

# Session Content Description & Learning Objectives

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## A) Pathways to Regulation: Applied Polyvagal Theory in Eco-Art Therapy

### 6-Hour Training

#### Abstract / Session Summary

This 6-hour training introduces participants to the integration of Polyvagal Theory with eco-art therapy practices to support nervous system regulation and trauma recovery. Drawing from research on the restorative impact of nature and the therapeutic use of creative expression, this session explores how sensory engagement with natural environments can foster parasympathetic activation, safety, and connection.

Through experiential eco-somatic grounding strategies, participants will deepen awareness of autonomic states and learn to apply ecological metaphors to describe and normalize state shifts with clients. Ethical considerations, cultural narratives, and accessibility adaptations for diverse populations will be addressed to ensure inclusive and trauma-informed practice.

Participants will engage in hands-on eco-artmaking, personal regulation bundle creation, and collaborative group rituals designed to cultivate ventral vagal safety and co-regulation. By the conclusion of the training, clinicians will leave with evidence-based knowledge, creative tools, and embodied practices to integrate eco-art therapy into personal use and professional work with clients.

#### Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least one eco-somatic grounding strategy to orient to ventral vagal safety.
2. Articulate personal and professional intentions for integrating Polyvagal-informed eco-art therapy.

3. Summarize at least three current research findings linking nature exposure and stress reduction.
4. Explain how sensory engagement with nature activates parasympathetic regulation.
5. Explain the three primary autonomic states and their clinical relevance.
6. Apply ecological metaphors to describe autonomic state shifts.
7. Demonstrate how eco-art practices support nervous system regulation.
8. Construct and describe a personal regulation bundle linking natural symbols to autonomic states.
9. Identify two ethical considerations and two cultural narratives relevant to eco-art therapy.
10. Develop one adaptation strategy for nature-based interventions for a neurodiverse or marginalized client population.
11. Create a symbolic visual map of autonomic shifts during embodied exploration.
12. Identify at least one body-based cue signaling transitions between autonomic states.
13. Participate in a collaborative eco-art ritual that fosters ventral vagal safety.
14. Identify two ways group rituals enhance therapeutic alliance and co-regulation.
15. Articulate at least three ways Polyvagal-informed eco-art therapy can support trauma recovery.
16. Implement one eco-art-based regulation practice in personal or client work post-training.

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## **B) Somatic Ecosystems: Applied Polyvagal Theory in Somatic Art Therapy**

**6-Hour CEU Training | Facilitated by Katie Kapugi**

**Abstract / Session Summary**

This 6-hour continuing education training provides a comprehensive exploration of how somatic art therapy integrates Polyvagal Theory to enhance regulation, resilience, and trauma recovery. Participants will examine the historical and theoretical foundations of art therapy, review current evidence linking artmaking to nervous system regulation, and explore the unique therapeutic qualities of somatic art practices compared to other expressive modalities.

Through lecture, demonstration, and experiential activities, participants will learn to identify and map autonomic states, apply pacing and titration principles, and use symbolic artmaking and movement-based interventions to support nervous system balance. Attention will be given to interoception, proprioception, and body awareness as essential dimensions of somatic art therapy.

This training emphasizes trauma-informed principles, accessibility considerations, and cultural humility in diverse clinical contexts. Participants will create personal activation–settling art sequences, practice movement-informed interventions, and learn to adapt strategies for multiple client populations. The session concludes with integration practices and discussion of clinical applications, equipping clinicians with practical tools to support clients' regulation and recovery through body-based art therapy.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the overall goals and structure of the training.
2. Demonstrate one grounding technique for establishing safety and presence.
3. Describe at least one personal somatic resource relevant to clinical practice.
4. Summarize the historical and theoretical foundations of art therapy in clinical contexts.
5. Describe at least two evidence-based findings linking art therapy to emotional regulation.
6. Explain one way art therapy differs from other expressive modalities in trauma care.
7. Define somatic art therapy and its relationship to body-based psychotherapy.
8. Identify the role of interoception and proprioception in art-making processes.
9. Apply one body-mapping activity to increase embodied awareness in clinical practice.

10. Explain three principles of Polyvagal Theory and their clinical relevance.
  11. Differentiate between autonomic states and identify how they appear in art therapy sessions.
  12. Use symbolic art-making to represent personal autonomic shifts.
  13. Demonstrate one movement-informed art-making intervention for nervous system regulation.
  14. Identify pacing and titration principles in applying somatic art therapy.
  15. Create a personal activation–settling art sequence to model for clients.
  16. Apply somatic art therapy interventions to at least two distinct client populations.
  17. Identify two accessibility considerations for art therapy in diverse settings.
  18. Integrate trauma-informed principles into somatic art therapy practice.
  19. Synthesize key learnings from Polyvagal Theory, somatic practices, and art therapy.
  20. Identify at least two clinical applications of training content for professional use.
  21. Demonstrate a brief closing regulation practice for personal/professional integration.
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## **Session Presenter & Qualifications**

### **Katie Kapugi, M.A., LMHC, ATR, RYT**

Katie Kapugi is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Washington State, LH60947980), a nationally Registered Art Therapist (ATR #18-403), and a Registered Yoga Teacher, bringing a strong interdisciplinary background to the integration of Polyvagal Theory, somatic psychotherapy, and art therapy.

She holds a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a specialization in Art Therapy from Antioch University Seattle, complemented by training in yoga, mindfulness, and somatic practices. As Founder and Clinical Director of *Dream Big Wellness*, Katie has developed and facilitated trainings on art therapy and nervous system regulation, bridging evidence-based practices with creative, body-oriented interventions.

Her prior roles include clinical positions with Neighborcare Health, Swedish Pain Services, and Full Life Care, where she provided psychotherapy, developed art-based therapeutic programs, and introduced nervous system education and relaxation therapies into pain management and trauma recovery contexts. Katie has presented at the 23rd Annual Pain Symposium and worked internationally in Rwanda developing community-based art and health initiatives.

Her clinical experience spans children, adolescents, and adults in outpatient, school-based, pain rehabilitation, elder care, and community art settings. She regularly integrates eco-therapy, mindfulness, yoga, and somatic practices into trauma-informed, culturally humble, and accessible care.

Professional memberships include the American Counseling Association (ACA), American Art Therapy Association (AATA), and Evergreen Art Therapy Association.

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**Total Training Hours/ Credit Hours:** 6 hours each