

Part One (Lecture):

**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS:
An Introduction to PhotoTherapy Techniques**

Lecture Presentation • 2005 Conference of the Canadian Art Therapy Association • Victoria

by

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Author of *PhotoTherapy Techniques -- Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums*

Program Listing for LECTURE PRESENTATION:

PhotoTherapy techniques use personal snapshots, family photos, and photo-interactions -- and the feelings, memories, thoughts and information these evoke -- as catalysts for therapeutic communication and personal healing. ***This slide-illustrated presentation*** will cover the "why" and "what" of PhotoTherapy techniques, with several case examples.

(Note: This will be followed by "Part 2" (an Experiential Workshop for learning about the "how" of these techniques personally), although this Lecture is not required for attending Part 2).

Presenter:

Judy Weiser is a psychologist and art therapist in private practice (specializing in HIV-related psychosocial issues). Founder and Director of the PhotoTherapy Centre in Vancouver, past Editor of the Journal *Phototherapy*, member of the Editorial Board of the *CATA Journal*, and a gallery-exhibiting photographer, she consults, lectures, and gives training workshops world-wide about PhotoTherapy techniques.

Along with her book, *PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums* and her website *PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy*, she has produced a video and numerous book chapters and articles on the subject (as well as many on HIV-related counseling also). She can be reached at: jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com.

Presentation Objectives:

After this event, those attending should be able to:

- 1) List, describe (and explain the differences between) the basic PhotoTherapy techniques.
- 2) Explain why and how PhotoTherapy techniques are of *particular* benefit to any arts/expressive-based therapy practice.
- 3) Know how to access other practitioners and additional information about this subject (including receiving handouts with recommended readings, networking contacts, etc.).

Longer Summary, with References: see next page....

Longer Summary:

Ordinary personal snapshots serve as 'mirrors with memory' reflecting what and who has mattered most in people's lives. Therefore, what any snapshot is *about* emotionally is far more important than what its surface shows visually – its value always having more to do with what the image *means* inside peoples minds and hearts, than what their eyes see.

Based on this, "PhotoTherapy" techniques (Weiser, 1993/1999; 1983-2004 below) use personal snapshots and family photos (and interactions with these) as nonverbal tools to assist therapeutic communication and personal healing. Worked with as symbolic self-constructs, transitional objects, personal and family narratives, and metaphoric communications from deep inside, clients' snapshots (as well as those taken by others) can help them bridge into feelings and memories in ways that words alone cannot.

In PhotoTherapy-based counseling sessions, photos are taken, viewed, posed for, actively reconstructed or "sculpted", worked with in memory or imagination, or even explored through interacting with photographs taken by others. This work is about "photography as symbolic communication", rather than "photography as art": *using photographs as an active agents of exploration and change...*

Combined with art, play, drama, music, poetry, and numerous other expressive (and other) therapy approaches, people's photos prove to be worth far more than the proverbial "thousand words" -- and thus therapists and counselors trained in PhotoTherapy techniques find that making use of these "secret lives" of ordinary photographs greatly helps clients learn more about themselves.. Using these techniques requires *no* prior familiarity or experience with cameras or photographic art and is extremely "user-friendly" for the client.

This slide-illustrated Presentation (including anecdotal examples) will introduce the interrelated system of PhotoTherapy technique and discuss their rationale and applications (alone or in combination with other art media) for any therapy practice, regardless of theoretical orientation, preferred therapeutic approach or particular client population.

NOTE: *Attending "Part 2" (the PhotoTherapy Workshop following this presentation) will be useful for deeper understanding of the presentation, but attending it is not a requirement for attending the Lecture part)*

Presenter's Publications: *see next page....*

Publications* by Judy Weiser:

*Please note: Most of the articles and chapters listed below may be downloaded *for free* from:
www.phototherapy-centre.com/biography.htm

- 2004(a) -- PhotoTherapy techniques in counseling and therapy: Using ordinary snapshots and photo-interactions to help clients heal their lives. *The Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal, Fall, 17:2, 23-53.*
- 2004(b) -- The continuum of arts-based healing practices: Arts-in-Therapy/Arts-as-Therapy. *Creative Arts in Counseling Chapter Newsletter (Canadian Counseling Association), Fall, 1:2, 3.*
- 2003 -- A picture is worth a thousand words: Using PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling Practice. *Bulletin of the Private Practitioners Chapter Newsletter (Canadian Counseling Association), March, 3:2, 3-4.*
- 2002(a) -- PhotoTherapy techniques: Exploring the secrets of personal snapshots and family albums. *Child & Family, Spring/Summer, 16-25.*
- 2002(b) -- PhotoTherapy techniques: Exploring the secrets of personal snapshots and family albums. *B.C. Psychologist, Winter, 26-27.*
- 2001 -- PhotoTherapy techniques: Using clients' personal snapshots and family photos as Counseling and Therapy tools (Invited feature article in "Special Double Issue: Media art as/in therapy"). *Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism, 29:3 (Nov/Dec), 10-15.*
- 2000 -- PhotoTherapy's message for Art Therapists in the new Millennium. *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 17:3, 160-162.*
- 1999* (Book; 2nd Edition) -- *PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums. (1st edition: 1993),* Vancouver: PhotoTherapy Centre Press [ISBN: 0-9685619-0-X].
- *IMPORTANT NOTE:** Italian Lawyers have estimated that over 90% of Giusti & Proietti's book "*Fototerapia: E Diario Clinico*" was directly copied from this book. Writs have been served against the two, and the court date for the plagiarism case is set for Milan, February, 2005. (Visit www.phototherapy-centre.com for more information)
- 1990 -- "More than meets the eye": Using ordinary snapshots as tools for therapy. In: Laidlaw, T., Malmo, C., & Associates (Eds.), *Healing voices: Feminist approaches to therapy with women* (pp. 83-117). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 1988(a) -- "See what I mean?" Photography as nonverbal communication in cross-cultural psychology. In: Poyatos, F. (Ed.), *Cross-cultural perspectives in nonverbal communication* (pp. 245-290). Toronto: Hogrefe.
- 1988(b) -- "PhotoTherapy: Using snapshots and photo-interactions in therapy with youth. In: Schaefer, C. (Ed.), *Innovative interventions in child and adolescent therapy* (pp. 339-376). New York: Wiley.
- 1986 -- Ethical considerations in PhotoTherapy training and practice. *Phototherapy, 5:1, 12-17.*
- 1985 -- Training and teaching photo and video therapy: Central themes, core knowledge, and important considerations. *Phototherapy, 4:4, 9-16.*
- 1984 -- PhotoTherapy: Becoming visually literate about oneself. In: Walker, A.D.; Braden, R. A.; and Dunker, L. H. (Eds.), *Visual literacy: enhancing human potential* (pp. 392-406). Virginia Polytechnic State University Press.
- 1983 -- Using photographs in therapy with people who are 'different'. In: Krauss, D. A. and Fryrear, J. L. (Eds.), *Phototherapy in mental health* (pp. 174-199). Springfield, IL: Charles Thomas.
- 1975 -- PhotoTherapy: Photography as a verb. *The B.C. Photographer, 2, 33-36.*