

Handout:

Parallel Transformations through Art and Counseling

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Related books

The Courage to Create by Rollo May is an existential linking of creativity to action and wellbeing, declaring it an essential part of life.

“...the essence of art is the powerful and alive encounter between the artist and his or her world.” (p. 52)

Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art by Stephen Nachmanovitch focuses on the intimate intertwining of improvisation with life, and encourages playful and hardworking practice of whatever your life's art is.

“The freedom to create is a fruit of personal growth.” (p. 191)

“The only road to strength is vulnerability.” (p. 64)

The Creative Habit by Twyla Tharp gives practical exercises and thoughts for developing a daily practice of creativity for everyone.

“Everything is raw material. Everything is relevant. Everything is useable. Everything feeds into my creativity.” (p. 10)

Be ready for creativity to happen...

In both life and therapy, we can practice creative thinking in a number of ways which can benefit ourselves and our clients.

- Be open to opportunity. Take advantage of novelty and chance.
- Allow risks.
- Persist through challenges – and also be flexible.
- Practice intentionality by making choices– also practice spontaneity and using intuition.
- Have props available or be ready to make common items into props with new uses.
- Notice metaphors emerging and delve in through conversation, drawing,, guided imagery, etc.
- Recognize that making art (and getting use from a creative technique), like therapy, is a process that may take effort and time to discover and live out the value in it.

Value your creative perspective

Clients and counselors may feel hesitant to engage in creative techniques, or to claim their ability to think creatively. The arts and creativity are often sectioned off as areas of expertise. However, creative thinking is for everyone and doesn't have to look like “good art” to be meaningful and helpful.

To help a client (or yourself) gain confidence in this, recognize the role that your inner critic may play as you begin using creativity for your growth. You can accept this critic, confront its messages, ask for its gentleness as you create, find your supportive inner voice, or many other techniques according to your theory or needs.

Take Advantage of Parallel Perspectives

How does each term from the creative stages inform and develop the therapeutic process as defined here or in your personal understanding?

Creative Process

1. Intentionality
2. Conscious creation
3. Creativity
4. Completion

Therapeutic Process

1. Initiation of the relationship
2. Commitment to the relationship by both partners
3. Fusion and change
4. Resolution and separation

Strategies to Play With

- **FOUND IN TRANSLATION**

When you have something in one media form, “translate” it to another and see what you discover. For example, take a word and make it a drawing, take a drawing and make it a poem, make that a song, make that a gesture... What does each reveal or contribute?

- **A NEW VIEW**

Tear or crumple, rearrange, cover up, or isolate parts, turn it upside down or backwards. See what difference these make to what you see and experience in relation to the piece. For example, do this with a drawing or a metaphor mentally or with a visual representation to discover elements and relationships.

- **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION**

What difference does placement make? Location, proximity, number of... With a person, image, or work of art, experiment with these using physical or mental representations .

- **THE EYE OF THE ARTIST**

Practice your creative thinking by consuming art with an open mind and heart. Consider the associations you make without judgment, and respond with reflection and new creations.

“Creativity is central to the therapeutic process, partly because counseling is a moment-to-moment experience.” *