



Reparation through the creative arts in therapy

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Presentation overview



- Definition of the creative arts in therapy
- History
- Current uses
- Training
- Regulation
- Case study
- Trauma in relation to childhood abuse
- Current theories on intersubjectivity, creativity, trauma and reparation

Definition of the creative arts in therapy



- Giving form to authentic feelings
- Less defended way to communicate
- Can make therapy fun, engaging
- Provides easier access to unconscious and feelings
- Can be a powerful and effective way to facilitate reparation/change/growth

Definition of the creative arts in therapy



- Being creative in therapy parallels sophisticated psychological concepts, mainly sublimation (Kramer, 2000) - chaotic feelings, trauma, and other issues can be processed and formed into constructive meaning in artwork and in life
- Simply speaking: id/primitive disorganized energy is reorganized
- It becomes energy for the ego to develop and use in a more sophisticated and meaningful way (Freud, 1989, Kramer 2000)
- This assists in the development of a healthy sense of self
- Which assists in constructive life choices
- More meaning/authenticity in life (Kramer, 2000, Winnicott, 1971)

History of the creative arts in therapy



- Tradition in art in psychiatry from Europe (late 1880's) - Prinzhorn, and Pacific Rim (1950's) - Cunningham/Dax
- Pioneers in USA (Naumberg and Kramer), Europe and Pacific
- Music - ancient times to organized in 1950's
- Dance/Movement - Cultural dance traditions, 1940's-50's - organized in 1965
- Drama - 1920's-1940's - story telling/enactment, shamanistic, play, movement, organized 1970's

Current uses of the creative arts in therapy



- All have the concept of authenticity (Winnicott, 1971) and healing in their frameworks
- Many hospitals in US, Europe, Australia have creative arts therapy departments especially in psychiatry, pediatrics and rehab
- Schools (special and mainstream), prisons, counselling centers, hospice, private practice

Training of creative arts therapists



- Need MA from accredited programme in specific modality or expressive therapies to work in most countries
- Strong psycho-therapeutic training in addition to competencies in fine arts
- Supervision and additional hours upon graduation for credentials
- Licensing increasingly required

Training of creative arts therapists



- Recently programmes are adding international training and exposure
- Singapore students have been able to practice their clinical skills with children in need include Sumatra, Nepal and Yogyakarta.
- Research projects include working with children with special needs/austism, people with parkinson's, eating disorders, depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, trauma, self-esteem issues, cancer, end-of-life issues and abuse

Regulation of the Creative Arts in Therapy



- Internationally there are three main accrediting bodies regulating the field:
- ANZATA - Australia, New Zealand, Singapore
- AATA - North America, Licensing becoming more common
- BAAT - UK
- JACHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)
- UK - HPC -Health Professions Council

Traumatic effects of child abuse according to Herman (1997):



- Must find a way to develop basic trust and safety with caretakers who are untrustworthy and unsafe
- Must develop a sense of self in relation to others who are helpless, uncaring, or cruel
- Must develop a capacity for bodily self-regulation in an environment where her body is at the disposal of others needs
- Must develop a capacity for self-soothing in an environment without solace
- Must develop a capacity for initiative in an environment which demands that she bring her will into complete conformity with her abuser
- Must develop a capacity for intimacy out of an environment where all intimate relationships are corrupt
- Must develop an identity out of environment which defines her/him as a whore and a slave (pp. 96-114)

Current theories on intersubjectivity, creativity, trauma and reparation...



- Robert Stolorow (2007) in his book, *Trauma and human existence* discusses the reframing of the dynamic unconscious by himself and his colleagues which they say contains “emotional experiences denied articulation because they were met with massive malattunement...perceived as threatening to needed ties to caregivers. Repression is grasped as a kind of negative organizing principle determining which emotional experiences are prevented from coming into full being.” (p. 27)
- He also discusses their concept of the invalidated unconscious as “emotional experiences that could not be articulated because they did not evoke the requisite validating responsiveness from caregivers that would make their articulation possible.” (p. 27)
- Stolorow (2007) says symbolic expression becomes the vehicle for articulating and integrating the emotional experiences through the ‘relational home’ and attuned therapeutic relationship
- Herman (1997) describes safety as the most important first step in the therapeutic relationship and in traumatic reparation

Current theories on intersubjectivity, creativity, trauma and reparation...



- Jessica Benjamin (1988) says in her seminal book, *The bonds of love*, “Recognition is thus reflexive; it not only includes the other’s confirming response, but also how we find ourselves in that response.” (p. 21).
- Benjamin (1999) suggests that if we can move beyond aiming for only the complementary in relationships and if we can survive and repair the negation of dominance, we achieve “the pleasure of shared understanding” (p. 193) and all the creativity that the movement between understanding differences brings us as creative arts therapists and as human beings. In other words she would say we see each other as subjects rather than objects.

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