

**EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF  
PERSONAL SNAPSHOTS AND FAMILY ALBUMS --**

**• Introduction to PhotoTherapy Techniques •**

**Introductory Workshop (half-day to 2 days)**

*Open to anyone interested*

**Instructor:** Judy Weiser, R.Psych., A.T.R. -- Founder and Director, PhotoTherapy Centre (Vancouver, Canada)

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

**Brief Summary**

PhotoTherapy techniques use personal snapshots & family photos -- and the feelings, thoughts, and memories these evoke -- as catalysts for therapeutic communication and change.

Since the emotional contents of any photograph are far more important than its visual details, clients' ordinary snapshots and family albums can serve as powerful bridges into previously-unconscious, long-buried, or overly-defended information, and underlying beliefs and values, in ways impossible with words alone.

This "Introductory" Workshop will begin with a slide- and video-illustrated presentation about PhotoTherapy theory and application (including case anecdotes), and then provide opportunities for some experiential encounters with some of the techniques personally\* (*\*Participation in exercises is voluntary, as this event is for the purpose of participants' education, rather than for personal therapy*).

***Please note: Prior experience with cameras or photographic art is not required!***

*However, prior exploration of the "PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling" website (at least its Home-Page and "Five Techniques" pages) will definitely add to participants' enjoyment of this event!*

***For more information about PhotoTherapy, see: <http://www.phototherapy-centre.com>***

**Instructor**

Judy Weiser is a psychologist and art therapist in private practice (specializing in HIV-related psychosocial issues). Founder and Director of the PhotoTherapy Centre, former Editor of the Journal *Phototherapy*, she consults, lectures, and gives training workshops world-wide about using PhotoTherapy techniques to improve counseling practice.

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.

*She can be reached at: [jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com](mailto:jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com) or 604-689-9709.*

**More information about PhotoTherapy can be found at: <http://www.phototherapy-centre.com>**

*For a longer description, please see the next page...*

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#### **Longer Explanation**

Every photograph we take, keep, or react to is in many ways a metaphorical self-portrait, a "mirror with memory" reflecting the unique story of our particular life and what has been important to us. Personal snapshots are like "visual footprints" marking where we have been emotionally, as well as physically -- and they also sometimes signal where we might be heading, even when we may not know this yet ourselves! Thus, a photo's value lies not so much in its surface visual "facts", but more in what these selectively-noticed details *mean* inside each viewer's mind (and heart).

Based on this, "PhotoTherapy" techniques use therapy clients' personal photos (and their interactions with these) as nonverbal tools for helping them better understand, express, and resolve their problems and feelings. Serving as powerful symbolic self-constructs, emotional catalysts, metaphoric transitional objects, visual traces of family systems dynamics and representations of personal/family narratives, clients' photos permit a much deeper form of "insight" to emerge.

In PhotoTherapy-based counseling sessions, clients not only view existing photos, but also take, pose for, actively reconstruct, visually sculpt, or create new ones, as well as remember or imagine those unable to be held in their hand. PhotoTherapy is about "photography as symbolic emotional communication", rather than "photography as art" -- *photography as an active agent of change and self-exploration*. And therefore, using these techniques requires no prior experience with cameras, nor any knowledge about photographic art.

Used alone, or in combination with various other therapy techniques, clients' own snapshots prove to be worth far more than the proverbial "thousand words" -- and thus mental health professionals trained in PhotoTherapy techniques find that making use of the "secret lives" of such photographs can greatly enhance their counseling effectiveness.

Format: Opening with a slide- and video-illustrated presentation (accompanied by case-anecdotes) to provide background theoretical rationale and framework for applying these techniques, this Workshop will also provide participants with experiential opportunities to encounter some of the major techniques personally\* -- under the direct supervision of PhotoTherapy pioneer Judy Weiser. (*\*Participation in exercises is voluntary, as this event is for the purpose of participants' education, rather than for personal therapy*).

The goal of this Workshop is to explain, illustrate, and demonstrate how PhotoTherapy techniques can be useful counseling tools for all Mental Health Professionals, regardless of their theoretical orientation, preferred therapeutic approach, or particular client population -- and to enable participants to have some direct encounters with some of the techniques.

- *Numerous handouts will be provided to guide the experiential process and to assist with further reading and networking.*