



# EMPOWERED

IMPROVING LGBTQ+ MENTAL HEALTH

## LGBTQ+ Well-being Cultivated Through Creative Expression

*Collage and article by Envision:You Intern, Chelle Schaffer (they/them/she/hers)*

Outright expression of emotions can pose a distinct challenge for many individuals within the LGBTQ+ community. This may be due to societal prejudice contributing to internal homophobia or transphobia and fear of judgment or rejection from others. Many have lived much of their lives silencing their authentic selves. For many years, silence brought safety and with that silence came an ability to close off emotionally not only to others, but oneself. Living one's truth in authenticity is all about honoring one's identity without sacrificing aspects of it. Creative outlets allow for exploration of emotions and finding ways that feel true to ourselves in that expression.

Exploring various creative mediums sparks activity throughout the brain, making neural connections stronger and boosting mental agility. This helps to develop and grow problem solving skills and increase one's ability to cope in stressful situations. Consistently utilizing creativity to process emotions may enhance memory, increase attention to detail, and support the development of neural flexibility over time. As creativity continues, there may be noticeable improvements in memory, a sharper eye for details, and a mind that's quick to adapt to change ([Medium](#)).

Artistic expression is often used therapeutically as a way to process complicated and sometimes confusing emotions. For some, finding words to verbalize can be difficult and utilizing art provides an opening to the door

of communication. Creating art can be a powerful tool to provide a safe place for self-reflection that can be shared with others to break down barriers of isolation. It also allows internal reflection, exploring the subconscious and bringing hidden thoughts and emotions to the surface. This healing process can provide a sense of release and relief as internal struggles are externalized on paper (or other chosen mediums).



Meditation is also a use for creativity as it relates to supporting mental health. In such a busy and chaotic world, staying in the moment can be difficult to say the least. When focusing intently on a creative task, many other aspects of life seem to get quieter which in turn, reduces anxiety.

For some who struggle with self-destructive behaviors, there is a possibility that creating something can take just as much energy as self-destruction does.

In fact, the act of destroying something (a magazine) in order to create something (a collage) can be extremely cathartic.

Art serves as a powerful tool for processing emotions while empowering the individual in their own therapeutic process. The expressive nature of art provides an accessible outlet for individuals to navigate and manage their mental well-being. The act of creating not only offers a medium for emotional expression but also contributes to a sense of empowerment, mindfulness, and self-discovery.

[Click here to see Envision:You in the news](#)



## Monthly Development

This month, give the sweetest gift by becoming an Envision:You GEM! (Gives Every Month Donor). Your monthly donation is crucial in contributing to collective impact, which in turn creates monumental results. Whatever the amount, every contribution matters and contributes to our shared vision of improving the lives and well-being of LGBTQ+ folks.

**Will you be our sweetheart this Valentine’s Day and become a GEM?**



## 5 ways of possible expression through creativity:

- 1 WRITING** - Journaling can be a great way to process how you’re feeling and what you’re experiencing. Gratitude journals provide the opportunity to engage throughout the day in seeking positive moments. Poetry and short stories provide an outlet for creative expression and self-reflection.
- 2 CRAFTING** - Using mixed media, creating collages, sewing, and sculpting may be a different medium of expression that is more immersive depending on the materials you choose.
- 3 PAINTING/DRAWING** - Pay attention to the content and colors that draw your attention. How do you use different colors to convey different emotions?
- 4 DIGITAL ART** - Use your computer, phone, or tablet to sketch or create an image reflecting how you’re feeling in the moment.
- 5 DANCE** - Put on music that feeds your soul and experience some joyful movement!

ENVISION:YOU

**“I’m gay so I don’t need to learn how to treat LGBTQ+ clients.”**

**Reality Check**

**There are as many ways to be LGBTQ+ as there are LGBTQ+ people.**

**LGBTQ+**  
Behavioral Health Provider Training Program

**ENROLL NOW**

## LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program Highlight

We are excited to announce that the Envision:You LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program (BHPTP) is now endorsed by the **Colorado Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers** (NASW-CO) to provide **continuing education credits** (CECs) for social workers! Such credits may be utilized for Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs’ (DORA) Continuing Professional Development requirements for licensure renewal. This endorsement covers our programs Level 1, Level 2, and population-specific modules.

As a program committed to equipping providers with tools to deliver culturally relevant and identity-affirming care to LGBTQ+ clients, our team is grateful for this opportunity and recognition. Learn more about the training program at: [envision-you-training.org](https://envision-you-training.org)