

## Empowering Through Art: A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals and Caregivers

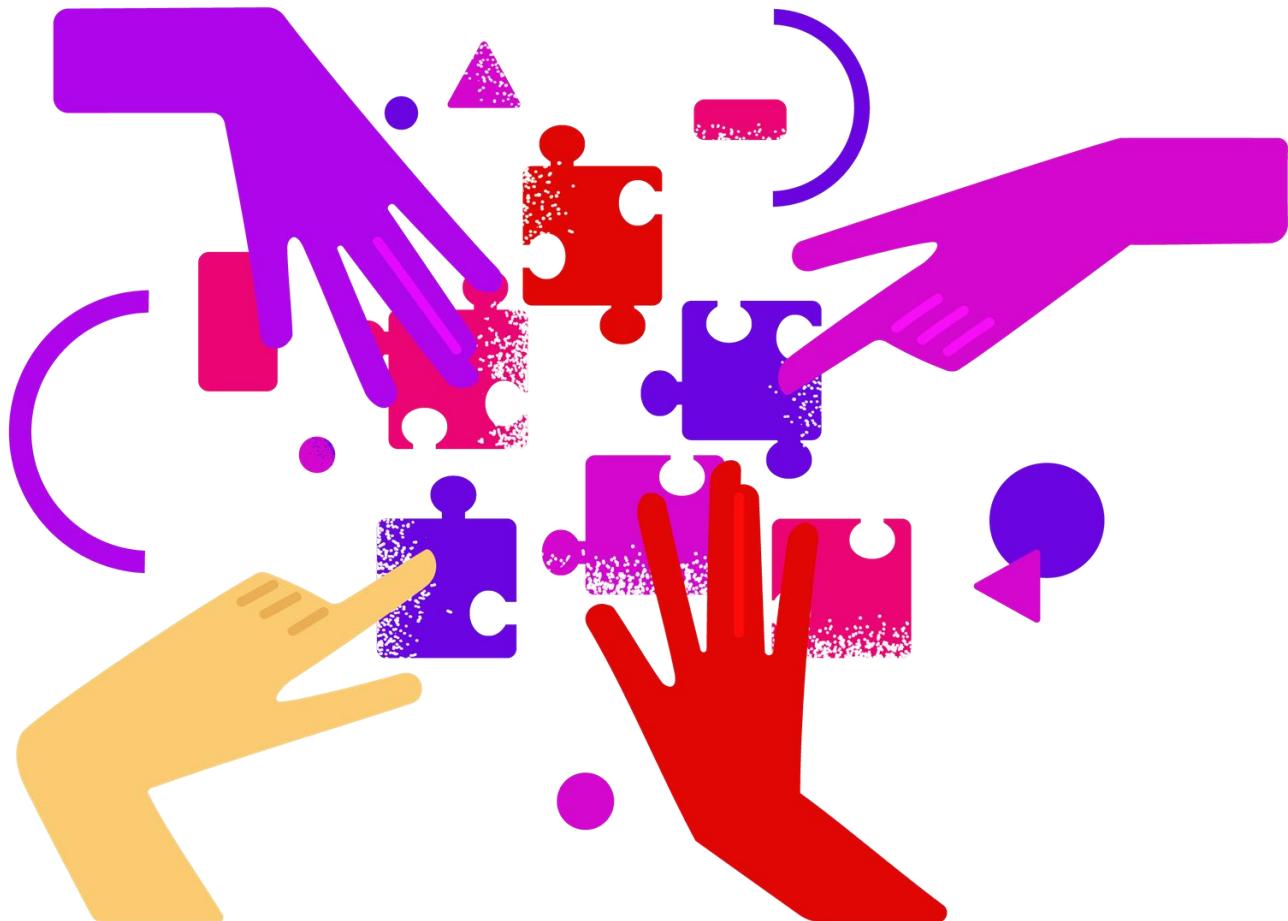
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*Promoting an Artistic Venture for  
ASD and DS*



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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

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**ARTIT**



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## Introduction to the module's objectives:

1) Exploring marketing strategies tailored to the art industry, including online platforms, social media and exhibitions.

2) Creation of a personal brand and development of an art portfolio to showcase individual work.

3) Understanding the value of networking and building relationships with potential customers and employees.

4) Collaborative initiatives for entrepreneurship and art with young people with ASD/DS

Exploring marketing strategies tailored to the art industry, including online platforms, social media and exhibitions.



- Online Platforms: Utilizing e-commerce platforms, artist websites, and online galleries to reach a global audience and facilitate sales.
- Social Media: Leveraging platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook to showcase visual content, engage with a community, and build a brand identity.
- Exhibitions: Participating in local and international art exhibitions to gain exposure, network with industry professionals, and connect with potential buyers and art enthusiasts.

Exploring marketing strategies tailored to the art industry, including online platforms, social media and exhibitions.

## Examples

- Online Platforms: For instance, platforms like Saatchi Art and Artsy have provided artists with global exposure and the ability to sell their work directly to collectors worldwide.
- Social Media: Notable artists like Banksy and Yayoi Kusama have successfully used Instagram to share their work, interact with their audience, and create a strong brand image, thereby increasing their popularity and market value.
- Exhibitions: Art events like Art Basel and the Venice Biennale have served as prominent platforms for artists to showcase their work, gain critical acclaim, and connect with influential figures in the art world.

## Creation of a personal brand and development of an art portfolio to showcase individual work.



- Personal Brand: Defining a unique artistic style, narrative, and visual identity that resonates with the target audience, creating a cohesive and recognizable brand.
- Art Portfolio: Curating a comprehensive and visually appealing portfolio that showcases the breadth and depth of one's work, highlighting versatility and skill in different mediums.

Creation of a personal brand and development of an art portfolio to showcase individual work.

## Examples

- Personal Brand: Artists like Shepard Fairey, known for his "Obey" and "Hope" campaigns, have established a distinct visual style and message, allowing their work to be instantly recognizable and sought after by collectors and enthusiasts.
- Art Portfolio: Renowned artists such as Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo have curated extensive portfolios that not only display their artistic evolution but also provide insight into their personal lives, fostering a deeper connection with their audience.

## Understanding the value of networking and building relationships with potential customers and employees.



- Personal Brand: Defining a unique artistic style, narrative, and visual identity that resonates with the target audience, creating a cohesive and recognizable brand.
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Understanding the value of networking and building relationships with potential customers and employees.

## Examples

- Networking: Artist networks like the Artists' Network and the College Art Association have facilitated connections between artists, curators, and gallery owners, leading to collaborative exhibitions, residency opportunities, and increased visibility in the art world.
- Relationship Building: Collaborative projects like those between renowned artists and gallery owners, such as the partnership between Andy Warhol and Leo Castelli, exemplify the power of strong relationships in securing representation, exhibitions, and critical acclaim in the art industry.

## Collaborative Initiatives for Entrepreneurship and Art with Young People with ASD/DS



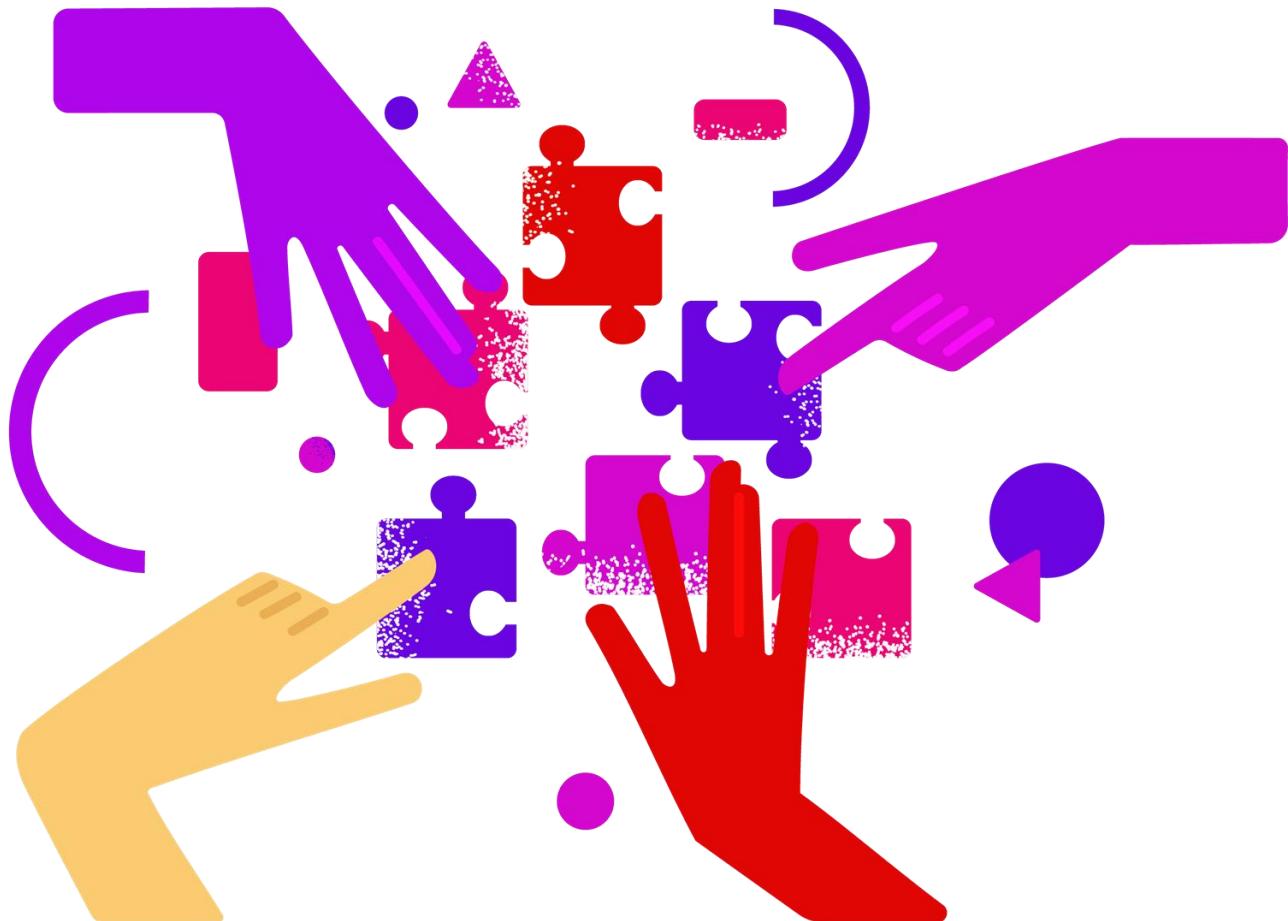
- Tailored Support: Creating a supportive environment that acknowledges and addresses the unique needs and abilities of young people with ASD/DS, fostering creativity and providing opportunities for skill development.
- Community Engagement: Organizing events, exhibitions, and programs that showcase the artistic talents of these individuals, fostering inclusivity and awareness within the broader community.
- Adaptive Marketing: Tailoring marketing strategies to promote the artwork of individuals with ASD/DS, creating opportunities for their work to be recognized and appreciated by a wider audience.

## Collaborative Initiatives for Entrepreneurship and Art with Young People with ASD/DS

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### Examples

- Tailored Support: Organizations like Pure Vision Arts and the Art of Autism have created inclusive art programs tailored to the needs of individuals with ASD/DS, fostering creativity, self-expression, and personal growth within a supportive community.
- Community Engagement: Initiatives like the "We See Abilities" art exhibition and the "Autism Artism" project have brought together artists with ASD/DS and the broader community, fostering understanding, empathy, and appreciation for their unique artistic perspectives.
- Adaptive Marketing: Initiatives such as the "Art Enables" gallery have adapted marketing strategies to promote the work of artists with disabilities, emphasizing the unique stories and artistic expressions of these individuals, thereby increasing their visibility and sales opportunities.



## CHAPTER 2

*Benefits and Practical Applications*



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Only through art can we get outside of ourselves and know another's view of the universe which is not the same as our sand see landscapes which would otherwise have remained unknown to us like the landscapes of the moon.

Marcel Proust



The power of art for individuals with ASD and DS lies in its ability to make learning both visual and appealing.

The promise of fun art projects will often grab and hold the child's interest while the adult can ensure that the projects are designed to help the child make progress in relevant treatment goal areas. I believe that there are six major goals for children on the spectrum that can be best addressed using art:

1. Imagination/ abstract thinking
2. Sensory regulation and integration
3. Emotions/ self-expression
4. Development growth
5. Visual-spatial skills
6. Recreation/ leisure skills



How a child learn how to self-regulate using art

## 1. Imagination/abstract thinking

### Goal

To display age-appropriate imagination and abstract thinking skills.

Imagination, to a greater or less extent, is a deficit area for all children with ASD/DS and is one of the three features of the traditional triad of impairment together with communication and socialization. Imagination is pretty much synonymous with creativity which is generally described as the physical expression of imagination. Both imply the two skills of flexibility and the ability to think abstractly which are difficult for children on the spectrum. Being creative with art materials means finding a solution to a problem that has no right or wrong answer, and being imaginative means thinking of an idea, if possible, a unique idea, without too much help from an external source.

## 1. Imagination/abstract thinking

### Specialized art projects

### THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Learning and utilizing the creative process is one of the most far-reaching benefits of art-making. The steps of the creative process involve:

1. Get in touch with your feelings and ideas.
2. Brainstorm possible ways to express them.
3. Experiment with different options and materials.
4. Problem solve your way through the project.
5. Behold the final creation, and
6. Provide an explanation of what you made.

## 2. Sensory regulation and integration

### Goal

Improve the child's ability to regulate his or her body and integrate sensory experiences. Children with autism often experience hyper (too much) or hypo (not enough) stimulation due to their body's poor ability to filter sensory input properly and often require adult help to calm or energize them-selves. Using art to help them regulate their bodies can be tricky.

Often a child will be drawn to materials that match, rather than soothe, their current sensory state, and allowing too much of this can be like putting fuel on the fire and increase their disregulation.

## 2. Sensory regulation and integration

### INCORPORATE THE FULL BODY INTO ART-MAKING

Body tracing, body painting, mask making, and creating and wearing costumes or body puppets are big crowd-pleasers among neurotypical kids. Children with ASD often need a great deal of support, encouragement, and structure in order to have a positive experience with these activities due to the great imposition they put on the child's physical and sensory boundaries. If these activities are relevant to the child's treatment goal (either sensory regulation/integration or imagination/abstract thinking), then introduce them with patience and lots of reinforcement.

### INCREASE MATERIAL EXPLORATION AND REDUCE SENSORY DEFENSIVENESS

This usually happens as a by-product of art-making, but you might have to do it with intention, particularly for a lower-functioning child. Present the child with a variety of textures, pressures (applied to different materials), scents, and sounds

### 3. Emotions/self-expression

#### Goal

Use art to externalize and process thoughts and feelings. It isn't easy to be a kid on the spectrum. ASD/DS symptoms exacerbate everyday conflicts and make activities that help a child pinpoint and process their emotions very practical. For children on the spectrum, therapeutic art projects provide the concrete, visual format that allows you to literally wrap your hands around a topic. Due to the child's social deficits, the traditional "triangle" of art therapy (the three-part relationship between the child, the art, and the therapist) allows art to act as what art therapist David Henley (1992) calls a "buffering agent" to soften and facilitate the interaction between client and therapist. For kids on the spectrum, I like to call it a concrete conduit. Also, current studies suggest that children on the spectrum have an easier time processing objects than faces, and many people with autism testify to this, so in theory the art object may be more useful than the adult's words. The artwork functions as a product that a child can refer to over time as a way to remember and strengthen learning.

### 3. Emotions/self-expression

#### Specialized art projects

Any art project that addresses issues that arise from the child. Common issues include stress-reduction, attachment issues, identifying emotions and connecting them to activities/experiences, developing relational skills, family/sibling/peer relationships, transitions such as entering school or puberty, anxiety, depression, bullying, safe expression of “bad” or negative feelings, understanding and coming to terms with disability, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-management of symptoms, and more. Some of these issues are particularly relevant for children with Asperger’s or high-functioning autism. Children of early intervention age can work toward developing a basic “vocabulary” of emotions, how to draw/represent them, and then, as they get a little older, make the connection to real-life experiences.

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## 4. Developmental growth

### Goal

To display age-appropriate drawing ability, fine motor skills, overall artistic development, and any relevant deficit area that can be addressed using art.

Clearly this category is a bit of a catch-all, and includes artistic developmental growth and any developmental goal that can be addressed using art projects.

## 4. Developmental growth

### Specialized art projects

#### FINE MOTOR DEXTERITY

Any art project can tackle this objective. Select a project according to its dominant motor activity (e.g., collage = scissor use, beadwork= pinching, clay tools = cutting, knifing, etc.) and practice, practice, practice! Having an art project to focus on beyond the motor activity required to accomplish it makes work less stressful.

#### VISUAL SEQUENCING

Sequence drawings (drawing one “frame” of the action at a time) can help break down real-life situations and make them easier to analyze or tell. Comic book formats provide a nice visual structure; Carol Gray’s *Comic Strip Conversations* (1994), tailored specifically for people on the spectrum, uses thought and text bubbles to “show” what people are thinking during social interaction

## 5. Visual-spatial skills

### Goal

To improve the child's ability to negotiate and render/model in both two- and three-dimensional space as well as the ability to mentally rotate objects.

For many individuals with autism (notably those with savant drawing skills), visual-spatial skills are a strength area, but for others, the development of these skills can be frustrating. I have seen very little middleground: either it is very hard for the child or they have prodigious visual-spatial ability. If this is an area of strength, then art-making might be an attractive way to address other deficit areas with the child, such as emotional self-expression or socialization.

## 5. Visual-spatial skills

### Specialized art projects

#### SCULPTURE

Modeling clay “in the round” (i.e., taking care to model all sides of the figure, not just the front) means negotiating three-dimensional space. In my experience, children of all ages on the spectrum typically prefer two-dimensional work because it can be kept cleaner, is limited to a single plane/working surface, is more immediate, and usually more colorful. Starting with bas-relief sculptures (flat-back) or drawing visual instructions for the child to follow while modeling clay are both useful interventions to bridge the child’s move from two-dimensional to three-dimensional work.

#### PRINTMAKING

Making prints is the most straightforward two-dimensional art process that requires mental rotation. In order to print a readable image, the plate/stamp must first be carved or drawn backwards. Demonstrating for the child and providing a mirror can help.

## 6. Recreation/leisure skills

### Goal

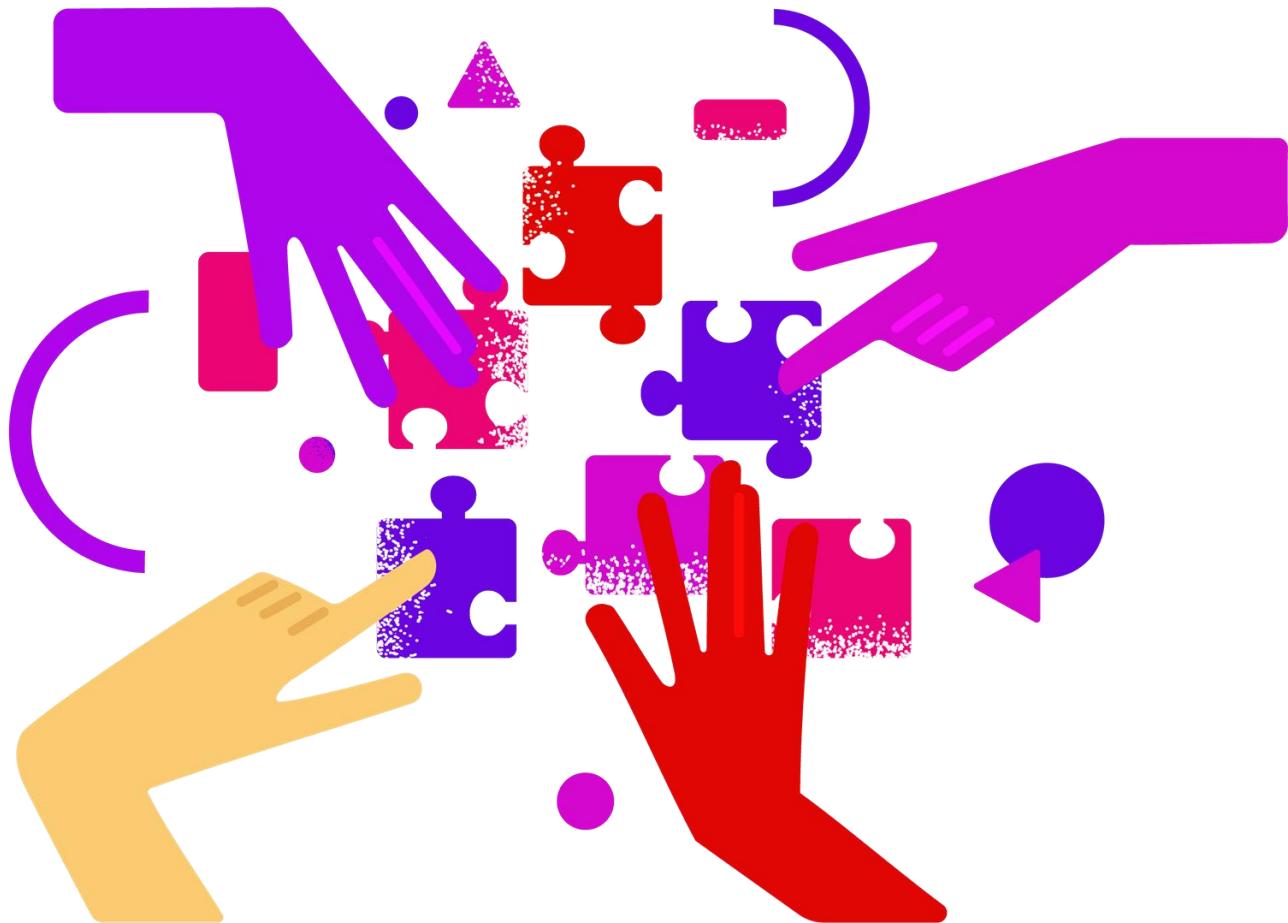
To develop productive, enjoyable leisure activities and generalize them to the home and other natural environments.

This treatment goal is probably the number-one reason why parents enroll their children in art activities. Parents desperately want their children to learn healthy ways to happily spend their time (not just watching videos or playing on the computer all day) and desire services that are both therapeutic and recreational, like creative arts therapies, adaptive sports, and hippotherapy. Keep this in mind if you are a creative arts therapist and ever feel pressured to make art or music projects appear more “serious” and are tempted to tone down their playful aspects. Autism therapists in other fields try to incorporate art, music, and movement into their work all the time in order to make it more fun and enhance learning. Pleasure is important for a small child in order to learn from and feel safe with you.

## 6. Recreation/leisure skills

### Specialized art projects

Any enjoyable and productive art activity. Remember, art is the engine that drives treatment goal progress. Art projects are infinite in kind and number and can be created to address any goal, including goals that are often significant areas of concern for children with ASD, such as communication, reading, sequencing, socialization, and flexibility, but not listed as major goals in this chapter. Chapter 4 highlights the six treatment goal areas that I believe are best addressed through art-making, since art is usually just described in terms of what it is complementary or adjunct to, instead of asserting its own areas of primacy. Art projects are regularly created or coopted by teachers and therapists of all kinds in order to achieve success, and rightly so.



## CHAPTER 2

*Art therapy demonstration*



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## 1) Group Collage:

### Description:

In this activity, participants work in small groups to create a collaborative collage that expresses a specific theme or emotion. The focus is on teamwork and creativity.

### Analysis:

- Teamwork and Collaboration: The group collage activity encourages participants to work together, promoting teamwork and collaboration. This can be particularly beneficial in professional and caregiving contexts, where collaboration among individuals with different roles and expertise is essential.
- Creativity and Self-Expression: Collage as a medium offers participants a chance to express themselves creatively. For individuals with ASD and DS, this non-verbal form of expression can be especially valuable. Artistic creativity can provide an alternative outlet for emotions and thoughts that may be challenging to express verbally.

## 2) Expressive Drawing:

### Description:

In this activity, participants are given a specific art activity and asked to adapt it to suit the sensory and cognitive needs of individuals with ASD and DS. The focus is on creative problem-solving.

### Analysis:

- Emotional Exploration: Expressive drawing provides a structured yet flexible platform for individuals to explore and convey their emotions. For individuals with ASD and DS, who may have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally, this activity can be a powerful therapeutic tool.
- Self-Expression and Communication: The act of drawing enables self-expression, which can lead to improved communication skills. Art can serve as a bridge for individuals with limited verbal communication abilities, offering a way to convey their thoughts and emotions.

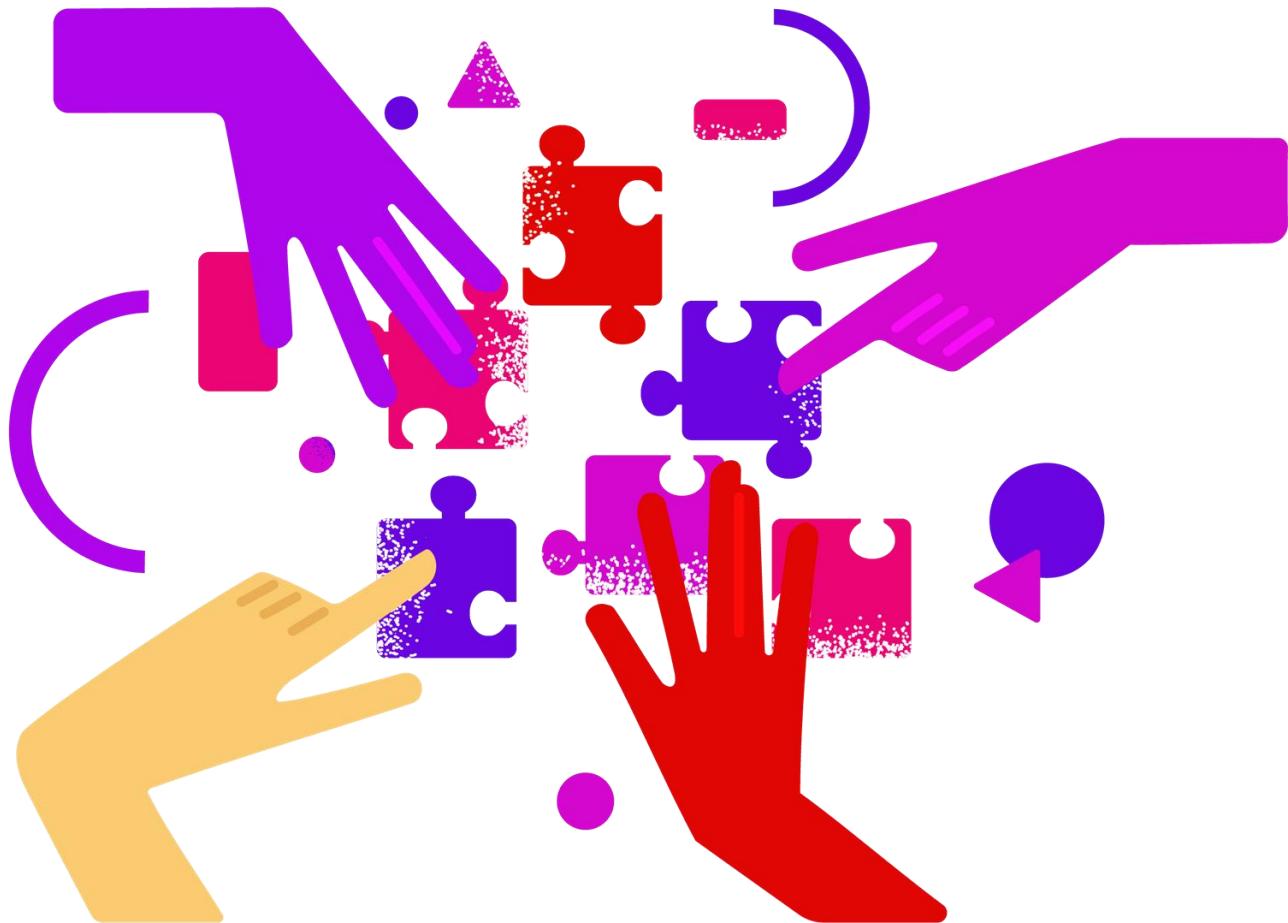
### 3) Adaptation Exercise:

#### Description:

In this activity, participants engage in expressive drawing, allowing them to explore their emotions and thoughts through art. The emphasis is on self-expression.

#### Analysis:

- Emotional Exploration: Expressive drawing provides a structured yet flexible platform for individuals to explore and convey their emotions. For individuals with ASD and DS, who may have difficulty expressing their feelings verbally, this activity can be a powerful therapeutic tool.
- Self-Expression and Communication: The act of drawing enables self-expression, which can lead to improved communication skills. Art can serve as a bridge for individuals with limited verbal communication abilities, offering a way to convey their thoughts and emotions.



# Thank you!

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