State licensing laws and legislative bills generally follow one of three approaches in describing health and mental health professions or specialties to be licensed and the professions’ or specialties’ approved scope of professional practice. Many states include these descriptions as one of more definitions in the “definitions” sections of licensure bills (the Maryland and Kentucky art therapy licensing laws follow this approach). A number of large states structure legislation to include this information in separate “scope of practice” sections in professional licensure bills. Other states simply describe a profession or specialty by the academic and experience requirements needed to qualify for licensure, without specific definitions for the profession/specialty or its scope of practice (the New Mexico and Kentucky art therapy acts and Texas’ LPC art therapy subspecialty statute follow this approach).

An important strategic goal of the Association is to ensure that licensed and credentialed art therapy professionals are recognized by legislators, regulators and insurers in all states. This will require a high level of uniformity in standards governing licensure and practice of art therapy in state licensing laws. AATA’s Government Affairs Committee (GAC) has developed the following legislative provisions, modeled on the language of the 2012 Maryland law, to guide chapters in describing professional art therapy and the practice of professional art therapy in state licensure bills. Chapters are strongly encouraged to use one or more of the model legislative provisions that correspond to the structure of licensure legislation in their state.

**Definitions of Professional Art Therapy and the Practice of Professional Art Therapy:**

“Sec. ____ . Definitions.

(a) “Professional art therapy” means the integrated use of psychotherapeutic principles, art media, and the creative process to assist individuals, families, or groups in:

1. Increasing awareness of self and others;
2. Coping with symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences;
3. Enhancing cognitive abilities; and
4. Identifying and assessing clients’ needs in order to implement therapeutic intervention to meet developmental, behavioral, mental, and emotional needs.

(b)“Practice of professional art therapy” means to engage professionally and for compensation in art therapy and appraisal activities by providing services involving the application of art therapy principles and methods in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and amelioration of psychological problems and emotional or mental conditions that includes, but is not limited to:
(1) Clinical appraisal and treatment activities during individual, couples, family or group sessions which provide opportunities for expression through the creative process;

(2) Using the process and products of art creation to tap into client’s inner fears, conflicts and core issues with the goal of improving physical, mental and emotional functioning and well-being;

(3) Using diagnostic art therapy assessments to determine treatment goals and implement therapeutic art interventions which meet developmental, mental, and emotional needs; and

(4) Employing art media, the creative process and the resulting artwork to assist clients to:

   (i) Reduce psychiatric symptoms of depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, and attachment disorders;

   (ii) Enhance neurological, cognitive, and verbal abilities, develop social skills, aid sensory impairments, and move developmental capabilities forward in specific areas;

   (iii) Cope with symptoms of stress, anxiety, traumatic experiences and grief;

   (iv) Explore feelings, gain insight into behaviors, and reconcile emotional conflicts;

   (v) Improve or restore functioning and a sense of personal well-being;

   (vi) Increase coping skills, self-esteem, awareness of self and empathy for others;

   (vii) Healthy channeling of anger and guilt; and

   (viii) Improve school performance, family functioning and parent/child relationship.

**Scope of Practice for Professional Art Therapy:**

Sec. ___. Scope of Practice of a Licensed Professional Art Therapist.

The scope of practice of a licensed professional art therapist includes, but is not limited to:

(a) The use of psychotherapeutic principles, art media, and the creative process to assist individuals, families, or groups in:

   (1) Increasing awareness of self and others;

   (2) Coping with symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences;
(3) Enhancing cognitive abilities; and

(4) Identifying and assessing clients’ needs in order to implement therapeutic intervention to meet developmental, behavioral, mental, and emotional needs.

(b) The application of art therapy principles and methods in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and amelioration of psychological problems and emotional or mental conditions that include, but are not limited to:

1. Clinical appraisal and treatment activities during individual, couples, family or group sessions which provide opportunities for expression through the creative process;

2. Using the process and products of art creation to tap into client’s inner fears, conflicts and core issues with the goal of improving physical, mental and emotional functioning and well-being; and

3. Using diagnostic art therapy assessments to determine treatment goals and implement therapeutic art interventions which meet developmental, mental, and emotional needs; an

(c) The employment of art media, the creative process and the resulting artwork to assist clients to:

1. Reduce psychiatric symptoms of depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, and attachment disorders;

2. Enhance neurological, cognitive, and verbal abilities, develop social skills, aid sensory impairments, and move developmental capabilities forward in specific areas;

3. Cope with symptoms of stress, anxiety, traumatic experiences and grief;

4. Explore feelings, gain insight into behaviors, and reconcile emotional conflicts;

5. Improve or restore functioning and a sense of personal well-being;

6. Increase coping skills, self-esteem, awareness of self and empathy for others;

7. Healthy channeling of anger and guilt; and

8. Improve school performance, family functioning and parent/child relationship.

Professional Art Therapy: Requirements for Licensure

Sec. _____. Licensure of Professional Art Therapists

To qualify for a license to practice professional art therapy, an applicant shall be an individual who meets the requirements of this section.

(a) The applicant shall be of good moral character.
(b) The applicant shall be at least 18 years old.

(c) The applicant shall hold a master’s or doctoral degree in art therapy from an accredited educational institution that is approved by the (Board), and shall have completed:

   (1) A minimum of 60 graduate credit hours in an art therapy program accredited by the American Art Therapy Association and approved by the (Board); and

   (2) Not less than two (2) years, with a minimum of 2,000 hours, of supervised experience in art therapy approved by the (Board), one half of which, or a minimum of 1,000 client contact hours under appropriate supervision, shall have been completed after the award of the graduate degree.

(d) The applicant shall provide documentation to the (Board) evidencing the completion of 60 hours of graduate course work in art therapy from an accredited college or university program that is accredited by the American Art Therapy Association, and approved by the (Board), and includes graduate-level training in:

   (1) The art therapy profession;

   (2) Theory and practice of art therapy;

   (3) Human growth and developmental dynamics in art;

   (4) Application of art therapy with people in different treatment settings;

   (5) Art therapy appraisal, diagnosis and assessment;

   (6) Ethical and legal issues of art therapy practice;

   (7) Matters of cultural and social diversity bearing on the practice of art therapy;

   (8) Standards of good art therapy practice;

   (9) Group art therapy; and

(f) The applicant shall pass the Board Examination of the Art Therapy Credentials Board.