



**18th Canadian Collaborative  
Mental Health Care Conference (2017)**

*Connecting People in Need with Care*

June 2 and 3, 2017 | Delta City Centre, Ottawa, Ontario

*Adolescent Therapy Using Film; Theory and Process*  
*Dr Nadeem Akhtar, Shirley Hurley, Andrea Speziale*

# PRESENTER DISCLOSURE

- **Presenter: Nadeem Akhtar MA (Cantab), MBBS (Lond), MRCPsych (UK)**  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, McMaster University  
Staff Psychiatrist, Hamilton Family Health Team
- **Presenter: Shirley Hurley MSW, RSW,**  
Mental Health Counsellor, Hamilton Family Health Team
- **Presenter: Andrea Speziale BSW, RSW,**  
Mental Health Counsellor, Hamilton Family Health Team
- **Relationships with commercial interests:**
  - **Grants/Research Support:** none
  - **Speakers Bureau/Honoraria:** none
  - **Consulting Fees:** none
  - **Other:** none



**18th Canadian Collaborative  
Mental Health Care Conference (2017)**  
*Connecting People in Need with Care*  
June 2 and 3, 2017 | Delta City Centre, Ottawa, Ontario



Bureau du développement  
professionnel continu  
Office of Continuing  
Professional Development



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the theoretical strength behind the use of Film for Therapeutic gain
2. Develop a framework for using film in a Therapeutic setting
3. Describe the experience of participating in a film therapy/ creative arts therapeutic process from the participant's point of view



**18th Canadian Collaborative  
Mental Health Care Conference (2017)**  
*Connecting People in Need with Care*  
June 2 and 3, 2017 | Delta City Centre, Ottawa, Ontario



Bureau du développement  
professionnel continu  
Office of Continuing  
Professional Development



# The Power of Cinema



- Film has great educational and therapeutic potential [1,2,3]
- As an art form shows internal and external world simultaneously
- Elementary cinema revolves around visual storytelling; not limited by language, doesn't exclude other cultures [4]
- Films can allow for vicarious learning and behaviour rehearsal [5]

# The Power of Cinema 1



- Films contain metaphorical elements which may align with cultural archetypes on a sub-conscious level, bypassing conscious resistance [7]

# Audio-visual material and learning 1



## Improve Illness Awareness [7a]

ISIS -French study (158 patients)

ISIS-Hypertension and cardiovascular risk educational computer program  
Compared to regular education program (physicians, nurses, leaflets)

CV knowledge tested at baseline and 2 months after by 28 item standardised questionnaire

Both groups improved on CV knowledge score, the ISIS group significantly more than the controls

# Audio-visual material and learning 2

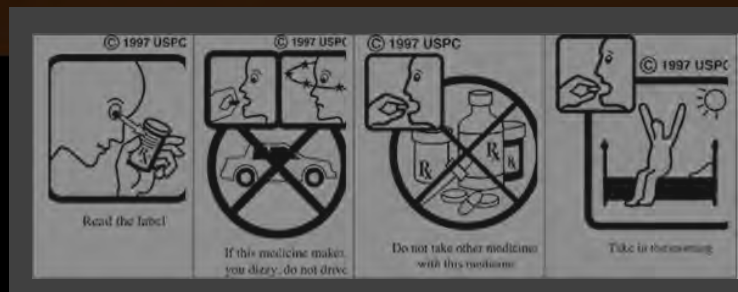
## Improve Recall [7b]

Pictographs are used in those with poor literacy to aid recall of instructions

21 subjects listened to lists of actions for managing fever (50) and sore mouth (38)

one action list was accompanied by a pictograph during listening and recall

Average recall was 85% with pictographs and 14 % without  
a highly significant finding ( $p < 0.0001$ )



# Audio-visual material and learning 3



Computer Based Education lesson using Audio Visual content for Rheumatoid Arthritis

vs

standard education (physician, nurse, leaflet) [7c]

significant, sustained improvements favouring the AV intervention, in:

Knowledge

Outlook on life

Hopefulness of a good prognosis

Rehabilitative behaviours (joint protection etc)

reduced belief- luck alone would determine the state of their condition



# Audio-visual material and learning mechanisms 1

- Imitation and modelling behaviour may play a part
- Bandura [1,2] hypothesized that children learn by copying the observed behaviour of attachment figures



# Social Learning Theory; the Bandura experiment



# Learning theory, the modules of intelligence



**Gardner** [6] suggested the existence of multiple intelligences; The more of these we access, the faster we learn

LOGICAL	→	plot
LINGUISTIC	→	dialogue
VISUO-SPATIAL	→	pictures, colours, symbols and camerawork
MUSICAL	→	sounds, score
KINESTHETIC	→	movement
INTERPERSONAL	→	storytelling
INTRAPSYCHIC	→	self reflection/inner guidance



"pi", dir. Aronofsky 1998

# Power of cinema 2:accessing the internal world

- Cinematic elements add to the emotional impact of viewed material
- These aid the director in demonstrating the internal world of a character in response to external mechanisms
- Facial expression, shot size/angle, colour grade, speed and sound essential elements
- Camera oscillates between observer and participant



# Power of cinema 3: Narrative



- Focused attention to a story creates a mild trance state [8,10]
- During such times, reduction in perception of external stimuli, preoccupation with thoughts and external issues
- Films contain metaphorical elements which may align with cultural archetypes on a sub-conscious level, bypassing conscious resistance [7]
- Metaphors in stories carry an intuitive understanding tapping into unconscious processing.

# Power of cinema 3: Physical Space



- Cinematic auditoriums holds a cultural position where their ambience and presence is a sanctuary
- If watching a film creates a trance like state, induction starts with simply entering the movie theatre
- Motifs facilitate relaxation and enjoyment; the smell of popcorn, dim lights, a large screen [11]





Akhtar, N. , Robinson, C., Rose, R., 2015



- First of its kind, manualised group programme using films for therapy
- Aim was to appeal to adolescents often put off by standard therapeutic programmes [12]
- Creative arts groups are seen as less overwhelming, (initially) concrete and easier to relate to [14]
- They can facilitate relaxation and peer bonding [13,15]



Akhtar, N. , Robinson, C., Rose, R., 2015



- Theme based group, using short films to build elements of resilience (self esteem, symptom management)
- Themes relevant to all mental health conditions (eg stigma, loss, loneliness)
- Natural progression through 8 weekly sessions
- Group one hour in length, short film followed by guided discussion



Akhtar, N. , Robinson, C., Rose, R., 2015



- Short films from YouTube and Vimeo
- Selected for diversity of themes, metaphorical content and strong cinematic elements
- Guided discussion an elaborated, manualised system based on the Cinematherapy model (Zuhr Institute, California, USA)



Akhtar, N. , Robinson, C., Rose, R., 2015



- Two integral and unique features to our model
- The creation of an **immersive environment** to aid engagement

And

- **Layered system** for therapeutic dialogue

# FILM THERAPY

Akhtar, N. , Robinson, C., Rose, R., 2015



## THERAPEUTIC LAYERS



**!TECHNICAL !**



**!PROJECTIVE (Like or dislike of characters)!**



**!EMPATHETIC (emotions characters feel)!**



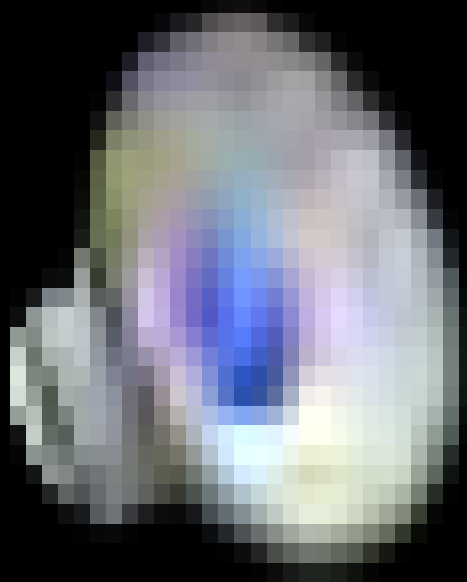
**!REACTIVE (Emotions patients feel whilst watching)!**



**!DEEP MEANING (aligning of narratives)!**

EXPERIENCE





“A Social Life”



# references



1. BANDURA, A., D. ROSS, and S. A. ROSS, A COMPARATIVE TEST OF THE STATUS ENVY, SOCIAL POWER, AND SECONDARY REINFORCEMENT THEORIES OF IDENTIFICATORY LEARNING. *Abnorm Psychol*, 1963. 67: p. 27-34.
2. BANDURA, A., D. ROSS, and S. A. ROSS, Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. *Abnorm Soc Psychol*, 1963. 66: p. 3-11.
3. Sturdevant, C.G., *The Laugh & Cry Movie Guide: Using Movies to Help Yourself through Life's Changes*. 1998, Larkspur, CA: Lightspheres.
4. Noël, S., S. Dumoulin, and G. Lindgaard, Interpreting Human and Avatar Facial Expressions, in *Human-Computer Interaction - INTERACT 2009: 12th IFIP TC 13 International Conference, Uppsala, Sweden, August 24-28, 2009, Proceedings, Part 3*, T. Gross, et al., Editors. 2009, Springer Berlin Heidelberg: Berlin, Heidelberg. p. 98-110.
5. Counsellors, A.I.o.P., *Behavioural Therapy: A Guide to Counselling Therapies*.
6. Gardner, H., The theory of multiple intelligences. *Ann Dyslexia*, 1987. 37(1): p. 19-35.
7. Hauke, C. and J. Alister, *ung and Film*. 2001: Brunner-Routledge.
- 7a. Ben S. M., Consoli, S., & Jean. J. (1994). A comparative study between computer-aided education (ISIS) and habitual education techniques for hypertensive patients. *Proc Annu Symp Comput Appl Med Care*, 10(4)

# references



Houts, P., Bachrach, R., Witmer, D., Tringali, C., Bucher, J., & Localio, R. (1998). Using pictographs to enhance recall of spoken medical instructions. *Patient Education Couns.*, 35(2), 33-38

Wetstone, S., Sheehan, J., Votaw, R. G., Peterson, M. G., & Rothfield, N. (1985). Evaluation of a computer-based education lesson for patients with rheumatoid arthritis. *Rheumatol*, 12(5), 907-12

1. Izod, J. a. U. o. S. U. K. and J. a. Dovalis, Cinema as Therapy: Grief and transformational film.
2. Sharp, C., J. V. Smith, and A. Cole, Cinematherapy: Metaphorically promoting therapeutic change. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 2002. 15(3): p. 269-276.
3. Erickson, M. H. and S. Rosen, My voice will go with you: The teaching tales of Milton H. Erickson. 1982, New York/London: Norton.
4. Bierman, J. S., A. R. Krieger, and M. Leifer, Group Cinematherapy as a Treatment Modality for Adolescent Girls. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth*, 2003. 21(1): p. 1-15.
5. Wergeland, G. J. H., et al., An effectiveness study of individual vs. group cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety disorders in youth. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 2014. 57: p. 1-12.
6. Guttmacher, J. A. and L. Birk, Group therapy: What specific therapeutic advantages? *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 1971. 12(6): p. 546-556.

# references



1. Vernon, A. and K.L. Barry, *Counseling Outside the Lines: Creative Arts Interventions for children and adolescents: Individual, Small Group, and Classroom Applications.* 2013.
2. Dokter, D., *Helping and Hindering Processes in Creative Arts Therapy Group Practice.* Group, 2010. 34(1): p. 67-83.

?

A wide-angle photograph of a large, empty theater. The seats are arranged in many rows, all facing towards the front. The seats are a deep red color. A wide, light-colored carpeted aisle runs down the center of the theater. At the far end, a large, blank white screen is mounted on the wall. Above the screen, several bright spotlights are visible, casting light onto the screen. The walls of the theater are dark, and there are some architectural details like door frames visible on the right side. The overall atmosphere is quiet and empty.

Questions?