



Art-Based Group Therapy: Theory and Practice

Bruce L. Moon

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Leading art therapy groups is often a challenge, but as Bruce Moon so eloquently describes in this book, making art in the context of others is an incredibly and almost inexplicably powerful experience. He writes, 'Things happen for people in art therapy groups that really are almost magical.' The author's approach is to simultaneously explore how this magic occurs while still honoring the mystery and power of interpersonal art making. Through the author's effective use of storytelling, the reader encounters the group art therapy experience, transcending the case vignette and didactic instruction. Through his personal disclosures and vivid descriptions of amalgamated clinical situations, the reader is invited into art therapy sessions and given access to the mind, the heart, and the soul of the therapist. The book helps group leaders answer such questions as: Should I have a directive? How structured should the group be and how open-ended? Do all the group members have to work on the same task or should they work individually? What do I say, when do I say it, and how should I say it? Do I have to use language at all? How is this particular project therapeutic? The author encourages the art therapist to not look outside for validation, but rather to look from within. By placing the art at the center of practice, Art-Based Group Therapy creates an explanatory model and rationale for group practice that is rooted in art therapy theory and identity. The book will be of benefit to students, practitioners, and educators alike. Using it as a guide, art therapy students may be more empowered to enter into the uncertain terrains of their practica grounded in a theory soundly based in their area of study. Practitioners will no doubt be encouraged, validated, and inspired to continue their work. Educators can employ the twelve principles, as they teach the basic theories and applications of group dynamics and processes. Advocates and practitioners must continually explain, evaluate, and communicate what they do; the author succeeds in establishing a framework that allows art therapists to communicate the value of their work in a language that is unique to art therapy.

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