



coloring outside the lines

Using Creative Therapies with Difficult Clients

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Why would I use creative therapies in a forensic setting?

- In forensic settings the therapists' task of lowering the client's defenses to help him rebuild a healthier self is often MUCH more difficult.
- Patients need for diversion and escape from boredom

(Gussak & Virshup, 1-2)



Difficult Clients

- Who are we referring to?
- Clients who have a history of responding poorly to traditional “talk therapy”
- Clients with diagnoses that are chronic and difficult to treat with traditional therapies
 - Incarcerated Offenders
 - Personalities Disorders
 - SPMI



How it Works

- Creative therapies offer a “safer” or more comfortable way of expressing things that patients are not able to share through words.
- This non-verbal expression can be essential for working through issues of anger or resentment that could be perceived as threatening and result in other problems if expressed verbally in the institutional setting.

(Gussak & Virshup, 1-2)



Art Therapy

- The ability to create good art can be a status symbol.
 - Art is a form of expression that is acceptable both to staff and other patients.
 - Art making may reduce depression and conduct violations
- (Gussak 444-45).



Who can benefit from Art Therapy?

Case Examples:

- Offender who “acts out” by drawing staff – naked?
- Mandalas for Mindfulness
- An Offender who is severely depressed and unable to express emotions.



Cinema Therapy

“No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul.”

– Ingmar Bergman



Is Cinema Therapy Something New?

- Could be considered a form of Bibliotherapy.
- Storytelling
- Ancient Greek Dramas
- Power of Metaphor, Symbols, and Myth



How is Cinema Therapy Used?

.Evocative Way

- Clients are encouraged to talk about movies that they have strong reactions to.
- Therapist does not recommend specific movies.

.Prescriptive Way

- Therapist recommends a movie.
- Discusses movie with client(s) focusing on lessons learned by the characters.

.Cathartic Way

- Therapist recommends a specific movie with an emotional theme that client is having difficulty connecting to.
- Encourages client to pay attention to and discuss how the characters processed the events/emotions.

The Power of Film

.Movies

- allow us to move beyond our own experience to the perspective of the observer.
- tap into basic human instincts and desires.



What is Music Therapy?

- Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credential professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.
- Music therapy also provides avenues for communication that can be helpful to those who find it difficult to express themselves in words.
- Research in music therapy supports its effectiveness in many areas such as: overall physical rehabilitation and facilitating movement, increasing people's motivation to become engaged in their treatment, providing emotional support for clients and their families, and providing an outlet for expression of feelings.

– ***American Music Therapy Association***



Music Therapy vs. Therapeutic Music

- Music Therapy as a Licensed Music Therapist vs. Therapeutic Music as an augmented technique to other modalities.
- Music Therapists are specialized clinicians, with a particular highly trained skill set.
- However, there are other examples of Therapeutic Music that can be incorporated into nearly any clinical setting:
 - Asking a client to share the lyrics of a favorite song.
 - Listening to music in session.
 - Discussion based on song lyrics and emotional responses to music.



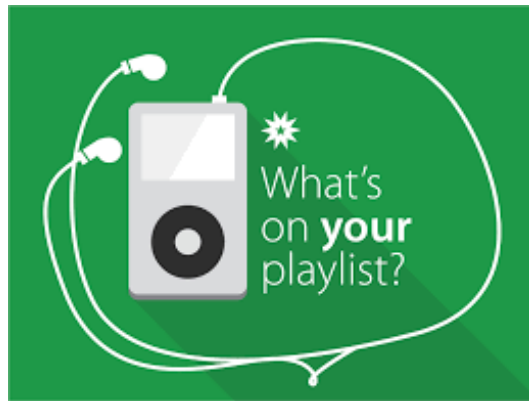
Mood Regulation

- When used in conjunction with other techniques listening to soft music has been found to reduce anxiety in inpatient psychiatric clients (Silverman 2006).
- Music alone can also significantly reduce stress related arousal symptoms (Pellitier 2004).
- Listening to music with a sad theme may assist patients with depression in identifying their emotions (Bodner et. al. 2007).



Access to Music

• Simply having access to music can be an issue for some due to safety issues and property restrictions in maximum security settings.



- How can the clinician become an advocate for access to items (e.g. CD player) that might improve an offender or patient's behavior and decrease symptoms of mental illness?

Pet Therapy

- Animals provide opportunity for positive interaction and a lowering of barriers that difficult patients may be unwilling or unable to allow themselves with other people (Ormerod 2008).



Pets in Unusual Places



Puppies for Parole

- Offenders Train Shelter Dogs that were previously labeled “unadoptable” and would have otherwise been euthanized.
- 4000th Dog adopted in February 2016.
- Partnership with COMTREA’s Bridle Ridge for Training Therapy Dogs
 - Advanced Dogs placed in therapeutic settings: Autism, PTSD, Nursing homes, etc. to match the unique needs of the adopter.
 - Dog Handlers are Supervised by Certified Therapy Dog Trainers
 - [Facebook.com/Missouri PuppiesforParole](https://www.facebook.com/MissouriPuppiesforParole)

DMH Pet Therapy Options

- CLS/Groups Homes has Slim living in cottage with forensic clients for more than 6 years
- Pet Therapy with Rehab Staff

Summary

- As long as you're being therapeutically appropriate there is no wrong way to use creative therapies.
- The goal is to use these interventions to break through barriers and better meet your clients' needs.



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