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The British Columbia Psychological Association provides leadership for the advancement and promotion of the profession and science of psychology in the service of our membership and the people of British Columbia.

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**Lost in Translation** | Jennifer Bain, MA.

**The Process of Change through Art Therapy**
James Ligertwood, ICADC, ICCS & H. Elise Reeb, Ph.D., R. Psych.
I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Murray Ferguson is our new interim Executive Director for BCPA. And course, we naturally all wish the very best to Rebecca Smith and the very best for her future projects and endeavors. She faithfully served with BCPA for five years.

I also wish, on behalf of the Board, to take this opportunity to thank all members who have volunteered their time over the years in serving our interests in promoting psychology for BC. Some have indeed dedicated so much of their time that our gratitude here is very great indeed.

The Board and I also wish to thank all those who have contributed articles to our journal, BC Psychologist. Please consider writing an article, as this is an excellent vehicle for imparting to your colleagues information and experience that you have found useful, inspiring or simply informative. I think that is important that we help each advance our profession by communicating knowledge, experience, and insights since we can all learn much from each other. Thank you again for the articles.

This year, in anticipation of the coming election when political parties are forming their platforms, we have started to communicate with politicians. We will be delivering in person our briefs and offering our services as consultants for any issue that does or could involve the services of Psychologists. It is our role to persist in always asking of or recommending to Government what we believe can be obtained and what we hope to achieve. Others are also knocking on the doors of Government and we must never neglect doing likewise. I believe that we have crafted a sound presentation of recommendations for expanded and improved Psychological services and this Board is confident that we will be successful. For instance, we have completed a brief for limited psychopharmacological rights for that next generation of psychologists who may wish to obtain a post-doctorate Masters Degree (M.Sc.) in psychopharmacology. Indeed, these would be huge steps forward for our Profession and with persistence over the decade we can make real progress on these and other matters. There are areas for which we also would like to ask for your help in developing future proposals or briefs. For instance, briefs documenting, supporting and encouraging the continued and expanded role of Psychologists in Mental Health Agencies also now need development and updating. Please call the office if you wish to be involved in such a brief or have ideas of your own.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. (Goethe)

Respectfully,
Dr. Ted Altar
Dear Colleagues:

It has been an interesting and exciting year at the BCPA with several changes, some actualized and some pending. We have moved our office location, and have settled in nicely, with a larger board room, elevator access, and space for a small Member Library. There is a variety of books and some journals available at the new office for members to borrow. If you have books or journals that you wish to donate to the library, please contact us or bring them in.

Our annual AGM will be held on November 30th at the Arbutus Club. Information on the workshop that is being offered and on how to register for the AGM is located at the end of this edition of the BC Psychologist. There are four board terms expiring and your votes are important for this year’s board election. There are also constitutional changes that require your vote, so be sure to join us at this year’s AGM and workshop.

We are sad to announce that Dr. Joanne Tessier has resigned as Executive Editor of the BC Psychologist. Dr. Tessier’s tireless and devoted energy and time to the BC Psychologist is much appreciated. She has been a delight to work with and the Board wishes to extend its deep gratitude to Dr. Tessier for her significant contributions to the BCPA.

The board also wishes to announce that Dr. Murray Ferguson shall be stepping in as interim Executive Director (ED) of the BCPA, effective October 1st, 2012. We wish to express our best wishes to Ms. Rebecca Smith who has served as the ED since 2007. The board is in the process of seeking a new ED for our association.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Sincerely,
Dr. Anne Dietrich ■

MURRAY FERGUSON, D. PSYCH.
The interim Executive Director of the BC Psychological Association.
Contact: exec@psychologists.bc.ca

While new to psychology in British Columbia, I see similar challenges to those faced by psychologists in Australia. By working together and with member involvement, these challenges can be met, and positive outcomes reached. I therefore encourage all members to get involved in your association. Each of us is a face of psychology in the community, and it is through our collective efforts that the profession will grow.

I hope to see many of you at our Annual General Meeting on 30th November, at the Arbutus Club in Vancouver. Please register to attend through the BCPA website by November 19th, 2012. I would also like to encourage members to attend the Risk Assessment and Management workshop, also being held on November 30th at the Arbutus Club. The BCPA aims to support the professional development of its members through offering such workshops, and we hope to see as many members as possible attend.

I would also like to thank Ted Altar and the rest of the BCPA board of directors for the opportunity to serve as the acting executive director, and for their support and assistance as I taken on this important role. I look forward to the opportunity to serve the members of the BCPA, and to work closely with all members while the search for a permanent executive director is undertaken.

Regards,
Murray Ferguson ■
The Council of Representatives is the legislative body of the American Psychological Association (APA) and is composed of representatives from State and Provincial Associations, APA Divisions, members of the APA Board of Directors, and officers of the APA. Five of the Canadian provincial psychological associations have seats on the Council.

The Council meets twice per year (February and August) to vote on issues important to the APA (e.g., membership, policies and position statements, practice guidelines, ethics, governance, budget, etc). Information regarding the activities of the Council of Representatives is published regularly in the APA Monitor. Please see an upcoming issue (expected October 2012) of the APA Monitor for a detailed review of the Council's actions during the August 2012 meeting in Orlando, FL. Some highlights of the August 2012 meeting include:

1. **Resolution on the Effectiveness of Psychotherapy:**
   The Council adopted a resolution to increase the public and health communities’ awareness of the effectiveness of psychotherapy. The resolution aims to educate the public about the value of psychotherapy, particularly as it compares with medications, in addressing mental health problems. The resolution cites more than 50 peer-reviewed studies on psychotherapy’s effectiveness in treating a variety of behavioural health issues among various populations and highlights the long-lasting benefits of psychotherapy, particularly as it relates to health and well-being, life skills, and quality of life.

2. **Internship Stimulus Package:** In an attempt to address the growing imbalance between the number of psychology graduate students seeking clinical internships and the availability of those internships, the Council voted to fund a $3 million internship stimulus program to increase the number of accredited internship positions. The funding is expected to help as many as 150 programs move from non-APA accredited to accredited status and create 520 new accredited internship positions over the next 3 years.

3. **Changes in the Governance Structure of APA:**
   In an attempt to ensure APA’s governance structure is appropriate for the challenges facing the profession in the 21st century, the APA Council has been reviewing the structure of governance over the last two years. At the August 2012 meeting, the Council approved a plan to create a nimbler, simpler, and more flexible governance system that would allow for more direct member input and be more strategically focused. The next steps in this process are to work on how changes would be implemented with final approval of a new governance system expected in August 2013.

4. **New Journal:** The Council approved the creation of a new journal, *Archives of Scientific Psychology*, which will be APA’s first open-methods, open-data, open-access journal.

My term as the BC Representative to the APA Council is ending in December 2012. It has been my pleasure and honour to represent BC Psychologists and I thank you for the opportunity. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Jeanne LeBlanc as your representative for the 2013 – 2015 term.
BCPA NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS

BCPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT (RAM) WORKSHOP
AGM and workshop will be held on Friday November 30th, 2012. See page 41 and 42 for details and registration.

SUBMIT ARTICLES

Want to write for us? We are always looking for writers for the BC Psychologist or the BCPA blog. The theme for the upcoming Winter 2013 issue is: DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). For further details, contact us at: info@psychologists.bc.ca

We publish notices regarding retirement, awards, and deaths of members. Please keep us informed about your career and life milestones. If you want a notice to be included in the publication (100 words maximum) contact us at: info@psychologists.bc.ca

WorkSafeBC

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Recently, BCPA and WorkSafe BC formed a Working Group, consisting of various BCPA board members and representatives from WS Health Care Services. We meet on a monthly basis at present, with the purpose of bringing any questions or concerns that BCPA members have regarding WS issues, to the WS representatives. Questions that are most pertinent include those related to WS contracts, forms, referrals, reports, and clinical questions (whether or not they are claim related). If you have questions, concerns, or comments that you wish us to address to WS, please send them to us at worksafebc@bcpsychologist.org.

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Did you know?

- 1 in 5 Canadians will face a psychological disorder in their lifetime (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Depression will be the second leading cause of disability, for all ages and both sexes by 2020 (World Health Organization)
- Mental disorders account for more of the global burden of disease than all cancers combined (Mood Disorders Society of Canada)

The British Columbia Psychological Association provides a free, province wide referral service to help you locate qualified, registered psychologists in your community. To find a psychologist visit www.psychologists.bc.ca or call 604-730-0522 or toll-free 1-800-730-0522.
Art: Persevere, Attune & Configure

WAYNE EMERY, PSY.D., R. PSYCH.
A Psychologist in British Columbia, Registered Art Therapist, and Approved Consultant in Clinical Hypnosis. He works for two multidisciplinary rehabilitation clinics and has a private practice. He paints and makes hand made furniture.

Artwork has both shone and been discredited in the world of psychology. Before focusing upon benefits, some problems will briefly be identified. Attempts have been made over the years to diagnose with artwork. Any Axis I or II pathology has several criteria that need to be investigated, and confirmed or ruled out before a diagnosis is made (APA, 2000). As well, in DSM, personality is a heuristic of patterns that become more rigid as a person moves closer to a disorder. Evaluating art in search of Axis I or II tends to lack the validity and brevity of approaches such as interviews, tests, historical documents, and secondary sources. Even drawing tests lack sufficient psychometrics or are mind-boggling such as scoring the Exner System (2002).

While it may be questionable to use artwork to evaluate personality, art may be more useful in the understanding of character. Personality is a typology model, while character looks at the diverse aspects of a client, some of which will be accepted and others unrecognized or rejected by the individual (Hillman, 1999). The goal of character development is an endless process of integration. Both models of personality and character have their uses, but are very different. When clients show interest in art, therapists may want to shelve their DSM and instead focus on healthy aspects of integration such as perseverance, attunement, and configuration.

The ways we persevere show aspects of character: maintaining a direction or purpose in spite of difficulty. Recently the Vancouver Art Gallery (2012) had a show that included several Matisse paintings, including Large Reclining Nude, 1935. One wall was covered with photographs of the work in progress over several months, where the artist went between abstract and realistic, clear and diffuse, pattern and simplicity. Often in life we underestimate the amount of effort needed to accomplish something, also evident in some clients who expect an easy or quick fix. One aspect of perseverance is the balance between comfort and struggle. Sometimes we need to pursue discomfort to accomplish something worthwhile, but ongoing or overwhelming struggle often leads to anxiety, escapism, and loss of sensitivity.

Another more subtle aspect of perseverance involves the balance between directed focus upon achieving a specific goal and being open to change along the way. If we adhere too strictly to an anticipated outcome, then opportunities along the way to improve the design or life goal are overlooked. On the other hand, not enough consistent vision and steadfastness lead to incomplete projects and half-hearted achievements, also influencing self-worth. For instance, an art therapy student decided to listen to the same favorite song repeatedly while painting to capture her feelings about the music. However, as she listened to the song over and over, she became increasingly sick of it. She was disappointed in the outcome, as she no longer liked the painting or the song. It seems that she missed an opportunity to adjust the goal to a more interesting theme such as how feelings change. By being fixed on a limited goal, she missed an opportunity to explore something more complex and interesting.

The word attune describes moving towards and away from being in tune, as in the process of tuning a guitar and it slowly edging out of tune. Similarly, an artist makes discriminative decisions to move towards what resonates. However, creativity theory indicates that we are best to generate ideas first and later judge them, as creating and evaluating can interfere with each other (Davis, 2004). Yet, to attune artistically, both sensitivity and judgement are needed at the same time. James Lord (1965) posed for Alberto Giacometti and kept a diary describing the artist’s dramatic behaviours and multiple over-paintings. He was interested in how both the peaks and valleys enhanced progress, not just the brief times of being in the zone.

A basic attuning exercise involves developing sensitivity through colour mixing and adjusting the colour to match particular emotional states. The goal is to get absorbed, while just using red, blue, yellow, black, and white. While increasing sensitivity during activity shows mindfulness, the discriminative process also needs to be called upon, which can include moving towards and away from the desired outcome. Like with Giacometti, the process includes getting closer to a goal, finding it slipping away, and feeling lost at times. The client can document the process for later discussion by putting dabs of paint on paper, without the need to create a specific picture.

Putting aside the scary expectations and mysterious qualities surrounding creativity, it can be helpful instead to operationally consider configuration. In this regard artists tend to first find what interests or inspires them and then bring varying interests together in their own work. Interests are often generative, where one triggers another. Have you gone to a library and found an interesting book sitting next to the one you were looking for? Converging interests can be most easily seen in art history books or retrospective shows, where influences are pointed out and patterns displayed before your eyes. What is considered highly original also makes sense in a context. For configuration to happen, an artist connects sufficiently with a community to develop influences, but balances this with enough separateness to be able to stand out and be unique. As
Art students often talk about finding one’s voice or style, what will make them unique and identifiable in the art community. When making images, these students may cling to the first thing that seems to work for them, where there is some glitter and praise. A student mistakenly identifies with what was done and tries to reproduce it with diminishing outcome. Instead, the student would do better to tolerate ambiguity (what will be my style?) and let several interests or loose threads accumulate and converge over time. It can help for there to be a conviction or non-religious faith that things will come together, as part of tolerating ambiguity about art or identity.

The elderly photographer Freeman Patterson considers his nature-based images as being an autobiography. He sees himself as having lots of experience, working in Canada and Africa, but also “where the unconscious runs ahead” and forms patterns in his work that have become more evident to him over time. Once the “weave” is noticed the meaning begins to clarify and become symbolic. For instance, on CBC radio (2012) he described photographing a fresh snowfall, where soon afterwards there was a fleeting thought, “the fields look like my life to this point”. In this regard, he had faith that components would jell and form a more intricate configuration than something forced for quick satisfaction.

The purpose of this article is to convey how artwork can be used therapeutically to reflect and integrate diverse life processes. This is not done through diagnosis or weak psychometric testing, but instead by helping clients make art and life has parallels such as how to persevere, attune, and configure pursuits.

REFERENCES
A picture may be worth a thousand words; however, the richness and power that an image holds originate in the psychic space within which the image is made. That space, where everything is possible, captures my interest as a photographer.

I began wandering with my camera in my early 20’s. Often aimless in my ventures, I captured only those images that called out to me. At times, it was the strength of lines or the familiarity found in a repetitive pattern that drew me in. Other times, it was the way the light brushed against form. With no audience in mind, I sought only direct contact with the image. I found myself in a space where time lost all meaning, where the ordinary became wondrous. In the spirit of the “decisive moment” (p. 33), he believed that good images resonate at the core of our being.

The primary role that the senses play in aesthetic experience is understandable given that our earliest impressions in life were formed through our bodily senses — sight, sound, smell, taste, movement through space. Marion Milner (1957), a psychoanalyst who closely studied her internal experience in her attempts to paint, observed that the awareness of bodily sensations and movement is essential in the process of making art. The act of creating, according to Milner, requires an “enhanced body awareness” (p.107) that is free from intention and follows from silencing the mind’s discursive thinking. She further suggested that this kind of directed attentiveness promotes a more fluid sense of boundaries between the self and world, even a temporary sense of unity. Consequent to this self-loss is an expanded sense of consciousness with a feeling of renewed perception. The description of the quality of awareness as well as the expansive perception appears comparable to the ideas of mindfulness and mindful meditation (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

D. W. Winnicott (1971; 1953) a close associate who shared similar ideas with Milner, conceived of creativity as belonging to an intermediate area of experiencing, a psychological space between fantasy and reality that involved the interplay between the inner and external worlds. This transitional or potential space emerges as the child, coming out from merger with mother, first begins to experience a sense of separation. The transitional object (not limited to a teddy bear or blanket) is adopted by the child to provide a needed sense of continuity in order to lessen the anxiety of the separation. In representing the mother, but more importantly the mother-child relationship, the transitional object is neither just a mental concept nor the mother herself. Rather, it is experienced by the child as being both within her and also a part of the world, allowing for both a sense of fusion and separateness. The potential space, then, permits the child both the experience of “me” and “not-me” as well as the interchange between these two states of being. Out of the developing inner self (as separate), and through the use of a transitional object, the child creates, for the first time, something imaginative. According to Winnicott, that creation is the forerunner of artistic creations while the “capacity to create” is part of being alive.

In mediating between the inner and outer worlds, the psychic space of potential extends itself to the realm of image-making, where the transition from object to symbol is made and visual metaphors are created. In light of Winnicott, I reflect now on how my camera can serve as a portal to potential space. How, within the frame of the viewfinder, the intermediary area of my imagination and reality can come together in play. The once familiar building with arching lines and space is the “found” object of my imagination. I see, in the image of its gentle curves, the arms of a loved one lost, the arms holding me in the moment. I rest my aloneness in the spaces between. And in them, I feel the missed presence within me. It is all of this at once. The freedom in which I experience my transitional object comes only with the receptivity and non-judgment that I allow, in the way that the child’s use of the teddy bear needs to go unchallenged. In holding the image, I feel held. Perhaps like a child feels held by a “good-enough mother”. It is a good-enough image. In this space of potential, I experience myself as separate yet connected, and bridge the gap between what is lost and what is being found. It is a space for creativity both in my art and in my living.

REFERENCES

Although I am not an art therapist and have never been trained in this treatment modality, I have long held an interest in how traumatic events find expression in the arts. What purpose do artistic recreations of traumatic events serve? Do traumatic expressions in art assist in healing from the trauma for the artist? I have come across varied explanations or theories as to why art is used as a medium to reflect traumatic events. Some theorists view trauma art as a means of reflecting the truth or reality of an event or series of events—to document, as it were, that ‘this event happened’ (Modersheim, 2005); others view trauma art as a way for the survivor of trauma to express his or her emotional experience to the viewers—as a language of its own or a means of communication (O’Neill, 2011); yet others view trauma art as a process that helps the survivor to understand and come to terms with what has happened, and the act of reproducing the trauma in art is how the person remembers and works through the traumatic event(s) (Modersheim, 2005). In the works of art that follow, I have loosely categorized them according to these viewpoints; however, the works themselves defy simple categorization and there are many aspects to the works that fit into all of these categories. There are undoubtedly more perspectives than those mentioned here.

Documentation of the Traumatic Experience

Judy Herman wrote that one of the most important components of therapy for trauma is bearing witness to the traumatic experiences of clients. George Grosz, a well-known artist who had served during World War I, was diagnosed with “Shell Shock” (PTSD) and was deemed unfit for duty after a suicide attempt. His work, as well as that of Otto Dix (www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ARTdix.htm) represents the reality of war as experienced by the soldiers. Grosz’s The Survivor is believed to represent the recurring posttraumatic nightmare of his friend and artist, Otto Dix (Modersheim, 2005).

His decision to publicly convey such harsh reality led to the loss of his career, his being forced into exile, and imprisonment for 7 years. Dix (cited in Modersheim, 2005) said about his work:

I studied the war thoroughly. You have to represent war in realistic terms in order to be understood. The artist works so that others see how something like that really was. I focused on showing the cruel consequences of war. I think that nobody else has seen the reality of this war like I have, the deprivation, the wounds, the suffering. I chose to give the truthful part of this war. I wanted to show the ravaged earth, the corpses, the wounds.
The Vietnam War (1964 – 1973) resulted in mass casualties in terms of severe disability (injury, PTSD, depression, etc.) and loss of life (close to 60,000 died during the war with over half being less than 21 years of age; www.postmodernart.com). Artist, veteran and social worker Doug Yelmen was commissioned by his friend to create *Greg’s*, which depicts his friend’s rape and the killing of two enemy soldiers during the war (please see www.postmodernart.com for Mr. Yelmen’s work).

Communicating the Experience of Trauma, Understanding & Making Meaning

Bennett (2005, p.1) notes that trauma art has a “certain affective dynamic internal to the work”, which communicates the trauma in terms of sensation and affect. She views the work as reflecting a process of “coming into language”, a “kind of visual language of trauma” (p. 1).

For traumatized clients, an intellectual understanding of what occurred is an important part of healing. Evidence-based therapies are important: clients often benefit from desensitization to the fear or terror; from learning healthy ways of relating to others if this capacity was damaged from trauma; from connecting events from the past to present functioning in order to prevent re-enactments; from identifying trauma-related cognitive distortions and cognitive restructuring — all of these and more are necessary. However, they may not be sufficient in terms of fully tapping into the deep emotional valence or experience of extreme interpersonal trauma. It is in our client’s benefit that we recognize the potential limitations of our assessment protocols and evidence-based treatment approaches when working with clients who have suffered particularly extreme forms of trauma.

The expressive arts, whether in terms of narratives, psychodrama, poetry, performing arts, photography, sculpture, or painting (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list), have been recognized as helpful adjuncts to talk therapy. The emotional/psychological experience of trauma is often not expressible in words. How would a client sufficiently express with words the excruciating experience of being raped as a child or of witnessing parents being severely tortured and killed during acts of war?

Bennett asserts that “the experience of trauma paradigmatically encapsulates both direct, unmediated affective experience and an absence of affect, insofar as it is resistant to cognitive processing and induces ‘psychic numbing’” (2005, p. 5). The following works were created by a survivor of severe childhood sexual abuse and torture, who has been diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder. Ms. Schirmer’s work is available at http://LynnSchirmer.com and also at http://lynnsmart.net/

The emotional valence — horror, helplessness, incredulity and shock, the fragmentation that prevents the development of a coherent and unified sense of self, torture, and much more — is evident in Ms. Schirmer’s works. Words alone do not adequately convey such an experience to others, and words alone do not help the survivor to understand his or her experience in a holistic manner.
Into the White where the Bones Don’t Store Pain, above, reflects Ms. Schirmer’s experience of peri-traumatic dissociation and Closet Time shows the dissociative fragmentation of at least two parts of self—a self-protective, perhaps numbed part of self and a part of self that holds some of the painful affect.

Sigmund Freud’s view on helping client’s process traumatic events was that clients need to remember, repeat, and work it through. He viewed posttraumatic symptoms (or what was then known as hysterical neurosis) as being based in the volitional repression of traumatic experiences (whether real or fantastic) that were manifested in somatic symptoms of hysteria. In Freud’s conceptualization, trauma-related affect was attached to the memory of the trauma and both the memory and affect were actively repressed simultaneously. Treatment involved eliciting the combined memory and affect and processing it cathartically through abreaction. Yet, uncontained abreactions may retraumatize rather than heal.

Freud also failed to recognize that, when trauma occurs before personality is solidified into a complete sense of self, it prevents formation of a unified sense of self. However, when trauma occurs during adulthood, it can fragment the already developed sense of self. One of the early works of Mr. Yelmen, The Scream, reflects the inherent terror and fragmentation of severe traumatic experience of adults (www.postmodernart.com).

Contrary to Freud, Pierre Janet’s view was that an involuntary process of dissociation of memory, affect, sensation, and so forth (rather than volitional repression) is that which leads to symptoms and that recovery involves re-association or integration of the dissociated components. In this view, elicitation of one component (e.g., the episodic memory) does not necessarily elicit other components, such as affect. One could remember the event but the affect could remain dissociated from conscious awareness; conversely, one could experience the affect (or sensations, or actions, etc) but the episodic memory of the event would remain dissociated from conscious awareness. These fragments would manifest themselves as posttraumatic symptoms. In severe forms, fragments of personality reflect a failure, through dissociative amnestic barriers, of personality formation or development.
Integration theorists argue that for complete healing to occur, all of the dissociated fragments must be re-associated or integrated into a coherent, unified understanding. An alternate view of severe dissociation holds that effective functioning is possible even when dissociated aspects of experience or identity are not fully integrated. In either case, the artistic process appears to assist in healing. Ms. Schirmer’s *An Average Day*, conveys the experience of her gaining insight into her dissociated parts of self (through journaling and other artistic methods) and the process of learning to function day-to-day, after extreme, early childhood trauma.

Lynn Schirmer’s (2005, p. 18) view is that artists utilize artistic media to:

…work through their memories and emotions by repeating the very incidents that caused their trauma in the images that they create. While the trauma and its memory violently disrupt the stability of one’s identity, the traumatized self re-establishes itself as a witness, as a testifier, as a survivor, as a narrator of the story that haunts the memory. The nightmarish scraps and flashes of memory, shocking, disturbing, and disruptive at first, begin to form a structure, usually the form of a narrative that eventually allows analysis of the experience.

Integration theorists argue that for complete healing to occur, all of the dissociated fragments must be re-associated or integrated into a coherent, unified understanding. An alternate view of severe dissociation holds that effective functioning is possible even when dissociated aspects of experience or identity are not fully integrated. In either case, the artistic process appears to assist in healing. Ms. Schirmer’s *An Average Day*, conveys the experience of her gaining insight into her dissociated parts of self (through journaling and other artistic methods) and the process of learning to function day-to-day, after extreme, early childhood trauma.

Lynn Schirmer’s (2005, p. 18) view is that artists utilize artistic media to:

…work through their memories and emotions by repeating the very incidents that caused their trauma in the images that they create. While the trauma and its memory violently disrupt the stability of one’s identity, the traumatized self re-establishes itself as a witness, as a testifier, as a survivor, as a narrator of the story that haunts the memory. The nightmarish scraps and flashes of memory, shocking, disturbing, and disruptive at first, begin to form a structure, usually the form of a narrative that eventually allows analysis of the experience.

The topic of the accuracy of traumatic memory is beyond the scope of this paper.

Lynn Schirmer, “Black Hole”, 2009

Thus, expressions of trauma utilizing artistic means may enable the survivors to process the trauma, develop insight and improve their functioning, and to bear witness themselves, as well as communicate their experience such that others may also bear witness. Bearing witness may be particularly important when there is doubt or denial about the reality of traumatic events by perpetrators or society. This may also occur in clinical contexts, including psychological assessment (Briere, 2004). Clients may be left feeling “crazy”, which may be more evident when the client has experienced extensive emotional abuse, or abuse that involves denial by others. When clients are confident in the reality of their experience, they may feel valid anger if told that their interpretations of reality are wrong or questionable, which in turn can lead to the pathologizing of the anger.

The Black Hole, above, appears to include depictions of those nightmarish scraps and flashes of memory, in symbolic form.

Thus, expressions of trauma utilizing artistic means may enable the survivors to process the trauma, develop insight and improve their functioning, and to bear witness themselves, as well as communicate their experience such that others may also bear witness. Bearing witness may be particularly important when there is doubt or denial about the reality of traumatic events by perpetrators or society. This may also occur in clinical contexts, including psychological assessment (Briere, 2004). Clients may be left feeling “crazy”, which may be more evident when the client has experienced extensive emotional abuse, or abuse that involves denial by others. When clients are confident in the reality of their experience, they may feel valid anger if told that their interpretations of reality are wrong or questionable, which in turn can lead to the pathologizing of the anger.

2 The topic of the accuracy of traumatic memory is beyond the scope of this paper.
New Understandings

O’Neill (2011) argues that, rather than helping a client to work through the trauma in the Freudian sense, artistic works form “an accommodation with their trauma, and offer a new aesthetic, a new story, in which the fleeting, the discarded and the transitory acquires [new significance]” (O’Neil, 2011, pp. 52 – 53). Through the artistic process, a new form of meaning evolves. “We tell stories to…repair our reality…motivate us to act, to fight and be willing to die for an ideal or a belief” (O’Neil, 2011, p.58).

The work of artist Linda Ness depicts her experiences of domestic violence and abuse as a child, as well as her process of understanding and healing from her trauma, in the following works.

Ms. Ness (www.nwfirefly.com) writes:

*The fear of domestic violence was a constant threat. We witnessed mom get battered many times. This painful image has helped me understand the need for change to abusive patterns of expressing anger and not accepting the role of victim or becoming an abuser myself.*

Trauma art is concerned with the past and how that past is experienced in the present. However, it also serves the important function of helping clients to understand and make meaning for them. According to O’Neil (2011),

*When our sense of reality is damaged through traumatic experiences we attempt to repair our relationship with the world through the repeated telling of our stories. These stories are not just a means of telling but also an attempt to understand (p 52).*

In describing this picture, Ms. Ness writes (www.nwfirefly.com):

*After dinner we would read the bible while mom would leave or tend to my youngest sisters, leaving us alone with dad. We would take turns reading as we stood next to dad. For years, I felt the shame of that experience as if somehow I should have done something to make it NOT happen. As the other kids sat around the table listening, HE chose to fondle the reader and masturbate while the bible was being read. It took seeing that scene on canvas for me to witness the truth and release a mountain of shame. I was not to blame. I had no guilt.*
Some current day trauma theorists posit that the dissociated memories, emotions and sensory fragments from the traumatic experience are that which are evidenced in posttraumatic re-experiencing symptoms. When dissociated intrusive and certain hyperarousal symptoms (under modulated symptoms) are not processed and resolved, they may inevitably lead to a rebound of over modulation, such as avoidance and numbing. The inability to express emotion (over modulation) can thus vacillate with uncontrolled expressions of emotions (under modulation) and it is possible that one inevitably leads to the other. In this sense, affective dysregulation is thus at the core of active posttraumatic sequelae. As such, clients must learn to hold the affect without numbing it, dissociating it, or acting it out, for the healing process to be effective.

From Ms. Ness’s site (www.nwfirefly.com):

"The seeds of hate and anger are symbolically reflected in this image. I inherited the seeds of these hurtful, evil spirited monsters and their slimy, perverted companions from my abusive, tyrannical father. As I became an adult, it was painful to witness these monsters of rage explode from me, hurting those closest to me. The words and emotions that came out of my mouth seemed beyond my control, coming from deep inside, exploding at their will — not mine.

By creating and understanding this image, I am able to recognize these ugly parts of myself. I see that although they are inside, they are NOT me. I need not fight, react to them or give them power. By examining these scary parts, I learned to recognize the triggers that give these monsters power and how to pull the plug so they no longer control my emotions or life.

Finally, art can also represent a sense of healing from traumatic events:

As a gift to my inner child I have created this image which includes children playing with no fear of the night.

This, I think, is a most fitting way to close this article. Thank you again Mr. Yelmen, Ms. Schirmer and Ms. Ness for your openness and willingness to share your work."
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This study has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Ethics, University of Alberta

REFERENCES

Did you know?
• 1 in 5 Canadians will face a psychological disorder in their lifetime (Public Health Agency of Canada)
• Depression will be the second leading cause of disability, for all ages and both sexes by 2020 (World Health Organization)
• Mental disorders account for more of the global burden of disease than all cancers combined (Mood Disorders Society of Canada)
Words empty of meaning veil the elusive truth. Neither the speaker nor the listener can penetrate the protective defense. The unbearable truth lies latent and out of reach, particularly for survivors of childhood trauma. As psychotherapists, we don’t read minds, but we can suspend logical, sequential thought to enter into a space of non-linear attunement. Picking up on subtle, nonverbal expressions and the language of symbols, we may free the truth imprisoned in the shadow.

In circumstances of early childhood trauma, unbearable experiences are locked away. Children whose feelings and perceptions were denied do not develop language for their subjective experiences. Overlays of a “false self” or rigid controls and alexithymia make people strangers to themselves. Art and expressive therapies provide a medium for symbolic expression from which client and therapist can co-construct meaning, and, in turn, develop language for experience.

Art is beautiful. Like poetry, song, good fiction or a good movie, we resonate with the artist’s subjective expression. There is no right or wrong. You like it or you don’t. It stands in contrast to the scholarly science of psychology which relies on linear thinking and scientific inquiry. Observation leads to questions as we try to understand phenomena in our human experience. Then we are taught to formulate hypotheses, select sound research methods to test the hypotheses, analyze the data, and report the results. Building blocks aligned on the solid foundation of empirical discovery become the structures for our work as science practitioners. But, psychology is both science and art.

PSYCHOLOGY IS BOTH SCIENCE AND ART:

Psychology is both science and art. The balance between convergent and divergent thinking enriches both the science and the art of psychology. Art and expressive therapies enhance our psychotherapy tool box particularly for clients whose life experiences have robbed them of language for their inner experiences. Without the ability to communicate inner realities, people often exist in depleting emotional isolation despite their apparent relationships.

Funeral of Silence

Such is the archeology of sound:
the pickled larynx
set in a vinegar of silence
a quiet that collects in the mouth
a powdered tongue
sonorous suspension
of words like small fossils, wrapped
in a tissue paper of quiet
the fat impulse pales
withers in cabinets, collects
like secrets tucked in cupboards
the wrinkled skins of wishes
joyless pills, black raisins
with a sweetness pulling into itself
a fermented exuberance
(chock full of preservatives)
whose speech bubbles float away
in the helium of silence
the cry escapes the sieve

JENNIFER BAIN, MA
Expressive Art Therapist
ANNIHILATION:
THE DOOR OF BECOMING

All lost entrances
transparencies do
and sheltered stairways
the crumbling walls, blockades

Battalions of sliding gypsum
unraveled weave of rooftops
mud
obscuring the horizon

Nomadic in its orientation
a kaleidoscopic dread
a foggy exile, the smoky hovel
This floating house has lost its mouth

ties its body
to shy pillars
braves muffled gales

There hangs an epitaph of longing
Fated vacancies of dreaming
deficiencies of wonder
waiting, waiting
is the bleating heart
in its narrowed cage

Yet, hold to the tail of this vast flower
Something swift, unseen

attempts the latches with a key
(the stormy amygdala and its veil)

Past
the ray that lights the grotto
a torch of snowy pallor
ricochets
into soft openings
slick with colour
a flag, an exhalation
like a damp vibrato
over desert

The wind sends forth her velvet mimicry
bills her plume

Glass pebbles mount their castles
From lucid towers
the drawbridge crashes

Down
through mist, assumption
the empty gray in the painting
that opens

Sound of hoof-beats on the hollow drum:
a premonition;
the brassy storm of trumpets
golden doves

The blackened alley detonates
the fearsome antecedent

opening the doorway to
Become

SO IT IS WRITTEN

How
the written word,
it grovels
doggedly pacing
from door to door
knocking on raptek houses

this sentence, it panhandles
its way
onto the breast of the page
from white pomp
to trampled sheets
without the dignity of envelopes
weary lines

this soggy document
is combing the streets
for a souvenir of words
plows the trinket for the fodder
adds a compost of tears

pages
of punctuation like umbrellas
for expired wings

and me still full of what couldn't be taken

LOST IN TRANSLATION

The adolescent girls
who punctuate their phrases with like, like
as if unable to move past resemblance
all action tethered in similes
to some point of starting
like, like
as if pleading, asking
again and again to be released
with each attempt forward
choked back into starting
bound in landscapes under construction
detours and transgressions
a persona, closed for repairs
under the ransom of perfection
like, a lick of word exacting
chisel studded collars for tongues
where scenery gropes for the familiar
like, like
the glass walls that birds fly into
unable to reach and

JENNIFER BAIN, MA
Expressive Art Therapist
The Process of Change through Art Therapy

For clients struggling with severe issues, the change process can be conceptualized as a journey. Clients embarking on this journey can be guided by the use of “hero myths” that serve as metaphors for the struggle to find identity, make transitions, and to find their individual place in the world.

Art therapy can assist clients in this journey by conceptualizing the stages of the journey, making it seem more real, and providing clients with verbal and nonverbal tools to express their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. Healing occurs as a function of the creativity and the thematic conceptualization of the adventure. This article outlines a twelve-session art therapy program developed by the first author based on Campbell’s (1949) “hero myth.”

The program begins with discussion of the value of mythology, identification of personal mythologies, and the nature of the hero. Using mythology in therapy can be valuable as it serves to provide good examples of struggles that people often go through, how they resolve them, and what they learn from them. Personal mythologies are beliefs and images that people have about themselves. For example, a client who was abused envisioned himself as a big bad hairy monster that was rejected wherever he went. In this session, clients create images of personal or cultural heroes. As in all sessions, clients describe their artwork together with associated emotions and memories.

The second session addresses the mythical “call to adventure,” which is the often accidental circumstances that result in significant life changes. Therapists tell the story of The Frog Prince as it serves as a good example. In this fable, a frog is asked to retrieve a ball accidentally dropped into a pond by a princess. This simple accident sets into motion a series of events neither expected nor planned by the characters, resulting in pervasive changes in attitude and circumstance (including transformation from frog to handsome prince).

People struggling with severe issues usually arrive at a point of despair that often occurs due to seemingly “accidental” events that lead them to a condition that demands significant change. One client who completed this program represented this experience with a painting of a boat with a slack white sail, suggesting a feeling of impotence. As he described his point of despair, or “bottom”, the boat became a metaphor for both a dangerously hopeless time and a vehicle for change.

The third theme surrounds the “refusal of the call” or resistance to change. Mythological examples of this theme lie in the stagnation that befell the castle in Sleeping Beauty or the turning to salt of Lot’s wife for looking back. Clients create art reflecting their ambivalence about embarking on their journey. One client created an image of a sunken ship which suggested stagnation and hopelessness within the unconscious (universally symbolized by deep water.)

The fourth theme introduces the concept of helpers and protectors. Previous clients responded to this...
theme with images depicting figures that inspired them to feel safe during their journeys. They were asked to be aware of bodily sensations regarding what it felt like to be protected. Empowered and energized, they generally produced lighter images that included sources of energy such as the sun and sky, which are metaphors for new beginnings.

The fifth theme addresses crossing the threshold between the old and the new world. Beyond the threshold lies the world of adventure and the mythical guardians that protect that realm. Emphasis is placed on the perception of opposites (such as good and evil) that often make clients feel a need to defend themselves. Clients created art reflecting the threshold between addiction and a new life in recovery. They expressed fear of crossing this threshold, as the transition can be painful. One client created an image of a rocky beach between a body of water and a jungle. He described a dangerous transition from water to a lonely beach that reflected a “forbidden” land. He communicated a sense of foreboding as he continued his mythological journey. His image and narrative reflected loneliness that he said he had struggled with since childhood and to which he attributed the origin of his addictions.

The sixth theme, “Belly of the Whale,” examines existential questions such as “Who am I?, What am I when I die? and What part of me needs to die?” Mythology abounds with tales of being swallowed by whales or other animals such as Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother being swallowed by the wolf. Past clients created art that symbolized their experience of transformation. Illustrations depicted “rebirth” and a sense of hope that transformation was imminent.

“Road of Trials,” the seventh theme, examines the difficult tasks one needs to perform in order to facilitate a rebirth or transformation to wellness. Client images tended to be expressions of hope and fear. One client’s image included a snake; he described his task (to facilitate recovery) as crawling through an unfamiliar and dangerous jungle assisted by a serpent, which he described as both dangerous and helpful. This image and narrative suggested a new-found tolerance for opposites and acceptance of ambivalence.

The eighth theme involves “Meeting the Goddess.” The remembered image of the mother is represented by the sleeping goddess, Briar Rose or Brynhild. She is the incarnation of the promise of perfection, assurance that the bliss of the comforting, nourishing, ‘good’ mother, young and beautiful, is still available. Clients created art depicting the protective goddess within themselves.

The ninth theme concerns atonement with a father figure. Many clients responded to this subject with trepidation, creating stark and painful illustrations of childhood experiences.

In the tenth session, the “ultimate boon,” representing achievement of the goal of wellness or recovery is examined. In mythology, the hero often miscalculated the reward for his efforts; King Midas thought he wanted gold but found that his power to create it robbed him of everything important to him, including his daughter who turned to a golden statue when he embraced her. Many clients created images that were spiritual in nature, reflecting positive changes and improved ego strength.

The eleventh theme warned of the “return threshold.” Clients created images of the perils of return and the value of the boon to their community. Images reflected hopefulness and willingness to share the benefit of their journey with others. They portrayed a sense of purpose and strength that had not been present at the beginning of therapy. One client produced an image of a moon reflecting on blue water against a black sky; he verbalized an awareness of the dangers of dualism and expressed a sense of peace present in his image.

The twelfth and final theme is “master of two worlds,” concerning balance between material and spiritual worlds. Mastery of these two worlds leads to freedom from the fear of death and, in turn, the freedom to live a full life. Clients created art reflecting happiness, hope, and recovery. Some expressed a sense of having their “feet on the ground.” There was a general awareness of having completed a rite of passage and a mood of pride and achievement for having completed the project. Clients became pensive as they reflected on the process and transformation they went through.

In general, clients reported that they found this program helpful in realizing, conceptualizing and expressing the arduous journey of change. They stated that illustrating their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours made it easier to express them. The mythical heroes helped clients to realize that they were not alone in their struggles and that people have been struggling with similar issues through the ages. Clients expressed their joy in creativity together with a sense of hope, pride, and achievement.

REFERENCES
NEW PUBLICATION
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BC PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
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Risk Assessment and Management (RAM)
Workshop Presented by Dr. Barry Cooper

About the Presenter

Dr. Barry S. Cooper is a Registered Psychologist in Vancouver, BC, Canada, practicing in the forensic arena. A former Senior Psychologist for the Correctional Service of Canada, Dr. Cooper is a Psychologist for the Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission at the BC Forensic Psychiatric Hospital. He is a Clinical Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at UBC and an Adjunct Professor in the Departments of Psychology at UBC-Okanagan and Simon Fraser University. In addition, Dr. Cooper is in private practice which involves assessment and consultation services to law enforcement, lawyers, corrections, and the judiciary. He is also a founding Partner and Director of Research and Development for the Forensic Alliance, a research, training, and consulting company. Dr. Cooper’s research and clinical-forensic interests include investigative interviewing, eyewitness memory, credibility/malingering assessment, risk assessment and psychopathy. He has provided training to various groups including law enforcement, child protection, mental health professionals, lawyers, corrections, and the judiciary. Dr. Cooper has also provided evidence at BC Review Board hearings and has served as an expert witness in court for both the prosecution and defence.

About the Workshop

Assessing risk for violence is a complex task to be mastered by forensic mental health professionals. Indeed, the results of risk assessments influence a number of decision making processes within the criminal and civil justice and forensic mental health systems, and impact the safety of society.

Although the field of risk assessment had advanced considerably in the recent past particularly in terms of the development of assessment instruments, there remains no generally accepted systematic approach to the assessment of risk. Drawing on research and clinical-forensic experience, The Forensic Alliance has developed an evidence-based approach to assessing risk for violence in correctional, forensic-psychiatric and related contexts. Founded in research and clinical-forensic experience, The Forensic Alliance remains no generally accepted systematic approach to the assessment of risk. Drawing on research and clinical-forensic experience, The Forensic Alliance has developed an evidence-based approach to assessing risk for violence in correctional, forensic-psychiatric and related contexts. Founded in research and clinical-forensic experience, the Risk Assessment and Management Workshop provides participants with an evidence-based, practical, step-wise approach to assessing and managing risk for violence. Any professional involved in assessing and managing clients’ risk for future violence would find the knowledge and skills offered in this workshop invaluable. It would benefit groups such as law enforcement, mental health professionals, social workers, correctional staff, lawyers, judges, and others.

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