

Interpretation Of Art Therapy Practices In Context Of Formal Education And Training

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Abstract: Art therapy training programs provides students theoretical knowledge about art and psychology, whereas, under practical training students get insight into experimental learning under supervision. The study focuses on the significance of formal education and training in the discipline of art psychotherapy. For data interviews were conducted with five professional art therapists. Questions focused on their personal education, training and their practical experience during art therapy sessions. The interviews have indicated clearly that for the professional use of art therapy formal education and its practical training is mandatory. The stress was laid upon the interdisciplinary nature of therapy where the synchronization of elements of both- psychology and art play a vital role. Amalgamation of theoretical, clinical and experimental studies make them competent art therapists to deal with intellectually and emotionally demanding profession.

Keywords: art therapy, relationship, education, training.

1. INTRODUCTION

In our world communication in the form of language dominates but there are many other forms of communication which are used to express emotions called 'Expressive Art'. The best thing about this therapy is that one who intends to take benefit, doesn't need to have any kind of formal education in the field of art. There are many types of expressive art therapies seen like dance, music (both instrumental and vocal), drama, storytelling, collage, painting, sculpture but here the area of focus will be therapy using visual art. In the visual art therapy, the most traditional and convenient form of art is utilized such as drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, collage and many other forms of visual art expression. Art therapists have skill of finding problem and healing through art. Their knowledge about psychological theories, spiritual artistic traditions, pigments help them to diagnose and finding solution. The work can be clinical or non- clinical. Any individual can take benefits from art therapy. It can also be in group or in family.

The power of art therapy is mainly dependent upon:

1. Human beings of all races, age and sex are familiar to its language.

2. It has a capacity to target the hidden sufferings and makes a hope to deal with it by art therapists by bringing it to conscious.

In art therapy a therapist has to go through the client's final artwork, process of artwork and what is a client's absent product, which was tried to make with the help of art material but was unsuccessful. In this process, the role of art therapist is very important. Art is majorly involved in it. So, the question arises that everyone who is formally or informally educated in the field of art is competent to work in the field of art therapy or a formal training should be a primary requirement?

2. ART THERAPY PRACTICES

Mental health is seen as an important aspect of the society. Art therapy profession is quite popular in clinical and non-clinical set-ups among people. In non-clinical settings art is seen as therapy and aids humans in art studios and creative workshops. The person seeking benefits through art works with art materials. The other form of art therapy is where 'art' is used in therapy. In this, art therapists use their skills to evaluate and assist client to heal their mental distress. The art therapy sessions are designed keeping in mind of therapeutic goals and purposes. The area they work is very vast like self-awareness, coping with stress, ease traumatic experiences, increase mental abilities and improvement in interpersonal relationship. Activities and material are chosen by art therapists according to the age and mental level of the clients. In short, art therapists lay a role of psychotherapists using art as a medium to improve the symptoms of mental illness and self-discovery.

3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Its history seems to be very old when art was used for healing in ancient caves. It is very new and still lot to come out in the field of mental health. 'Art Therapy' as term firstly came into existence in late 1940 in UK by the artist Adrian Hill where he used therapeutic applications of drawings and paintings on tuberculosis patients. For this Hill explained, enabled patient to 'build up strong defense against his misfortunes' (Hill, 1948:103). Adamson also contributed a lot in the field of art therapy in Britain when he saw people felt themselves healed through art as it gave them outlet for expressing their feelings. The only matter of concern was act of creation. He advocated 'free Expression' and used to invite people to his studio to paint or sculpt freely without any judgement or comments. He never favored psychological interpretation as he called it 'therapist's own projections'. Hogan called his work 'non-interventionalist'. A psychologist Margaret Naumberg in USA at around the same time displayed model on Art Therapy which focused on withdrawing unconscious with the help of art. The roots of this model are based upon the relationship between the patient and the therapist. The expression of hidden thoughts through symbolic designs were the form of communication between a therapist and the client. Website of New York University calls Margret Naumberg 'a pioneer for offering different courses and training seminars for graduate level programs in Art Department and Art Professions in New York University. As Naumberg developed diploma and graduate courses in Art Therapy in Art Department; Kramer in 1973 developed Master of Art Therapy Program. Two parallel streams in Art Therapy 'Art as' and 'Art in' started and were run. So, in USA Art as psychotherapy kept developing where the stress is upon the relationship among the art therapist, client and the artwork. While working on the benefits of art it was proved art assimilates great power in healing mind and body. So, these days in schools, universities, workplaces art is observed as stress buster. In western countries it helps to gain a kind of self-satisfaction and self-appreciation. The benefits of art as therapy are immense but in the therapeutic use; art is also seen having great

potentials in it. Art in therapy has proven benefits for the patients in physical as well as in mental needs as it carries with different methodologies for treatment and assessment process. The people from all ages and sex can avail its benefits. Art therapy is not only meant for the treatment of physical and mental problems, but it covers the wide area of human life. It can help any individual for personality development, stress relief and many other day to day issues related to the family and work. It can also be used as mode of self- discovery, emotional control, managing addictions.

Scientifically it has been proven that art helps to enhance brain functioning. Its effects on the brain patterns and different emotions are being observed. It improves the serotonin levels which is important chemical and neurotransmitter in humans. It helps to regulate appetite and digestion. The scientists are observing links between serotonin and depressions. A leading translator in the neuroscience into education, Eric Jensen, states in his book ‘Arts with the Brain in Mind’, “The system they include our integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities are the driving forces behind all other learning.”

4. LITERATURE REVIEW.

Jamie Sanders from St. Catherine University in “The Use of Art in Therapy: An Exploratory Study” records people experiences in an emotional pleasurable states when they see or indulge in art making activity. She joins art making with social work by calling it an activity to enhance human wellbeing. Art is being used in making social connections, for development of own and spiritual growth and in great number of human explorations. The use of art in self evaluation and share emotions and experience is being done for long times. In different types of art therapy, she further explains, different tools for therapy which are receptive, expressive, symbolic. Further, while talking about the strengths of art therapy she calls it a way to cope with life’s stressors like pains and limitations and self- discipline, self-awareness, and self-exploration. In conceptual frame work in post-modern art therapy types are narrative, solution-focused, cognitive behavior, psychodynamic and humanistic. After interviewing art therapists, in conclusion, she says that choosing art therapy depends upon the age of the client, out of all expressive therapies art was most widely used by the therapists and liked by clients.

According to American Art Therapy Association (AATA), which was founded in 1969, and is known as world’s prime art therapy membership association “ the mission of American Art Therapy Association is to advocate for expansion of access to professional art therapists and led the nation in advancement of art therapy as a regulated mental health and human services profession” (August 2016). It calls art therapists a master degree clinicians who work with all the ages follow the ethics and scopes of practice which is honouring the beliefs of every individual. Along with master degree an art therapist has to ensure training in the field of process of creativity, understanding psychology, group therapies, assessment of art therapy, research and understanding of multicultural populations. Completion of 100 supervised practicum hours and in clinical setup 600 supervised hours. Preparatory training in studio art and psychology in graduate studies. The established standards by American Art Therapy Association are looked after by Accreditation Council for Art Therapy. Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB) with AATA looks after the testing process and awarding credentials to the art therapists for professional and high-caliber practice of the therapists. Following are the credentials administered by ATCB at national level:
Provisional Registered Art Therapists (ATR-Provisional)

Registered Art therapist (ATR) Board Certification (ATR-BC)
Art Therapy Certified Supervisor (ATCS)

Frances E. Anderson in *Art Therapy: Myths and Realities* calls art therapy field new as work started in this field in 1930 and American Art Therapy Association (AATA) was founded in 1969 with about 100 people and by 1979 the number of members were 1324. This area was majorly created interest in 'special education' and new job opportunities. Author by sharing own experience where she faced challenges as an art teacher with special children. It motivated her to join art therapy program. Further she writes about art therapy training which started from one degree to 28 graduate, 11 clinical training, 5 special training and 42 undergraduate programs. When it comes to the definition of art therapy, in 1976 in AATA conference a session "Art Therapy: An Exploration of definitions" was conducted and no clear consensus results were attained. But it can be said that art can be used as therapy or it can be used as a vehicle of psychotherapy. To get registered as an art therapist with degree one has to be an active member of AATA for six months and should have completed 1000 paid hours with client. Work area for therapists can be schools, special children schools, rehabilitation centres and mental hospitals. To become an art therapists one should study psychology along with art education. This field needs attention not only in the matters of education but also research.

David Edwards in his book *Art Therapy*

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The central idea of this paper is art therapy education particularly its academic and training context. For this qualitative research method was opted which tried to describe and explain professional art therapists' views points were collected in the form of survey and interview method. 5 senior and highly respected art therapists from existed professional network with vast experience in this field from Canada and USA were selected for interview. Carry Cardwell in Canada with experience of 30 years in art therapy was the first one who agreed for interview. She completed her post graduation from Lesley Graduate School with 800 supervised practicum hours and registered with American Art Therapy Association. Sally Chung, a young art therapist in Canada working with Art As Therapy centre in Orangeville branch, mastered in her field and attended 700 practicum hours which included direct client contact and also case management and report writing. In USA Emery Mikel- managing Director of Water and Stone Art Therapy Centres. She has been running six branches in different parts of New York and New Jersey with total work experience of more than twelve years. In the name of academic qualification she has done masters degree in Transpersonal Counselling and Art Therapy from Naropa University and out of 1500 hours of practicum training 1000 hours were in direct client contact. Cindy Schwab in USA working therapist in Women Shelter Home done her Masters of Professional studies in school of visual art, NYC. Her experience in this field is about sixteen years and practicum hours were 1500. Cindy strongly believed in constant training to understand new concepts in the the field for this she had plans to attend two training classes of fifteen days each. Another art therapist named stephnie Sakland, who run Art Therapy Pros- an art therapy centre since five years. After completing her Masters Degree in Art Therapy and Counselling from C.W. Post, Long Island University, USA she attended 700 hours practicum training, attended two internships of 1500 hours for ATR-BC licence and later she attended another 1100 hours training for state licence. The indepth interviews included examples and their experiences so that the significance of art therapy education and training understood easily. The aim of the questions were to explore in detail about the

significance of education and training in art therapy. Four interviews were taken at work place of art therapist. While, one interview was conducted in a park. All interviews were recorded

6. FINDINGS

From the transcriptions of the interviews, text fragments were selected according to the research questions. These were:

1. Formal Education
2. Training
3. Relationship between Formal Education and Training

Formal education: for practicing art therapy one must acquire knowledge about certain elements and principles of art and also the creative process. Theories and methodology related to psychology and counselling plays equally important role. 4 therapists out of five fully agreed to it whereas Carry Cardwell partially agreed by affixing 'social work' word along with educational qualifications. It is said partially because she wanted a social worker to have expertise in art.

"If you became a social worker I would be okay with you doing art therapy cause you are already and artist"

"Yes, its different. You have to be an artist to do art therapy. If you are a social worker and an artist, its okay, it has changed with time. Cause I see there are so many competent people but yeah, If, you are a music therapist, you have to be a musician."

But, she strongly recommended the need of synchronisation of psychology and art to work as an art therapist.

"The thing is when you are working as an art therapist that is a full-fledged profession. So, you have to have psychology background and art."

In the following quotes Sally Chung illustrated how art therapists have talked about gravity of formal education for delineation of art therapy.

"Ya, I mean art therapy is a form of psychotherapy. So, you provide psychotherapy- therapy to anyone. I would say education is crucial. I would say rather its very unethical and quite harmful either if someone is not trained in art therapy and therapy providing services to someone and sharing this is therapy. I don't find that ethical. You don't find... Ya, just like a chef, I mean if they had no formal education in cooking and they cook, say I am a cook and when you cook and prepare, here for you. It would be the same."

Emery Mikel strongly supported the need of formal academic qualification with its practical training:

"So, my degree in psychology and art therapy. So, I have those pieces, so, some of these classes which are not just art therapy based, they were actually psychology based. So, we had the grounding in psychology degree- understanding of how the mind works, how the body works, it what that actually happens and then learn how to also use the art materials and art with and then specific art classes are really pin pointed. What is this combined so, we have the base in both of those and then combine them, which allows, it allows for me to do setting with client and only the art therapy but when I see them needing something else I have to choose the knowledge to go there with them."

Therapist highlighted dual aspect in art therapy. In the curriculum not only art is taken as important subject but psychology is also equally important to understand the working of mind and body along with depth knowledge of art materials. Combination of both subjects makes an art therapist having the capacity to transform the character of a person.

Cindy Schwab working in Women Shelter Home and come across with many types of situations everyday finds formal education and training as an integral part of the life of art therapist.

“so when treating, anyone you treating, people with diverse background and I think in order to understand people and understand what are you seeing have to do very quick assessment like I say who you are dealing with, now this is, this is not, there is not talking here”

“One cannot call oneself an art therapist unless they hold a masters level degree as well as some sort of regulated certification or license that is administered by a governing body, such as local government or the art therapy credentials board. There is danger in someone stating that they provide therapy when they are not trained, or that they are able to provide a specialty, but they do not have the skill set to understand the power as well as the limitations. I think it sets individuals up to feel that they can practice unhindered by an ethical body to answer to.”

Sally Chung shared her own experiences to make understand the role of academic qualification and training for any art therapist.

“I mean my course is very extensive 16 months program. So, doing that I needed to be go through all the different psychology approaches, starting from psychoanalysis to cognitive behavioral therapy to dialectical behavior therapy. There are many things we have studied-trained properly to how to work with population starting from babies toddlers to like older population”

Education in the classroom helps stimulating personal and professional growth of future art therapists. Malchiodi agreed to the point that ‘Dynamic experimental group’ courses which are based on working with art materials have the capacity to provide the experience of “being fully heard and deeply understood”. (Malchiodi, 2003, p.61) so formal education remains the core component of art therapy.

7. TRAINING:

Just as an art therapy education is an indispensable part of art therapy, its training is also inseparable element. The second aspect after formal education in art therapy is putting education into practical process. Therapists in their interview laid emphasis on experience of practical knowledge which is generally called practicum hours which includes specific hours of supervised and clinical training. Sally Chung’s views in this concern:

“So, absolutely a big part of art program is doing practicum intern hours. So we have to do 700 hours. A part of that had to be direct client contact and other part had to do with case managing and you know note writing, supervision, there are many things a part of the program.”

Training in art therapy is very important because it gives a chance to the upcoming art therapists an in-depth experience to work directly with clients. This part of the study is very important as this gives them an opportunity to understand self-ability and they also learn to work with experience and link their theoretical knowledge in practical. It gives self-exposure and helps to fight fears.

The work of art therapists includes understanding of emotional issues and work towards resolving it. Professional training gives chance to art therapist to step into emotional world of others through art. Emery Mikel who is special with the cases of grief, pain explains benefit of training in the field of emotions:

“Ya, I think that also when, I work a lot with grief and loss and death and dying. Those are my favorite things to work with. So the emotional aspects come up pretty strong and any work with them also to the different things and then I connect exist with those comfortably and my classes and my training and more the psychology and meditation classes are just art therapy, really gave me a ground for that so I could exist, were strong factors.”

Training of art therapists enhances their skills and their experience with clients prepare themselves for their life-long process. Their further trainings like attending workshops, attending conferences lend a hand to acquire specialist skills in different areas. Practical training under supervisor helps them to monitor their own competency. Case and Dalley (1992: 167) also supports supervision of practical training by calling it essential for all practitioners.

8. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Buffet of many kinds of elements like psychology, art education training (supervised and independent) and passion play important role to become a successful art therapist. where learning certain essentials of art therapy in the classroom enables them to practice their profession under supervision. This doesn't only help a therapist to maintain psychotherapeutic relationship with client but also assists to have knowledge and understanding about self. Integration of theoretical and practical training helps to strengthens the following are the areas of art therapists:

- Concepts for the art psychotherapy are cleared which are integral part to establish a therapeutic relationship with a client.
- Familiarity with theoretical aspects like background and advance research about the field is gained by student.
- Practical training gives insight to art therapists to excel their skills of managing different types of clients in the context of age, sex, and their focus areas.

9. CONCLUSION:

The techniques and methods of art therapy is based upon the wellness of the individual. So, for an art therapist a balance of theoretical education with clinical and experimental learning is must. It can be sufficient hours of supervised training under a person with the responsibility of clinical art therapy. Having understanding of visual art for art therapy is fundamental requirement. Case and Dalley (1992: 148) says that the foundation of art therapy without the base of visual art is eroded. First is their assumption about elements and principles about image. Further, their understanding about materials and technical know-how. Next comes familiarity with cultural, traditional, technical and psychological contexts which are reflected during art therapy sessions.

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