

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is Expressive Arts Therapy?

According to the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA), Expressive Arts Therapy (EXAT) is the integrated use of multi-arts processes for personal and social transformation. EXAT uses imagery, dance and movement, music, sounding, story-telling, drama, writing, poetry, dream work, ritual and visual arts, in an integrated way to foster personal growth, human development, psychological health and body-mind-spirit healing. The combination of different art processes, often moving from one to another, is referred to as a multimodal practice. EXAT is also called Integrative Arts Therapy.

2. What is the connection between expressive arts and therapy?

EXAT is a creative blending of expressive arts and psychotherapy. It is the use of a multimodal discipline of arts as a form of therapy to enhance personal growth and improve quality of life. EXAT emphasizes artistic experience and creative expression as a tool of self-healing for the integration of physical, psychological, spiritual and social functioning, and for building community. EXAT helps strengthen the connection with the body, emotions, thoughts and spirits through the creative healing process. Based on the needs of clients, therapists use different art forms in an integrated way to foster self-understanding, self-awareness, psychological health and healing. The therapy aims are determined and reviewed collaboratively by therapist and client. There are a growing number of practicing psychotherapists throughout the world who specialize in EXAT with individuals, groups and families.

3. How does EXAT differ from traditional creative art therapies?

Traditional creative art therapies (such as art therapy, dance and movement therapy, music therapy, drama therapy and poetry therapy) use single modality arts-based approaches. They put emphasis on a particular art modality. EXAT integrates and embraces all the art modalities in the therapeutic processes. The emphasis is on the healing potentials of the artistic experience itself, the creative source and self-help capacity of each individual, group and family.

As each individual is unique, people have their own choices of art forms and expressive styles in using arts for healing. Different art forms carry distinct sensory responses, therapeutic effects and emotive qualities. It is helpful to experience multimodal EXAT for a full exploration of the psyche. The integrated use of divergent art modalities can achieve a holistic connection of the physical, emotional, sensational, intellectual, social and spiritual parts of self. In EXAT, individuals can choose their preferred art modalities to tap their latent creativity and actualize their inherent potentials.

4. Can EXAT be incorporated into other methods of therapy and practice?

The expressive arts processes integrate well with many approaches in psychotherapy, counseling, group facilitation and social work practice, as well as education at all levels and work with organizations. The depth of expressive arts processes changes progressively from arts as leisure, to arts as healing, arts as a complementary tool to psychotherapy/counseling, and then to EXAT.

5. Why is Person-centered Approach adopted in this program?

“Person-Centered Expressive Arts” (PCEA) was founded and developed by Dr. Natalie Rogers in the mid-1980s. It blends the benefits of the Person-centered Approach with the healing power of expressive arts. The theoretical foundation is rooted in the humanistic philosophy of the Person-centered approach developed by Carl Rogers. Each individual has worth, dignity, and the capacity for self-direction and growth. It is in line with the professional ethics and values in counseling, social work and psychology.

The client-therapist relationship is more interactive, equal and collaborative in PCEA. As a Person-centered therapist, we do not interpret or judge the creative expression of clients. We try to understand the meanings of creative expression from the perspective of the creator. PCEA emphasizes the importance of deep understanding with empathic listening, non-judgmental compassion and mutual respect. It echoes the Chinese culture of harmony and respect. We aim at fostering self-actualization of each individual, widening the scopes of understanding, finding one’s true needs and transforming the negative energy into healing resources for a positive change.

6. I understand that PCEA is one strong approach to EXAT, but how can I learn about other approaches in EXAT?

EXAT is a fast-growing rich and complex field, with many different approaches and emphases. Our faculty team will invite master trainers with different approaches in the field to conduct training workshops, programs and conferences in Hong Kong. We shall collaborate with the Art in Hospital, the Continued Professional Unit of the Social Work

Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and NGOs in organizing these events. Students need to pay for attending these additional trainings and enrichment programs.

7. Will this program become a Master degree program?

This program is not a graduate academic program. It is a structured clinical training program conducted by Registered Expressive Arts Therapists (REAT) instead. Upon completion of the eight core courses, 8 practicum courses and supervision, a certificate of completion with the total training hours, practicum and supervision hours will be issued. The training hours are recognized for the application to become a REAT and Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educator (REACE) with IEATA for competencies and/or course work.

8. What are the admission requirements?

The 3-year Program is designed for human service practitioners, such as social workers, counselors, psychologists, creative arts therapists, mental health professionals, or people in a related field.

Having a master degree is one of the requirements for the REAT/REACE registration. Students enrolled in the masters or doctoral programs in counseling, social work, Marriage and Family Therapy, etc., may pursue our Program in conjunction with their degree.

If you are planning to apply for REAT or REACE registration, you have to check the education, training and competency requirements at the IEATA website at <https://www.ieata.org/professional-registration>. Each application is examined by the IEATA reviewers based on the standard of the registration you selected.

9. Can I join your program if I don't have a Master's Degree?

Any human service practitioners with passionate interest in PCEA are welcome to join our program. A Master's degree is not an absolute requirement.

For those who might consider applying for REAT registration, applicants must have a Master's degree in designated fields listed on IEATA website.

If you do not have a Master's degree but want to join our program, you have to document your educational training, work experience, non-formal training and standard of practice that apply to fulfilling the registration requirements for the Non-Formal Training Pathway

to REACE registration. Only after extensive review of these documents will applicants be accepted.

10. I am now enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral degree in a mental health field. Can I apply for this program?

Yes, you can but you have to accede to the agreement that you will not be able to complete our three-year EXAT program until you have completed at least a Master's degree.

11. Do I need a background in the arts or a specific art talent?

Our students usually have an interest, talent or capacity in one or more art processes. However, no formal arts training or background is required. We look for students who are coming to understand the need to engage in creative exploratory processes that awaken and integrate all aspects of self: the body, mind, emotions and spirit through integrated use of different expressive arts modalities.

This program is designed with a practical, hands-on, and co-creative approach in which students and facilitators work together to create an environment for personal healing and growth.

12. Will I have to participate in the expressive arts processes?

Students are facilitated to experience EXAT in order to better understand the impact on themselves and the client as well. Undoubtedly, both the personal and professional qualities of the helping professional are pivotal in the therapy process. To empower our personal and professional "self", expressive arts are a kind of holistic means of self-awareness for connecting our inner and outer reality: body, mind and spirit.

Students are encouraged to be engaged in a regular practice of expressive arts for building up the wholeness of self and actualizing their life-force. When we are empowered through the integrated use of expressive arts, we can be capable of helping ourselves and helping others.

13. Am I expected to perform or to exhibit artwork?

Students can co-create a space and opportunities to perform and exhibit their visual arts, music, dance/movement, poetry and writing for sharing their voices in the community. Sometimes the material and self-understanding that emerges from expressive arts

processes can be very personal and surprising in nature. No one is required to exhibit their art. Instead, participants are encouraged to trust their own deepening self-understanding to inform whether, when, and with whom to share their art.

14. What is the language of teaching/learning in this program?

Most teaching and learning are in Cantonese, supplemented by English. We strongly encourage our students to share their expressive arts processes and creative experiences in their mother tongue.

For the sessions conducted by international faculty/trainers, English is the language in teaching. Instantaneous interpretation is provided for Cantonese-speaking students.

There are coursework assignments to complete throughout the program. Written assignments can be in English or Chinese.

15. How about students from overseas?

Students have to attend the eight core and eight practicum courses spread over the three years, and submit written assignment via email.

If it is not feasible to travel for the monthly supervision, students can get their clinical supervision in their home country by a REAT/creative arts therapist.

If there is no REAT/creative arts therapist in your home country, you can get distant supervision by a REAT/creative arts therapist in another country.

There is no exemption or discount on the tuition fee.

16. How does this program advance my profession/career?

You are proficient as a Person-Centered Expressive Arts Practitioner upon completion of this program and coursework assignment. You are able to infuse the integrated use of arts in your work and life.

Practitioners can be therapists, social workers, coaches, educators, consultants, pastoral counsellors, healthcare professionals, and artists.

17. Are the graduates qualified to be an expressive arts therapist after completing PCEA program?

Our graduates will be a Person-Centered Expressive Arts Practitioner. If they are planning to proceed the professional registration pathway, they can claim themselves expressive arts therapy intern during supervised practicum.

18. How to proceed the professional pathway to be a registered expressive arts therapist?

If people are planning to get registered expressive arts therapist (REAT) qualification, they can include our PCEA program hours for their application.

For REAT application, applicants should have a master's degree in social work/family therapy/related program with required training hours, supervision and practicum hours. For details, please check out at <https://www.ieata.org/apply-for-reat>.

19. How do I accumulate practicum hours for registration?

Post-Masters students are required to accumulate certain supervised experience of EXAT within a certain period of time stated on IEATA website. Students can apply PCEA in their working agencies or in other NGOs as a volunteer.

20. What kind of positions do graduates of the program currently hold?

Graduates can sustain their current professional development with a specialization in PCEA. They can also hold positions in private practice or at public hospitals, non-government organizations (NGOs) and educational institutes as a freelance expressive arts therapy intern/consultant/educator. IEATA is building global as well as regional support networks for those practicing EXA in different settings.

21. Will I be a REAT after completing the program?

Students completing the program can become a Person-centered Expressive Arts Practitioner.

They can also further acquire adequate practicum and supervision hours for applying for becoming a REAT or REACE. The registration is conferred by IEATA and requires post-master's experience and supervision.

22. How do I apply for the program?

All students must apply through the CPE by 10 June, 2022. Applicants must fill in an application form and application statement.

23. How do we prepare the budget for the courses?

8 Courses – \$7,280* for each course

8 Practicum - \$7,900* for each practicum course

Supervision - \$13,340* for 14 supervision sessions

Total tuition fee - \$135,060*

*Subject to approval

24. Is this an annual program? When will be the next enrollment?

It will take 3 to 3.5 years for completing core courses, practicum and supervision. For upcoming arrangement, it will be reviewed and announce accordingly.