

IDEA TO ARTICLE



A PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO PUBLISHING
ART THERAPY RESEARCH



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WHAT IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is meant as a resource for anyone who's interested in publishing art therapy research. Research is essential for the growth of art therapy as a profession. It promotes the understanding of art therapy, provides evidence for its efficacy, encourages innovation, and fosters community.

All members of the art therapy community can contribute to research! This includes practitioners, students, scholars, educators, service users, and more. Research is not something restricted to those in academia but should amplify the voices of all members of the profession.

There are many barriers to publishing art therapy research, from systemic issues to personal challenges and everything in between. Some of these challenges include systemic oppression and bias, imposter syndrome, lack of time, finances, mentorship, and information... The list goes on.



These barriers often result in research authorship being skewed towards individuals in positions of privilege. Privilege can be defined as unearned advantages, including socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

This guide is an effort towards lowering barriers and making the process of publishing art therapy research more accessible. In this guide, you'll find 10 stages of growing an idea and turning it into an article, with advice for each stage contributed by individuals with prior research experience.

A list of research journals and resources are also included. By providing information and guidance, this guide aims to demystify the process of publishing and encourage members of the art therapy community to contribute their voices to research.

This guide is a living document and is open to revisions and feedback. If you have any suggestions or contributions, please email Dr. Christine Phang at cphang.art.therapy@gmail.com.

STAGE 0:

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SEED – YOUR POSITIONALITY

An important place to start any idea is by considering your positionality. What does that mean? Positionality is defined as the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability status, and other factors. Positionality describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world.

In simple terms, positionality is who you are and everything that has shaped that. This is essential to consider because who you are influences what you research, why you research it, and how you make sense of what you find.

In the box on the next page, you can explore your positionality. What are the different parts of you that make up your identity? What are the different things around you that have influenced you?

You can come back to this later on when you write your positionality statement.

**EXPLORE YOUR
POSITIONALITY!
WHAT ARE THE
DIFFERENT PARTS
OF YOU THAT
MAKE UP YOUR
IDENTITY?**



STAGE 1:

THE SEED – YOUR IDEA

You've thought of an idea you believe could become an article! You've already begun the first step of research. Your idea is the beginning, a seed with the potential of becoming a fully grown tree.

Motivations for writing and pushing research can vary and can include:

- Contributing to the field of art therapy
- Carrying on or extending research that has already been conducted
- Sharing innovative practices
- Investigating hypotheses
- Advocating and/or raising awareness
- Strengthening your professional identity
- Building community
- And more!

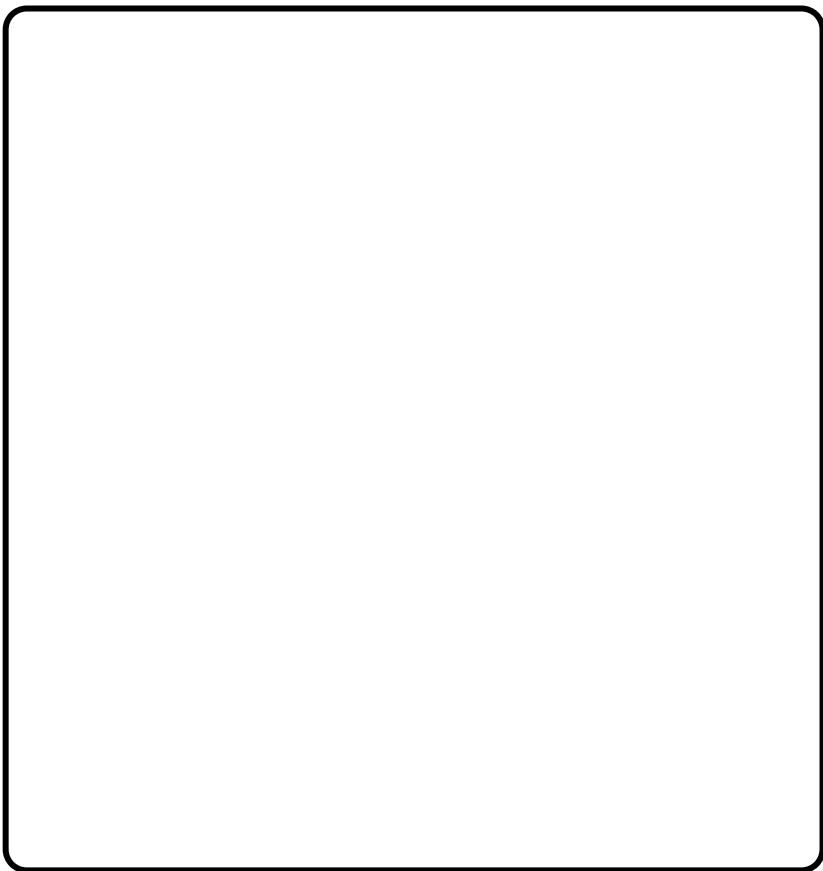


**WHERE DID
THE SEED OF
YOUR IDEA
COME FROM?**

At this stage, it may be helpful to ask yourself these questions:

- Where did this seed come from? This seed came from another tree. What influences led you to this idea?
- Why are you doing this?
- Who is this for?

These are some simple questions that can help give more form to your idea. You can write or make art in the box below in response.



STAGE 2: GERMINATION - MOVING YOUR IDEA AROUND

At this stage, you might begin moving your idea around. The seed is starting to sprout! Now that you've thought about why you're doing this and who it is for, you may want to consider:

- What's my personal connection to my idea that will help me persevere through the research process?
- What might my personal connection look like visually? At this point, you may want to start creating art about your idea.
- What strengths do I have that will allow me to persevere?



**DR. MICHELE FORINASH,
DA, LMHC, MT-BC**

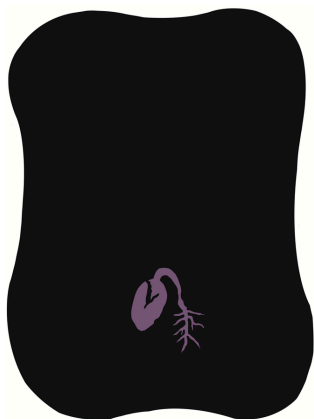
“[People] seem to think that it comes out of my mouth in perfect form and through my hands and I write one draft and I send it off and it's accepted. And that has never been my experience. In fact, I counted one time, and I had 19 of my own drafts before I actually sent it off to a journal.”

As you continue on your journey, it can be helpful to keep your personal connection to your research in mind. Publishing research is a process that often requires perseverance!

After submission, a journal can take between 1 week to 2 months to make an initial decision on your submission. Even after an article is accepted by a journal, it typically takes 6-9 months for it to be published. This includes:

- 2-4 months for peer review
- 1-2 months for revisions and resubmission
- Up to 1 month for the editor to make a final decision
- Up to 1 month for production and publication

Knowing your intention for your idea can help keep you motivated on this journey, especially when challenges arise! Creating an image that reminds you of your inspiration can provide motivation.



**MOVE YOUR
IDEA AROUND!
THE SEED IS
STARTING
TO SPROUT...**

STAGE 3: THE SPROUT - TALKING ABOUT YOUR IDEA

At this point, you may have thought and reflected on your idea quite a bit. A seedling has emerged. As you continue to nurture your idea, it may be helpful to start talking to others about your idea. This may include friends, family, colleagues, supervisors, professors, or mentors - whoever in your support network you feel would provide helpful advice and encouragement as you start this process.

As you begin conversations with others about your idea, here are some possible questions you can ask:

- What is your goal?
- What audience are you trying to reach?
 - Is your desired audience fellow art therapists, members of other mental health professions, service users, art therapy educators?
 - Your audience will be a factor in choosing a journal to submit to.



**TALK ABOUT YOUR
IDEA WITH OTHERS!
CONVERSATION CAN
NURTURE GROWTH.**

You can also consider if there's anyone in your circle you might want to invite to co-author the article with you. Working with a co-author can have benefits like:

- Mutual motivation and encouragement
- Increased support and accountability
- Lightening the workload
- Adding new perspectives

"I think having co-authors are helpful, or at least somebody who might want to help you, support you through some of those rough times and tell you that it will get published."



**DR. NANCY GERBER,
PHD, ATR-BC**

STAGE 4: THE SEEDLING - FIGURING OUT THE LOGISTICS

Now that you have a better idea of your goal and your intended audience, you might want to consider what journal you want to submit to and what kind of article you're writing.

What journal would be suitable for your article?

- There are different kinds of journals that accept art therapy research.
- Which journal is best suited to your idea based on their mission and their audience?
- Refer to page 28 for a list of different research journals that accept art therapy research.

Consult the Directory of Open Access Journals to check the authenticity of journals (<https://doaj.org/>).

- This can help you distinguish between reputable and predatory journals. Predatory journals typically charge authors high processing fees for publishing their research.
- Think. Check. Submit. offers researchers a checklist when considering what journal to submit to (<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/journals/>).



- What kind of article are you writing?
 - There are also different kinds of articles based on the journal you're submitting to. Some examples are listed on the next page. Which kind of article is suited to your idea?

"I started an article and they said, "Why don't you put it as a viewpoint? And that will give you more autonomy." Even within a journal, there might be different places that you can maybe have a better fit, too, of where [an article] should go. Because [one is] trying to narrow down something so big, and it's very personal, too."



**DR. DANIELLE CHEN,
PHD, LMFT, RPT, ATR**

Here are different types of articles that journals publish

- **Opinion Pieces or Viewpoint Articles:** Typically shorter articles that present professional experiences, reflections, or artworks in an informed manner that has implications for the field.
- **Practice Papers or Case Studies:** Articles that focus on innovative art therapy practice, including case studies of work with clients. Remember to always have a signed release of information form to publish client images.
- **Research Articles:** Articles about the findings from research, including research studies completed with participants or scoping reviews (synthesis of the literature related to a particular topic).

Cover Art is another way to get published - by submitting artwork with a short writeup.



“Cover art is another way that publishing is accessible to everybody, that we can publish a piece of artwork with a very short explanation.”

**DR. LISA HINZ,
PHD, ATR-BC**

STAGE 5:

THE SAPLING

- CREATING YOUR OUTLINE

Now that you have a better idea of the journal you would like to submit to and what kind of article you're writing, you can start creating your outline. This outline is the first step towards writing your final manuscript.

Creating an outline is an important first step as it will become the backbone for your manuscript. It helps provide you with a structure for the rest of the process. As you create your outline, consider the following tips gathered from different authors and editors.

1) Make sure your manuscript follows the instructions for authors and the templates provided by the journals

- Journals will have specific requirements for their articles. Visit their "Instruction for Authors" page to find out what these requirements are.
- Make sure that the journal's requirements are incorporated into your outline.
- A common reason for rejection is when manuscripts do not follow the journal's instructions.

2) Make sure there's a logical flow to your outline, i.e., that one section connects well to the next.

- Another common reason for rejection is a lack of internal logic within the article.

3) As you create your outline, read articles from the journal you plan to submit to.

- Look specifically for articles that are similar to the kind of article you're writing (i.e., research articles, practice papers/case studies, or viewpoint articles/opinion pieces).
- Reading examples of articles can give you a better sense of what a journal is looking for.

"Figuring out what journal I wanted to publish in, then going to their instructions for authors, because they lay out what they want... That was, for me, a really good starting point about how to structure my article and make sure I was meeting the requirements."



**DR. CHRISTINE PHANG,
PHD, ATR**

- AATA members have access to the following journals (go to *Learning and Research* under the *Professional Development* tab on AATA's website):
 - *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*
 - *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*
 - *International Journal of Art Therapy*
 - *Arts & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*

You can also access journal articles by:

- Using open access search engines like the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (<https://doaj.org/>)
- Checking academic repositories like *ResearchGate*
- Contacting the author directly to request a copy of their article

**YOUR OUTLINE
WILL BECOME
THE BACKBONE
FOR YOUR
MANUSCRIPT.**



STAGE 6:

THE BUDDING TREE

- WRITING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Now that you have an outline to help you structure your article, begin writing a rough draft based on this outline. This may feel like an intimidating process. Here are some points that may be helpful to keep in mind:

1) Don't aim for perfection.

- The editor of an art therapy journal once told me a key part to making progress is to be okay with a “bad first draft” – the writing is in the revision!

2) Develop a positionality statement so that your readers are aware of your background and influences.

- This can be a helpful starting point, especially if you're having difficulty beginning your writing.
- Your positionality is something you already have plenty of knowledge about! You can refer back to your reflections on your positionality in Stage 0.
- At the end of this stage, an example of a positionality statement is provided.

3) Look at the existing literature surrounding the topic you're writing on.

- This will not only give you inspiration but will also provide references to substantiate your article.
- Refer to Stage 5 for ways to access journal articles.

4) Reference up to date literature in your manuscript.

- One common reason for rejection is outdated literature.
- Ideally, references should be from the last 5-10 years unless they are foundational works.

5) Before submission, share your manuscript with others.

- This can include classmates, colleagues, professors, mentors, family members, or friends.
- Get your draft to people who can give you honest feedback and who can help you improve your manuscript.

Here is an example of a positionality statement from an article written by Christine Phang (PhD, ATR) that was published in the International Journal of Art Therapy :

"I am a cisgender Chinese woman who grew up in Singapore. When I was 15, I stumbled across the field of art therapy and was instantly captivated. From that point onwards, I became determined to become an art therapist. This was a somewhat unusual path to take, given both the perceived impracticality of a career in art as well as the stigma around mental health in my culture."



Phang, C. (2025). The role of art-making in navigating the art therapist's personal and professional identity. International Journal of Art Therapy, 1-7.

STAGE 7:

THE FLOWERING TREE

- SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Once you have finished the manuscript of your article, the next step is to submit it to a journal for publication. Authors are generally not allowed to submit to multiple journals at the same time as it wastes resources and can also lead to copyright issues.

Below are some tips as you decide what journal to submit to. You'll also find a list of journals starting on page 28.

- If you are unsure about whether your manuscript is suitable for submission, you can contact the journal to ask. For example, the email address of the AATA journal is journal@arttherapy.org.
- In your submission you can also let the editorial team know if you're a first time author and request a mentor. Some journals are willing to provide additional mentorship to first time authors if they have resources available.

- Journals also regularly issue calls for special issues about specific topics or populations (e.g., community-based art therapy, art therapy in medical settings etc.). Be on the lookout for special issues that your article might be a good fit for.
- As you prepare to submit your manuscript and receive feedback, it can be helpful to develop a thick skin and try not to take feedback personally. More details about this are discussed in the next stage.



**TAKE A MOMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPLETING YOUR
MANUSCRIPT! YOU HAVE PUT IN EFFORT
TO GROW YOUR IDEA INTO THIS FORM.**

STAGE 8: THE FRUIT TREE - RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

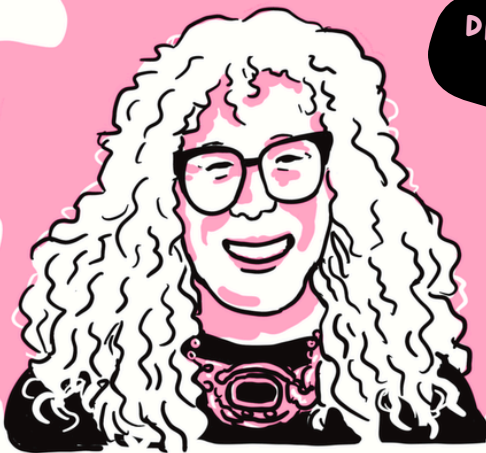
If you find a journal that accepts your manuscript for publication, congratulations! Take time to recognize how much work you have put in to get to this point. There are likely a few things you still need to do to get to the final step of publication.

The first step is responding to the peer review of your article. It is extremely common to receive a list of requested changes from the peer reviewers and the editor assigned to your article. Here are some things that can be helpful to know as you go over their feedback:

The first step is responding to the peer review of your article. It is extremely common to receive a list of requested changes from the peer reviewers and the editor assigned to your article. The next page has some points that may be helpful to keep in mind as you go over their feedback:

- Journals often conduct blind peer-review, meaning the reviewers do not know your identity.
- As the reviewers do not know your identity, the feedback they provide is not personally targeted at you but is usually well intentioned with the aim of improving the manuscript.
- Try not to take feedback personally and see how you can use it to improve your manuscript.

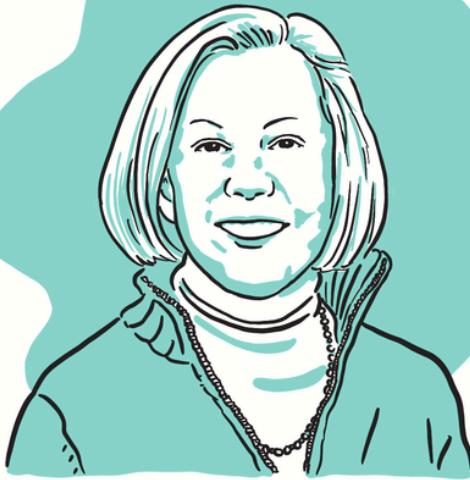
“One of the other challenges is that once you get over the narcissistic wound... you need to look for the helpful suggestions, and I think that I see those always in hindsight. Once I've done the revisions, I see that it was helpful, that these things were important.”



**DR. NANCY GERBER,
PHD, ATR-BC**

- Ask a friend or colleague to read the feedback with you as you navigate it.

"The opinions of trusted colleagues has often helped me put editorial feedback into perspective... I think it's really great to have co-authors or people that are willing to read and review with you once you get any kind of feedback."



**DR. LISA HINZ,
PHD, ATR-BC**

Addressing all the requested revisions may feel like a big task. You may find it helpful to have a table to record the editor's and reviewers' feedback, alongside your response to each point.

In this table you can record what you did to address the feedback or your rationale if you did not make the requested change. This can help you keep track of what you have and have not addressed. Additionally, submitting this along with your revised manuscript will help the editor know that you have taken in and responded to the feedback.

#	Editor's/Reviewer's Comment	Author's Response
1	Copy and paste the comments from the editor or peer reviewers.	Your response, including how you addressed this feedback or your rationale for not making the requested change.



**CONGRATULATIONS!
YOUR HARD WORK
IS BEARING FRUIT.**

STAGE 9:

THE HARVEST

- WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR PUBLICATION

First, celebrate all your hard work! Be proud of the work you've done to get to this point.

- You can also share your research with people. Usually, journals will provide a link that includes 50 free shares.
- You can email the link to members of your community such as colleagues, classmates, professors, mentors, friends, family, and more.
- You can also share your article on platforms such as LinkedIn or forums such as the AATA community forums.

Additionally, you can create an ORCID ID and Google Scholar profile if you do not yet have one.

- An ORCID ID is a free, 16-digit unique identifier that permanently connects you to your research and publications.
- A Google Scholar profile is a free, personalized webpage that allows academic authors to showcase their publications and track citations.
- These platforms help increase the visibility and discoverability of your scholarly output

After your publication you will receive email offers to publish more of your work.

- Many of these offers may be from “predatory” open access journals that do not employ blind peer review and charge high article processing fees.
- Consult the Directory of Open Access Journals to check the authenticity of journals: <https://doaj.org/>



**CELEBRATE AND SHARE THE
FRUITS OF YOUR HARD WORK
WITH OTHERS!**

AFTERWORD

Thank you for reading this guide! I hope it has helped demystify the process of publishing art therapy research and that it provides you with some measure of support if you choose to publish your ideas.

The word “research” has its roots in the French word “recherche”, which means “to go about seeking”. When we think about research, many associations may come to mind. Some of the less favorable ones that come to my mind include “exclusive”, “intimidating”, and “elitist”.

However, when I think of research as “to go about seeking”, it helps me see it as a journey - a journey of curiosity, of examining our ways of being in this field, and of giving voice to new ways of seeing. This journey’s path is a lifelong road that does not end in publication but continues beyond it, in nurturing our desires to learn and grow, as a profession and as people.

I hope that this guide aids you in walking this road and that on it, you may encounter fellow travellers to journey with!

Dr. Christine Phang, PhD, ATR

Send feedback to cphang.art.therapy@gmail.com

JOURNALS FOCUSED ON ART THERAPY

Journal Name	Associated Organizations	Publishing Company	Impact Factor
International Journal of Art Therapy	British Association of Art Therapists	Taylor & Francis Online	2.7
Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association	American Art Therapy Association	Taylor & Francis Online	1.3
Canadian Journal of Art Therapy: Research, Practice, and Issues	Canadian Art Therapy Association	Taylor & Francis Online	N/A
Journal of Creative Arts Therapies	Australia, New Zealand, and Asia Art Therapy Association	Western Sydney University	N/A
Polyphony	Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapies	University of Manchester	N/A

JOURNALS FOCUSED ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Journal Name	Associated Organizations	Publishing Company	Impact Factor
The Arts in Psychotherapy	N/A	Elsevier	1.5
Arts and Health	N/A	Taylor & Francis Online	1.7
Journal of Creativity in Mental Health	The Association for Creativity in Counseling	Taylor & Francis Online	0.6
APA Division 10: Journal of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts	American Psychological Association	American Psychological Association	2.7
Creative Arts in Education and Therapy (CAET) – East, West and Global Perspectives	The International Association for Creative Arts in Education and Therapy (IACAET)	Inspirees Education Group	N/A

JOURNALS FOCUSED ON MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Journal Name	Associated Organizations	Publishing Company	Impact Factor
Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology	Counselors for Social Justice, Psychologists for Social Responsibility	Ball State University	1.13
Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology	American Psychological Association	American Psychological Association	2.9.
Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development	Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD / ACA)	Wiley	1.1

JOURNALS FOCUSED ON QUALITATIVE & MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

Journal Name	Associated Organizations	Publishing Company	Impact Factor
Qualitative Research	N/A	SAGE Publications	2.9
International Review of Qualitative Research	International Association of Qualitative Inquiry	SAGE Journals	N/A
Journal of Mixed Methods Research	Mixed Methods International Research Association (MMIRA)	SAGE Journals	3.8
Qualitative Research in Psychology	N/A	Routledge (Taylor & Francis)	4.9
International Journal of Qualitative Methods	International Institute for Qualitative Methodology (IIQM)	SAGE Publications	3.9
Qualitative Inquiry	N/A	SAGE Publications	2.5

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Taylor & Francis Author Services:**
<https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>
- **APA Manual:**
<https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition>
- **Introduction to Art Therapy Research by Lynn Kapitan:** <https://www.routledge.com/Introduction-to-Art-Therapy-Research/Kapitan/p/book/9781032650494>
- **Art Therapy Research Community Network:**
<https://www.artthxresearch.com/>
- **AATA Research Shared Interest Group:** If you're an AATA member, you can also join the AATA Research Shared Interest Group to connect with others. Log in to My AATA, go to Member Community, and join Research Shared Interest Group. SIGs often have in-person meet-ups at conferences.
- **Think, Check, Submit:**
<https://thinkchecksubmit.org/journals/>
- **Directory of Open Access Journals:**
<https://doaj.org/>

