

How I Use “Create A Colour Wheel”

Materials Needed:

- Acrylic paints - Colours: Red, Blue, Yellow and White
- Paint brushes
- Mixing palette (or improvise by using some cardboard)
- Colour wheel template (included in this resource section) - Alternatively feel free to create your own using a pencil and compass

I have used the colour wheel with clients, as a sort of prelude to them using the emotions wheel, which is in fact the next lecture.

Creating a colour wheel, is a good exercise for getting clients reacquainted with colours. For some of my clients it could be 30 years or more since they paid any real attention to colours - and for many, probably since doing an art class at school.

This exercise is especially helpful for those people who regard themselves as not being particularly creative, and consequently they may not relate very much to colours because they feel they don't pay a big part in their life. This isn't the case at all, it's just that the client is unaware of how colours affect them.

I sometimes use this exercise as a metaphorical tool as well. Creating colours also helps to demonstrate to clients, that life is about variation and that there is more than one way to view something.

In this instance, we literally see the physical change of colours as we mix one with another. This helps to demonstrate we're capable of gaining new perspectives and things don't have to be so one dimensional (also known as black and white thinking in CBT).

Staying with the metaphorical properties of this exercise, I have found enormous value in using this to help those clients who are experiencing challenges that they feel overwhelmed by and who may have a sense of not being able to cope or push through certain emotional obstacles.

With this in mind, I like to share with my client, that by using just three colours (the primary colours), we do in fact have everything we need to create whichever colour we choose to.

In this setting, the primary colours would represent ourselves. They would symbolise that we do in fact have everything we need within us, to make positive, profound changes for a healthy, happier life (even if tell ourselves we do not).

Very often I see clients who feel overwhelmed and that they cannot cope, as they believe they haven't got the resources (emotional resources), or don't have the strength to deal with what issue(s) they may be facing. Creating the colour wheel is a visual representation that we *do* indeed have the resources to be able to exercise choice in order to expand our reasoning, enabling us to experience the issue with a different, fresher perspective.

In my own practice, I have used this exercise to explore with clients their relationship with colours, and their intrinsic feelings towards or against certain colours in prep for the emotions wheel. I tend to ask my clients what they feel about certain colours - as they are created (as a result of mixing other colours together). Even basic questions such as, Do you like it? Why do you like it? - and then when you've added another colour and the shade changes, asking the same questions.

There are no right or wrong answers, the exercise is to get the client to develop a sense of awareness surrounding their relationship with colours.

It's also a nice lesson in gaining confidence in experimenting with colours and their shades and tones.

Creating a colour wheel is one of the first activities that many artists do, as it affords a great understanding of colour, creating colour and colour hues.

Above all else, it's a great excuse to get messy with paints and enjoy creating!