

CINEMA THERAPY

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WHAT IS CINEMA THERAPY

Cinema therapy is a creative therapy technique in which a trained psychotherapist uses the films as a therapy tool.

According to the film therapist Gary Solomon, cinema therapy is usage of films which have positive effects on people except psychotic disorders.

In cinema therapy movies are used by psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, art therapists, academicians, instructors and educators.

Group movie therapy is consists of 8-12 mental health clients for 90 minutes once a week. It's theme can be problem solving, PTSD, depression, relationships, motivation or the needs of patients. Patients are evaluated after six weeks and their improvement is documented by using the measurable variables.

Cinema Therapy is not only therapy itself but also a tool for supportive, dynamic and cognitive-behavioral approaches. Therapist apply movies in different situations such as individual, family and group settings.

HISTORY

Stories and fables are used for therapy for a long time. Therapeutic use of film has been started and several books have been written and seminars have been offered.

Bibliotherapy which is from Menninger school in 1030 is the prototype for cinema therapy.

Bibliotherapy is reading to facilitate healing in psychiatry. According to the Dr Fuat Ulus, movie therapy is more fascinating than bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy uses the books for therapy and cinema therapy uses the films for therapy. Also, cinema therapy is easier than bibliotherapy because watching film is easier than reading book. Because watching films requires less time than bibliotherapy, cinema therapy's treatment process is faster.

FAMOUS CINEMA THERAPISTS

Gary Solomon

Gary Solomon, MPH, M.S.W., Ph.D., is the father of cinema therapy. He is professor of Psychology at the Community College of Southern Nevada in Henderson in Nevada. He wrote book about cinema therapy .These are Reel Therapy, The Motion Picture Prescription and Cinema Therapy for Parents. He has the site called www.cinema-therapy.com. According to the Gary Solomon, movies are the examples of 'an art's imitation. To start therapy, first thing we should do is searching for the movies which reflect our own life problems which help us to grow.

Birgit Woltz, PhD

Birgit Woltz is psychotherapist. She was born in Germany. She published the articles about cinema therapy in many periodicals and journals. She arranges workshops about cinematherapy. She facilitate cinema therapy groups for personal and spiritual growth.

According to the Woltz, more people feel relieved by watching films than psychotherapy.

Woltz says that films can provide a healthy emotional release. She points out the medical research about laughing and crying. Laughing boost the immune system and decrease stress hormones and crying releases the neurotransmitters relieves pain. She also says that, the number of therapists who recognize the value of cinema therapy increases.

www.cinemaalchemy.com is the Birgit Woltz's site. This site gives information about seminars, presentations and online courses about cinema therapy. The two examples of online courses in the site are Cinema Therapy: Using the Power of Movies in the Therapeutic Process and Boundaries and the Movies: Learning about Therapeutic Boundaries through the movies

Fuat Ulus

Fuat Ulus is consultant psychiatrist at Saint Vincent Hospital and Health Center, in Erie in Pennsylvania. Dr. Fuat Ulus and his colleagues in the intensive Outpatient Therapy Program make group movie sessions. The program contains The Three E's: Entertainment, Education, and Empowerment. The program contains different theme based presentations such as ego power, stress management or forgiveness. Fuat Ulus says that first participants watch clips than they talk about film, characters. Then they talk about their own experiences which is parallel to the characters in the film. He uses different films for different disorders. For example for chronic anxiety he uses the film Dirty Harry by Clint Eastwood. He uses for posttraumatic stress disorder is The Deer Hunter. According to the Fuat Ulus, patients can discuss issues easier by the movie characters than directly confronting that issue. Fuat Ulus's group movie therapies consist of between eight –twelve patients. They come together for one time in a week for 90 minutes. Content of film group therapy is determined according to the post traumatic stress disorder, depression, relationships, motivations and the need of patients. The patients are evaluated in six week period and healing process of patients is documented by measurable values.

HOW CAN HEALING OCCURS

According to the Fuat Ulus, films have entertainment, education and empowerment effects. The empowerment occurs by projection, identification and introjection. In the projection process, our thoughts, affects and beliefs reaches the events and characters in the film. Than by identification process we perceive or reject the characters. Without awareness, we feel like the characters in the film. Last, in the introjection stage, we take the experiences in the film into our worlds. After the film finish, what we learn by projection, identification and introjection process, the lessons we take, and solutions we find by the film decreases the our depression, anger.

HOW CINEMA THERAPY WORKS

Watching a movie with conscious awareness is similar to guided visualization. Films can be used with the other therapy techniques such as psychodynamic therapy, cognitive-behavior therapy, behavior modification therapy, systems-oriented therapy. Films are metaphors like stories, myths, and fables. Its importance is that by symbolic images unconscious communicates it to the conscious mind. Awareness of communication occurs by dreams and active imagination. Dreams and imagination are the doors from unconscious to conscious mind. Movies which evoke pleasant and unpleasant emotions, are a tool for therapist which points that scene shows unconscious material. Like the dreams, after watching film this unconscious material becomes accessible to consciousness.

Metaphors in films in cognitive behavior therapy

Metaphors in films can be used in therapy. In cognitive behavior therapy, films can help by

- 1) Films play an important role to understand the maladaptive thinking and beliefs and also reconstruct the cognition
- 2) By the help of the films, clients who watch films can have what to do. The affective insights by films can motivate them

Character in films in behavior modification treatment

Characters in films behave in a way that has courage in the face of a challenge. The client can model the behavior which makes the treatment more successful.

Systems-oriented therapy

These therapists use film as a supporting tool for their approach. Movies can present unfamiliar concepts of family and organizational systems. Films are better than mere words for understanding.

LEARNING THEORIES

A recent theory of learning says that we have several types of intelligences. If we use more type of them, we learn faster. Watching film can affect seven types' of intelligences. These intelligences are logical (plot), linguistic (dialogue), visual-spatial (pictures, colors, symbols), musical (sounds and music), interpersonal (storytelling) kinesthetic (moving), intrapsychic (inner guidance)

CHOOSING MOVIES FOR THERAPIES

Movies can be used to serve or to harm us. Movies which have powerful effect on our psyche , can also damage people who had trauma in the past in their life. Also, movies can be used to growth people. The two important points is choosing the most appropriate film and following the cinema therapy guidelines.

Solomon says that idea is choosing movies which reflects clients current problem. Movies for therapy should be choose according to the therapeutic context such as addiction, death, abandonment or abuse,

Fuat Ulus says that film therapists can be mixed two other distinct groups.

First group is lay-cinema therapists who advise the reviewers of their products to watch this, to feel this.

Second group is psychoanalytical mental health providers only analyze the films.

The cinema therapy is tool for supportive, dynamic and cognitive-behavioral approaches.

It can be used in general hospital behavioral inpatient units, partial care programs and outpatient clinics.

Films can be applied to individual, family and group settings.

According to the Fuat Ulus films are used by lots of practitioner, academician, and sports technical directors and in the field of work.

Use of films in therapy, especially in psychiatry improves slowly. The possible reasons he think are:

- 1) Films are interpreted by the psychoanalysts in educational field in journals. This interpretation improves the field of education and at the same time removes the therapy notion.
- 2) The way of therapy in psychiatry is electroshock therapy and drug therapy.

GUIDELINES FOR WATCHING FILMS FOR THERAPY

Birgit Woltz gives the some guidelines her clients and the members who want to use cinema for therapy purpose.

These guidelines are.

1) Stay comfortably and give the attention to the body and breath and release the tension of the body.

2) After your attention is enough for your balanced breathing, experience your situation without any thought and idea.

3) After you relax you can watch film and pay attention both yourself and the story.

After movie finish, then she recommends the answer questions she prepared which helps you to write. Some of the questions are:

- 1) Did your breath change when you watched film?
- 2) Did the film remember your dreams?
- 3) Was there anything that you liked or hated?
- 4) Was there any character which is attractive or unattractive?
- 5) Did you identify any character?

FILMS INTERPRETED BY CINEMA THERAPISTS

Films by Fuat Ulus

The films interpreted by Dr Fuat Ulus for its healing effects are Cold Mountain, The Last Samurai, Something's Gotta Give and Mona Lisa Smile in mezunusa.com web site.

In Cold Mountain, film teaches the importance of the maintaining kindness in every situation including most complicated ones.

The Last Samurai shows us the different cultural values in the places where we born and places where we lived, acceptance or rejection of the new cultural values different from the values that we adopted. This film is important for its effect on the personal growth and acceptance of values different from our values.

Something's Gotta Give film shows us that age is not important criteria to love .After watching this film, people can search for new solutions for their relationships.

In Mona Lisa Smile film, there are various student characters that include good, bad, conservative, rebellious and shy ones. By this film, people can search their inner world and find the powerful and weak sides of their characters and improve it.

Fuat Ulus also interpreted the films Notes on a Scandal, Stranger than Fiction, Spider Man-3, Sherrybaby, Half Nelson, Bobby, Little Miss Sunshine, Letters from Iwo Jima, Pursuit of Happiness, The Queen, Casino Royale.

Films by Birgit Woltz

Birgit Woltz, PHD write about the films About Schmidt, Antwone Fisher, As Good As it Gets, Before Sunset, Brokeback Mountain, Bend it like Beckham, Changing Lanes, The Dogwalker, In America, The Lord of the Rings, Trilogy, Lorenzo's Oil, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Pride and Prejudice, Ray, The Secret Lives of Dentists, Sliding Doors, Under the Tuscan Sun, The Upside of Anger.

CINEMA THERAPY EXAMPLES: SLIDING DOORS (1998)

Birgit Woltz, PhD suggested one of her patients the Sliding Doors. Her patient is a girl Sally. (Not her real name).She had problems with her boyfriend. To solve the problems with his boyfriend they used cinema therapy. After Sally watched the movie, she internalized Helen's courage in the movie. Birgit Woltz believed that with the help of the movie of the Sliding Doors; it was easier for Sally to explore her capacity.

COURSES AND SEMINARS CINEMA THERAPY FOR PSYCHOLOGIST PSYCHIATRISTS

Birgit Woltz, PHD gives an online course to psychotherapists. This course gives the information about background of cinema therapy, therapeutic effect of movies, and way of film usage in the therapeutic process.

Also there are other seminars and online courses about cinema therapy in cinemaalchemy.com

CINEMA THERAPY BOOKS BY PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

One of the books which are written by Birgit Woltz, PHD is E-Motion Picture Magic: A Movie Lover's Guide to Healing and Transformation. This book includes movies effect on healing, and releasing negative beliefs, self esteem building, self –discovery by film characters etc.

Another book is Reel Therapy: How Movies Inspire You to Overcome Life's Problems by Gary Solomon. The book consists of two parts. First part includes healing through the movies and second parts includes some of the films such as Angel Heart, Awakenings, Bed of Roses, The Bell Jar. The second book by Gary Solomon is The Motion Picture Prescription: Watch This Movie and Call Me in the Morning: 200 Movies to Help You Heal Life's Problems. This book includes movies as healing stories and some of the films like All That Jazz, Drugstore Cowboy, and Dead Poets Society, Face to Face.

Another book which is written by Dr Fuat Ulus is movie therapy, moving therapy. This book consists of the themes for movie group therapy, movie group therapy process and the information about movie group therapist.

ENGLISH WEB ADDRESSES FOR CINEMA THERAPY

The sites about cinema therapy are www.cinematherapy.com, www.cinemaalchemy.com, www.cinema-therapy.com.

Cinematherapy.com

Cinematherapy.com is the biggest site that gives huge information about movie therapy. Site consists of film index about the disorders, movie reviews; also, this site contains the guidelines for choosing and watching films.

Its members are academicians, administrators, art therapists, behavioral coaches, educators, physicians, psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, therapists.

The movie therapists listed in the site are psychotherapist Frann Altman, PsyD, psychotherapist Sara Fasja, licensed professional counselor and life coach Michael Kahn, psychologist Allan Cooperstein, psychology professor Stuart Fischhoff, psychologist and film scientist Ursula Szabo Henningsson, director and movie therapist Pekka Lehto, psychiatrist Francis Lu, psychotherapist Claire Odeon Hershman, psychologist Debra Margulies, Psychotherapist Frankie Perez, Child & Family Counselor Michael Lee Powell, psychiatrist Michael A. Kalm, behavioral health therapist Tina Murzynski, psychiatrist Frank Sommers, psychiatrist Fuat Ulus and psychotherapist Birgit Woltz, psychotherapist and counselor Bernie Wooder, psycho-social therapist Gert van Veen, social worker Andrea Thomas, youth counselor Robert P. Stanford , clinical psychologist Elicia Seay

In the cinematherapy.com film index consists of the films which are about children, adolescents, family, couples, mental and emotional illnesses, physical illnesses and medical issues.

The site also includes information about cinema therapy group facilitated by Birgit Woltz, PHD. The groups search for characters, metaphors plots in the movies. The aims of the course are understanding emotional themes, creating other ways of thinking or feeling, improving the imagination etc. There are group exercises in the therapy which helps members to explore the hidden unconscious mind.

After the group therapy, members can use the movies powers to inspire them and to find their higher possibilities. The group therapies are held for 12 weeks and limited to eight person. The fee of the therapy is \$35 per session.

The cinematherapy.com site also gives the information about guidelines for choosing films and watching films.

EXPERTS' IDEAS ABOUT CINEMA THERAPY

According to the Dr. Woodrow Donovan cinema therapy opens topic areas that clients can talk.

According to the Nancy Feehan who is film therapist says that to discuss delicate topics by a movie character is easier than directly confronting the client. She also says that movies open the door for people to tuning their own thoughts and feelings.

According to the Marsha Sinetar movies has mystical messages. Using the films which has mystical messages empowers us and help us to gain insight and self-awareness.

The other expert Robert Thomson, thinks that movies are the modern church. He has searched for the messages from the creator. The films are modern way of searching for the message.

According to the Stephen Simon, cinema is a metaphoric way to explore love, meaning of life and death, time, space and future.

James W. Hickey thinks that using motion pictures has more powerful tool than the mere talk and reading. The selection of motion picture is more effective, if the person feel that he has something to say about the movie. Motion picture is a tool for introducing the topic to discuss.

For Stephen S. Pearce films are metaphors for therapy as stories, myths, jokes, fables. Films awake our feelings and have an important effect on carrying out new desired behaviors.

John W. Hesley & Jan G. Hesley uses video work in which therapists and clients discuss the films that are related to the issues of therapy. Films are important for self-understanding and for future therapy.

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