

Colour Therapy

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What is colour therapy?

- Colour therapy, also known as chromotherapy, uses the benefits of different colours and shades to affect your well-being.
- As each colour has a unique light wavelength, the colour therapy principles use the energy of each shade to boost your mental and physical health.



Why does colour affect us?

- We naturally associate colours with emotions: when we're sad we feel blue, when we're angry we see red and we even feel green with envy.
- It's perhaps unsurprising to learn that colours also can be used to influence our moods through colour therapy. After all, we're used to using colour to express our feelings.

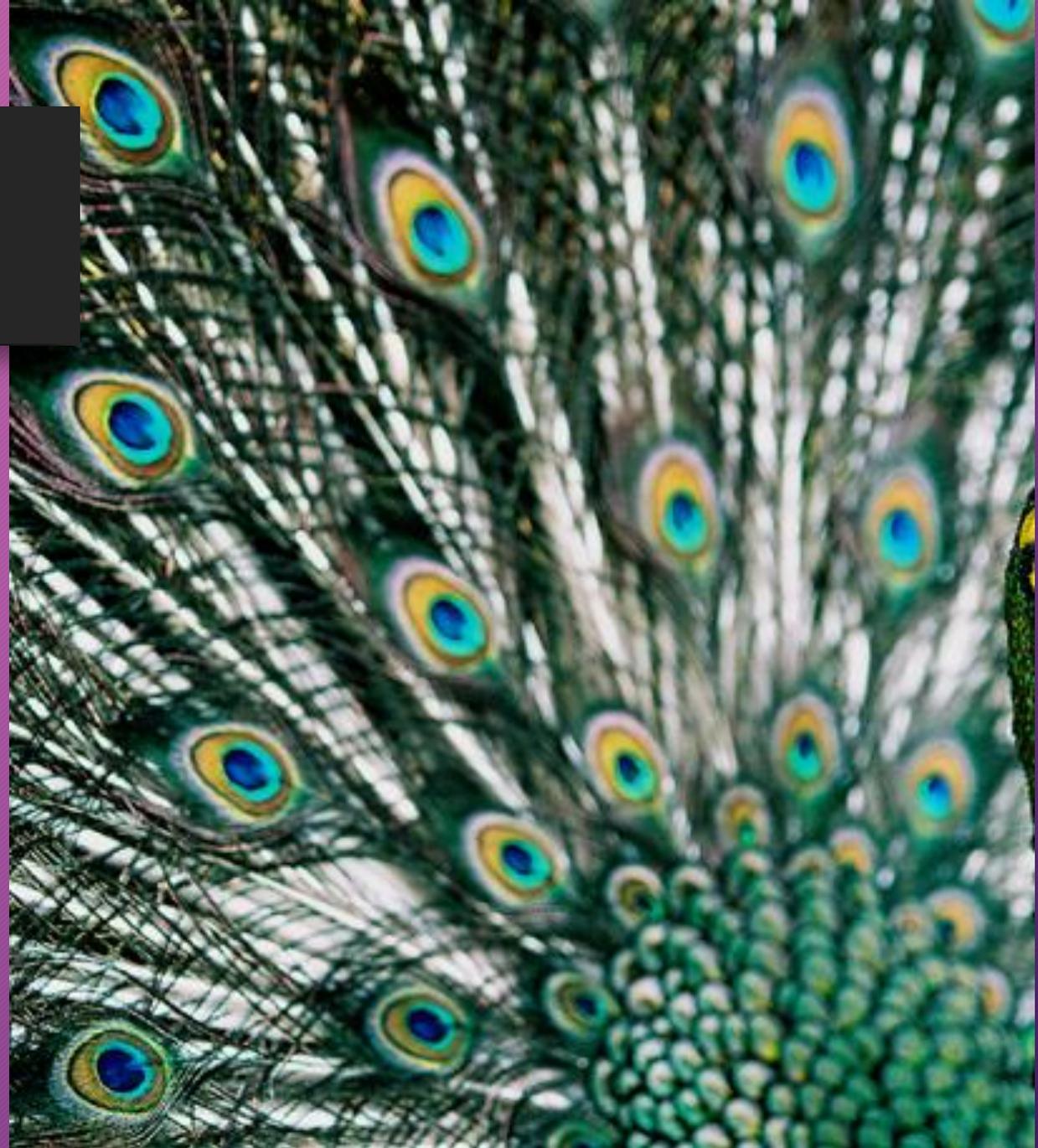
Benefits of Colour Therapy

- Colour therapy can be used to help people suffering from a variety of mental health conditions, from depression to anxiety.
- Vanessa Volpe of Colour for Wellbeing uses colour therapy techniques to manage symptoms of anxiety and boost your confidence, as well as treating problems such as insomnia and physical pain. Her 'Colour Play' programme combines occupational therapy techniques with colour therapy.



What does colour do?

- Professor Stephen Westland is Chair of Colour Science and Technology at the University of Leeds and studies the non-visual effects of colour. The University's Lighting Laboratory can light an environment across the spectrum and research the effect of colour and light on sleep, emotion and wellbeing.
- Coloured light has been found to have a small effect on heart rate and blood pressure: red light raises heart rate and blue light reduces it.



How does colour affect our mood?

- Karen Haller is a colour psychologist, who uses colour to create a well-balanced environment that creates positive behaviour.
- “Colours can influence how someone thinks, feels and behaves,” she explains, “so we can use colour to boost wellbeing and morale. Don’t sit in a white room, as it’s likely that you’ll heal quicker if your mental attitude is positive.”
- Karen’s advice is to not be scared of colour, and of what people think of your colour choices. “Trust your own colour intuition. Explore the colours you love - you might not know why, but if you love them and they make you feel good then use them. You’ll want different colours at different times of the day and week.”

How does colour boost our wellbeing?

- Red and pink colours are linked to your blood, circulation and breathing. Use these colours to raise your pulse, blood pressure and the rate at which you breathe, and strengthen your circulation.



What about yellow?

- Yellow is linked to your skin and tissues, mainly your digestive system, metabolism and nervous system. It can be used to strengthen your body, treat asthma and bronchitis, and help with skin problems.
- For Lara Sanjar of Wild Renata Flowers, working with blooms and colour helped to ease her anxiety.



Flowers for colour?

- “It was from that day onwards that I decided to pursue floristry as a possible career change and since then have never looked back. It is my passion, my work, my love and my medicine.”
- She first noticed that flowers improved her mood when a friend brought her a big bunch of pink peonies while she was off work. “On the day of receiving these, that day everything changed,” she explains.
- “As I began attempting to arrange the flowers I realised my hectic, anxious mind had been silenced and I was in a state of calm working with these blousy new friends. The healing properties of flowers has from then onwards been a focus for me, from their beautiful colours to their scent and how they can help calm my soul.”



Yellow Flowers . . .

- Yellow inspires feelings of happiness and warmth - hardly surprising given our largest source of the colour is the sun. It also drives confidence, clarity and contentment - the perfect flower to treat someone you love who may be facing a new challenge, such as starting a new job. Chrysanthemums also symbolise optimism and joy - the perfect choice of colour and flower to keep in your home on those dark, dreary winter days.



Green

- Green colours have a harmonious, calming effect. Green can be used to fight infection and as an antiseptic.
- As an earth colour, green is extremely grounding. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it helps to take us back to nature, such as the rolling countryside, lush woodlands and tropical rainforests. Its calming and peaceful nature aids in combating any anxious feelings, while stimulating love, balance and harmony in the body.



Blue

- Blue also encourages relaxation and calm, so can be used to treat all types of pain (especially stomach and muscle pain) as well as headaches, colds, tension and stress.
- Blue is considered a calming colour, reflective of the sea and sky. Blue can help when seeking to reset a busy mind whenever life gets a little chaotic. This colour is also the classic variety of forget me nots. These blue blooms help to stimulate mental clarity, creative expression and aspiration.



Indigo

- Indigo colours are beneficial for problems with the eyes, ears and nose, while more violet shades of purple with a pink tone can help relax your muscles and nervous system. Violet colours are also useful when meditating.



Purple

- In colour therapy, purple packs a punch. Full of life and energy, its extravagance helps to stimulate feelings of inspiration, creativity and calm. Unlike other colours, it cannot be directly linked to any of the core natural elements - so it has a sense of magic.
- As flowers, purple anemones will help to keep you motivated and inspired for all those creative projects you have been putting off, and keep you calm when you could be feeling overwhelmed.



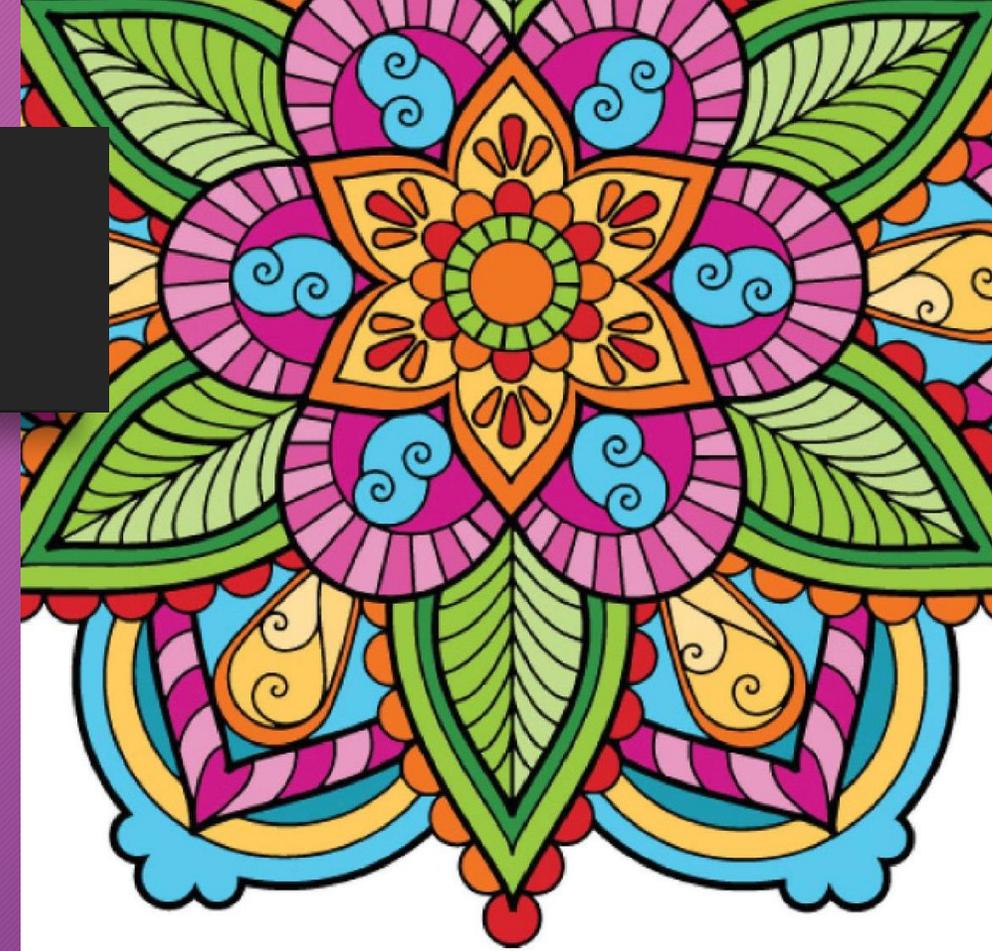
Red roses for romance

- Symbolic of romance and Valentine's Day, it comes as no surprise that these blooms have long been associated with love - and the heart. In colour therapy, red stimulates physical energy, confidence and courage, and promotes alertness - so whether you need the courage or confidence to finally tell someone how you feel, or to simply take control of tough choices or decisions in your life, select red roses.



Colouring as Therapy

- You can also apply the theories of colour therapy with coloring books for adults.
- Colouring has been found to release dopamine; the benefits include better sleep, and it can be used for pain management and mental health.
- According to healthline.com, “Colours have real effects on people, and it’s about time we start taking advantage of it.”



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Coloring Pages



Colour as alternative practice

- Known as chromotherapy, colour therapy is based on the idea that colour and coloured lights can help treat physical or mental health. According to this idea, they cause subtle changes in our moods and biology.
- Colour therapy has a long history. Records indicate that colour and light therapy were once practiced in ancient Egypt, Greece, China, and India. Today, colour therapy is largely seen as a complementary or alternative medicine therapy.



Eating brightly coloured foods

- Eating coloured food as a form of therapy for depression is gaining popularity with The Rainbow Program online.
- This program was created by a Canadian nutritionist to boost awareness of the impact of antioxidants on health and mood. Even the colour of foods can change the way we feel, she asserts.



How does The Rainbow Program help kids?

- The Rainbow Program has been taught online on their website for almost 15 years, with over 100,000 visits since 2006.
- It has been taught in schools, community centres, support groups, individual counselling, and seminars to help people choose a colourful variety of food options, with a list to choose from of foods by colour. Each colour group corresponds to a different organ of the body.
- The Rainbow Program is said to benefit the 5% of children with ADHD who are affected by food colouring, people with depression, cancer and even auto-immune disorders.



Can food affect our mood?

- According to the Rainbow Program website:
- High antioxidant foods should be what drives us to eat and keeps our interest.
- Have you heard of the idea that quality is better than quantity when it comes to food? Reach for pure pomegranate juice, or a tomato when you want something red, try berries when you want something blue, steam some green vegetables, and see these colour wavelengths begin to affect your mood.



This story has a happy ending . . .

- As of right now, medical science can't confirm whether colour or coloured lights will treat your physical ailments or help improve your mental health.
- However, there's some evidence to back up the idea that coloured lights can have effects on our bodies, our pain levels, and our moods.
- We realize as our awareness grows, that colours are all around us. They're in the natural world, in the homes we live in, in the cars we drive, in the clothes we wear, and in the food we eat. Colours aren't just derived from chemicals, either. They are naturally found in the environment and in food. They can change the way we feel and react to different scenarios. Colour therapy uses these powers of colour to heal, re-energize, and calm us.
- The Rainbow Program can be found online at: www.therainbowprogram.com and was created by Emily Isaacson.