

Using Ordinary Snapshots to Improve Sensitivity and Communication in Diversity-Based Practice, Research, and Education

"Diversity Matters" Conference * Vancouver Canada • November 2-3, 2009

Summary :

Workshop will discuss and illustrate how and why ordinary "non-art" photos can be useful in sensitizing people to matters of diversity, increasing cultural competence, and improving related communications and practices. After reviewing "PhotoTherapy" and "Therapeutic Photography" techniques (and audience interactions with photos provided), Presenter will show numerous examples of successful adaptation into a wide variety of non-therapy Health, Research, and Educational diversity practices.

Description

Any time a photograph is seen or remembered, its meaning is actually created inside the mind of its viewer, based on whatever visual details happen to be selectively noticed on its surface, and associated feelings and memories automatically arise. What people notice, defines what they will see...

Photos are powerful bridges into feelings, thoughts, memories, and other unconsciously-stored information -- and also therefore, into exploring the resulting beliefs, attitudes, judgments and expectations that people's implicit values produce.

For this reason, ordinary snapshots can be useful tools for exploring the more subtle nonverbal aspects of diversity, where differential perceptions (and personal expectations based on these) form crucial components that can affect communication without the participants even realizing (the things people know and are certain about, yet cannot fully explain in words, so communications become "stuck").

"PhotoTherapy Techniques" have long used personal snapshots, family photos, and pictures taken by others to improve communication and insight during therapy and counselling. Adapted as "Therapeutic Photography" techniques for non-therapy applications, these have proven successful in assisting people in learning more about themselves and others individually, as well as more generally to activate positive social change, strengthen communities, improve intercultural relations and conflict-resolution, bring attention to issues of social justice, deepen visual literacy, enhance education, extend health literacy, expand qualitative research methodologies, shape visual/nonverbal communications for the communicatively-impaired, and produce other kinds of change.

continued.....

After a brief illustrated introduction to the theory and applications of PhotoTherapy and Therapeutic Photography and how these can be adapted to wider approaches, this Workshop (by a Presenter with over 30 years' experience in using photos as therapy tools to help minority-culture and/or marginalized, disenfranchised, or traditionally-devalued clients with emotional, personal, or family issues arising from the "braid" of addictions, street culture, intergenerational trauma, residential school legacy, poverty, and/or HIV/AIDS), will then provide opportunities for the audience to personally experience, through guided interactions with photos brought by Presenter, how to use simple snapshots to explore "differences that make a difference" in diversity and related matters. Workshop will end with discussion and handouts to assist audience with additional information and resources.

Presenter Bio

Judy Weiser, R.Psych., A.T.R. is Founder & Director of the PhotoTherapy Centre in Vancouver Canada and Executive Director of the "Judy Weiser PhotoTherapy and Therapeutic Photography Educational Society". A psychologist, art therapist, consultant, trainer, author and early pioneer of PhotoTherapy (with education in both psychology and cultural anthropology), she authored the classic text "PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums", as well as numerous articles, book chapters, a video about PhotoTherapy, and the informational website explaining the field ("PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy", at: www.phototherapy-centre.com).

Presenter of over 300 workshops, lectures, and training intensives in over fifty cities world-wide during the past three decades, she has also mentored dozens of graduate Theses and Dissertations across many fields.

Currently a member of the Editorial Board for the Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal, and an elected member of both the American Family Therapy Academy and the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars, Judy is former Editor of the Journal Phototherapy, a former Board Member of the International Visual Literacy Association, past Editorial Board Member of the Journal of Medical Humanities, and former Canadian Liaison to the Board of the International Association of Arts Medicine. She can be reached at: JWeiser@phototherapy-centre.com