

**"PhotoTherapy" and "Therapeutic Photography":  
Using ordinary snapshots and family photographs to inform and enhance  
therapeutic practices (and related research or education)**

by

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For over 30 years, visual methodologies that focus on the emotional meanings below the surface of ordinary personal and family photographs -- along with feelings, memories, thoughts, beliefs, and values these visual narratives evoke -- have been informing and enhancing communication within various psychotherapy practices, as well as in related "photo-therapeutic" activities where people who don't need therapists can use similar techniques to increase awareness, insight, communication with others, and understanding of deeper issues at both personal and community levels.

Through such collaborative and participative methodologies, the structured viewing, creating, sharing, and discussing of ordinary non-art photographs makes them powerful agents of change and emotional exploration, whether done under the guidance of a trained therapist ("PhotoTherapy"), or by and for oneself alone, or together with others ("Therapeutic Photography"). These techniques are not about the art or technology of photography, but rather about the stories and secrets that are visually (and usually unconsciously) embedded in them -- and the reasons and feelings that can be "brought to light" when they are probed by someone who has been properly trained to do this well, and safely

In PhotoTherapy (therapy practices), clients not only view and discuss existing photos with their therapist, but might also be asked to take, pose for, actively reconstruct, visually sculpt or create new ones, as well as describe those they remember or imagine. In Therapeutic Photography (photography practices), people use similar techniques, but for and by themselves (alone or with others), to increase self-awareness and insight, strengthen relationships or communities, explore issues of diversity or social justice, and/or conduct photo-based community research or education.

Judy Weiser (an early pioneer now considered a "world authority" on these techniques), will present an illustrated introduction to the theory and application of these techniques, along with a review of current practices world-wide and handouts explaining where to find additional information and networking contacts.

*Bio on next page....*

## **Presenter Biography:**

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 -- and past Board Member of the International Visual Literacy Association (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](http://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 relating to Visual Methodologies. She can be reached at [JWeiser@phototherapy-centre.com](mailto:JWeiser@phototherapy-centre.com)

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