

History & Meaning of the Mandala

The Mandala (Sanskrit for “circle” or “completion”) has a long history and is recognized for its deep spiritual meaning and representation of wholeness.

Many people and cultures have vouched for the mandala’s intrinsic meaning. Buddhists, Tibetans, and Hindus have all derived meaning from the mandala and its captivating beauty. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung has called it “a representation of the unconscious self.” The mandala is widely recognized as a meaningful reflection of its creator. Mandala art therapy & healing can be a great source of reflection on one’s soul.

Mandalas can be seen all around us, but are not just people-centric. They are larger than life. Mandalas represent life as we know it, but they also represent a larger ecosystem and universe that exceeds our consciousness.

The “circle with a centre” pattern is the basic structure of creation that is reflected from the micro to the macro in the world as we know it. It is a pattern found in nature and is seen in biology, geology, chemistry, physics and astronomy.

On our planet, living things are made of cells and each cell has a nucleus — all display circles with centres. The crystals that form ice, rocks, and mountains are made of atoms. Each atom is a mandala.

Flowers, the rings found in tree trunks and the spiralling outward and inward of a snail’s shell all reflect the primal mandala pattern. Wherever a centre is found radiating outward and inward, there is wholeness—a mandala.

Source: <http://www.mandalaproject.org/Index.html>

This couldn’t have been explained more beautifully. Mandalas are everywhere. They are the structures of our cells, our world, and our universe.

Utilizing the Concept of Mandalas in Art Therapy

The very nature of creating a mandala is therapeutic and symbolic. The shapes and colours you create in your mandala art therapy will reflect your inner self at the time of creation. Your instinct and feeling should inspire and guide you through the process of creation. Ultimately, you will be creating a portrait of yourself as you are when creating the mandala. So, whatever you are feeling at that time, whatever emotions are coming through, will be represented in your mandala art therapy.

As with most art therapy, it’s not about the final product...it’s about the journey. When you reach your destination, you will have a representation of something meaningful and personal...a snapshot of you for a brief moment in time expressed through your mandala.

Prompts for therapeutic use of mandalas:

- Create a mandala that shows how you feel today
- Draw a mandala that represents your angry feelings
- Draw a mandala that represents the grief you feel inside
- On the inside of your mandala, draw what’s going on inside you and in the outside circle draw what’s going on around you
- Draw a mandala that shows how you see yourself within your family

Try out the template overleaf; this can be done at various points to capture your feelings in the safety of the circle.

Date:

