



Every Picture Tells A Story For Therapists

4 April 2005

Most of us have a favourite photograph in an album which evokes powerful memories, thoughts and feelings.

By using PhotoTherapy techniques to unlock responses to photographs, counsellors and therapists can help people cope with their problems, even those as severe as HIV/AIDS or manic depression.

Next week, international PhotoTherapy expert Judy Weiser visits the University of Derby - her first visit to the UK in a decade - to offer a unique insight into her work.

Judy founded and directs The PhotoTherapy Centre in Vancouver, Canada. She will hold a slide-illustrated public lecture at the University to help people understand more about these practices and how they work in both therapy and non-therapy situations.

A three-day workshop will follow, enabling health and counselling specialists from around the UK to find out more about her pioneering practices.

Judy said: "For photographers, the finished photograph is usually an endpoint, but for PhotoTherapy purposes it is just the start. It is not only the visual contents of the photographs themselves that are so therapeutically important, but also everything that happens while the client is interacting with them.

"Using PhotoTherapy techniques, the therapist's primary role is to encourage and support clients' own personal discoveries while exploring and interacting with the ordinary personal and family snapshots they view, make, collect, remember, or even only imagine."

The University of Derby's Therapeutic Arts Subject Leader, Linda Wheildon, said: "We are very excited indeed. Judy has made presentations at universities throughout the world, but Derby is the first university in the UK to invite her to speak about her work.

"We have already had interest from therapists and counsellors nationwide and internationally, and this sort of event helps put Derby on the map for learning more about these techniques in the future."

The PhotoTherapy Centre assists therapists in learning new practices, as well as supporting student research and further developments in the

field. It also holds the world's most comprehensive library of journals, articles and books, videotapes of live PhotoTherapy sessions, and photo-based creations made by clients and trainees.

Speaking about her PhotoTherapy techniques, Judy added: "Memories, feelings and thoughts that emerge during the photographic dialogue, provide additional useful information to therapists helping people with problems that are too difficult to reach or express in words alone.

"As clients discuss the layers of meanings contained within their photographs, they also reveal a lot about themselves, including values, beliefs, attitudes and expectations which hold important clues about how people make sense of their world and their position in it.

"Asking questions about - and of - the photograph as if it were alive and could speak for itself, further enhances therapeutic possibilities."

Judy Weiser's public lecture, 'Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums: An Introduction to PhotoTherapy Techniques', takes place at the University, on April 7 between 6pm and 9pm. To book, contact Linda Marshall on 01332 591395/6 or email: conferences@derby.ac.uk

The lecture is open to anyone interested, including hobby photographers, teachers, or art educators, or even those just wanting to improve communications with friends and family members.

The three-day training workshop 'A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words: Using PhotoTherapy Techniques in Art Therapy and Other Counselling Practices', (aimed at mental health professionals and advanced level graduate students in this field only), will be held between April 14 through 16. For more details telephone Catherine Foster on 01332 592185 or email: c.foster@derby.ac.uk

-ends-

For any other information please contact the Senior Press and PR Officer, Simon Redfern, on Tel: 01332 591942/ 591891/ 591041 or via e-mail pressoffice@derby.ac.uk

University of Derby
Kedleston Road
Derby
DE22 1GB