Procrastination & the Art of Hidden Agendas:  
Graphic Processes to Reveal the Truth.  
Vicki L. Williams-Patterson, MCAT, LPC-AT, ART-BC  
Texas Counseling Association Conference, November 16, 2012

Description of Terms:
1. Procrastination is a behavior in which an individual delays undertaking a task and thus reduces the likelihood that the task will be completed successfully. The task is either freely chosen or the results of the task are desired by the client. The behavior is generally seen as maladaptive.

2. Art therapy is the therapeutic use of art making within a professional relationship by people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development. Through creating art and reflecting on the art products and processes, people can increase their awareness of self and others; cope with symptoms stress, and traumatic experiences; enhance cognitive abilities; and enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of making art.

   Art therapists are professionals trained in both art and therapy. They are knowledgeable about human development; psychological theories; clinical practice; spiritual, multicultural and artistic traditions; and the healing potential of art. They use art in treatment, assessment and research, and provide consultations to allied professionals. Art therapists work with people of all ages: individuals, couples, families, groups, and communities. They provide services; individually and as part of clinical teams; in settings that include mental health, rehabilitation, medical and forensic institutions; community outreach programs; wellness centers; schools; nursing homes; corporate structures; open studios and independent practices.

   The American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (AATA) sets educational, professional, and ethical standards for its members. The Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB), an independent organization, grants credentials. Registration is granted upon completion of graduate education and postgraduate supervised experience. Board Certification (ATR-BC) is granted to Registered Art Therapists (ATR) who pass a written examination and is maintained through continuing education. Some states regulate the practice of art therapy (Texas LPC-AT), and in many states art therapists can become licensed as counselors or mental health therapists.

   From: Art Therapy: Definition of the Profession (American Art Therapy Association, 2012)  
   www.arttherapy.org

Art Tasks for Revealing the Hidden Agenda (two drawings):
   1. Think about a situation in which you or your client has experienced procrastination. Draw a representation of that situation. Include as many visual details as you can.
   2. Dot-to-Dot or Scribble image.

Proposed Explanations:
   1. Lack of skills & bad habits
   2. Avoiding distress
   3. Poor mental health: low self-esteem, low self-confidence, anxiety, self-defeating beliefs
   4. Severe mental illness: mood disorder, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attachment disorder, or psychosis
Possible art tasks to facilitate appropriate therapeutic interventions:
1. Lack of skills & bad habits
   a. Draw and/or find an image that illustrates your commitment to making a specific change in your life.
   b. Social Map: Illustrate your life showing the relationships & activities that take up time in your life. (See the handout.)
2. Avoiding distress.
   a. Procrastination image (See first task.)
   b. Mandala: free style or coloring a design
   a. Dot-to-Dot & Scribble technique
   b. Hand Outline Task
   c. Create awards and/or certificates of achievement.
   d. Make and finish anything.
   e. Use an unfamiliar art medium, especially clay!
   f. Feelings Map (Jones, 1997)
4. Severe mental illness: mood disorders, PTSD, attachment disorders, psychosis
   Follow your own treatment regimen. Once your client is no longer suffering from severe dysfunction, consider exploring the tasks described in #3.

Counseling techniques that may contribute to clients’ procrastination (Ishiyama, 1990).
1. Selective acceptance of emotion
2. Strategy aimed at controlling emotion
3. Avoiding staying with an emotion until it shifts spontaneously
4. Avoiding confronting the client

References:


Other Resources:
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont_delay
A blog about procrastination packed with resources by Timothy A. Pychyl, Ph.D.

Megan L. Van Meter, MA, LPC-AT, ATR-BC in Austin, TX. Art based clinical supervision, consulting services, and continuing education for illuminating the art of therapy: www.abcsfortherapists.com

American Art Therapy Association: www.arttherapy.org

The Institute for Continuing Education in Art Therapy (ICE/AT) created by the American Art Therapy Association: http://arttherapy.trainingcampus.net

Mandala Assessment Research Institute: http://www.maricreativeresources.com/

Mandala patterns: http://www.hellokids.com/r_1100/coloring
Design an award certificate for yourself recognizing a positive quality or action.
2. Choose a dark pastel.
3. Open your eyes.
4. Choose a dot and put it down randomly.
5. Start at the "x" and draw a line connecting the dots.
6. Use your created shape so that a shape is started so that a shape is finished where you can.
7. Give your picture a name that you have in mind, help you create the ideas you need.
8. Use your imagination to make the colors you can change.
9. You can use other shapes into something.
10. Choose a chalk pastel.
Feelings Map:

1. Choose a different color for each emotion listed at the right.
2. Make a map of your feelings using different line qualities to express how you experience that emotion. Ask make larger areas for emotions that you experience frequently; smaller areas for emotions that you experience less often.

- Love for myself
- Love for others
- Happy
- Sad
- Angry
- Afraid
Hand Outline Task: Within the hand outline, draw or write your positive qualities & resources. Around the outside of the hand outline, draw or write what you want to acquire.
I intend to __________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
1. Draw a design inside the circle, starting at the center. Use lines & shapes, or draw realistically.

2. Write three to five words that come to mind while you are looking at your design.


Think about situation in which you or your client have experienced procrastination. Draw a representation of that situation. Include as many visual details as you can.
1. Use markers or chalk pastels.
2. Practice scribbling in the air.
3. Using either hand, close eyes, and make a scribble: one continuous line. Stop when you are ready.
5. Color in the shapes and images that you see.
6. Write down your associations to the images that you colored in.
Social Map:
Draw a shape in the center area to represent yourself. Around that shape, add additional shapes to represent relationships and/or activities that take up time in your life. Keep your choices to ten (10) major areas. Examples: children, employment, spiritual practice, marriage, dating, hobby, entertainment, chores, pets, other family members, personal care, health care, commuting, career development, exercise, etc. draw a line between your shape and each shape that you have added. Make the line expressively, changing its color, density, and contour to indicate how you feel about this particular activity.