Recovery Pathways Service

Why not try: Collage

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Being creative can be good for your wellbeing.

It can help in the following ways:

- to relieve stress and anxiety
- is relaxing and helps you find a sense of peace
- helps to clarify and organise thoughts
- helps to free up the mind
- helps achieve calmness and mindfulness
- you can learn a new skill
- focus on something creative

**Did you also know**...practicing making decisions on a regular basis while being creative will help to increase confidence in making choices in everyday life – for example gaining confidence in choosing recipes, choosing what to wear, deciding what to do with my time.

Enjoy being creative

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What is collage?

The word collage comes from the French word *Coller* which means “to glue or stick together.

A collage can include magazine and newspaper clippings, fabrics, bits of coloured papers, paint, portions of other artworks, words, text, photographs and other found objects, glued to a piece of paper or canvas.

The origins of collage can be traced back hundreds of years, but this technique made a dramatic reappearance in the early 20th century.

There are so many different styles of collage. Some artists create abstract collages while others create work that tells a story with people in different settings and places.
What do I need?

You can use anything to collage with that you might have lying around. It's a great way of recycling old newspapers, magazines, books or catalogues. Other materials could be old cereal packets, labels, envelopes, coloured paper, card, fabrics, wallpaper. If you have access to a printer you can print different images off to use for your collage.

You will also need glue, a brush, scissors and paper or card to use as a base. (If you don't have a brush you could use an old toothbrush)

If you haven’t any glue, you can make a mix with flour and water that will also work.

Glue recipe;
Mix one-part flour with one part of water (e.g. 1 small cup of flour and 1 cup of water, until you get a thick glue-like consistency. Add a bit more water if it's too thick. Mix well with a spoon to get rid of all the lumps.

Now you have everything you need to start to collage.
Exercise One
A jar of my favourite things

In this exercise think of all the things that make you feel happy and content. This can be your favourite biscuits, places, colours, animals, music, people, flowers, places - anything that find comforting in your jar.

What to do!
Draw a simple outline of a jar using a pen or black marker, or use the jar template on the next page.

Now find images, text and words that reflect your favourite things.

Arrange everything how you would like them to be displayed. Try having images in different sizes and over lapping each other. Try placing words over pictures, this will create dimension and interest.

Try a few different ways for your layout before you finally start to stick them down.

You can always take a photo of the layout you are happy with and use as a reference.

Once you are happy with your layout, start to stick the images down inside your jar.

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A jar of my favourite things

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Exercise two
“Drawing with scissors”
Create a collage in the style of Henri Matisse

In the final years of his life, Henri Matisse experimented with collage which he called “painting with scissors” and produced some really colourful and expressive pieces of art. Have a go at creating your own Matisse inspired collage.

Materials
Coloured card or paper
Scissors
Glue and brush

If you have any paint or coloured pens, use these to make bold paper colours.

What to do!
No pencils allowed! “Draw” with your scissors only!!
Cut paper shapes in a variety of colors and sizes and arrange on white or black background paper.
Include geometric, *organic,* positive, and *negative shapes and at least one repeating shape.
Have some shapes overlap each other. Your collage can represent something or just be a totally abstract design.
Glue your design to the background paper, the largest shapes first, then the smaller ones on top.
*Organic shapes – shapes that are commonly found in nature, usually with curved, irregular lines
*Positive shape – the shape itself
*Negative shape – the area around a shape or in between shapes, where you can see the background behind the shape.

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Exercise two
‘Drawing with scissors’ inspired by Matisse

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Exercise three
Create a collaged landscape

Think of a landscape you would like to represent. A seascape, hills and lakes, a moorland, a woodland or a view from your window. Once you have decided, think about the textures of that landscape, what season is it? What time of day? Think about what colours and textures you can use to represent this in your landscape.

**Old maps work really well for this exercise!**

**Materials**
Different coloured textured paper
Glue and brush
Scissors
Pens/pencils

**What to do!**
Once you have decided on your landscape look at magazines for colour and images to make up your colour palette. Try using ripped brown paper or envelopes to create different textures. If you’re using newspaper try dying it different tones by using old tea bags. Anything is possible, just use your imagination! Once your landscape is complete, why not use a pen or pencil to do some mark making to create additional detail and texture?

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A collaged landscape

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Exercise four
Create a paper mosaic collage

First decide on a simple image you would like to create. This can be a flower, piece of fruit, butterfly, ladybird for example. **Keep your image simple.** You could use the cup template in this resource.
Think of what colours you would like to use.
Think carefully about the colour of your background. This is just as important.
Use the colour wheel on the next page to help you. Try using colours that compliment each other from opposite ends of the colour wheel.

**Cutting out all the squares for this exercise can take some time, but can be quite relaxing, put some music on, make a cup of tea and enjoy the repetitive process.**

**Materials**
- Paper squares in various colours
- Pen
- Glue and brush
- Card or paper
- Scissors

**What to do!**
Once you have cut all your squares, draw a simple drawing of the object you would like to mosaic, then use the coloured squares to fill the background and your design. If you are using squares from a magazine try using different tones of the same colour. If you have coloured pens or paint, you can paint white paper then cut out your squares for more of a block colour.
When sticking the squares down keep a slight gap between each square to get the mosaic effect.
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Create a paper mosaic

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Exercise five
Create a collage using words

In this exercise, create a collage just using words and text.

Materials
Newspapers, magazines, old books anything with words and text
Glue and brush
Scissors
Card or paper
Pen/pencil

What to Do!
You can create a collage just using words, by looking through newspapers and magazines for words you find uplifting and positive. If you can’t find the word you want try making it up by cutting out individual letters.
You could also draw a simple image, a cup or flower and think of words associated with your image and collage the words together
Try using the cup template from the previous exercise.

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Collage made from just words

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Exercise six
Create a portrait using collage

Portraits can be a challenge but using collage can be fun and interesting because you don’t need to be exact and use a lot of different materials to create an interesting portrait. You work in a traditional style by adding features, or just collage a lot of different images and words together to make up the portrait. See the examples above to see the different approaches you can take.

Materials
Pencil
Pen
Paper
Glue and brush

What to do!
Use the template on the next page as a guide or draw your own. Then use your collaged papers to fill the face, glueing each piece down smoothly. Try using eyes and mouth and noses cut from magazines. Don’t worry if they are different sizes or colours, this only adds interest to your work. Try using newspaper as a background then add spashes of colour for hair or the background to create contrast. You can use a black marker to create definite outlines.
Collage a portrait

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Exercise seven
Collage an owl

Use different types of paper from magazines, newspapers. wallpaper, card anything you have around. Try ripping the paper instead of cutting, this can create different texture.

Materials
Collage materials, magazines, coloured/plain papers, newspapers
Scissors
Glue
Card or paper to create a background for your owl
Coloured pens or pencil

What to do!
Find the different papers you would like to use to collage and using the template on the next page cut to shape. You can use just one colour for the main body of your owl or a variety of different colours. Once you’re happy with your arrangement, glue everything down smoothly. Cut out two circles, you can draw around a bottle top for this, and stick to your owl. Cut a triangle for the beak, two shapes for the wings and two smaller circles for the eyes. Make sure everything is stuck down securely. Apply another layer of glue to seal everything down. To create a background for your owl, collage ripped newspaper to a piece of card then cut out your owl and stick to the background. Try drawing a branch using a coloured pen for a perch.
Collage an owl

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We hope you have enjoyed this Why not Try Collage.

If you have enjoyed working with collage why not try revisiting some of the exercises and try a different colour palette or different collage materials.

As a project, use collage as a technique to try some upcycling. Use the skills you have developed and collage glass jars or tins to create interesting and colourful storage jars.

Most of all enjoy spending some time just being creative.

Please check out [www.start2.co.uk](http://www.start2.co.uk) for more creative wellbeing projects you could try.