

Statement of Support for Art Therapy Certification

January 31st, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Alison Boughn. I am a practicing, Board Certified Art Therapist, a licensed and practicing mental health professional in Iowa and South Dakota, an educator, and a member of the Nebraska community.

In my time as a professional, I have experienced licensure and certification processes across disciplines from clinical mental health to art therapy in Iowa, South Dakota, and now, Nebraska. It is apparent that our licenses for mental health practice are aimed to provide ease of access for traditional clinical fields (ex. Psychology, Counseling, Social Work, etc). It was this reason, and this reason alone, I chose to pursue two Master's of Science degrees; one in clinical mental health counseling and the other in art therapy counseling. I knew that after I completed my master's degrees, I wanted to serve my home communities and provide services to those who have experienced barriers with traditional forms of primarily talk based therapeutic interventions.

As someone who has grown-up in the Midwest, I recognize that embracing creative interventions and practices, especially related to mental health, can be intimidating and lead to confusion if unfamiliar. These fears and uncertainties often drive vulnerable people to unqualified professionals who claim to practice art therapy. This then removes trust in innovative clinical interventions and further isolates our qualified professionals despite the desperate need for services in our rural communities.

Providing a certification requirement for the practice of art therapy aligns in my continuous goal to protect my neighbors, students, clients, and family from malpractice. As a practicing clinician, I have far too often been in contact with those who sought services with someone who claims to be an "art therapist." I typically discover that this experience lead to them seeking other services because it caused additional distress in their lives. This is unacceptable.

Art therapists deserve and are in need of a legal title that protects consumers from accessing damaging services and provides effective professional regulation guidelines for the practice of art therapy in the state.

I am in full support of a certification for art therapists and I am encouraged to live in a state where this is prioritized for its community.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alison Boughn".

Alison Boughn, PhD, ATR-BC, LMHC, LPC, NCC, TF-CBT