

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Nature Art Therapy: Preliminary Research Findings

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Abstract

Andy Goldsworthy inspired nature art therapy provides a metaphoric template in which an adolescent explores time, change, and loss. Goldsworthy speaks to the importance of a heightened sense of touch or 'haptic' state that nature sculpture provokes within the artist utilizing all senses (Malpas, 2007; Goldsworthy, 2004). This whole body, mindful contemplation of place and the present, directly connects to the asserted need of the adolescent struggling with trauma (Van der Kolk, 2014). Nature art therapy allows the individual to create an essential sense of safety through the involvement of right brain interventions as well as the resolution of attachment to the environment. The importance of re-establishing a safe place for growth is essential to the developing needs of the adolescent struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This paper explores the importance of place through review of relevant literature and description of research within a nine week Andy Goldsworthy inspired nature group based treatment intervention for teenagers diagnosed with PTSD.

Keywords

Art Therapy, nature Therapy, PTSD, Adolescence, Space, Andy Goldsworthy

Introduction

Bessel van der Kolk asserts that resolution of trauma can only happen when an individual establishes a sense of safety and a safe place for growth (2014). Nature art therapy allows the individual to create that sense of safety through the involvement of right brain interventions as well as the resolution of attachment to the environment. Andy Goldsworthy inspired nature art therapy provides a metaphoric template in which an adolescent can explore time, change, and loss. Andy Goldsworthy speaks to the importance of touch and the heightened 'haptic' state that nature sculpture provokes within the artist (Malpas, 2007; Goldsworthy, 2004) This whole body, mindful contemplation of place and the present directly connects to the asserted need of the adolescent struggling with trauma (Van der Kolk, 2014). Nature forces the contemplation of past, present, and future (Moon, 2010). In its resilience and strength it teaches the concept of good enough mother and father and creates a natural holding space for growth and healthy development of attachment. Andy Goldsworthy's process of making collaborative art pieces with nature explores: resilience, letting go, and the experience of fantastic reality (Berger & Lahad, 2013). Winnicott (1973) describes the infantile omnipotence of creating the world as providing relief, and often occurring in the trance like state of the fantastic reality. Through the experience of making art within nature adolescents can experience an expression and containment of their traumatic experiences (Berger & Lahad, 2013). These expressions incorporate the emotional, cognitive, and somatic self, offering a template for healing and letting go.

Evidence for the role of nature in identity formation can be seen in the early work of Searles (1960) in which he asserted the importance of the role of the mother as well as the role of the environment in the infant's development of sense of self. Searles found that the infant's relationship to her non-human environment was important psychologically in the development of the self (Searles, 1960). Expanding on this theory Barrows (1995) proposes that a new concept of infant development be put forth that includes the ecological context. The idea that we need to reconnect with the natural world is a

common theme in the Eco psychology and ecological theories (Jordan, 2014). Jung (1921) believed that the earth was within us, pointing to the lack of definition demonstrated in indigenous people between the earth and their identity. Many utilize that theoretical construct in their therapeutic work within nature (Jordan, 2014).

Fine art perspectives

Art therapy draws from the foundation of fine art practices in the creation of interventions. Interventions carry theoretical and sensory meaning stemming from the materials and the art period reflected in the interventions. It is vital to understand the foundations of the art practice to understand the implications psychologically of an art therapy intervention. Andy Goldsworthy's artwork falls within the postmodern art movement (Malpas, 2007). Postmodern art asserts the existence of multiple ideologies and meanings (Alter-Muri, 2007). Art in this context comes to represent an evolution of meaning that situates the viewer in the past and in the present (Morse, 2004). Meaning is in constant motion representing the collage of multiple perspectives (Alter-Muri, 2007).

Installation art was an exciting development in postmodern sculpture. Installation recreates the perception of the environment and highlights new meanings based on context (Malpas, 2007). The work of the land artists of the postmodern era, including Andy Goldsworthy, is directly related to the installation work of the same era (Malpas, 2007). Land artists were first identified as exclusively connected to large-scale earth works in remote areas. Works by Heizer, Smithson, Walter de Maria encompassed a range of environmental art works, medium, and scale. These works also reflect a broad area of contexts and range of permanent to impermanent. Andy Goldsworthy's work contemplates the symbiotic relationship between the temporary and the permanent (Malpas, 2007). In his work art finds its voice in the sculptural architecture of nature. His work and the work of other land artists draws the viewer into nature spaces and provokes the viewer to look at what may have been overlooked (Malpas, 2007).

The work of Andy Goldsworthy directly focuses on the process of change and time within place. Conscious engagement in the process of awareness of the effects of time and change on place and identity are central concepts within his work (Goldsworthy, 1990). His work taps into what Ball (1999) called the self made tapestry and is a reflection of spontaneous reaction to environment and materials. The land artist's work has no boundary between the natural world, art, and self (Malpas, 2007). Rather the land artist works directly with the physical world creating and reflecting change and significance of place.

Place

Place is a central concept in land art and the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Making land art can be seen as a sacramental experience, the sacralization of life (Malpas, 2007). Making art is not a reflection of life, but life itself, is a core concept of land art and the art of Goldsworthy (Malpas, 2007). Mircea Eliade (1961) wrote regarding the mythic center, which was the spiritual core of ones life. This core was spatial and arose from the concept of place. She saw artwork as a reflection of that spiritual center. These concepts are also reflected in the artwork of the Australian Bushman's *alchuringa* experience where life is sung into existence. Joseph Campbell (1991) utilized the pollen path metaphor of the Navaho Indians to voice the same concept. Pollen represents the life source, the pollen path the path to the center, in that way the creative journey is the following of the pollen path to the center. This idea asserts that paradise can only be now. Goldsworthy work embraces multicultural ideas of the spiritual metaphor of place.

Place is both universal and local, reflecting the nuances of the moment and location, and the connection to universality of place (Malpas, 2014). Durell (1963) asserted that man is only an extension of spirit of place and his art a reflection of it. Land art is then a process of centering oneself in the essence of place and creatively responding. The artwork of a land artist must primarily please oneself as its ethereal quality may make its creator its only audience. In that way it provides the deep interchange between the internal and external worlds the tapestry of the developing and evolving self. The artist in this way works within the art as an experiment of living in which one is available to all

of the aspects of living. In this way the land artist is also utilizing a phenomenological point of reference in reflecting their whole experience of the place. This search for the essence connects Goldsworthy with the phenomenological perspective, Zen Buddhism, and existential philosophers such as Kierkegaard.

Oriental philosophy

The relationship between Goldsworthy's art and oriental philosophy draw from commonalities such as; the here and now, spontaneity, enlightenment, intuition, change, nature, the void, meditation, and cosmic unity (Malpas, 2007). The Zen Buddhist concept of the eternal now, for example, is reflected in the ethereal transitory nature of his sculptures such as poppy lines, where the flowers are only present for an instant and then blown in the wind. *Satori* is often described as seeing into one's own nature (Malpas, 2007). Suzuki (1966) terms it the insight into the unconscious, which reflects Goldsworthy thoughts that his sculptures are about seeing and time itself (Goldsworthy, 1990). Nature too is considered a teacher in land art and Eastern religion (Malpas, 2007). The essence of the void is clearly seen in the sculptures as they reflect the paradoxical ideas that emptiness is fullness and the idea that microcosm and macrocosm are interrelated (Malpas, 2007).

Change is central to the art of Goldsworthy and Taoist mysticism where the ying and yang create change, yet the great whole remains the same. Nature reflects the same process whereby flow is crucial. Land artists relish decay and collapse. Goldsworthy asserts that with the collapse the piece becomes more complete as it falls apart. This radical assertion of metaphor reflects hope and resilience within its core.

Contemplation is central to the process of making land art, in process it embraces a meditative state in the intensity of relationship to subject. The process is kinesthetic in nature, involving walking and physical labor. Walking has a long historical association with improved physical and emotional health. It releases chemicals in the brain that produces physical pleasure, has been known to soothe babies, and has been incorporated in to spiritual and meditative practices. In the creation of land art, the artist utilizes their self to

reaffirm their sense of home, a cultural and spiritual place, where they are the core center (Malpas, 2007). As sculptors, they use their whole self, embracing this 'haptic' sense that involves the whole body when making a creation.

The process of land art and the art of Andy Goldsworthy share core commonalities with current neurologically based trauma treatment (Malpas, 2007; Chapman, 2014; Van der Kolk, 2014). Whole body involvement, contemplation and meditation, acceptance of collapse, reestablishing a core sense of home and safety, and awareness of change as a constant, are all shared concepts.

Creative arts therapies

Creative arts therapies have recognized and utilized nature within their process. In these therapies the healing process involves engaging the creativity and symbolic expression of the individual. This healing process involves the inner subjective experience and that which cannot be expressed in words or is better expressed in other modalities (Frizell, 2008). Creative arts therapies recognize the power of creative expression to capture experience while acknowledging that the process of the creation or expression is curative in nature (Knill, 1999). In expressive arts therapy, arts as term, has multiple meanings and can be defined as any experience of making art such as dance, visual art, theatre and music. Arthur Robbins focused on the essential aesthetics in art therapy, voicing that the process and product of the piece of art was a powerful vehicle of expression and growth (Robbins, 1994). Robbins utilizes the relationship between the art and the artist in the process of self understanding and healing (Robbins, 1994). Berger drew on these concepts in his creation of a Safe Place protocol utilizing art therapy methods within outdoor spaces to help those children with PTSD heal from their trauma (Berger & Lahad, 2013).

Creative arts therapies draw from the fine art movements informing their work such as the land art movement (Tiberghien, 1995; Kastner, 1998). These art pieces utilize natural space and process to explore and create pieces of art situated in nature. Andy Goldsworthy's art expresses a deep connection to place space, time, and process. His work reflects a connection to personal

narrative in relationship to the earth. Goldsworthy speaks to the importance of touch and engagement of the senses in creation of nature sculptures. This active engagement promotes the reestablishment of whole body involvement, safety, and trauma resolution, (Van der Kolk, 2014). Berger's (2013) directive to create a home in nature reflects Goldsworthy's (2004) process. Henley (2002) also drew from the concepts of Andy Goldsworthy in his outdoor work with children who have experienced trauma. Creative art therapies draw on the sensate right brain focus in their use of nature in therapy (Frizell, 2008). The creative art therapies recognize the dynamic force of process and the diverse embodied connection we have to the larger world (Farely-Hansen, 2001). Siddon Heginworth (2009) focuses on the use of ritualized art creation in the outdoors as healing opportunities to consider change as a concept in our lives and in our psychological growth. The fields of creative arts therapy and art therapy have come to utilize nature as part of the creative process in a parallel trajectory as the field of contemporary art.

Space

When working therapeutically in nature it is important to understand the differences that exist in the therapeutic relationship and for this to be explicit in the informed consent and in the therapeutic choices. Berger (2006) describes the influence of natural space in therapy as having a democratizing effect on the therapeutic relationship. When therapy is conducted in an office that is a space owned or rented by the therapist or an agency, outdoor space is shared. This flattens the power hierarchy and can empower the client (Berger, 2007). The relational schools of psychotherapy focus on the transference and countertransference relationships (Jordan, 2014). The shared space may offer more experiences of mutuality (Bridges, 1999; Mitchell, 1988). This needs to be considered actively by the therapist in order to maintain the integrity of the therapeutic work (Jordan, 2014).

Nature can also act as a transitional object providing the transitional space that Winnicott (1958) described as the space between the inner and outer. Nature can serve as a transitional object reflecting back the good enough mother offering space to externalize and capture the needs of the individual

(Jordan, 2014). Nature in that way also can become the holding space, a space Bion (1971) conceptualizes as the therapeutic space where issues can be expressed and contained. In traditional psychotherapy this has been considered the room, a static and predictable environment. Nature can act as a transitional object, a holding environment for transference and countertransference, and a way for the client to explore attachment and affective issues in a non-threatening way.

Attachment

Special consideration must be made to the attachment of the individual client to nature and nature as a container for transference. If we conceptualize the pattern of behavior to nature as an attachment we can apply attachment models that can help us understand or lead our treatment (Jordan, 2014). If complicated issues of attachment arise from the relationship to the primary caregiver those would be projected onto one's relationship to the earth (Shephard, 1995). Shephard proposes that we also develop a unique attachment to the earth or our environment that is shaped in infancy and based on the complicated inter relationships we are exposed to.

Attachment is a key consideration in psychological evaluation and intervention in object relations theory (Robbins, 1994). Another key concept is having a secure base (Bowlby, 1969). Jordan (2014) postulates that nature provides just that, a secure base and the relational aspects of the mother and the father. Nature then can be seen as a source of comfort and security. Affect regulation is directly influenced by your early attachments (Schore, 2014). Individuals can utilize nature to address affective states and to understand and process helplessness and loss through the natural process inherent in nature (Jordan, 2014; Nicholson, 2003).

Mindfulness

Affect regulation is an important component of psychological well being, wellness and neurobiologically reflective of the experiences we had in early childhood and throughout life (Schore 2014, Chapman 2014). Mindfulness teaches the right brain affective regulation through focusing on the present

(Van der Kolk, 2014). Mindfulness has been integrated into many disciplines and is gaining popularity. (Jordan, 2014). Drawing from Buddhist philosophy mindfulness is a process of focused awareness (Mace, 2007). Recently literature has been developed linking the practice of mindfulness in nature such as hiking (Altschuler, 2004), walking meditation in nature (Altschuler, 2004), and focusing in nature (Gendlin, 1962). Schroeder (2008) utilizes focusing in nature to gain a greater awareness of felt sense and affective regulation. Nature is seen in Schroeder's (2008) work as the egoless other. Through contemplation of felt sense, we gain a greater awareness of ourselves and our connection to the earth. Theorists such as Swanson (2001) and Abram (1996) draw on the I-Thou relationship to capture the power of nature and mindfulness in therapy. Burns (2012) postulates that the embodied relationship between the individual and nature contains reciprocal communication that reflects object relations and somatic experience.

Projection, enactment and ritual

Projection in an outdoor environment can be utilized to have the individual project and work through issues within the container of nature, in this way the projected material can be worked on from safe distance (Jordan, 2014). In this way art therapy and nature-based therapy hold core commonalities (Jordan, 2014). Farrelly-Hanson (2001) is an art therapist who utilizes nature in her practice and sees the combination of nature and art as a powerful vehicle for process and change. Within nature we can see the actual experience of change and growth in a concrete fashion that is not possible linguistically (Bennett, 2010). Artwork in nature becomes a dynamic force field of change that reflects back the issue and solution in a developing field. The concepts of embodied life metaphors in nature offer rich possibilities for enactments (Stanostefano, 2004). Stanostefano's work with traumatized children in nature reflects an understanding how enactive movement can encapsulate a child's emotional experience. Ian Siddons Heginworth (2009) utilizes the seasons to help individuals explore personal journeys of healing through art and nature. The idea that we are evolving and dynamic helps transcend issues and change within our lifespan.

Siddons Heginworth (2009) utilizes ritual as a component of his work in nature and others have also asserted the importance of ritual in nature and within the field of psychology. Dissanayake (1998) asserts that ritual was a vital manner in which communities came together to express, contain and transcend troubling events. The containment of issues and events in ritual allows for the remembrance of the past the experience of the present and creation of the future. In this way the ritual provides both closure and the promise of something new (Dissanayake, 1998). Ritual has been utilized for centuries to connect with a deeper sense of self (Jordan, 2014). Ritual is intrinsically part of the therapeutic process apparent in the setup of the therapy rooms and the manner in which the therapy session is conducted (Chandler, 2010). Nature can provide a healing space that is sacred and connected to what is larger than ourselves (Jordan, 2014). Jung (1989) saw nature as imbued with spirit. The use of ritual within nature can help individuals connect inner and outer realities while connecting to something larger than themselves.

A Jungian perspective draws on the central idea that we are all connected, and all of nature originates from a single substance (Jung, 1989). It is also important to consider that emotions do not just happen within people but also happens between them. This deepens the essential need to consider the space in which the therapeutic work is unfolding (Jordan 2014). The interconnection between man and Earth is also celebrated in Indigenous cultures. The power of the forces of nature and our connection to change within nature is at the root of those practices. Andy Goldsworthy's nature sculptures incorporate change, time, and decay as central elements. His sculptures incorporate the Taoist concept that everything changes and transforms, but the Earth remains as a whole. Nature can be a mirroring source, a reflection of the whole self.

Adolescents with PTSD

Linda Chapman (2014) and Allen Schore (2014) speak of the importance of utilizing a treatment model with adolescents struggling with PTSD that embraces physical-somatic memory, verbal cognitive memory, and all components of the trauma. Nature art therapy addresses all of the senses and

provides a window into fantastic reality that directly speaks to the held trauma. Making art in a natural environment speaks directly to themes of change, death, decay, and growth (Whitaker, 2010). There is a certain degree of unpredictability in nature that compels the artist to consider that, and react to it directly within the art. Nature inspires us to evaluate the bigger picture and gain perspective on meaning (Whitaker, 2010). Hillman (1995) suggests that the deepest layers of the psyche emerge in reaction or response to organic matter. The natural world is not static it is constantly changing, evolving pressing on the notion of time. The work stimulates capacity for sensory, cognitive, and affective engagement. Nature art therapy allows the individual to reestablish trust within their environment and connection with others. Nature art therapy speaks to and disrupts the hyper individualized focus of modern society reconnecting us with the shared collective. Attachment to the environment as the good enough mother and father can be established offering a template for healthy attachment.

Andy Goldsworthy's art pieces provide a role model of acceptance, letting go, and contemplation. His work speaks directly to our sense of self and place within the universe. "We often forget that WE ARE NATURE. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we've lost our connection to ourselves (Goldsworthy, 2004)." Nature art therapy based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy, challenges adolescents struggling with PTSD to contemplate time, the past, present, and future. This allows them to contain their trauma and regain trust in the constant change of the earth. This allows them to establish a sense of inner security and resolution of the trauma. Through the right brain process of the nature art therapy they are able to resolve relational attachment disruptions that occurred as a result of their trauma. The processing of their pieces through photography stimulates the right to left-brain connection causing containment, an intellectual understanding, and a witnessing. This is an essential process in resolving the trauma and visualizing and experiencing a healthy sense of self and hope for a future. The population of Adolescents diagnosed with PTSD is growing. Neurological findings assert the use of right brain interventions such as art therapy in treatment for this population. Very

few evidenced based studies on treatment with adolescents diagnosed with PTSD have been conducted and even fewer utilizing art therapy. Internationally research and treatment has begun to incorporate the use of nature based art therapy in the healing of trauma with this population.

Research project

This mixed method design research project combines quantitative and qualitative methods to explore and describe: the effects of a nine week Andy Goldsworthy inspired art therapy group on the symptoms of anxiety and sense of self with adolescents diagnosed with PTSD. The study focuses on the symptoms of anxiety as defined by the UCLA PTSD index and sense of self as defined by the identification of core attributes of the self in interviews, drawings and nature sculptures measured by scores on the #4 space and # 5 integration scales of an adapted FEATS (Formal Elements in Art Therapy Scale) and through a phenomenological evaluation by a panel of art therapists. The # 4 space scale and the # 5 integration scale of the adapted FEATS will be utilized to capture the identification of the core attributes of the self and measure the strength of sense of self. Maslow (1962) asserted that the human potential can be actualized when an individual integrates traumas and challenges. It is through this acceptance of the positive and challenging experiences of our lives that we are able gather strength in the whole of who we are. This integration is communicated through our art as a reflection of the self (Thompson, 2011). Thompson also asserts that space in art is a reflection of self-identity, that the artist transposes the inner/outer selves within compositions. Through the aesthetic space of art, the artist can connect fragmented pieces, binding them with awareness, and affective resonance. Thematic data from phenomenological evaluation of the art and the interviews will capture meaning and then be evaluated for connections to the categories of integration and space to help determine strength of sense of self.

The study includes four sites each with an intervention and control group with 8 teens in each group. The participants in the intervention groups have nine sessions in a rural or wilderness area that each last ninety minutes. Prior to the start of the group interventions, each participant views the documentary

'River and Tides' focusing on the work of Andy Goldsworthy. This occurs in a group setting with the rest of the participants of their group, and the co-facilitators. The same two co-facilitators facilitate each nature-focused group. Each group session started and ended with the same ritual. Throughout the nine-week session the participants are invited to individually and collectively create sculptures or pieces of art in nature without the use of pre-made tools or adhesives. These art pieces are made in response to directives or questions posed by the two art therapists co-facilitating the groups. These invitations are preplanned and given to the facilitators ahead of time. After the completion of each piece the artist or artists photograph their work with the knowledge that the photos of each participant's nature pieces would be printed in a book format that they would receive at the close of the study. After each group session ends the co-facilitators participate in their own reflective art pieces that are done in the same manner, in response to the witnessing of the process. Photographs of those pieces are also taken and compiled into a book that is also given to the participants.

The control groups (treatment as usual) participate in the same pre and post test procedures as the intervention groups. They do not receive any additional counseling or therapy, and participate in the interventions that would be normally utilized at their treatment site. It is the hope of the researchers that this would control for the effects of the different treatment approaches at the varied agencies. Efforts were made by the researchers to offer the nature therapy groups to the control groups after the cessation of the research study.

Data collected includes the following pre and post data:

- Results from the UCLA PTSD index
- Three drawings completed in the interview evaluated by the FEATS
- Results of structured in-person interviews, transcribed.

Data collected during the intervention will include:

- Photographs of nature based sculptures created by the teens
- Photographs of the facilitator response nature sculptures completed by the facilitators
- Adapted FEATS scores of the nature based artwork

Data compiled after the completion of the intervention will include:

- Two books for each participant in the intervention
- One book of the photographs of their nature based sculptures
- One book of the photographs of the facilitator's response sculptures.

This research will add to the growing body of ongoing work and help to validate the use of art therapy and nature based art therapy with this population. It is also a response to the Delphi study calling for research in this area. The research project also adds to the body of research utilizing the FEATS as a measure with PTSD, anxiety, and adolescence. The addition of an adapted FEATS measure will help to fill the void of assessment measures for sculpture in the field of art therapy. Currently there are few assessment measures evaluating sculpture. Edith Kramer (1983) included clay in her initial child assessment but did not include a formal scale for its analysis. Additional assessments utilizing sculpture include; Margaret Fringes Keyes's Family Clay Sculpture (1984), the BATA developed by Ellen Horovitz Darby (Horovitz & Eksten, 2009) that evaluates spiritual development, Claire Golomb's studies of Children's development in sculpture (2003) and her following studies on the impact of cultural variables, Mala Betensky Art Therapy Diagnostics (1977), and Patricia St. John's neurological assessment of Children (1986). Despite the development of assessments using sculpture there is no formal standardized scale for evaluating sculpture done in art therapy. Creation of a valid formal way to evaluate art therapy sculpture as a potential measure could serve the field by establishing another tool of understanding. The adaptation of the FEATS for assessment for sculpture would allow another valid way to communicate about art therapy for research. Although informal art assessments help the clinician lead the treatment, formal standardized measures allow art therapists to speak across disciplines communicating our held beliefs through research. In this research design the process of the art is more important to evaluate than the symbolic content. That is why the adapted FEATS would be an appropriate measure (Gussak, 2013).

The study arose from three pilot studies enacted with a community providing therapeutic services for adolescents in Northern California who met the diagnosis for PTSD. Facilitators and participants noted changes in the individuals' experience of sense of self, as well as a reduction in overall

symptoms of anxiety. This research study seeks to validate these experiences in an evidenced based manner that fully supports the voice of the artistic experience. A mixed measure design was chosen to support multiple ways of knowing through research. The process of phenomenological evaluation of art process reflects the exploratory nature of art therapy (Kapitan, 2010), but has limitations in validity. The research outcome depends on the researchers skill and ability to bracket, or put aside subjectivity (Kapitan, 2010). The use of the panel of art therapists helps to address these issues but may not have eliminated the influence. In capturing the moment, important details of the participant experience may have been lost. It is also important to note that the essence of this evaluation measure creates difficulty in replication (Gilroy, 2006).

The mixed measures design of this research was utilized to help to control for these limitations. The process of comparing and evaluating both quantitative and qualitative data helped to offset the limitations, and highlight the strengths of both types of research measures. This approach was utilized in attempts to capture the whole experience and provide findings and questions for continued inquiry in clinical practice and research.

The phenomenological process was completed to capture a unique way of knowing, one of empathic subjective understanding. Franklin (2013) explored the relationship between the intersubjective projection into the inner world of another, response art, and action understanding (Gallese, 2008) tying the process of reflective art making to the empathic understanding of another's feeling state. The process of witnessing the art process and then reflecting on it within the same style of art process should offer the facilitators a connection to the emotional state of the individual who created the artwork.

In conclusion adolescents struggling with PTSD is an area of research inquiry that is under funded and is lacking in empirical research, despite its rising prevalence (Chapman, 2014). Recent neurobiological research has underscored the importance of right hemisphere treatment (Chapman, 2014; Van der Kolk, 2014). International art therapy research and treatment is starting to address and research the efficacy of nature art therapy on the symptoms of PTSD in adolescence (Berger, 2013). This study hopes to

address the gap in research and treatment design in the areas of adolescent PTSD and nature art therapy and encourage further inquiry.

Biography

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The focus of Lisa's clinical work has been developing and providing day treatment services to SED adolescents within New Directions Adolescent Services, known for its integrated and innovative approaches within art therapy. She has a background in residential treatment, and was involved in a collaborative intervention providing art therapy services to families affected by HIV, homelessness, and mental health issues. An Adjunct Professor at Notre Dame de Namur University, Lisa is also a practicing artist who exhibits regularly. She believes that art is a way of creating community, vision, and voice.

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