

USING EXPRESSIVE ART THERAPY IN THE HEALING PROCESS OF DELINQUENT ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a study that used phenomenological approach to understand the experiences, perceptions, beliefs and feelings of delinquent adolescents through their creative arts work. Specifically, adolescents' experiences were explored in the therapy in which expressive aspects are used. This creative process can ameliorate emotional conflicts, inculcate self-awareness and promote healing. The use of creativity encourages adolescents to participate more actively in their healing and recovery process. Significant themes and patterns that emerge from the use of expressive art therapy are explored in group counselling. Seven teenage girls who were involved in

delinquency and detained in a juvenile detention centre participated in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation in counselling process and analysis of documents using personal diary. Giorgis' recommendation concerning analysis of the interview data was followed. Six main themes were identified; catharsis, sharing, cohesion, awareness, installation of hope and experiencing the creative connection. This therapeutic process engagement promotes spontaneous expression of subconscious, suppressed feelings and emotions. The implications of the findings for counsellors and future researchers are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Expressive Art Therapy, Phenomenology, Delinquent Adolescents