



4KidHelp, Inc.

Center for Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

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April 8, 2017

Re: Independent licensure for art therapists

To The Ohio General Assembly:

Please provide specific licensure for art therapists and broaden the access of psychiatric patients to art therapy services.

I am a nationally triple-boarded child, adult and addiction psychiatrist. I trained at Harvard Medical School, and then was on staff at Harvard. Amongst my duties in Boston I have been the

- Director only state hospital psychiatric program for children in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; these children were the most behaviorally disturbed mentally ill children in the Commonwealth,
- Medical Director of the largest child abuse and battered woman's clinic in Boston,
- Lead psychiatrist in a large drug treatment center,
- Medical director of 2 large residential programs, a special education school, and 3 group homes,
- Medical Director of the locked intensive treatment program for urban and gang kids with mental illness
- Chief clinical consultant for the inner-city in-home therapy program for youth.

In addition, I was the protégé at Harvard of Sigmund Freud's professional grandson. I have also been the Medical Director of 2 large community health centers, 1 in Boston and 1 in Dover, Ohio.

Currently I direct and provide psychiatric services through my private psychiatric practice, 4KidHelp Inc., as the only private mental health treatment program in Stark county for child and adolescent patients, along with young adults. We service about 2000 children and their families from multi-millionaires to dirt poor persons with Medicaid. As you can tell I have served in many capacities and have much experience in mental health. Our patients tend to be the most severely involved youth in the region because of my work with profound mental illness. We have the largest practice for patients with autism, childhood schizophrenia, learning disorders, ADHD, depression, Bipolar Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder for several counties in Ohio.

I currently work with an art therapist at the Christian Children's Home of Ohio. She does wonders in unlocking trauma experiences in small children who have been viciously assaulted sexually. She does this not by chance – as an art therapist she knows how to use her toolset exquisitely. She knows how and when to probe in certain ways, and how to use art to heal. This is not a skill that regular therapists possess; that is why it is so important to license art therapists as a separate discipline.

Neurologically, art therapists deal with a different part of the brain than counselors, social workers or psychologists whose interventions primarily change the left hemisphere of the brain. Art therapy targets the right hemisphere of the brain. Right brain therapy is so important because this is where our emotions are processed. So for persons with trauma or substance abuse, right brain therapy is very important. Similarly the lesion for high functioning autistic children is believed to be in the right hemisphere; they benefit tremendously from art therapy.

Art therapists should be given their own licensure in Ohio. They are a unique subspecialty. They are taught specialized tools which effect different brain structures than counselors or other talk-oriented therapists. I want to employ more art therapists, but without a separate licensure going to graduate school in this field is risky, i.e. will the State of Ohio value these techniques enough to make such training lead to positions which

can pay for a graduate education. I suspect there is a pool of counselors who wanted to learn the complete art therapy toolset, but were afraid to pursue that career path without a fixed licensure opportunity. In Boston I employed art therapists because they uniquely can heal types of mental illness that usually don't get healed with talk-oriented therapists. I am talking about anywhere from a 3 year old child who has been beaten, to a child with schizophrenia who watched his father cut off his mother's arm, to 2 boys whom I have treated that were raised in cages in the woods for over 5 years, to an 11 year old who watched his father shoot his mother dead, to an 8 year old autistic boy who was so socially deficient none of the other kids in school would talk with them. All have been significantly healed by art therapy.

More currently, I see an autistic teenager who has problems finding appropriate words for his experiences, yet is able to draw geometric shapes that have special meaning to him. He had been through several talk therapists. With his current art therapist he has decreased violence, increased social engagement and improved school behavior. Another of my patients sees our art therapist for the physical abuse he endured at a public school. Art therapy has reached him in a way that he can now sleep at night and attend another school.

Please give art therapists their own licensure. They offer a unique skill set to psychiatric patients. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Reynolds, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas (Lee) Reynolds, MD
Nationally board certified as child & adolescent, adult and addiction therapist
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