

Dear Nebraska Art Therapy Licensure Coalition:

I am writing this letter to endorse your efforts to obtain art therapy licensure in the state of Nebraska. I have been an art therapist since 1996 and have been a resident of Grand Island, Nebraska for the past five years. I obtained my master's degree in art therapy from Eastern Virginia Medical School and practiced in a variety of settings in the Baltimore /Washington DC metropolitan area for eighteen years prior to moving to Nebraska. I am a Licensed Mental Health Practitioner, a Licensed Professional Counselor, a National Certified Counselor, a Certified Public Manager and a Registered and Board-certified Art therapist.

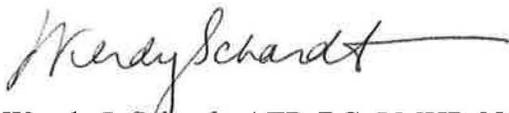
Over the course of my professional career, I have worked with a range of populations and ages in public schools, adult inpatient hospital settings, juvenile detention centers, foster care group homes and afterschool programs. My clientele ranged from children presenting with behavioral difficulties, adjustment and attachment disorders, to adolescents who penetrated the deep end of the juvenile justice system. Many of these young people perpetrated violence on others and were trauma-survivors themselves. I personally observed art therapy serve as a soft bridge between a hardened gang member and unresolved anger associated with childhood sexual abuse. I have observed small children struggling with communication disorders finally find freedom of expression through paint and sculpture. I experienced breakthroughs with sexual assault survivors who discovered strength, comfort and healing through the creative process. Art therapy has the ability to break down walls, uncover fears, expose personal strengths and facilitate a path to insight that talk therapy alone cannot accomplish.

I currently work for the University of Nebraska at Kearney as Director of Student Health and Counseling/Campus Recreation. While I do not practice clinical art therapy on campus, I provide workshops on the foundations of art therapy and am a part time instructor where I utilize art experientials to enhance learning outcomes in my classes.

Having witnessed the power of art therapy I have become a passionate advocate for art therapy licensure. Art Therapy licensing/title protection exists in some form in 15 of 50 states. This means that in 35 states, including Nebraska, that anyone can say they are an art therapist without having the essential training. Art Therapy is a Master's level field which shares about 50% of its curriculum with fields like counseling and social work but has 50% completely unique curriculum that teaches the power of art, how art media affect clients psychologically, and much more. Without art therapy licensure people without this training may offer art therapy services. Art can lead to breakthroughs quickly in therapy and individuals with no training in mental health or without art therapy specific training may not be prepared to assist clients in this process which can lead to harm.

An art therapy licensure will benefit Nebraskans by ensuring that there are competent, qualified and well-trained art therapists available state-wide who abide by a standard of practice. There are many rural areas where there is a shortage of mental health practitioners, let alone those with this unique set of competences like art therapy. For these reasons, I urge you to consider this endeavor.

Sincerely,



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