

Bertha Rosenstadt Showcase

Reflecting on Practice through Arts and Narrative (2010-13)



Presented by Karen Gold & Ingrid Cologna
Project Facilitators

Purpose of Project

- To explore the use of arts-based & narrative methods in promoting *reflective practice* in field practicum
- To provide a facilitated arts-based supervision group for students



Preparing students for practice & breaking silence & isolation

“Considering the complexities inherent in mental health [and social work], developing student reflective capacities may be the most important part of preparing future counselors for success in the field” (Griffith & Frieden, 2000).

“The practice of social work demands the ability to listen to, process and respond to [clients’] stories: within our professional worlds [we] attend to the narratives of others” (Opie, 2000).

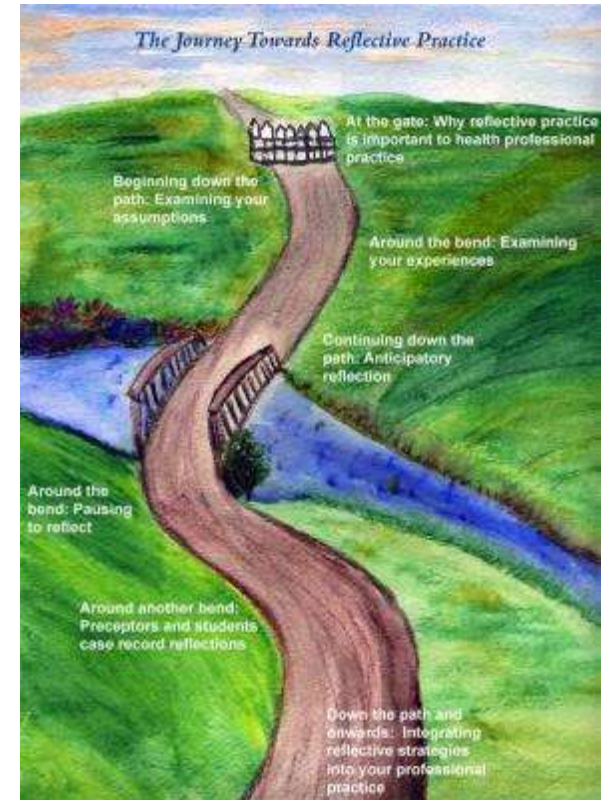


Methods...

- 'Close reading' of written texts
- Reflective Writing
- Art-making
- Relaxation/visualization/meditation

Arts & Narrative is a tool for...

- Concretizing and visualizing abstract themes
- Externalizing and examining experience
- Embracing complexity and uncertainty
- Enhancing self awareness and relational skills



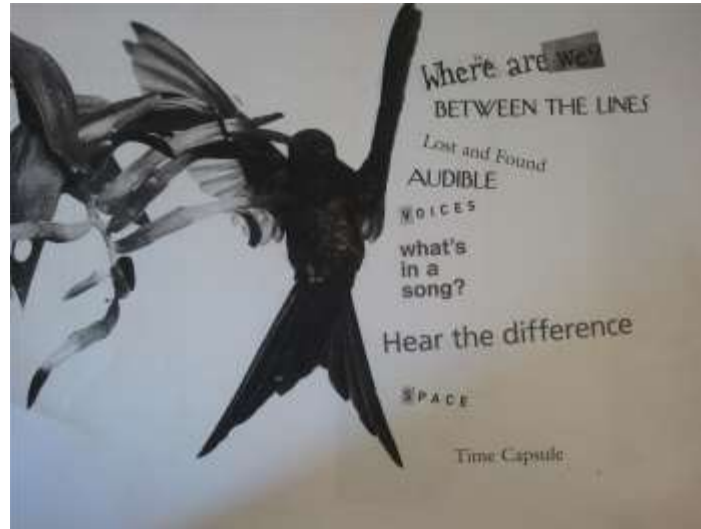
Curriculum – Themes

- My emerging professional identity/journey
- Listening
- Witnessing
- Embodying our practice
- Relational moments
- Hopefulness
- Impact of therapeutic interactions & clients stories



'Listening': close reading, art-making, writing

Short Story: *The Flutter of an Aching Heart*



Artist Statement:

"The hummingbird represents how quick things can happen in sessions and difficult it can be to pick up on what the client is saying which is often 'unsaid'. Thus listening in all kinds of ways is critical e.g. body language and voice".

'Scars': reading, writing, casting, collage

Poem: *Scarred Topography*

Artist statement:

The red dots on the fingertips represent the many diabetic patients I see [and] symbolize the daily reminder of their disease where constant blood glucose testing, that sometimes leaves a mark, is necessary...I tried to also take a positive perspective...represented by all the various colours of tissue paper coming out of the hand, as if to say "diabetes isn't all that defines me..."



Narrative Collage Exercise

Guest Artist: Barbara Astman: 'Daily Collage' Project

Create a series of 3-5 collage pieces exploring: (1) A relationship or interaction with a client; (2) a theme in your practice like 'loss' or 'living with illness'; (3) an aspect of your own professional identity



Feedback & Facilitators' Reflections

Feeling of appreciation for experience

Recognizing importance of supportive relationships (feel less isolated)

Art-making and narrative are useful metaphors for practice

I was surprised at what emerged

Striving to be 'my best self'

Importance of client stories and the impact on storyteller and listeners

Making art relates to why I became a social worker

Art as parallel process to client work

Art-making as a way to process issues after seeing clients



Challenges & Barriers:

- Logistics/scheduling (more time!)
- Lack of familiarity/comfort with modalities
- Pressure around “creating art” and dealing with self criticism
- Creating safety among participants

Dissemination:

- Article, WCH Newsletter ‘*Connect*’ (2011)
- Presentation at ‘Social Work Week’, WCH (2013)
- Publication (forthcoming) in anthology on health professional education:
Gold, K. & Cologna, I. “Inspired by the Arts: Collage-making as Reflection” in *Keeping Reflection Fresh: Top Educators Share their innovations*. Eds., A. Peterkin & P. Brett-MacLean, Kent State Press.



Thank You...

To the students for sharing their work

The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work &

Theresa Kay, Professional Practice Leader (WCH)

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