

Italy Therapist Retreat 2026

Title | Integration & Considerations of Treating Trauma with Art & EMDR

Instructor: Bonnie Walchuk, MA, LMFT, ATR-BC, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Nationally Registered and Board Certified Art Therapist based in Washington state. Bonnie has obtained a dual masters degree in both Art Therapy and Marriage and Family Therapy from Antioch University Seattle, completing over 3000 hours LMFT and Art Therapy post graduate hours to achieve dual licensing in both professions, and has completed EMDRIA Training. Bonnie brings 10 years of extensive experience in therapeutic practice and clinical training, focusing on art therapy's impact on emotional and psychological well-being.

She specializes in supporting adults experiencing cancer, medical trauma, chronic illness, chronic pain, end of life, grief and loss, life transitions, and globally mobile populations. As Executive Director, President and Founder of the Seattle based nonprofit, Dream Big Wellness, Bonnie is dedicated to creating more access to art therapy and advancing the field through innovative and culturally sensitive practices. She has served as a Psychotherapist and Art Therapist facilitator at 14 retreats since May 2022 and continues to expand opportunities for art therapy and mental health continuing education training.

Abstract: This 3-hour training explores the integration of Eco-Art Therapy into Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Phase 2, with a focus on trauma stabilization and emotion regulation. Participants will examine the core principles and therapeutic mechanisms of Art Therapy, Eco-Art Therapy, and EMDR, including credentialing requirements and ethical considerations. Through case vignettes, demonstrations, and experiential exploration, participants will gain an understanding of the art therapy profession and the benefits of incorporating art into EMDR, particularly in strengthening grounding, safety, and client readiness for reprocessing. Attention will also be given to evaluating the risks and contraindications of combining these modalities when working with clients with complex trauma. Participants will leave with an understanding of art therapy's effectiveness in treating trauma, and safety considerations of using art and imagery/nonverbal processing with EMDR phase 2 resourcing.

Objectives:

Define Art Therapy & Safety of Using Art in Practice

Understand what art therapy is and the art therapy profession

Effectiveness of Art Therapy Treating Trauma

Participants will learn about research and effectiveness of art therapy treating trauma and gain a brief introduction to Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC)

Safety and contraindication of combining Art Therapy with EMDR

Participants will learn safety and cultural considerations of using art

Considerations of integrating imagery with EMDR will be discussed

Integration of Art & EMDR Phase 2

Participants experience the benefits of using a combination of natural materials and art media for emotion regulation, coping skills and establishing a sense of safety as a part of EMDR Phase 2 training.

Demonstrate Creative Processing & Grounding Techniques for EMDR Phase 2

Creative processing, grounding techniques, journaling prompts will be demonstrated to support emotion and physiological regulation