The use of images as an arts based intervention to promote therapeutic approaches to social work supervision

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Issues for the workforce

Impact of globalisation

Turbulence of social work and its environment

Managing the impact of austerity on everyday relationships
What can help ........?

- Compassion fatigue and secondary trauma
- Building emotional resilience
- Finding practical / alternative tools to support self-regulation
- Improve quality of support which in turn has impact on quality of services
Supervision practice – traditions and quality issues

- Lacks firm empirical basis (Carpenter et al, 2013)
- Content more action oriented and managerial than welfare or support focused
- Evaluation demonstrates that innovation is slow to embed in supervision practice
- Significance of relationship-based approaches (Munro, 2011)
Arts-based methods & Arts-based research

- What we see and what we say – combining visual and verbal information which can be conflicted (Huss, 2011)
- Making use of cross disciplinary analysis (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2013)
- Museum guide, art therapist or exhibition curator (Couchman et al, 2014)
- Distancing using metaphors/symbols (Huss, 2013)
Arts for counteracting stress

The arts are cited as especially effective in counteracting the stress of trauma situations in that it incorporates different levels of intervention in treating clients (Hass-Cohen, 2003; 2008; Klingman, Koenigsfield, & Markman, 1987; Mallay, 2002), such as:
- combining the senses through observing, touching, and manipulating art materials
- as well as addressing the symbolic manifestation of traumatic experience
- while also creating a cognitive hermeneutic zone for more positive re-interpretations of perceptions of the traumatic events (Allen, 1993; Appelton, 2001; Cohen-Hass, 2008; Perry, Pollard, Blakely, Baker, & Vigilante, 1995; Pifalo, 2002; Sarid & Huss, 2009).
Identifying an issue in practice that causes stress or discomfort
Drawing an image of the stressor, colour, lines, shapes, symbols
Using a scale 1 – 10 articulating the amount of stress associated and felt
Describing and sharing using imagery
Listening, reflection, and focusing through therapeutic means
Combining verbal and visual methods
Disconnection and disorientation
“Whirpool to Snail”
Next stage

- Stress narratives
- Adding to the image - symbolic control and compositional explanation of the image
- Envisaging solutions
- Clarifying coping potential
Completing Validated Scales:
COPE Inventory
Role Strain
1. Content level of stress: what is going on

- Phenomenological explanation of art work by the drawer, within a group context
- Naming and identifying the sources of their stress was helpful in gaining control of the diffuse sense of anxiety. In the model, they drew the sources of stress, gave them names and labels and viewed them from the distance of the page. Furthermore, the group also provided multiple perspectives and reassurance that their feelings were common to many.
2. Identifying stress in the art work

- form of the composition e.g. colors chosen in the drawing.
- Compositional irregularities as single objects taking up the whole page, people without faces, areas encapsulated or cut off from the picture
- fragmentation of the composition
- repetition of objects or symbols
- disjointed elements, intense shading, strong dividing lines,
- other elements that disturb the integration, proportion and harmony of the art work (Rubin, 2001; Furth, 1998; Wilson, 2001).
3. Identifying resilience through reframing, and adjusting the art work

Finally, the social workers were encouraged to change and adapt their own art to create a paradigm shift toward highlighting strengths and suggesting tangible options of more adaptive coping (adding, connecting between, subtracting, modulating, integrating, shifting size and area verbal re-framing of meanings).
Analysis and evaluation

- Finding an appropriate analytical strategy (images as subject) verbal and visual explanation of composition and content (Huss, 2011; 2013)
- Using validated scales for triangulation to assess stress reactions
- Artist self-reporting
- Transferability to range of contexts
- Developing self as a resource in supervision
References


