

TRAINING AND TEACHING OF PHOTO AND VIDEO THERAPY

Central Themes, Core Knowledge, and Important Considerations

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[a personal position paper, expressing the opinion only of the author, and not intended to be presented as any "official" stance of the International Photo Therapy Association]

Introduction

There it was again! It seems that now every time there's a workshop, I am starting to hear the same refrain, "I have to make sure I get all this down in my notes, because I am teaching a workshop myself on this to my staff when I get back!" Talk about mixed emotions--I am pleased to realize that more people will therefore, be put in touch with the value of this field, and yet, these are sometimes the very students I have been concerned about during training because they have been seeming to miss the point somehow, usually in the direction of being confused by the lack of rigid structure. These are often the folks who will persist in searching for simple solutions to large systemic problems; the ones who want a simple quick-and-dirty diagnostic checklist to interpret photos by. They are usually very well intentioned, thinking that indeed, they have "got it" photo-therapy-wise, and are certain it will be simple to explain to others the how's and why's of what they learned, but for some reason, I am left with vague doubts about the way they will be interpreting my teaching

Or, much better, I find that ex-students who definitely did grasp the complexities and fully respect the depth of the field are contacting me, asking, "I want to do an introductory overview in my own city to encourage more interest in possibly bringing you in for a longer workshop later--do you think you could send me advice on what I should include, how I should organize and present the material, do I need to evaluate, and how will I know if I've included everything I should? HELP!!" "Help" I am always willing to provide, especially to people who genuinely understand the responsibilities of what they are getting into, but I think it is now time to make my advice a bit more tangible and accessible; hence, this document.

All of us have borne sad witness to the plethora of "official" or "certified" trainers that seem to erupt in any new field that appears on the market; for example, consider the numerous Neuro-Linguistic Programming instructors abounding. The confusion arising from trying to decide *who* to take serious training from ("Will the *real* trainers please stand up?"), and all the political in-fighting that this craziness represents MUST be avoided in our field if it is to survive. Credibility and acceptance is hard enough to come by, much less trying to cogently, clearly, and simply present our complex field to newcomers--we do not need possessiveness, guarded and protected knowledge, and secrecy or isolation, or arguments about "her way" versus "his

way" and "who is right" in our preparation and training of those joining our field. As more and more persons decide that they too can offer training in phototherapy, this becomes even more important, for their sakes as well as future students.

Thus far, Dr. David Krauss and myself are the only two persons we know of, giving more than the occasional introductory/survey lectures; we regularly provide formal training intensives of three to five days in length, all over North America, individually and occasionally jointly--but we do not intend any "exclusivity" and indeed, would very much welcome a few more to share the load!! Anyone is certainly encouraged to lecture, train, instruct, etc.; what I am suggesting here is only that so far, Krauss and I have managed to train so that any of our students can be assured to get about the same content and experiences, and we would hope that this interchangeability (and the commitment to open communication that it represents) could be shared as well by any others considering such activities.

Most practitioners and researchers of phototherapy blundered into it by putting into practice what seemed to them to logically be a good idea--that of blending interests in photography with their counseling work. Actually, several of us each individually thought we had invented it ourselves, but quickly gave up that isolation in trade for the benefits of networking, sharing, and learning from others in similar situations. Most of us never had any formal training in phototherapy *per se* (There wasn't any!!), and although we enthusiastically encourage newcomers to get into the field, there is really not a lot of cohesive structure available to them apart from reading the literature and being guided by one "already there."

This has managed to succeed so far, as the phototherapy network has been very giving of its time, but as the field grows exponentially, and newly interested folk increase their numbers, there reaches a limit on how many people can be individually instructed while still doing one's own work!! As with any holistic field, there is no one tight package of information to be handed over; however, the need for addressing the issues and content of "proper and full" training has arrived.

Concerns

Teaching and training has its own very serious responsibilities and ethics--the manner in which phototherapy is taught has *direct* consequences upon its practice, and the basic assumptions and models from which it is presented affect the expectations of the student as well as the client (or therapist!). It is time to examine and evaluate what is being taught to whom and why (and *by* whom and why), as well as what our students then go

out to do to others. Hopefully, no matter who is providing training, for the sake of all students as well as ethical responsibilities to the field itself, certain key philosophical stances, a core content of techniques and methods, as well as planning and ethics are being stressed. [Ethics is a full discussion itself; please refer to the companion article in next issue.] There does *not* have to be only one right way to instruct people, and we certainly can do without the ulcer-producing debates about certification; there are, however, central themes, basic core knowledge, and other important considerations that must be included in any training program worth its salt, and the more people beginning to attempt to train others (or representing themselves as "giving workshops"), the more relevant and critical this becomes!

For the past ten years, I have been giving formal structured training programs and workshops in using phototherapy and video as adjunctive tools for counselors/therapists. Since the opening of the PhotoTherapy Centre in 1982, I have intensified this program into a standard format of two levels of training for various helping professionals—3-day introductory overview and 6- or 7-day full intensive formal training and supervision, along with the occasional full-length class for those wishing ongoing instruction. Both individually and together with Krauss, I have given various lengthier intensives, and I am presently gathering video and photo-recordings of workshop and case material in order to attempt a text and/or teaching tape series. Training, teaching, supervision, and writing have become a major focus in my work, and this paper will attempt to address the issues that I feel are critical to anyone attempting to train others in these techniques. I'll be addressing two levels throughout this paper—points and issues to consider in doing training programs in general, and things to consider *in* those actual programs themselves. Of primary importance in beginning this study is defining our terms, assumptions, and goals (and thus our values, judgments, and expectations of ourselves and our students).

There are central themes and core knowledge areas that must be included, as well as ethical obligations and responsibilities (in both levels of concern—teaching students fully and effectively, as well as their own concerns in working with others)—all these any potential trainer **MUST** consider before embarking. Training implies the student comes out with an ability to successfully *use* and *apply* the skill taught; it is far different from just listing for the student what those techniques are, and perhaps, where they come from, and leaving them with new cognitive information, but no certain qualification or experience in applying it. It should be possible to design some type of pre-and post-evaluation that can demonstrate the learning and increased ability that students have hopefully internalized. Students must be given more than a simple introductory survey or lecture presentation if it is to be assumed that they are now qualified to practice upon others (and/or themselves). It is preferable (and morally required) that students being trained (as opposed to lectured to) also encounter a large experiential component, to learn by doing, experiencing the power and intensities of phototherapy firsthand, rather than just being told about them—and this requires that the instructors themselves know how to do this competently (having themselves been guided through their own training by someone who knows how). It should be a given that you should **NEVER** do unto others (whether your clients, or less formally with family/

friends/etc.) what you haven't experienced firsthand in training yourself (and preferably more than once!).

Being a trainer implies a certain competency, and training others implies being willing and able to validate and certify *their* competency—fuller in apprenticeships, less in classes, and even less in quick intensives such as Krauss and I find ourselves frequently being asked to do because of time or budget constraints. By "certifying" I do **NOT** mean "certification" in any formal sense of sounding like I am calling for licensing, registration, or any such restrictive practices. I only mean that self-policing in terms of knowing one's own limits and being clear about them with one's students is ethically required of trainers, as we are in some ways partially responsible for the actions our students take with other peoples' lives; a responsibility that trainers should not take lightly! If we claim someone has been trained, we'd best be able to demonstrate it to anyone enquiring, as well as being answerable if someone challenges our students' later actions. Thus, it is critical for the instructor to make students aware of such limitations—and encourage them to access further learning and practice opportunities. We can give information and introduce ideas; students can hear us and absorb, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they can also *do!* (Having the menu, recipes, and ingredients do not necessarily a gourmet chef make!). Not only do we need to remember this, but also, we must make sure our students do not leave our sessions with an over-inflated idea of their new-found abilities. Additionally, trainers should be responsible enough to make their own limitations and those of the workshop goals clear in their promotional material advertising the workshop so that there is no misrepresentation made—who trained the trainers themselves or where they learned the knowledge they are teaching should always be clearly presented so that students don't get taken advantage of (the old "had-one-course-now-I'm gonna-teach" syndrome that is often too frequently encountered in the mental health fields). But the amount of their training should also be clear—I occasionally shudder when I read workshop advertisements from an ex-student of mine (whose total contact with me was when he took a 1-day intro five years ago), who lauds himself as giving courses on "intensive personal explorations using phototherapy, as taught by the Photo-Therapy Centre Program" (and who slept through most of the lecture and theory parts of that one day). It does worry me in terms of what his students think of phototherapy techniques the way he presents them; it bothers me more that they may do someone harm by not realizing what they can start when they follow his loosely presented suggestions. But most of all, it bothers me because there's nothing I can do to make it clear to his students that this is *not* phototherapy as a serious discipline, and above all, that it's *not* coming from me or my Centre (or the Association). I could consider a lawsuit to get him to drop the use of all reference to me or the Centre, but I have neither the time, money, nor pompousness to go through all the hassles. It was a lesson from days when I wasn't so cautious teaching, and one that I try to overcome when communicating with my students now.

Of similar situation is when we read of someone advertising a "Phototherapy Workshop" being held, sometimes as part of a travel excursion with no contents or program description given in the ad; conducted by someone none of our Association has ever heard of before, with no instructor qualifications or background listed. This is nothing on its own to be alarmed

about, If the person can truly do what they are advertising (if they had included an outline or goals in the first place)--but I do grow concerned when that same person never answers any of Krauss' or my friendly letters of enquiry asking for more details in case we'd like to come, offering to share our mail lists, and stating our desires to network/share literature files! If the instructor is ethical (but perhaps just hates writing letters), then those students attending will be fine--but how are they to check it out to protect against spending lots of dollars to be taught by possible charlatans? These questions are valid ones, but I am not so good with coming up with any answers; nor is it my sole position to attempt to try to. But I think the Association (or the journal-person that decides on acceptability of advertisements) should prepare for the day when our group is big enough that these concerns become relevant.

Now, all this may seem to be a trifle hair-splitting, and I am certainly *not* suggesting something so severe as any type of "approval committee" (heaven forbid), and yet, there *are* some very serious moral/ethical points that must be looked at for the consideration of those persons innocently signing up for such events, thinking that they will be receiving phototherapy training as we all know it to be. Perhaps they indeed will; fine, but what if they don't?? Should we be concerned about this? We do not yet have (and thankfully so!) any licensing or exclusivity arrangements in phototherapy, and for the most part, this delights me--but only as long as the world remains honest, responsible, ethical, and open to mutual communication and criticisms. The flip side of this, however, increasingly does worry me as we grow larger in numbers: Is there to be any specific curriculums or outlines or syllabus to be followed, albeit voluntarily, by all of us who provide training, any mutually agreed to "required inclusions" or core content common to all our teaching that we all agree needs to (ought to) be included regardless of whatever other individualistic material we might wish to also include for our own personal purposes? And, more importantly, SHOULD there be??

Without too much restraint of individual freedoms, I think the answer should be a guarded "yes", and I hope that by freely sharing with you the following pages that list my own key points, reasons, philosophical perspectives, specific techniques and approaches to training, (as well as ethical and moral considerations in a companion article), that perhaps I can encourage a beginning dialogue amongst those of us who are instructing others. I encourage any of you who might be deciding to begin teaching to at least consider using these as a basic starting point for your own work. I don't "own" them, the sources come from others who have instructed me over the years, and I will provide original sources when possible. If you choose to do so, and will communicate feedback, then I in turn can learn from your experiences. I would rather have people using my work to base theirs on than find that what Krauss and I consider important to the learning of phototherapy has been excluded, especially out of ignorance! We dislike hearing about phototherapy teaching that resembles pop psychology or photographic palm-reading, and hope other trainers also feel the same way!

Background

Historically, it is difficult to figure out *who* started doing training "first," and I hardly think that it should matter anyway,

as long as we remember to credit our mentors appropriately when we use their material. Stewart, Zakem, Krauss, Walker, Entin, Fryrear, Hogan, Gassan, Weaver, (and myself), and others, I am sure, *all* began thinking, writing, and sharing with others during the 1970s; all have numerous articles available (see general reading list at end). Probably some student someday might find a good research project in collecting from all of us our various teaching outlines and suggested readings/handouts, and attempting to codify the teaching content and methods (but the poor soul would most likely end up wishing to never see a photograph again!!).

Krauss in 1979 dedicated his Ph.D. Thesis¹ to establishing a training model, and when we first discussed the topic of our mutual training courses, we found that his model and mine were strikingly similar throughout--an example either of nice synchronicity, or else, we'd developed a logically self-evident structure that made good sense. Regardless, it made it very easy then to co-instruct, or share students, with the additional pleasurable benefit of knowing that we could count on each other to do what each of us would do for ourselves individually. This "breathing of the same air" meant that our students could be assured of consistent learning experiences, and we have continued to work this way with these assumptions. There is a freedom in knowing that we have, by default, "written" the training syllabus on what we consider critical points in teaching, but there also is a consequence--how can we encourage others to do training as fully as we think necessary without seeming to force our will, as well as not being closed ourselves to new ideas and changes? As well, we maintain a serious code of ethics in terms of what we perceive to be our responsibilities and obligations to each other, our professional colleagues, and our students.

Formal training, even at the introductory level, is no light or brief matter, and both Krauss and myself try to assure that our "graduates" can be assured of a high standard and universally given program of instruction. We make no assumptions of always being the *only* two trainers around (in fact, it would be a definite relief to have more!), but we do share a serious concern for commitment to rigorous standards of content and presentation so that participants are certain to come out of any training either of us gives with close to the same experiences.

Basic Assumptions

Although the breadth and depth of content and experiential opportunities must vary depending upon time and length of workshops and classes, there are also some assumptions that vary depending on the level of workshop (Introductory/ Intermediate/Advanced), the audience focus (professionals to use with their clients or more personal applications), and the nature of the instruction itself (workshops, classes, apprenticeships, and/or mentoring or serving as reader for graduate students doing their own investigations). Although there are personal explorations involved in all levels, most workshops aim toward teaching mental health professionals how and why to use these techniques in their own work, as adjunctive tools to help them do what they are already doing with more avenues of possibilities and flexibilities. Thus the assumption is made that workshop participants are *already* competent and ethical in their required job skills (or at least recognize their own limitations for their people-helping work); they are not attending in order to be

trained in counseling skills themselves, but rather, knowing how to counsel already, they have come to learn new creative tools to add to their techniques "bag of tricks." This assumption is extremely critical in training and allowing entry to my classes; I do *not* pretend to be teaching counseling itself, and in this approach still leave the doors open for non-professionals to attend if they wish, as long as they clearly recognize that attendance does not then qualify them to go out and phototherapize their neighbours! Thus there is an honour code in my workshops that people will not misuse what they are learning, but this is clearly verbalized as part of my introductory comments (and agreed to in writing if I think necessary). Anyone is welcome to attend my workshops; however, all are *not* then equally qualified to inflict their new knowledge on others (but, I should add, these sessions have frequently been the catalysing event for some people making a decision to return to a university for further study!).

There are some assumptions as well in the nature of teaching phototherapy. As phototherapy's home base is predominantly in the areas of Phenomenology and Existentialism, learning is internalized, and thus implemented, by first-hand experiencing of the techniques in addition to their descriptive material. This learning is analogous to the old proverb, "If you wish to feed people for a day, give them fish; but if you wish to feed them forever, then teach them HOW to fish." To do this within an explanatory framework and structure, there is an obligation to focus the reasons and contexts for perceptions and values and using photography as a tool to reach them. Therefore, I think workshops must include a healthy section on conceptual background, on theory and philosophical foundations, and historical/development context, as well as the actual techniques and applications themselves (see later pages for details).

The difference between techniques/tools/(verbs) and models/theories of therapy (nouns) must be clearly explained in order to stress that phototherapy is *not* a therapy onto itself, but rather a methodology applicable to any theory or approach (or combination that makes up one's particular style); hence, our aversion to the label "Phototherapist" (including that this is the totality of one's therapy work full-time!). Phototherapy is primarily process rather than product—although the photo-product is also of interest to us, we are usually more interested in a person's interactions with it. Seen this way, phototherapy can be seen as photography-as-a-verb as well as-a-noun, and thus, there is no single right way to view, teach, or use it. It is *not* a bounded set of rules or steps that must be followed in some specific order or pattern "or else . . .," nor is it some gimmicky new "therapy-of-the-year," rather it is an open-ended collection of methods that allow therapists and clients access to previously blocked areas of feelings, thoughts, attitudes, memories, expectations, etc., that had otherwise been unavailable through ordinary verbal means of counseling.

In presenting phototherapy as a subject for teaching, pains must be taken to convey that it is a serious and credible discipline worthy of (and requiring) study in some depth. The idea must be developed clearly and the techniques presented as a menu of choices rather than a fixed system. It must be clearly shown that, just as there are no right or wrong ways to "read" or react to a photo, there is not any single correct way to approach the field itself, or to separate out all the various techniques for instructional examination. Each of us maps the territory a little bit differently, although all the parts do eventually get covered

regardless of how we divide up the field or separate it into categories.

Like so many holistic approaches and expressive therapies, phototherapy suffers a bit from having to be taken apart for analysing its parts in any sequential or linear manner. It must be stressed that creative and effective therapists use these techniques in various interrelating combinations, intersections, and overlays—for example, all photographs are in some ways self-portraits; doing active album (and other photo) work requires projecting; family videos/movies are also albums, etc. Teaching and describing phototherapy often forces the somewhat disjointed separation of what are really integrally related parts, and with a sense of loss, I might add, as the effect of the whole system of phototherapy is so much more than just some combination of distinct step-by-step entities. As McLuhan suggested, in the "Electric Age", things do not move linearly, but rather simultaneously.

Photography *is* seductive, and training must include the caution not to let the photography "for itself" become the focus of the counseling interaction; early writers such as Stewart², warned about this. Phototherapy, as mentioned before, requires using both verbal and visual modes, and thus requires therapists who are *trained* to do both. Otherwise, we are in danger of misinformation based on partial and incomplete knowledge/understanding of what phototherapy is and has the potential to be. We must be careful not to develop a categorical system of analysis or semiotics that becomes too rigid: we don't want the person to photograph or respond in order to fit some external expectations of definitions (expressed or implied); we don't want to see developed some third-person method of analysing client responses by some pre-established assessment or evaluative criteria—rather, we want to serve people by responding to their freely chosen photography and photo-interactions in ways which enhance sensitivities. Such photographs should be discussed rather than defined. In other words, we must be careful in establishing a methodology of photographic therapy not to establish a fixed language!

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual foundation of phototherapy is in the realization that no cognitive taking-apart and studying could ever fully explain what is basically a holistic system of interrelated parts. The theoretical framework used to introduce phototherapy's philosophical base should include journeying along the path that visits (though in no fixed order) the following: brain hemisphere lateralization studies' implications (Ornstein and others); general systems theory and implications (Von Bertalanffy and others); linear versus lateral thinking (de Bono and others); gestalt laws of perception and psychology (Perls and others); visual and non-verbal thinking and languaging (Arnheim and others); visual literacy (Dondis and other); metaphoric thinking (Samples and others); imaging, symbol-making and interpreting (Kepes and others); Jungian archetypes and psychology; various models of therapy—Satir, Haley, Rogers, Glasser, Bowen, Erickson, etc., Cross-Cultural and Anthropological/Sociological implications (such as writings by E. T. Hall and others); concepts of nature of "reality", and how the photograph attempts to represent the "documentation" of it (Searle and others); implications regarding the nature of photography itself (and its sociological use), (Becker and others); communication

in other-than-verbal symbol language systems (Bliss Symbolics, Orcutt WorldVisual, various deaf and other non-deaf sign language systems, etc.) (Stokoe and others); relevant implications from Neuro-Linguistic Programming Theory (Bandler & Grinder and others). One should as well consider specific concepts or applications from the fields of Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Communications Theory--key terminology which applies directly, such a selective perception, personal reality, egocentrism, cultural ethnocentrism, marginal man status, tolerance of difference, differentiation/fusion, differences-that-make-a-difference, and so on. Additionally, for required reading by serious students, I would highly recommend our jointly compiled book, *PHOTOTHERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH*, especially Krauss' extremely elegant writings on these topics in Chapters 3 and 4, as well as others of his articles (available from him directly).

Also recommended is developing the above information into a concept of therapy in the other-than-verbal domains, looking at one's creative products and reactions as "insights-from-the-inside"--thus the growth in popularity (and success) of fields relating to the non-verbal therapies, the Expressive and Arts Therapies, with phototherapy definitely as one of them. Students are owed the knowledge of how all this fits together, the conceptual home base and framework; once this is secured, trainers are *then* free to give the developmental history of the field, and *then (and only then)* move onto general theory followed by discussion of the specific techniques.

Doing this in any other order, or doing solely the presentation of just the techniques themselves is severely cheating the student, and could easily lead to potential misuse through insufficient understanding of what underlies these tools and their reasons for use. ALL of the previous topics are presented in the conceptual framework introductory section of all of my training workshops; students are given a tour through *all* of these topics as threads woven into the tapestry of "why" phototherapy. I strongly believe that if this isn't done, people won't have the foundation for knowing why it is that they are looking for information in the first place; thus working with a client may well yield important clues that aren't noticed because the therapist isn't properly prepared to recognize their value. I refuse to start my training of students by simple introduction of only the techniques or their history, without preparing the conceptual foundation and philosophical perspective to consider them from. To do otherwise, is to educationally cheat the learner; you can't just teach people what the tools are; you must also teach *why* they are, preferably with the aid of direct personal experience and practice, as well as giving the limits and warnings of caution regarding use. Once all the above has been done, students are also owed a section detailing ethical, legal, and moral concerns, issues, and responsibilities (including a section on evaluation criteria and possibilities), provision of an up-to-date bibliography (available through the Association), and a description of the network of other major practitioners, writers, researchers, and trainers in the field (as well as how to access them) in order to continue further dialogue and gather information after the training event is over.

It must be strongly stressed to all students (and anyone else too!) that therapists using phototherapeutic techniques do *NOT* interpret other people's photos *for* them; the input comes at all times *from* the client, guided by the therapist's questions. A

person's responses and associated feelings are uniquely personal, and no external interpretive criteria can be used to evaluate or judge; there is no "wrong" way to perceive a photograph. Similarly, a person's responses cannot, on their own, indicate any particular problem or illness--no analytical decisions can be made from singular responses; competent therapists using phototherapy techniques are looking for patterns, consistencies through time and often generations, unusual or symbolic content, and most of all, emotional responses indicating inner feelings which may or may not be conscious. Thus, the therapist's primary role is to encourage and support the client's own personal discoveries--and students must understand this perspective fully.

Certainly, there are some difficulties in teaching phototherapy--trying to teach what is basically non-verbal information verbally, holistic information linearly, a system sequentially, something which is by nature open-ended in a structured and hopefully consistent way! But, paradox at least is not boring, and it can be used to advantage as a catalyst to learning as well; the best approach for me with this sort of dilemma has been to share its dimensions with my students in a "re-framing" as part of the power of the field.

Techniques

Introducing the specific techniques usually includes a brief general introductory overview, such as the following excerpts from the Centre's brochure and Workshop pamphlets (which you are welcome to read from, but which are *copyrighted* in terms of any written reproduction or promotional use):

The process of taking a picture can reveal as much about the photographer as the subject being photographed. There are always expectations of what is desired and why a particular choice is made to "fit" those criteria. In looking at photos, we actively take part in the meaning we perceive (based on our own culture filters and personal categorization system for interpreting them). Besides what we think the photographer intended us to get from the photo, we cannot help but be affected by our own unique background experiences and values. Photography can thus be used to aid self-awareness and communication, and to permit people to experience the world more fully.

People working in the helping professions have found that incorporating PhotoTherapeutic techniques into their repertoire of counseling skills greatly improves client understanding, change, communication, and growth--especially with those people for whom the usual verbal interaction is limited, unavailable, uncomfortable, or overly-defended. As clients take photos, or respond to pictures they have selected to look at, or explore how they wish to be viewed or photographed, they provide rich information in the realm of values, emotions, attitudes, and expectations (as well as their own unique view of family life); as they use these techniques, they gain the perspective to feel, think, and behave in ways that are more flexible

and adaptive to their environment and other people.

Therapy oriented toward including the more visual, metaphorical, non-verbal, holistic, and more right-brain types of accessing and processing information will find clients responding in more emotional/intuitive and less defended manners. Photography (and Visual Literacy) permeates our world; the keeping and valuing of photographs is nearly universal. "Working" a photograph or videotape with a client can provide information and feelings not otherwise available. At the root of most personal and interpersonal difficulties lies the issues of self: self-image, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and, often as well, self-acceptance. PhotoTherapy, through its various techniques involving passive viewing and active taking of photographs can work toward marked improvement in these areas. PhotoTherapy usually means one or more of the following, used alone, or in various combinations with the others: projectives, historical/album/photo-biographical, photos taken by the client/assignments, photos of the client by others, self-portraits, video, active and passive darkroom work, and secondary applications such as communications and proxemics research, cross-cultural or ethnic literacy, classroom applications, and related others."

The above paragraphs typify what I would cover in introducing the various techniques before going into any detail. Each technique would then be explained verbally, examples given from my own experience (personal and/or client or student anecdotes), illustrated with ample material (and with video documentation when available), demonstrated for the class by means of a student volunteer for "role-play," and then the accompanying experiential exercise assigned. After questions and completion of that assignment, de-briefing is done in one or more of the following ways: myself and a student-volunteer dialoguing in front of the group (to assist their learning and resultant modeling of the appropriate enquiry techniques), or students paired off around the room with me circulating amongst them observing and gently correcting or commenting in order for them to gain actual "live" experience in *doing* the skills, or with them "working" me for direct feedback as to how their questions feel, or in triads or co-therapy models. After the doing, the entire event is de-briefed by the group as a whole, summarized and critiqued, and sometimes even resulting in my giving specific "homework" assignments.

The techniques of phototherapy can be explained in detail and experiential exercises can be found to pair with each one. The difficulties and complications students encounter most often appear when those who are fairly confident about the knowledge they have just "learned" actually get down to putting into practice the actual *doing* of what they have just heard described! As mentioned before, since there really is no one right way to do phototherapy, the skills themselves are best learned by practice over a variety of situations and people, and even better if under trained supervision, if at all possible. Thus, my workshops not only list and explain these tools, and put people through experiences, but also give students hefty time to

de-brief each other's work so that there is feedback from more than one person (if desired).

A typical 3-day workshop might see participants doing a variety of activities in addition to listening to me: shooting various assignments I give (either during class or on their own time) with either their own cameras or basic 126-cartridge cameras I provide; taking instant-photo self-portraits (with my Kodak Colorbursts or Polaroids) to work with; having their photos taken by other participants (both posing and uncontrolled); working with images they were instructed to bring with them (either photos from home collections or gift-photos, or if claiming to have none, photos from magazine pages that appealed to them in some way); working with family photos (from albums, shoeboxes, whatever!) that they have brought along; making constructions or collages with any of these; using video actively in dialoguing, layering, re-structuring, sculpting, as well as for their own personal feedback; plus, several times using exercises designed for working with the collection of several dozen of my own photos that I bring in as stimuli. One can even make use of imaginary or "invisible" photos as productive tools! I have dozens of exercises on file that I choose from to match the various workshop goals and audiences to the techniques being taught, most of which I've invented or else borrowed (with or without alterations) from other phototherapy colleagues, making sure to give credit to the original person when using their material (such as McDougall-Treacy's³ person-as-camera exercise, or Turner-Hogan's⁴ creative "me" ideas).

All the methods described above should not be taught as mutually exclusive categories; like all good systems, they interrelate and overlap and combine into larger units more effective than just their individual components, and training should include some examples and suggestions for such use. The goal for students should be to remain flexible, creative, and above all, comfortable themselves with the various tools in order to achieve the goals they choose. In other words, there is no limit to the dimensions of therapy possible and explorable by a creative therapist using phototherapeutic techniques; the only limit is in a too-narrow focus of questioning, or assumptions that the therapist can somehow know for certain what is going on in the client's head without actually asking them. The emphasis at all times, should not be in the answers directly given to questions (though they are, of course, important themselves); but rather, how does the person *know* their answer?; How do they know that?; What would have to be different for their answer to be something different?; What would it take to convince them to entertain another alternative?; On what are they basing their statements?; Where are they getting the information they are basing their decisions on?—these answers and reasons are where one finds the cues to value systems and beliefs and attitudes and feelings. Feelings can dominate and influence what is thought to be fact; phototherapy work is an excellent way to discover feelings that one may not be consciously aware of, expectations that one may be carrying around, arising out of value systems that one may want to bring to light for re-examination.

Conclusion

In reference to all the above, it is interesting to note that both of us who give formal training measure the success of our

students with evaluation criteria based not only on the facts learned, but also (and usually more so) on how much students improve on the kinds, quality, diversity, creativity, insightfulness, etc., of the *questions* they learn to ask. What is important is learning how to use photography (product and process) as a stimulus and catalyst for client understanding and growth, and the use is made of *all* of what one is hearing in process (besides the content of the actual words spoken), as well as how it was presented. There actually isn't all *that* much hard theory and facts to teach when instructing phototherapy techniques; most of the time is spent in discovering how to explore photographically and then how to dialogue with what one finds. This what to model, therefore, in going on to use in work with others—the enquiring *process*.

Most of the guidance I end up giving, therefore, has to do with helping my students mature their enquiry skills; I give advice such as, "Don't get into the habit of asking lots of questions easily answerable by the client as "yes" or "no", as you will find yourself doing all the work!", or, "If the client says they don't like how they look in the photo, find out first if this bothers them *before* you go racing off on assumptions about what "should change!" As well, all students come out of my training with a good idea of numerous questions that work well in initiating responses, some of which I and others already use and share, others of which they come up with themselves as part of their own unique personal style. I would be willing to share my "working list" with any of you who wish to write for it, explaining the training you are doing, and doing some networking with me in trade (as well as letting me in on any good questions or suggestions of your own!).

In teaching within a short time frame, I find it extremely difficult to give any thorough comprehensive training. Three days is my minimum (and, unfortunately, usual) length, and it is really insultingly brief (to students as well as trainers). In doing the experiential components, which are time-consuming yet extremely necessary parts of training, I regularly find decisions having to be made regarding depth versus breadth of scope. Students inevitably protest that lengthier workshops are too expensive and require too much time off work UNTIL they get to the last day of their training event, and then FREQUENTLY tell me that they found it was too short, and that not enough time was available to cover all they desired (usually saying that I should make it longer next time, all the while agreeing that if *this* one had been that long, they wouldn't have come . . .). I can provide no guidelines here, except to share in what I am certain will be your similar frustration in trying to meet all these varying needs!! My personal solution is to divide my training offerings into brief introductory three-day events and then once a year offer a full week intensive formal skills training with practice and supervision components (residential/retreat format). I also have been offering weekend experiential-only events for the general public, in which I do not give any "therapy-with-others" instruction; these kinds are solely for self-exploration and communication purposes only, and thus, are open to anyone interested.

It is essential that better training be provided for therapists, to appropriately use these techniques, to learn to fully "read" photographs and more importantly, to know when they have reached the limits of that readability, to know how to ask appropriate questions and seek the emerging patterns and symbols, to move more freely between the various sensory

accessing and representational systems (and guiding the client into more options for change by doing the same), to finer tune one's attention to the photograph and the process involved in exploring it as well as one's ability to point out to the client the data on which one is basing one's observations. Special skill in photography and camera knowledge is obviously not necessary, but more training in the visual and/or metaphoric modes is critically essential. Phototherapy is not "voodoo;" there is no secret, mysterious special skill involved; it just takes training, practice, and an open curious mind—and a commitment to work within the value system of the client rather than interpreting meaning for them (as well as determination to try to keep one's own personal agendas out of it all!).

One must learn and then practice the concept that there is no "right" or "wrong" in this business—only "different," and that the therapist as well as the client can learn to expect, understand, and appreciate the differentness, without these being negative. Graduate training curricula that prepare professionals to do therapy using these skills are being written and introduced; Departments of Art, Expressive, and Visual Therapies are expanding where related training, teaching, and supervision is provided along with research and client casework. The PhotoTherapy Centre serves as a resource for many of these, and we hope that phototherapy itself will become a common facet of these programs' content and practice. Those who will be providing such training MUST know the power involved from firsthand experience—cognitively, and more importantly, emotionally, in order to be sufficiently qualified to begin guiding others in the field.

Further in-depth explanations of the techniques themselves is not within the scope of this paper; they can be assessed through the available literature. The main emphasis students should find being stressed in *any* training is that learning the specific techniques is just the starting point; that the best goal would be for them to enlarge their own receptive abilities, and to train themselves to notice the potential significance of *all* of what they are hearing without over-interpreting it, while the words flow past in response to photographic stimuli. *The basic vocabulary of these techniques is asking questions, concentrating not only on the direct answers to questions and probes, but also to how they are answered; noticing what else "goes by" as the responding is occurring, and making therapeutic use of it ALL.* •

Phototherapy is more a way of thinking than a set of fixed techniques, a state of readiness to fully comprehend the entirety of what passes by as comments are made, an ability to really hear what one is listening to, for what it may reveal about the person speaking, if only you are open to receiving it!!

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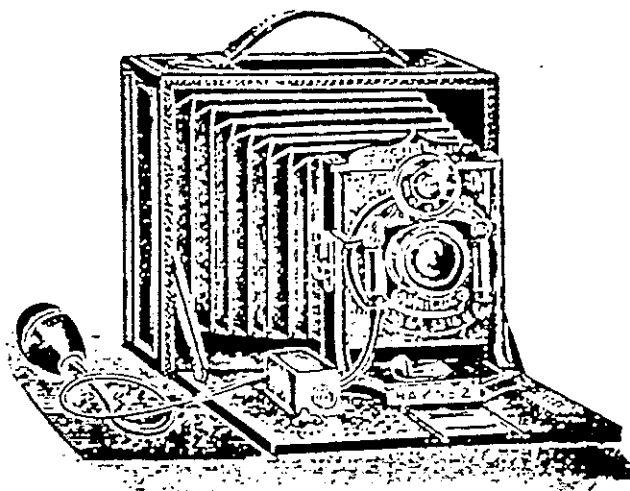
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For further general references please contact the author.

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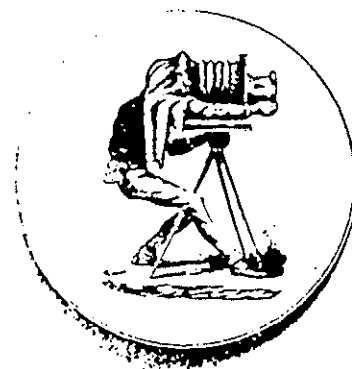
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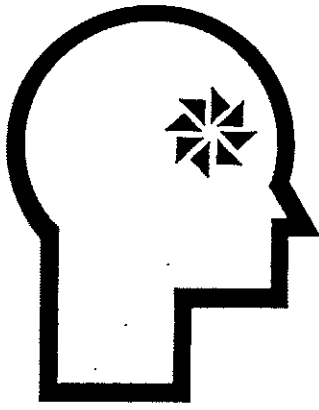
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