

Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums: Using PhotoTherapy Techniques in Art (and other) Therapy Practices

Introductory Workshop • Riga, Latvia
February 11-13, 2011 • Art Therapies Centre / Institute of Health

Instructor: Judy Weiser, R.Psych., A.T.R., Founder & Director, PhotoTherapy Centre, Vancouver, Canada

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

Brief Summary:

PhotoTherapy Techniques use personal snapshots, family albums, and pictures taken by others (and the feelings, memories, thoughts, and information these evoke) to deepen and enhance therapeutic process in ways not possible using only words, drawing, or inner self-reflection alone.

Since the emotional contents of any photograph are far more important than its visual details, clients' snapshots and family pictures can be powerful, yet safe, non-verbal "bridges" that quickly connect them to memories, feelings, values, and information far below their conscious awareness -- along with deeply-held beliefs, expectations, and judgments that these nonverbally produce.

This Workshop is for mental health professionals who are already-trained in therapy itself, to learn additional photo-based therapy techniques that help clients benefit from exploring the "why" of their own photographs. The Workshop will combine illustrated lecture presentations with many structured experiential* opportunities to practice the techniques and exercises directly (each followed by in-depth de-briefing and discussion).

(*Workshop is for the purpose of participants' education, and is not for their personal therapy)

There is no need for prior knowledge or experience with cameras or photographic art.

Important: Participants must bring certain photos with them.

It is very important to start the *Photo-gathering "Advance-Homework" Assignment* as soon as possible.

Instructor:

Judy Weiser is a psychologist, art therapist, trainer, consultant and early pioneer of PhotoTherapy techniques. Founder and Director of the PhotoTherapy Centre in Vancouver, Canada, former Editor of the Journal *PhotoTherapy*, and currently Editorial Board Member for the *Canadian Art Therapy Journal* and the Italian Journal *PsicoArt*, she has long been considered the "world authority" on PhotoTherapy (and the related fields of Therapeutic Photography, VideoTherapy and Photo Art Therapy) and has given several hundred workshops, lectures, and training intensives about these techniques world-wide during the past 30 years.

Author of the classic text, "*PhotoTherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums*", and the informational resource website "*PhotoTherapy Techniques in Counseling and Therapy*", she has also produced numerous professional articles, book chapters, and an educational video/DVD on the subject. She can be reached at: jweiser@phototherapy-centre.com

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Longer Description:

Ordinary personal snapshots serve as 'footprints of our lives' reflecting what and who has mattered most to us. Thus their value lies more in what they are about *emotionally*, than in what shows on their surface *visually*.

Based on this, PhotoTherapy techniques use clients' personal snapshots, family photos, and pictures taken by others (and the feelings and memories these evoke) as catalysts to deepen and enhance their therapy process in ways not possible using only words (or inner self-reflection) alone.

Serving as powerful symbolic self-constructs, metaphoric transitional objects, frozen traces of family systems dynamics, and visual/cultural narratives, clients' photos can be very powerful bridges into previously-unconscious, long-buried, or overly-defended information. Their "secret lives" can provide much insight also into deeper beliefs, values, and expectations.

In PhotoTherapy-based therapy sessions, clients not only view and discuss existing photos, but also take, pose for, actively reconstruct, visually sculpt or create new ones -- as well as describe those they can only remember or imagine.

PhotoTherapy is about "photography as symbolic emotional communication", rather than "photography as art" -- **photographs used as active agents of change and self-exploration, but *always* done under the guidance of a trained therapist.**

*PhotoTherapy techniques explore the "why" of clients' photographs, not their "how" (nor their artistic value) -- therefore, **using these techniques requires no prior experience with cameras, nor any knowledge about photographic art -- and they can be used with any therapeutic modality, client population or setting.** (And therapists with special additional training in art therapy discover extra benefits using photos as an additional art medium during "Photo Art Therapy" work with clients).*

This Workshop for therapy professionals will combine slide-illustrated presentations and discussions with several structured opportunities for experiential* practice (guided by the Instructor) with several of the major techniques (by interacting with photos brought by the Instructor and also with their own pictures*). Each exercise will end with in-depth de-briefing of each experience into a cognitive framework permitting later application and practice.

*Participation in exercises is *voluntary*. This event is for the purpose of participants' education, not for their personal therapy.

More information about PhotoTherapy can be found at: www.phototherapy-centre.com

*** IMPORTANT: Please get the "Photo-gathering" Advance-Homework Assignment from the Registrar as early as possible.**