

BUT FIRST, THE ART,

Presentation by

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Settling into space...

- Who are we?
- Who are you?
- AT Disclaimer
- Getting grounded together

INVITATION

The hope for this session is twofold...

- An exploration of a useful art-based intervention and a space to get curious around the use of art in therapeutic spaces.
- An opportunity to engage in the healing process of art making.
Let's pour into our cups!

BUT FIRST THE ART

Agenda:

1:30 – 1:45

Getting settled in

1:45–2:25

ART!!

2:25 – 2:45

Diving into what we felt and what we see

2:45 – 3:00

Wrapping up and time for questions

ART DIRECTIVE

Build an Island

- You and your table have crash landed on a deserted island. Length of time before rescue is uncertain
- Use the materials available to recreate the situation

Roles

- As you begin art making, decide at your table what your roles can be.
- You might be a family a group of scientists, or Gilligan's island style cast, or attendees of the WCW conference!

Let's Art: 40ish minutes Go!

Let's get curious

01

Clean up the space around you with the exception of your island and any accessories it has

02

Take a moment to reflect on how that process felt for you

03

Take a moment to take in your product



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Process

- The HOW of what happens between the person and their art making
- What happened in the room?
- The pace, approach, preferences, patterns...
- Their emotional process
- Hesitation
- Frustration
- Flow
- Reactions to their artmaking or art product

Product

- The finished product
- A tool to use for reflection and exploration
- A visual timestamp of a point in treatment...of a journey in healing
- Might serve as a transitional object
safety considerations
- Can be destroyed – cathartic release
- Can be deconstructed and reconstructed



Process: What do we feel?

The healing benefits of art making

Self-expression & exploration

Brain Food

Problem solving skills

Self-esteem

Mastery

"I love the idea that healing is in the rest notes, in the in-between places. Silence can say a lot when things are marinating, and you need to allow for this."

Resmaa Menakem, on using play and art in racial trauma healing

Art & the Brain: Big Ideas

Creativity is a primary language

Visual parts of our brain formed first

Non-verbal communication speaks volumes and offers relief

Art and the Brain Example

The Broca's area of the brain (language center) shuts down when we relive trauma (memory, trigger, or in vivo). We can still create visual art during this state due to art making (visual and creative practices) not being as localized in the brain.

Art and the Brain Example

In a 2022 peer reviewed study, Ukraine war refugees in Poland, who used drawing as an early intervention, reduced the number of those qualifying for PTSD diagnosis by 80% or more.



PROCESS: WHAT DID WE NOTICE/OBSERVE?

Who started things up? Who felt vulnerable?

Did a nurturer appear? Who felt themselves waiting or hanging back?

Were your growing edges present? Did any teaming happen?

Were there signs of frustration?

Were your strengths present? Did anyone step out of their comfort zone?

What jumps out of the metaphor?



PRODUCT

How "successful" was the group in navigating the construction of the island?

Are there any people/self-structures made? Are they engaged in an activity?

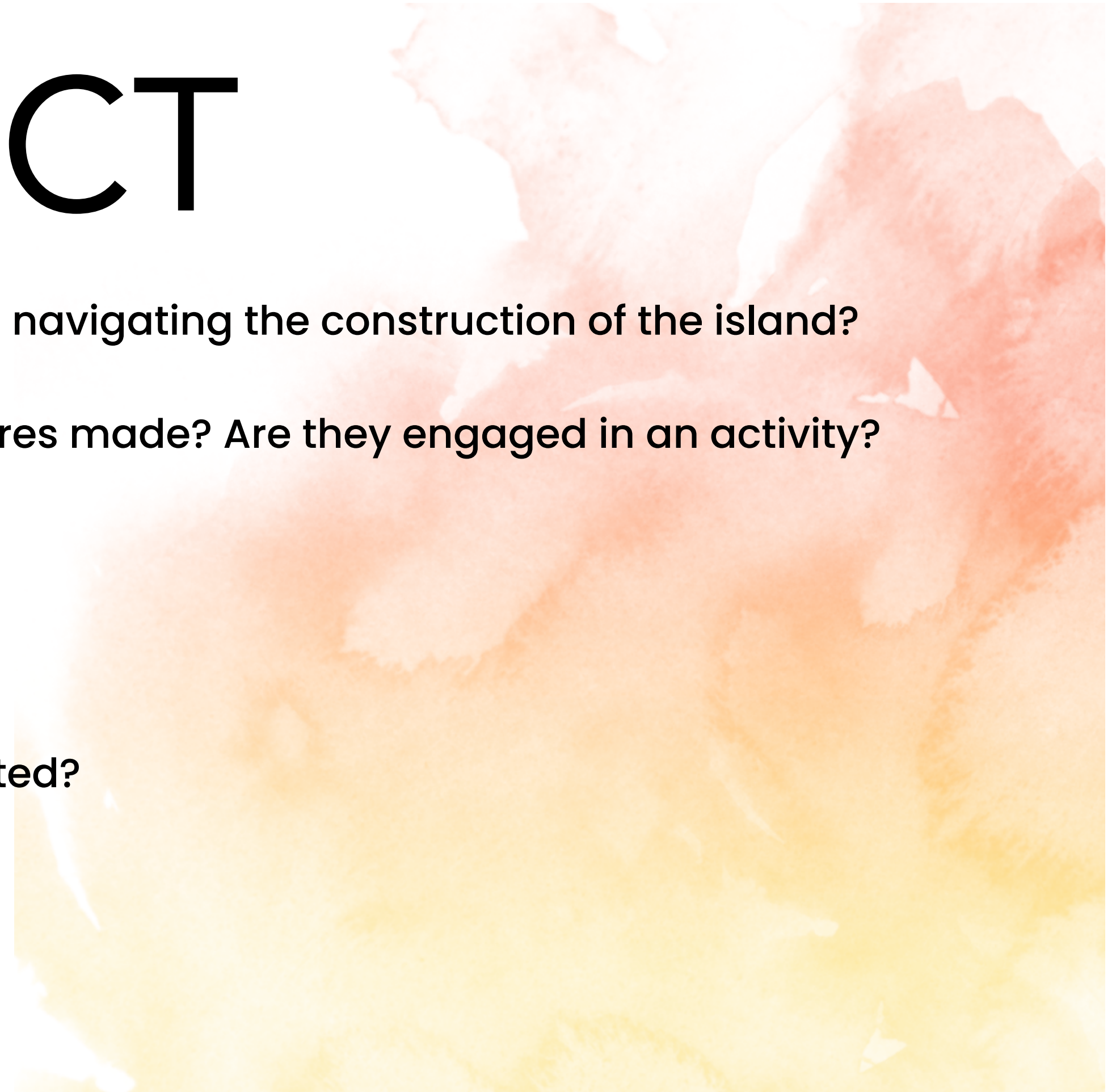
Is there food?

Are there weapons?

Is there additional "danger" depicted?

Size/Space occupied

Colors used/not used



ART DIRECTIVE #2: AN ASSESSMENT TO GO!

Verbal Joint Drawing

- Large sheet of paper
- Each member chooses their own color marker
- Let them know that they will have 7 minutes to draw together as a family

Nonverbal Joint Drawing

- Large sheet of paper
- Each member chooses their own color
- Same rules and timeframe...but no verbal communication allowed

Reflecting with the family

Which was more challenging – verbal or nonverbal?

Were there strengths that show up in life that they noticed show up in the art making?

Were there challenges that show up in life that showed up in the art making?



ADDITIONAL ART THERAPY ELEMENTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Line, Form, Content
- Choice of material
- Relationship with space on the "page"
- Sensory preferences
- Ability to attend focus
- Ability to observe regulation skills/frustration tolerance
- Structured vs. Unstructured materials
- Developmental Stages of art making
- Fine and Gross Motor Skills
- A visual record of change overtime

CONCLUSION

What can you take with you from today?

Message in a Bottle



How can I use more art in my life and work?

- Provide ways for your clients and families to communicate verbally and non-verbally. It could surprise them and you.
- Have art supplies available (even sticky notes + pen, whiteboard + dry erase markers) to help in moments that they feel stuck, or for the regulating experience
- Nature and recyclables are an accessible way to make more art (cereal boxes, leaves, sticks, junk mail).
- Provide containment through visual borders and lines to create safety
- Make art yourself! After a session, group, or difficult moment, and see what you can leave on the page (or dancefloor).

THANK YOU!

Contact us!

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