with a regulatory College if the institute is recognized.

Professional Member is someone who either has the comprehensive ExAT training or already has a Masters degree in a Creative Arts Therapy plus additional ExA training.

Read further about OEATA here: <https://oeata.ca/about/>

If you have questions, reach out to Terri Robertson, Past President here:
info@oeata.ca

OEATA has a dynamic calendar of monthly events and workshops:
<https://oeata.ca/events/month/>

Membership with a **Professional Association**, (eg. OEATA/CATA) offers, amongst many other benefits, (see [Member Benefits](#) at this link) the opportunity to apply for liability insurance which is a prerequisite to registering individually with a regulated College.

6. Canadian Expressive Arts Therapies Association (CEATA)

CEATA is a Canada wide container for all expressive therapy associations who would otherwise not have a national voice. The first goal for CEATA is to establish Educational Standards for Expressive Arts Therapists.


President - Terri Robertson info@oeata.ca
Vice-President - Marilyn Oladimeji
Secretary - Miriam Duff - WHEAT Graduate
Treasurer - Valerie Mason-John

7. International Expressive Arts Therapy Association IEATA (REACE & REAT Registration)

You may submit an application to be assessed by the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association in order to register as either a Consultant Educator (REACE) or Expressive Arts Therapist (REAT). The links to registration information follow.

Expressive Arts Consultant Educator REACE <https://www.ieata.org/what-is-reace>

Expressive Arts Therapist REAT <https://www.ieata.org/what-is-reat>

	<p>REAT Registered Expressive Arts Therapist REAT (Registered Expressive Arts Therapist) www.ieata.org</p>
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Learn more about IEATA here: <https://www.ieata.org/>

Reach out to join in our Canadian community of Expressive Arts Practitioners, Consultant Educators and Therapists. Workshops and networking opportunities are available. The IEATA Canadian Regional Representative is WHEAT Graduate, Frieda Lepp-Kaethler: <https://www.ieata.org/regional-groups-canada>

8. Related Information about Professional Associations

Professional Associations like CATA act in the best interest of their professional members by representing the profession in the workforce in a positive light. Regulatory Colleges/bodies act in the best interest of and serve the public. Professional Associations are not Regulatory Bodies; each differs in purpose, structure, and governance.

Membership with a Professional Association, like CATA, is voluntary but strongly encouraged to grow professional representation in the field across sectors; it provides its members with opportunities for networking and professional development and welcomes student members. Professional Associations like CATA ensure that members adhere to a certain set of professional and ethical standards of practice and are governed by a board of directors across regions or provinces who are associated with the professional field (not lay members of the

public); they do the important work of creating standards of practice, ethics, and lobbying with policymakers for the advancement of the profession.

Therapy is currently a self-regulated field in Canada, which means the government has delegated its regulatory authority to those with the specialized knowledge required to do the job. A self-regulatory profession protects the public interests by setting standards of competency and conduct, and disciplines members that fail to meet them.

Regulatory Bodies/ Colleges serve and act in the best interest of the public and are led by a council of members that include a mix of lay representation by members of the public as well as professional members. Council members are located in and specific to a single region or province (for example, council members would be located in Alberta only versus across Canada). Regulatory Bodies/ Colleges develop standards of practice that their registered membership must adhere to and membership is mandatory in order to serve the public with a protected title such as psychotherapist. Regulatory Bodies/Colleges' main priority is to protect the public, ensuring that the public is served by a registered member in good standing with the Regulatory Body/College, who is sanctioned to use any protected titles in the field and possesses the professional competencies laid out by the Regulatory Body/ College to provide restricted activities. In these ways, Regulatory Bodies/ Colleges develop, maintain, and enforce professional regulations, standards of practice, and codes of ethics.

Restricted activities are high-risk activities performed as part of providing a health service that requires specific competencies and skills to be carried out safely. Restricted activities are not linked to any specific health profession, and a number of regulated health professionals may perform a particular restricted activity. Regulated professionals who have the competencies required to perform a restricted activity safely and effectively are authorized to provide the restricted activity identified in their profession's regulation. The provision of psychotherapy

in any form, including Art Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy, demands a high standard of competency to ensure public safety.

A major responsibility of regulatory colleges is to investigate complaints about regulated members and impose disciplinary sanctions if appropriate. Regulatory colleges are not the same as professional associations and are also not post-secondary institutions; they have powers and authorities for self-governance, whose primary role is to advance the interests of health professions. Regulatory Bodies/ Colleges liaise with the Government and have gone through the lengthy process of receiving royal assent and proclamation to be an operating College of Professions where such professions are recognized under the Health Professional Act in Canada as a regulated profession.

Across Canada, each province differs with regards to the Regulation of Counselling and Psychotherapy related activities. Currently, five provinces are already regulated. These are Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta, with Alberta awaiting a proclamation date, at which time the current regulatory body, ACTA, will become the CCTA - College of Counselling Therapists in Alberta. The regulated list of competencies and protected activities of these five colleges could be met by a CATA-ACAT Professional or Registered Canadian Art Therapist who has studied at one of the recognized schools which offer Art Therapy or Expressive Arts Therapies programs.

Regulatory Colleges are legally mandated to protect the public. Professional Associations protect therapists.

9. Key Points to Remember

1. Art Therapists and Expressive Arts Therapists work within a professional community of therapists who specialize in utilizing the creative arts as a

therapeutic modality along with a broader professional cohort of counselling and psychotherapy practitioners working within a health care and wellness framework.

2. After graduation, you will decide where and how you wish to practice. Your insurance, registration, and regulatory responsibilities will vary, depending upon several variables such as employer requirements or geographic location.
3. If you decide to pursue professional membership and registration with CATA and/or you are required to do so, it is your responsibility to initiate that process.
4. If you decide to pursue membership in a regulatory college and/or you are required to do so, it is your responsibility to initiate the process.
5. These processes are part of safeguarding for practitioners and for clients.
6. More experienced practitioners and supervisors are available to help and advise new practitioners as they establish their working lives.

11. FACT/PRPA

FACT/PRPA are associations of Professional Associations of Counselling Therapists or Psychotherapists, one per province, and are advocacy groups, liaisons between associations and government, and government appointed regulatory colleges, who are actively advocating on behalf of the interests of Counselling Therapists and Psychotherapists. Students and practitioners are welcome to be at the table of these advocacy groups.

Federation of Associations of Counselling Therapists-BC (**FACT-BC**)

<https://factbc.org/>

FACT BC

*The Federation of Associations for
Counselling Therapists in British Columbia*

Federation of Associations of Counselling Therapists-Manitoba (**FACT-MB**)
<https://www.fact-manitoba.org/>

Partnership of Registered Psychotherapist Associations (**PRPA**) in Ontario:
<https://prpainfo.ca/>



Accreditation is a voluntary process that colleges and universities undergo, not individuals. See more information here: [Professional Programs Accreditation.](#)

Private Colleges (eg. WHEAT, CREATE, etc) are usually in relationship with a provincial Private Colleges Act or provincial Private Vocational Institutions act (PVI). See the Private Career College Act here:
[https://www.ontario.ca/page/operating-private-career-college.](https://www.ontario.ca/page/operating-private-career-college)

WHEAT is registered as a PVI with the Manitoba government:
<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/pvi/list/index.html>

If you are in a regulated province, (See the map at the bottom of this link: <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/profession-and-regulation/>) under the **Regulated Health Professions Act** (RHPA) in your province, there may, or may not be, a regulated College for Counselling Therapy/Psychotherapy. This **RHPA** would include the colleges who are legally registered to practice in the area of the regulated Act of Counselling Therapy/Psychotherapy (this includes RN's, OT's, PsyD's, Psych Associates, MD's, and RP's). In addition, Social Workers have their own act and college.

If your province has an **RHPA** that includes counselling therapists or psychotherapists, then your training institute additionally needs to be recognized by that college (eg. in Ontario it is the [CRPO](#)).



In order for a **Regulatory College** to recognize a training program, the **Private College/Institute** needs to apply to it for recognition. This can be an out of province application.

People in unregulated provinces can become RPs through the CRPO. Further information can be found [HERE](#)

The Government of Alberta recently issued an [announcement](#) that the **College of Alberta Psychologists (ACTA)** has been asked to assume responsibility for the regulation of Counselling Therapists in Alberta. Counselling therapists commonly hold a master's degree in counselling, counselling psychology, psychology, psychotherapy, or a related field, with some having a doctoral degree. Due to Alberta's unregulated environment, there are counselling therapists who have acquired their competencies through diverse avenues and levels of education, training, experience, and supervision. Counselling therapists are already providing critical mental health services throughout Alberta. The goal would be to ensure that the current counselling therapy workforce can continue to provide these services with enhanced safety mechanisms and accountability for public protection.



In Québec the title of psychotherapist and the practice of psychotherapy are reserved. The **Ordre des psychologues du Québec** is responsible for issuing psychotherapy permits, overseeing the ongoing training of its professionals, and ensuring the rightful practice of the profession. In order to qualify for a psychotherapy permit in Québec, candidates must be members of an eligible order and hold a Master's degree in the field of mental health and human relations. They must also complete theoretical and clinical training.

Further information can be found at <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/quebec-regulation/>



www.wheatinstitute.com
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A WHEAT Art Therapy graduate may become an Art Therapist in the **Québec Art Therapy Association** ([AATQ](#)), but not an Art Psychotherapist. This applies if they study in Québec or in other provinces in the field of art therapy.