

2009

CONNECTING THROUGH ART: A RELATIONAL-CULTURAL APPROACH TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Tara L.L. Ford

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses>

Recommended Citation

Ford, Tara L.L., "CONNECTING THROUGH ART: A RELATIONAL-CULTURAL APPROACH TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE" (2009). *Digitized Theses*. 3905.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/3905>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

**CONNECTING THROUGH ART:
A RELATIONAL-CULTURAL APPROACH TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

(Spine title: Connecting Through Art)

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Tara L. L. Ford

Graduate Program in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
June 2009

©Tara L. L. Ford 2009

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Chief Advisor

Examination Board

Dr. Susan Rodger

Dr. Anne Cummings

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jacqueline Specht

Dr. Alan Leschied

Dr. Jason Brown

Dr. Jason Brown

The thesis by
Tara L.L. Ford

Entitled

CONNECTING THROUGH ART:
A RELATIONAL-CULTURAL APPROACH TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Counselling Psychology)

Date _____

Chair of Examination Board

Abstract

The current study explored, through the use of art in group therapy and within the theoretical framework of Relational Cultural Theory (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991), the relational experiences of women who have survived Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). A total of 10 women took part in two iterations of the six week art therapy experience. Three research questions guided the study: 1) How did the participants experience art-making and group processing?; 2) How have the participants been affected by the trauma of their IPV experiences?, and; 3) What are the meaning and value of healthy relationships to the participants? Artwork was processed in group. The verbal processing was digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed based on Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological design. From a total of 708 significant statements extracted from the 12 verbatim transcripts, six themes emerged : art as a transitional phenomena, trauma, intimacy, freedom, nurturing, and voice. Results indicate that art gave women who have experienced violence a way to be 'seen and heard', the group experience provided women an opportunity to develop growth-fostering connections, and helped women feel less isolated. Implications for counselling practice and research are discussed.

Key Words: violence against women, art therapy, relational-cultural theory, feminist.

Dedication

Even the smallest person can change the course of the future.

Jackson, P. (Director). (2001). *The lord of the rings: The fellowship of the ring*.
[Motion picture]. United States: New Line Cinema

Acknowledgements

I bow to you, women of the *Bridges* program. Thank you for allowing me to share a very brief moment in your lives. I remain forever awed by your courage, your humour, and your resilience.

Dr. Susan Rodger: thank you. Without you, the *Bridges* program would never have become a reality. Without you, this study, which became a labour of love for me, would never have been written. You have been both task-master and mentor to me. Your passion and dedication inspire me. Your warmth and kindness hearten me.

Dr. Alan Leschied: thank you. You have taught me so much about being an effective counsellor. You listen with your heart. I am a better person for knowing you.

Thank you to my thesis committee: Dr. Anne Cummings, Dr. Jacqueline Specht, Dr. Jason Brown, and John Barnett (Chair of the Examination Board). You created an atmosphere for my thesis defence that was warm, caring, and challenging.

To my friend, Bonnie Burnet: thank you. You encouraged me to listen to the music of these women's voices—not just the lyrics. I love you.

To my friend, Oona Ross-Tiplady: thank you. We have seen many adventures together. A piece of my heart will always be yours.

Thank you, Dr. Karen Scarth, for being a light when all other lights have gone out.

To my father, Russell Hodgson: thank you. You have been patient and supportive throughout this long process. I love you.

And to my husband, Michael Carrier. Love of my life. Heart of my heart. Thank you. For everything.

Table of Contents

	Page
CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	4
Relational Cultural Theory and Ways of Knowing	4
Trauma and Art	6
Art Therapy Groups	7
Method	10
Research Questions	10
Format	10
Participants	11
The Role of the Researcher	13
Procedure: Weekly Art Activities	13
Data Analysis	17
Methodological Rigour	18
Results	19
Question 1: How did the participants experience art-making?	22
Theme 1: Art as Transitional Phenomena.	22
Question 2: How did the participants experience group processing? ..	25
Theme 3: Intimacy	25
Question 3: How were the participants affected by the trauma of their IPV experiences?	30
Theme 2: Trauma	30
Question 4: What were the meaning and value of healthy relationships to the participants?	34
Theme 4: Freedom	34
Theme 5: Nurturing.	37
Theme 6: Voice	40
Discussion	45
Implications for Practice and Future Research	56
Limitations	57
Summary/Conclusion of Discussion	58
References	59
Appendix A: Letter of Information	66
Appendix B	70
Appendix C	72
Curriculum Vitae	84

List of Tables

Table	Title	Page
1	Group Participants (Alphabetical Order)	12
2	Examples of Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings	20
3	Theme Clusters and their Formulated Meanings	21

List of Figures

Figure	Caption	Page
1	Brody. Creative Visualization	24
2	Princess. Abstract Landscape	26
3	Makit. Creative Visualization	31
4	Winter. The Day I Will Never Forget	33
5	Didi. My Garden	35
6	Brody. My Garden	39
7	Priscilla. Creative Visualization	41
8	Priscilla. The Day I Will Never Forget	42
9	Priscilla. My Garden	43

Connecting through Art:

A Relational-Cultural Approach to Intimate Partner Violence

Introduction

*Didi: "I have to leave [the group] at 12 [today].
I'm being picked up. Don't worry. It's not a man." [Group laughs]*

Intimacy has a dark side. The 1993 *Violence Against Women Survey* (VAWS) reported that, of the 12,300 women interviewed, 1 in 4 women had experienced violence at the hands of current or past marital or common-law partners (Statistics Canada). One third of the women who had been victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) believed that, at some point during their abusive relationships, their lives were in danger. Statistics Canada recently released, *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006* (MVAW), an updated report that uses data collected by police agencies. MVAW found that, since the VAWS was published, (a) women—particularly young women—are more likely than men to experience severe forms of IPV, (b) criminal harassment by male partners has increased, (c) incidents of IPV against women has decreased, (d) violence committed by boyfriends has increased, (e) stalking has increased the risk of ex-partner violence, and (f) the risk of IPV and homicide is greater for women in common-law relationships and for women who have separated from their partners. The authors of MVAW cautiously note that their revised statistics may, to some extent, be skewed—particularly the data showing a decrease in IPV against women—because police records were used as source material and incidents of IPV often go unreported. Indeed, research indicates that measuring

the true extent of IPV is difficult. Women worry about embarrassing or shaming their families and many fear that, should they seek help, the IPV will accelerate and their lives will be at risk; therefore, only 37% of abused women report IPV to police and, when physicians do *not* directly ask about IPV, only 25% of women will disclose that they are being abused (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2005; Rodríguez, Sheldon, Bauer, & Pérez-Stable, J., 2001). In addition, IPV intervention programs have improved since 1993 and this may further account for some statistical decrease in incidents of IPV against women. Nevertheless, the demand for programs that provide safety, support, and shelter for abused women, “[continue] to exceed availability as reflected in the fact that some 200 women are turned away from shelters on an average day” (MVAW, 2006, p. 20).

Theoretical schools differ in their approach to the identification, observation, and treatment of IPV. For example, Family Systems advocates suggest that violence is created by familial/systemic influences, Object Relations adherents focus on the developmental pathology of violent individuals, Cognitive Behaviour proponents insist that violence is a socially-learned and self-reinforcing choice, and champions of feminist theories emphasize the sociopolitical principles that sanction and perpetuate violence (Pérez et al., 2007; Corey, 2005; Zosky, 1999). No matter which theoretical model therapists choose to adopt, Pérez et al. (2007) conclude that, when addressing IPV, “clinical efforts need to be directed towards countering emotional withdrawal and social isolation” (p. 73).

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT), a feminist theoretical approach, proposes that healthy relationships develop via “growth-fostering” connections, an active process where differences and conflicts are respectfully addressed through empathy, mutuality, and authenticity (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). When one person in a relationship misunderstands, injures, or violates their less-powerful counterpart—a woman experiencing IPV, for example—disconnection, or the interruption of the growth-fostering bond, occurs (Jordan, 2004). Sustained disconnection creates a *central relational paradox* where the injured woman gradually withdraws aspects of her authentic self from the relationship so that she can remain in the relationship. If the renunciation of her authentic self fails to effect any kind of positive change in the relationship, the woman loses all confidence in her *relational competence*. Discouraged, she engages in *strategies of disconnection* through which she creatively reinvents her “self” to become the woman she thinks her partner wants her to be. Strategies of disconnection offer a means of surviving traumatic encounters with a partner who, at times, may humiliate and/or brutalize a woman. If the relationship continues to deteriorate, the woman will silence her innate desire for connection. She will avoid opportunities to engage in new, potentially growth-fostering relationships because she fears further emotional and/or physical injury by others. Ultimately, chronic disconnection evolves into *condemned isolation*—a state of helplessness, hopelessness, self-blame, and exile (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Therapy informed by RCT helps women living in isolation to move “back into a place of connection where psychological growth can occur once again” (Jordan, 2004, p. 23). To rekindle the desire for connection, women must be given the opportunity to experience mutual empathy and mutual empowerment. Only then, will they feel safe enough to begin sharing their authentic selves with others. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore, through the use of art in group therapy, the relational experiences of women who have survived Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

Literature Review

Relational Cultural Theory and Ways of Knowing

Tannen (1990) maintains that, in a “world of connection where individuals negotiate complex networks of friendship, minimize differences, [and] try to reach consensus...” intimacy is critical (p. 26). Moreover, Jordan et al. (1991), the architects of RCT, believe that authentic, healthy, intimate connections enable emotional and spiritual growth. When women are mutually empathic and mutually empowering with each other, they experience what Miller (1988) calls the *five good things*: (a) increased zest (vitality), (b) increased empowerment (the ability to effect change within a relationship), (c) increased clarity (greater understanding of self, others, and relationships), (d) increased self-worth, and (e) a desire to develop more growth-fostering relationships. These five good things are, according to RCT, the foundation for transformation and healing.

When a woman's sense of disconnection is met with empathy and she feels empowered enough to be authentic, her relationship with the abuser is strengthened and she then becomes more confident in her ability to maintain intimacy with others. Conflict and injury thus become opportunities for healing and growth. On the other hand, isolation will likely occur if a woman is afraid to express her real feelings and opinions, if she is violated again, and/or if the abuser is indifferent to her perception of what has happened.

Feminist scholars propose that, because white males occupy most of the positions of power and privilege in our society, they are able to culturally define what is "normal" and what is "deviant." Therefore, if white males determine that independence, competition, and empiricism are "normal," then it follows that women, who find meaning through connection, collaboration, and personal experience, are "deviant" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). In a society where women's ways of knowing are considered aberrant, women come to believe that they cannot trust their own experiences. When women feel that they cannot express their authentic opinions without being dismissed, ridiculed, or attacked, they fall silent—they become submissive listeners and receivers of knowledge, rather than individuals with voices and truths of their own.

Gilligan (1992) argues that the anomalous data emerging from research focusing on girls and women are not evidence of female deviance; rather, these discordant conclusions indicate flaws in the developmental and psychological theories/measurements themselves. The antidote for being labelled deviant and the imposed silence that it incurs, according to Belenky et al. (1986), is to

encourage women to construct a way of interacting with the world that is collaborative, reciprocal, and accepting. Specifically, they argue that women need to develop mutually empathic and mutually empowering connections through speaking and listening, connecting and analyzing, and respecting the opinions of one's self and others, even through conflict.

Trauma and Art

Priscilla: "That's why I always [draw] a big tree.
That's what it's about. My big tree. I see myself. Me there. Alive."

Research indicates that, when an individual experiences psychological trauma, the brain organizes and stores the event not as a verbal narrative, but as a series of images (Simonds, 1994; Horowitz, 1978). The "very nature of a traumatic memory," states van der Kolk (2007), "is to be dissociated, and [the event] is stored initially as sensory fragments that have no linguistic components" (p. 289). Art can act as a symbolic language that safely recalls, translates, and communicates the chaotic and terrifying images of a traumatic event (Curtis, 2005).

Malchiodi (1990) suggests that, from the beginning, humans have felt compelled to create art in order, "to alleviate or contain feelings of trauma, fear, anxiety, and psychological threats to the self and the community" (p. 5). The act of processing artwork—that is, describing, exploring, and interpreting images—is crucial when working with trauma survivors. Art can become a bridge between the outside world (that which is spoken, known, and conscious) and a trauma survivor's inner existence (that which is unspoken, unknown, and unconscious). The connection between the spoken word and the unspoken image is key.

Indeed, a perpetually symbiotic relationship between visual processing and verbal processing lies at the heart of art therapy. For example, in their interpretation of Paivio's (1991) *Dual Coding Theory*, Mayer & Sims (1994) assert that "verbal material can evoke the construction of visual representations, and visual material can evoke the construction of verbal representations" (p. 390). Synthesizing these visual and verbal representations allows the disconnected images of a traumatic event to be placed within the framework of a cohesive, chronological narrative—a narrative that often helps survivors make some kind of meaning out of their experiences (Rothschild, 2000).

Art Therapy Groups

Experts seem to agree that the cornerstone of group therapy is relational cohesion (Singh & Hays, 2008; Comstock, Duffey, & St. George, 2002; Yalom, 1995). In fact, Kelly (2006) insists that group work, "[breaks] the isolation so often associated with abuse [and that it provides] benefits that cannot be duplicated in individual treatment [in a way that is] consistent with the underpinnings of a feminist theoretical perspective" (p. 100). Similarly, Züst (2006) believes that the most effective way to reduce the impact of IPV is through the development/implementation of group interventions that empower women to develop healthy relationships.

Art is, by nature, an invitation to intimacy. Through the intentional "communication of subjective knowledge," art-makers and art-observers form a collaborative bond—a synergistic relationship where knowing becomes telling (Gardner, 1994; Leight, 2002). Stout (1999) suggests that, "the arts, with their

inextricable ties to the imagination, have the capacity to provide an unlimited source of possibilities for connecting self to other and for creating a disposition for sympathetic awareness" (p. 22). Art in therapy is an intuitive approach to group work that helps participants gain "a clearer perception of themselves in society" (Leight, 2002; Hogan, 1997). Group art therapy, "allows women to connect to themselves, their history, [and] their significant personal and cultural symbols, without fear of challenge, confrontation or even the expectation of having to say too much" (Anderson & Gold, 1998, p. 33).

Belenky et al. (1986) argue that oral or written language is necessary for reflection to occur. They insist that, without verbal exchange, people remain isolated from themselves and from one another. Talking about a traumatic experience can, indeed, become an important part of healing; however, verbal processing requires a certain degree linguistic competence. Art has the advantage of being a universal form of communication: it does not require proficiency in any given language. Combining art-making and verbal processing gives survivors an opportunity to visually represent their thoughts, feelings, and experiences while maintaining control over what and how much they say about their art.

In the aftermath of traumatic events, most survivors will try to find meaning in what has happened. They begin questioning their identity, their relationships, and their place in world. Enosh and Buchbinder (2005) maintain that, when survivors try to, "integrate the experiences in their memory systems or schemas, they are torn between two conflicting goals: the need to recollect and process

those memories and the need to distance themselves and forget or detach from the pain and threat involved in these memories” (p. 10-11). Survivors who need/desire emotional containment may use their artwork as a “transitional object”—an anxiety-reducing *not-me* object that acts as a repository for experiences—thereby ensuring a degree of emotional distance from any revelations which they are not yet ready to acknowledge or address (McMurray, Schwartz-Mirman, & Maizel, 2000; Malchiodi, 1988; Winnicott, 1971; Molloy, 1997; Meekums, 2006; Waller, 1992; Wadeson, 1995).

In addition, art therapy groups foster the development of self-esteem through pride associated with successful task accomplishment (Brooke, 1995). The tangible nature of the artwork also allows both participant and therapist to observe patterns and themes that emerge over time, chronicling the growth and transformation of its maker (Curtis, 2005; Anderson & Gold, 1998).

Finally, ensuring participants’ emotional and physical safety must always be paramount when working with trauma survivors (Meekums, 2006; Hagood, 2000, Herman, 1992). Once a sense of safety and trust have been established, group members often feel less isolated, experiencing (perhaps for the first time) a sense of belonging and community. This desire for connection is, according to Curtis (2005), an indicator of a survivor’s readiness to begin the healing process. Thus, the primary goal of group art therapy with IPV survivors is to seek out and nurture the voices of women who have been silenced in the wake of senseless and unspeakable events (Wylie, 2004; Herman, 1992).

Method

Phenomenology cultivates awareness of some of the lived experiences of a study's participants, allowing theoretical approaches to be translated more readily into clinical practice. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore, through the use of art in group therapy, the relational and cultural experiences of women who have survived IPV. Currently, research that focuses on how female survivors of IPV understand and experience healthy connections is extremely limited.

Research Questions

The following questions helped to define the phenomenon being studied:

1. How did the participants experience art-making?
2. How did the participants experience group processing?
3. How were participants affected by the trauma of their IPV experiences?
4. What was the meaning and value of healthy relationships to the participants?

Format

Two separate art therapy groups were conducted in 2008. Each group met for 1.5 hours, one time per week for six weeks. The first group began in May and continued until mid-June. The second group began in September and continued through into October. Each group had different participants, but the session structure and art activities remained the same for both groups.

Participants

This study used a convenience sample. Women enrolled in the *Bridges: Women's Link to Learning and Success* project (Southwestern Ontario) were eligible to participate in the six week group art therapy intervention. The inclusion criteria for this study were identical to the criteria for the *Bridges* project; specifically, participants were women who (a) did not have a high school diploma, (b) had experienced or were experiencing IPV, and (c) were 18 to 65 years old. Candidates were required to have the ability to articulate their lived experiences in order to participate. The Letter of Information appears in Appendix A.

Because the women were free to accept or decline the invitation to participate in this intervention, the number of participants in each group varied from session to session. Throughout the six weeks, each group had a maximum attendance of five participants and a minimum attendance of two participants. The participants ranged in age from 22 to 51, with a mean age of 36.2. Nine of the ten participants were Caucasian with English being their first language. One woman was Latina with English being her second language. Seven participants were single and three participants were in long-term intimate, monogamous, heterosexual relationships.

The weekly sessions took place during a self-study period in the *Bridges* classroom. Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board at the University of Western Ontario (see Appendix B). Each participant chose her own pseudonym to maintain anonymity.

Table 1

Group Participants (Alphabetical Order)

<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>
<i>Makit</i>	<i>Bob</i>
<i>Cleo</i>	<i>Ashlee</i>
<i>Pixie</i>	<i>Brody</i>
<i>Princess</i>	<i>Didi</i>
<i>Priscilla</i>	<i>Winter</i>

The Role of the Researcher

The International Development Research Centre considers the researcher to be "the key instrument" for any qualitative study because, "all the research methods...are heavily dependent on the researcher as interviewer, observer, facilitator, communicator, and interpreter of data....all data is filtered through the researcher" (2009). Therefore, I feel that it is important for the reader to know that I have post-graduate training in art therapy and counselling psychology. I have worked as an art therapist for the past 10 years and, thus, have come to believe in the efficacy of art as a counselling tool. I have some (but not extensive) clinical experience working with women who have survived Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and I have never used the Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) model before I began this study. I am a woman. I am a feminist. And, I deplore violence of any kind.

Procedure: Weekly Art Activities

The art activities for both groups were identical in content and order. Art tasks were usually assigned within the first 15 minutes of each 1.5 hour session. After I described the activity for the group, most participants completed their tasks within 30 minutes. Artwork was processed during the remaining 45 minutes, using two set rules to maintain safety and containment—participants were asked to be respectful of one another and they were asked to use non-intrusive, non-judgemental questions and/or comments. I would generally start the processing portion of the session by asking for a volunteer participant to

describe her drawing for the group. Participants would then ask questions or make comments about the volunteer's drawing. When the group finished processing the first drawing, I would continue asking for volunteers until every participant who was willing to share her drawing had the opportunity to process it with the group. The art tasks for the first three sessions were designed to enhance safety, build trust, and explore participants' thoughts, feelings, dreams, and hopes. The fourth art task was purposely evocative, giving participants the opportunity to share core concerns and traumatic memories should they feel inclined to do so. The final two art tasks were used to identify participants' strengths and to celebrate the connections made in each group.

Session 1: Name Card with Symbols

Goals: establish a positive, non-threatening therapeutic environment; gather information about participants' lives; foster communication and group cohesion; identify themes to be explored in later sessions.

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Choice of markers, crayons, pencil crayons.

Instructions: Fold the paper in half. Write your name on one side. Fill the space around your name with symbols that represent what you like and/or what is important to you.

Session 2: Creative Visualization

Goals: identify and explore themes important to participants; safely externalize thoughts, feelings, wishes, and needs; decrease stress, anxiety, and fear; increase calm, peace, and tranquillity.

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Choice of markers, crayons, pencil crayons.

Instructions: Participants engage in a relaxation/deep breathing exercise prior to guided imagery exercise. **Synopsis of Creative Visualization:** *Participant is standing in a big room with no furniture. She finds a piece of chalk in her pocket and uses the chalk to draw a door on the wall. The door magically opens when she turns the handle. She goes through the door and follows a pathway to a forest where she sees a deer. As she continues to walk, she sees an object in the distance. When she gets closer to the object, she realizes that object is another door. She opens door. Visualization ends. Participants are asked to draw what they saw when they opened the second door.*

Session 3: Abstract Landscape

Goals: decrease fear of judgement and criticism by peers due to perceived lack of artistic abilities; create a symbolic representation of thoughts and feelings; view self and experiences in a fresh way.

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Choice of markers, crayons, pencil crayons

Instructions: Draw an abstract (non-representational) picture of a landscape of your choosing. [After the drawings are complete, ask participants to draw themselves into their landscapes.]

Session 4: The Day I Will Never Forget (Chicot, 2007)

Goals: ensure that the choice of unforgettable day remains within the participant's control; should a participant draw a trauma-related picture, provide

support during processing by helping participant to maintain safety/containment and, if possible, create a narrative for "sensory fragments that have no linguistic components" (van der Kolk, 2007).

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Choice of markers, crayons, pencil crayons.,

Instructions: "Draw the day you will never forget. It can be any day in your life" (Chicot, 159).

Session 5: My Garden

Goals: create a safe place; foster a sense of control; facilitate expression and communication of meaningful issues and conflicts.

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Choice of markers, crayons, pencil crayons.,

Instructions: Draw a picture called, *My Garden*. While you're drawing your picture, think about what you want to plant in your garden, who you will let into your garden, and how you will protect your garden.

Session 6: Group Collage

Goals: celebrate group's therapeutic gains; honour the connections that were strengthened through the art and stories that participants shared; create a positive termination experience.

Art Materials: One 9" x 12" sheet of watercolour paper per participant. Pastels.

Instructions: Before participants arrive, cut an 8.5" x 11" size copy of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* into the number of squares that match the number of participants engaging in the exercise. Do not tell participants that, together, the squares

create a whole picture. Ask participants to copy the colours and shapes of their piece of the dismembered painting onto a piece of 9" x 12" blank watercolour paper. When participants have finished colouring, have them put their drawings together to make a replica of the original Van Gogh painting.

Data Analysis

I asked participants in both groups—and verbal consent was granted—for permission (a) to make an audio recording of each of the six sessions and (b) to copy, scan, or photograph all artwork produced. During the course of each of the two groups, I made note of my personal observations and reflections regarding the art-making process and the insights I formulated as participants discussed their drawings.

The method used to analyze participants' verbatim transcripts for this study was based on Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological design, complemented by Creswell's (2007) and Sanders' (2003) interpretive guides. Colaizzi's (1978) seven steps for data analysis are: (a) develop a sense of the lived experiences of each participant by reading and re-reading all of the transcripts' narrative descriptions, (b) extract significant statements and phrases from the transcripts, (c) formulate general meanings from the significant statements and phrases, (d) cluster meanings into themes, (e) integrate all results into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, (f) describe the fundamental structure of the phenomenon and (g) return the findings to the participants for validation. For an example of one session's extracted significant statements and the emergent themes, please see Appendix C.

Methodological Rigour

As Creswell (2007) and Sanders (2003) have suggested, I followed a set list of criteria in order to demonstrate the trustworthiness and reliability of this study. For example, I used Colaizzi's (1978) method—an accepted approach to qualitative data analysis. I made every effort to, “describe and demonstrate a clear audit trail of decisions taken during the data collection and analysis process” and to be transparent about my, “role, thoughts, feelings, and reflections to promote the credibility” of my study (Sanders, 2003, p. 293).

I spent the past year listening to the sessions recorded for this study and I reviewed the transcripts to ensure that they accurately communicated the meaning and context of participants' statements. As Colaizzi (1978) requests, I honed my “tolerance for ambiguity” to prevent the “temptations of ignoring data or themes which don't fit, or of prematurely generating a theory...” (p.61).

I clearly articulated the phenomenon I set forth to study: to explore, through the use of art in group therapy, the relational and cultural experiences of women who have survived IPV. I also consulted frequently with my advisor and colleagues to ensure that my findings were evaluated in an open and inquiring manner by my peers. I respected the relationship between the data and my interpretations, ensuring that each step built upon the one preceding it to achieve a desired degree of accuracy.

Results

The current study was conducted to explore, through the use of art in group therapy, the relational experiences of women who have survived Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The lived experiences of participants were examined as they took part in a six-week art therapy intervention which sought to answer four research questions:

1. How did the participants experience art-making?
2. How did the participants experience group processing?
3. How were participants affected by the trauma of their IPV experiences?
4. What were the meaning and value of healthy relationships to participants?

Using the weekly activities schedule mentioned in the previous section, participants engaged in group processing of their artwork, the production of which was guided by instructions of the researcher. Sessions were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed.

708 significant statements were extracted from 12 verbatim transcripts. *Table 2* provides three examples of the significant statements and their formulated meanings. *Table 3* presents the theme clusters that developed during the analysis of the transcripts. In total, six prominent theme clusters emerged: *art as a transitional object; trauma; intimacy; freedom; nurturing; and voice.*

Table 2

Examples of Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
<p>Cleo: It's trying new things...is the biggest thing. It's not being scared....somebody taught me a long, long, long time ago...I was young...it was one of my first boyfriends...he was Chinese and his family <i>hated</i> me. Just because I was white. But it wasn't so much that they hated <i>me</i>...it was just the whole fact of us being together and I learned that years later.</p>	<p>Mastering fears and embracing new experiences encourages connection, empathy, and acceptance of cultural and physical differences.</p>
<p>Makit: ...when I was a kid, my main thing was my parents. And...being hungry all the time, you know? So, I'd go to neighbours' houses and...a lot of the times, if my mom couldn't find a babysitter and [my parents] wanted to go out, [my mom would] either just leave me with my older sister who's only four years older than me, or I'd just go to whoever. And my dad was a drug addict and my mom was an alcoholic. So you can just guess what their friends were like. So that's my main thing. That's why I [babysit other people's] kids...because I remember being hungry.</p>	<p>Traumatic events—especially those involving deprivation of basic needs during childhood—change the way one views the world.</p>
<p>Pixie: ...[my boyfriend] doesn't pretend to be something else....he's the type who just comes out with it. If he's got a problem, he'll tell you....I can't say that he doesn't yell. We've gotten into yelling matches, but...he doesn't get physical. That's one thing I like about him.</p>	<p>Honesty, respect, and safety encourage the development of healthy relationships .</p>

Table 3

Theme Clusters and their Formulated Meanings

Art as Transitional Phenomena		Trauma	
Subjective/Objective Space		Fear	Helplessness
Distancing (self from artwork)		Guilt/Regret	Anger
Creative Expression		Grief	Violence
Imagination/Fun/Safety		Blame	Hopelessness
Clarity		Shame	Isolation
Growth (development of voice)		Conflict	Rejection
Less Censorship (in art versus talk)		Judgement	Health/Addiction
Intimacy		Freedom	
Trust	Narrating	Survival	Exploration
Empathy	Reciprocity	Empowerment	Travel
Support/Teaching	Validation	Independence	Money
Authenticity	Approval	Space	
Witnessing	Love/Belonging		
Nurturing		Voice	
Comfort/Peace	Adventure	Identity	Meaning/Purpose
Coping	Spirituality	Culture	Personal Significance
Learning	Nature	Esteem/Pride	
Food	Laughter	Honesty	Time: Past, Present, Future
Pleasure	Humour		

Question 1: How did participants experience art-making?

Theme 1: Art as transitional phenomena

In this theme cluster, participants expressed a common interest in the idea of creative expression and the art-making process. Priscilla remarked, "I love drawing. It's relaxing. When it's a bad situation, I try to colour." Princess observed that she would, "have to be nice and not skip school" so that she could continue attending the art therapy group. Pixie stated that, "it is fun to draw...[drawing] Takes out the frustration," then later suggested that, "We've got to make [the art therapy group] longer next year. That would give us more time instead of hurrying through." Didi reported that, "lately, I'm trying to study art."

Nevertheless, participants revealed that they were also feeling vulnerable due to their perceived lack of artistic skills. For example, after telling the group, "You're not allowed to make fun of my goofy animal drawings," Princess attempted to moderate her discomfort by noting, "Do you know how many years it's been since I've drawn a horse? I had them down pat. Now...I haven't thought about sketching a horse." To which Pixie replied, "Mine's not any better." Pixie went on to explain that, "Whenever I colour something, I get frustrated. [My drawing] never turns out the way I wanted it to. So I get angry at it." Makit asserted, "I'm not a very good artist" and Bob insisted that, "That's the extent of my artistic skills. That's it. [The rabbit] was just something I could draw." Brody remarked, "[My drawing] is horrible" and Winter stated that, "I don't think [my drawing] is very good, myself." At one point, Didi concluded that her drawing looked, "like a porta-potty."

Participants further observed that they were sometimes unable to identify the *internal* meaning of their *external* drawings. During the *Creative Visualization* exercise, for example, Priscilla stated that she had not seen the deer that had been described; rather, she “was seeing a cross. I don’t know why. A black cross.” Similarly, after Makit had drawn, “Darkness. And...blood and sad and scared faces” she advised the group, “I tried to think of something...but nothing came. I tried to think of something else.” When asked to describe her drawing, Bob declared, “Give me a minute. I can make some real bullshit up here.”

In addition, some participants described their drawings and stories in a way that clearly separated the artist/storyteller (*me*) from their artwork/narratives (*not-me*). For example, Brody said, “[I told my boyfriend] ‘Have you ever heard of psychosis....I don’t have it but, *it* could snap....You could have come home. I could have been dead. My daughter could have been dead. My cat could have been dead.’...He [said], ‘Are you saying that you’re going to kill you daughter?’ [I said], ‘No! But...*it* happens. People snap and *stuff* happens.” [my italics]. Brody explained to the group that she was feeling upset because, “[My roommate] asked me if I wanted to go [to the bar] and...I can’t drop everything and go. I have a daughter. Even though this [past] weekend was my birthday. I just...I couldn’t. And, then...my boyfriend’s like, ‘Oh, well...I’ll go.’ And I’m like, ‘You’re going to the bar with *my* friend on *my* birthday... [and] they’re, like, ‘You have no right to be mad. Like, can’t we be friends?’ I’m like, ‘Yah, you can be friends, but you don’t *ditch* me. And you don’t go with [my boyfriend].’”

After listening to the *Creative Visualization* exercise, Brody observed that, “[My picture feels angry for me...there’s a lot of sharp lines...And scribbling” [my italics]. Brody’s picture (see below) represents how “angry” she felt when her roommate and her boyfriend left her alone on her birthday.

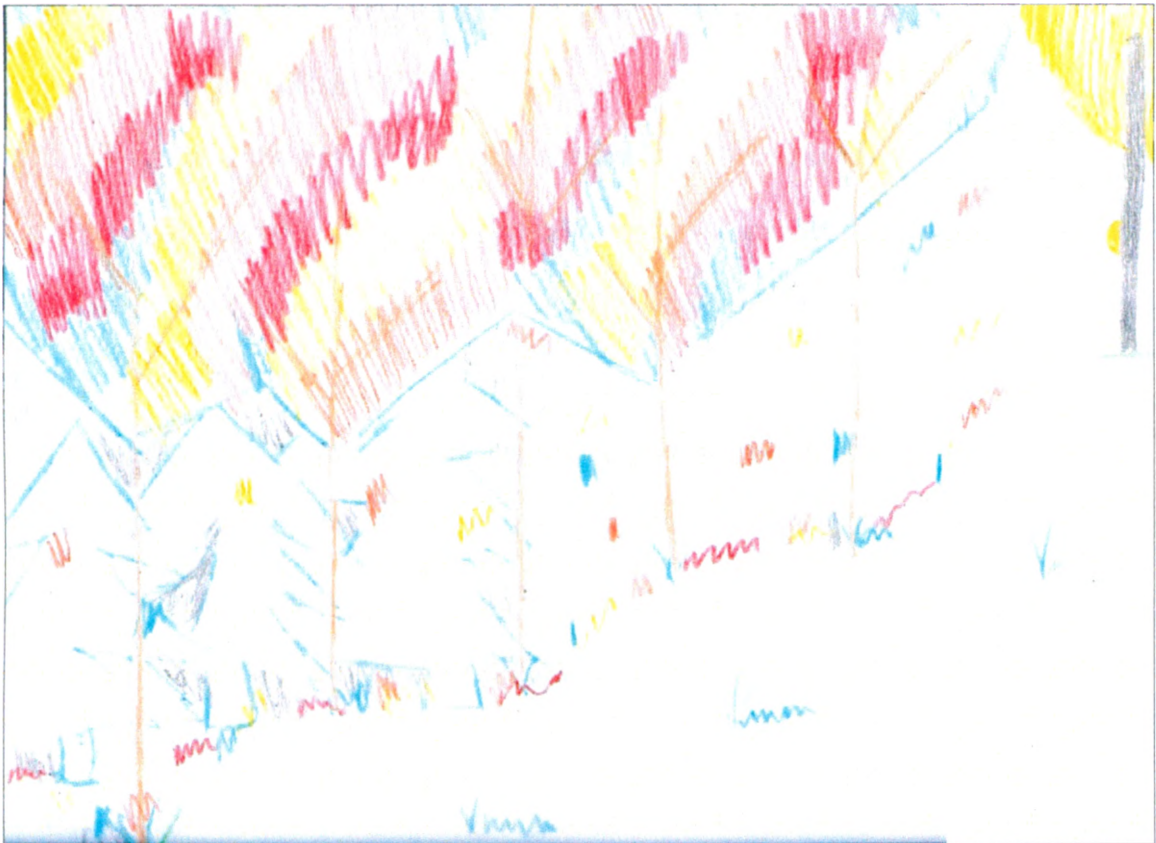


Figure 1. Brody. Creative Visualization

Similarly, Didi alternated between a first person narrative and a third person narrative as she interpreted one of her drawings for the group: "Actually, I got through the phone call...this was a very big thing that *Didi* had to go through....I had to make a phone call to Victim's Service....[Telling them] What happened to me in the past. And *Didi's* doing something about it." [my italics]

Question 2: How did participants experience group processing?

Theme 3: Intimacy

Trust and the need for love and belonging—conditions which are absent in abusive relationships—dominated the participants' experiences within this theme. Of these two components, trust was the issue that evoked the most passion during group processing.

Because participants had spent a considerable amount of time together in the *Bridges* program prior to the commencement of the art therapy groups, some trusting bonds had already formed. For example, Makit observed that the *Bridges* program is, "a different setting cause all of us here have experienced some sort of trust issues. Even when I first came...here, I was still a little wary of who I was going to meet....Princess, she gives me back friendship and someone to talk to. And that one time, that one time she saw me cry. Not too many people have seen me cry....But [Princess] came over and...I don't even want to talk about it...Like, yah...I give back what she gives me back."

During the *Abstract Landscape* activity, Princess drew a picture of herself with her arms wide open (see below). Makit interpreted this action as Princess offering, "a big hug." However, Princess quickly redressed Makit's analysis, stating that she was not offering a hug; rather, she was letting others know that, "This is my [personal] space." Makit saw love and belonging where Princess saw lack of trust.



Figure 2. Princess. Abstract Landscape

In a similar vein, Makit stated that, "I'm trying to put [my appreciation for Priscilla] into words. [To Priscilla:] I like that you compliment people all the time. You try to make people feel better. I couldn't put it into a smaller word. She really tries to give people confidence." Didi added that, "It helps [to have] good supportive friends...I never thought...'I could [call Victim's Services]!'...but with the support, I figured... Something's got to be done." Winter also assured Brody that, "You're okay alone [without your boyfriend]. You'll be fine. You're not alone. You live in an apartment with a daughter....You have adult people around here [at the *Bridges* program]. We may not be great sometimes [laughs]...but we're here."

Initially, participants were cautious about trusting me—someone they did not know, someone whose motives they often questioned. For example, when I asked the participants to draw an *Abstract Landscape*, Makit remarked, "I don't like abstract, but I'm going to do it just because she wants us to." During the Creative Visualization, Ashlee asked, "Is this [exercise] supposed to mean something?" When I asked Priscilla a question about her *The Day I Will Never Forget* drawing, she anxiously stated, "How can I see myself in the mirror, but not on the bed?...I didn't even put myself on the bed. Wait a minute! What does that mean?!" Winter was also wary of my intentions when she remarked, "And, so...your theory on us now is...?...You're the art therapist. What does [my drawing] say in therapy?" Bob, the participant who was most skeptical of my motives, told Brody that, "[That abstract painting is] messing with your mind. Cause if you're seeing something that really isn't there, then she [the art

therapist] can sit there and go, 'Hee, hee, hee. See! I won.'" Later in the session, when I asked Bob how she felt when she looked at Brody's painting, Bob replied, "How are we supposed to feel?"

Participants suggested reasons why they were unwilling to offer their trust freely to others. Makit proposed that, "I won't give you that chance to hurt me or to break my trust because I don't already trust you....some days, I get in those moods that I feel like the glass is half full. But most of the time, it's half empty for me. I'm not forgiving. I'm not trusting of anybody. I don't see the good in people.....If I need help, I won't ask for it....You just can't go on trusting everybody because that's how you get hurt. That's how you get knocked down." Makit added that, "I don't like it when people compliment me sometimes because it makes me think, 'What are you after?' 'Why are you telling me this?' 'You're lying.' Especially if I don't know them that well." Moreover, Priscilla identified that, "when you really think you have a friend and you...trust them with something and then you find out they've told another friend...you say...'Why are you doing this?' That's when you're trying to be yourself and something happens and it's, 'Wait a minute! I cannot be myself anymore.'"

The need for love and belonging was also evident in this theme. Makit informed the group that, "I still strive to make [my mom] proud of me and happy....I talk to her on the phone and I still want her to say, 'You're doing a good job, Makit. I love you, Makit....Now that she's started to say, 'I love you'...I still feel like I want more...I want her to apologize...I want her to feel sorry [for what she did]." Makit reported, "I give [my daughter] hugs all the time. And she

always lets go [first]....My mom is the one that didn't...she would let go first....And I give [my daughter] kisses all the time. I tell her I love her. And I tell her that she was always wanted and I...want her here."

Similarly, Princess wondered, "What could I do to change things so that [my mom] would be proud of me? I know that I haven't had the best of lifestyles. I've been in abusive relationships. She doesn't know exactly everything that I've gone through....[but] I don't compare my children [like my mom does with my sister and me]....I'm always telling them, 'I love you, I love you, I love you.' Showing it in more ways than one. But...if only I could [say]...to my mom...'This is what a mom should be doing. Not what you did.' I think I've made a difference....I don't say to [my daughter], 'You're dumb. You're stupid.'...It's hard, though, to break that cycle...I've had lots of support...though."

The development of growth-fostering friendships was also an important piece of the intimacy theme. Pixie emphasized that, "[The women at the *Bridges* program] are the only girlfriends I have....For me, it was harder to communicate with women cause I was raised around boys....But, now, I wouldn't trade my girlfriends for anything....There's a few of them that have made a big impact on my life and they were there when I needed them....my guy friends aren't into the whole emotional breakdown...thing....[but] With my girlfriends, they know [about having emotional breakdowns] and they don't leave until I'm over it....They're a support for me emotionally....I hope [the *Bridges* program] never ends....It's just nice to go somewhere [and] you know they're all going to be there."

Question 3. How were participants affected by the trauma of their IPV experiences?

Theme 2: Trauma

The most compelling aspect of this theme was how trauma has affected the lives and the relationships of the participants. Makit, who admitted that she is “very protective” of her children, recounted that, “when I was a kid, my main thing was my parents. And...being hungry all the time...[and] if my mom couldn’t find a babysitter and [my parents] wanted to go out, [my mom would] either just leave me with my older sister who’s only four years older than me, or I’d just go to whoever. And my dad was a drug addict and my mom was an alcoholic. So you can just guess what their friends were like.” Makit later mused, “I always wonder why. What happened?...was it me or is it because of her own baggage...if I was never born, would [my mom] be happy?”

The drawing (see below) that Makit made after listening to the *Creative Visualization* exercise, was filled with images of “blood” and “sad,” “scared,” “shocked” faces. When the faces “started to come outside,” Makit closed the door.

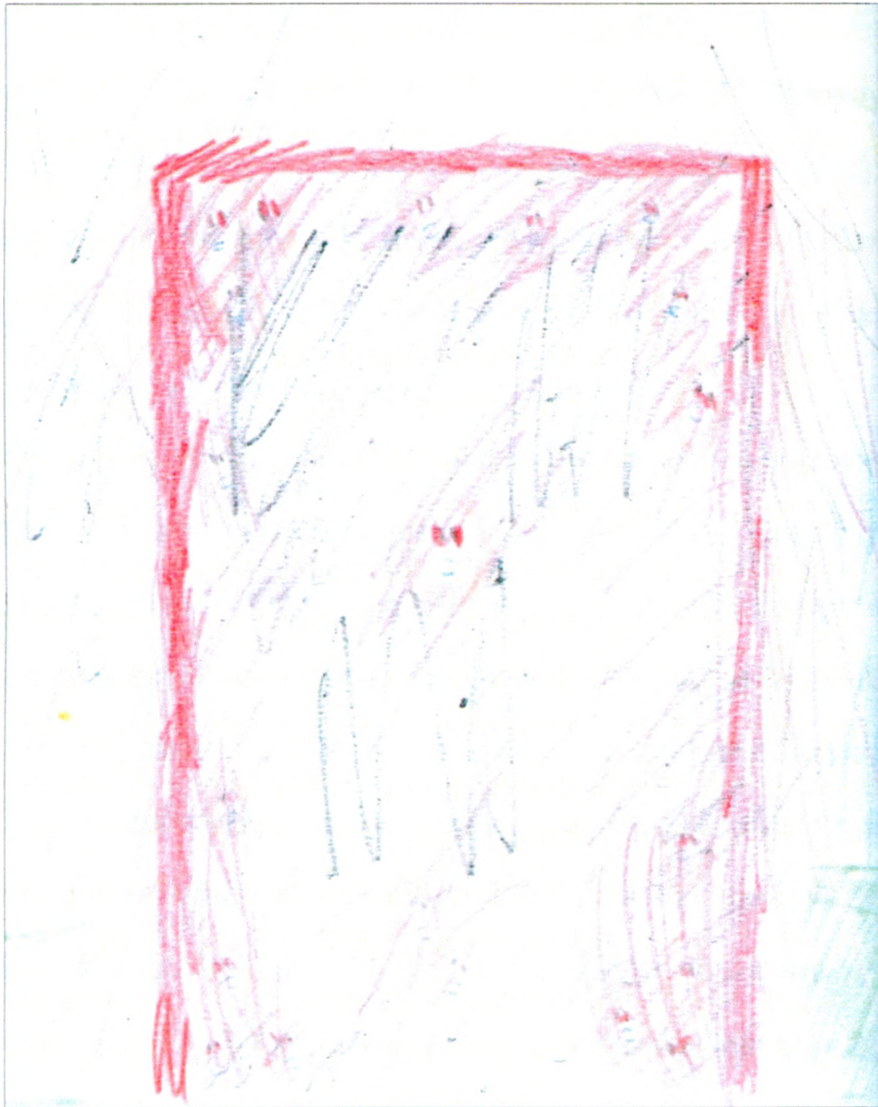


Figure 3. Makit. Creative Visualization

Princess—who has a daughter who is “mentally challenged”—insisted that, “I’m not that great of a mom...” and “I hate clingy people....Even with my kids....If I can touch you, you’re too close.” Princess later revealed that, “I had every [material] thing I wanted [when I was growing up]....But I never had my mom say I love you....I’m lucky if I get a half-hug...a one handed [hug].” Princess concluded that her daughter, “has been through quite a bit. Quite a bit with her dad and...a lot of changes...but...[my children have] survived.” Similarly, Didi reasoned that, “I love [my grandchildren] all the same. I tell them [that]. But, you wonder what goes through the kids’ minds. Why do they say that [I don’t love one as much as the other]?...[then] you look at the way you were raised from your own mother...[and] you see signs.”

Winter recalled the time that, “my sisters and brothers were looking after [my] mom at her house and they messed up her medication...And my mom...she would protect my sisters and brothers. And do I hate them? I do hate them all. [Winter begins to cry]. I hate myself more because...the nurse [at the hospital] comes in...and she says...’Oh, there’s a form here for resuscitate or not [that] has to be signed.’ [Winter continues to cry] I said, ‘Oh, I’ll sign it.’ And I signed it and [right after I signed the form, my mom] died....My mom and I had lots of ups and downs. And we fought like crazy, I mean...horrible fights. But she was my mom and that’s all I ever had. She’s gone. And there isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t miss her. And I’m sorry for every fight we ever had. That..is the day I’ll never forget. [Crying, Winter whispers] Sorry.”

As seen below, the starkness of Winter's drawing does not match the intensity of the anger, guilt, and grief she exhibited as she described the day her mother died.

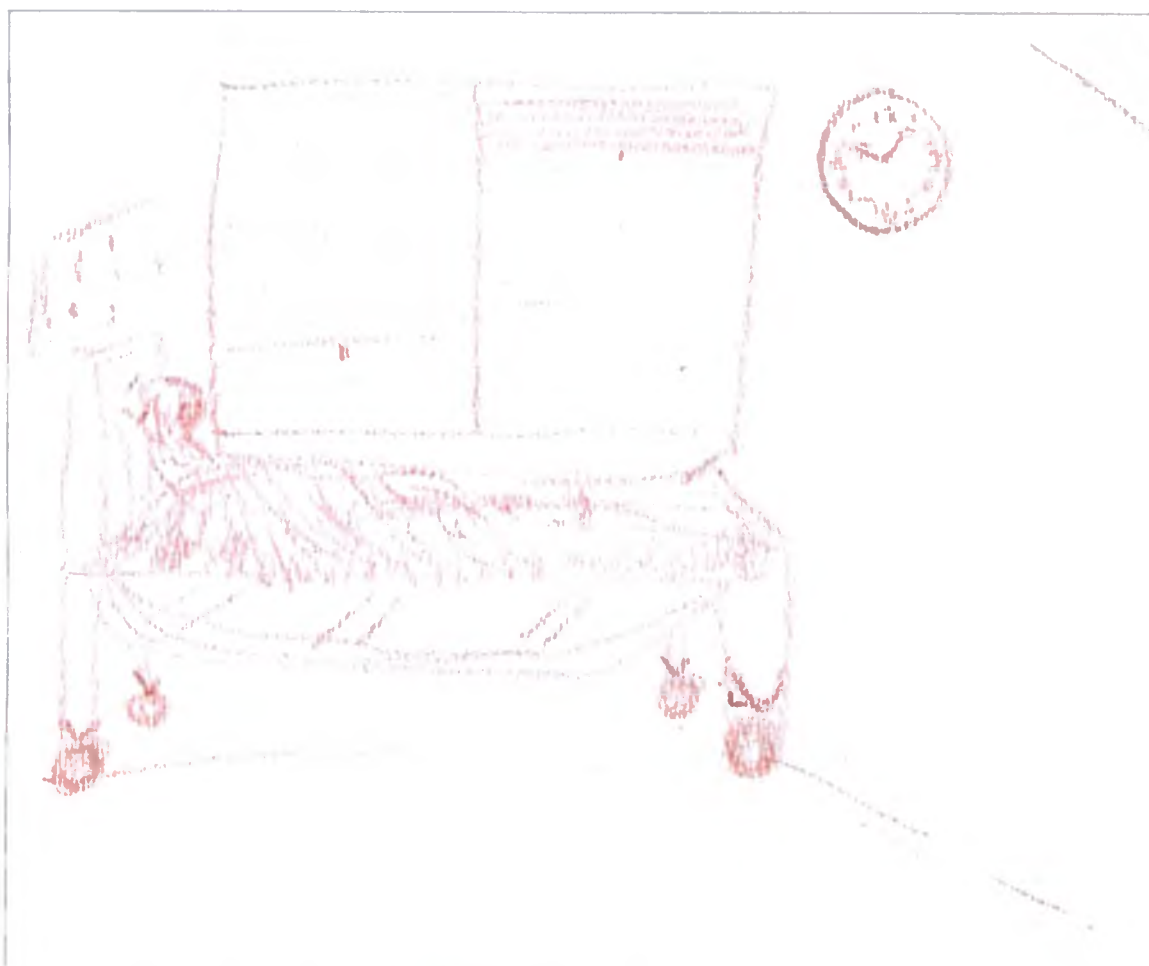


Figure 4. Winter. The Day I Will Never Forget

Priscilla revealed that, “[My sons] are saying, ‘You [made] our dad leave us....You were not doing [what you should have done]...when [our dad] asked you to do something.’” However, Priscilla observed that, “I always tell [my sons], ‘I love you. No matter what you say, I still love you. You’re my son. You’re part of me.’ That’s how I think. I’m trying to be positive. Not just negative stuff.”

Brody advised the group that, “I punched my boyfriend in the face the other day because he screamed at me [and] woke my daughter up...because I grew up in a family...[where] when you’re pissed off, you just beat the shit out of each other. And I know it’s wrong...But when someone’s screaming at me, it’s like I black out. I’m aware of what I’m doing, but...there’s no thought....It’s fight or flight. I fight. I don’t think, ‘Oh, I’m going to punch you in the face.’ I just do it.” Brody stated later that, “I just don’t feel anymore....About much of anything.”

Ashlee similarly insisted that, “It takes a lot to get me pissed off, but when I’m pissed off, I’m a very [vengeful person]...Paybacks are a bitch. That’s how I think of it.” Winter concurred, asserting that, “I have gone after somebody. I don’t give a shit. I’ve taken a shovel after them. I’ve taken a knife. And I’ve used them. I don’t care. I’ll protect myself. I don’t care what I use.”

Question 4: What were the meaning and value of healthy relationships to participants?

Theme 4: Freedom

Three forms of freedom emerged during the development of this theme: physical, emotional, and financial. While talking about her *Creative Visualization* drawing, Priscilla experienced physical freedom: “I was flying. And I just [had] on

this sheer...see through night gown. I...[had] nothing on because I [wanted] to see myself just flying. [Flying felt] Like freedom. Nobody [to] tell me...'Hey! You're not wearing clothes!' I was flying, flying and I [couldn't] stop."

Didi described a similar experience as she talked about her *My Garden* drawing (see below): "I'm on one of those swings....The black [birds] are the black hawks. You can see a field of them...it's a sign of luck....maybe when I'm gone I'll imagine I'm a black hawk." Didi revealed that, "When I used to drive, I would drive back roads and find the trees. It's so funny. [Didi laughs] I've always wanted just to run free in the field....Butt naked....Just no one could see me."



Figure 5. Didi. My Garden

Explaining how she came to terms with her emotional freedom, Cleo stated that, "I used to be a lot more rude, insensitive....[especially] If I was high at the time...I don't [hold myself] accountable any more for what I said when I was high. I won't say sorry for it any more. I won't. I will let those demons go. And I don't care. I really don't. I had to get on [with my life]." Similarly, Priscilla stated that she wanted freedom from her husband's emotional abuse: "I don't need someone to manipulate me and tell me, 'you can go here and do this. Now you have to stop doing [what you're doing]'....[I] want to be [myself]." Priscilla added that, "Because of what I've been through, I've felt suicidal a few times. And now that I see everything around me...especially my two boys...I'm so grateful that I'm still here. Whatever I did, it's...behind me....I was trying to find light. And it was wonderful that I have an opportunity to come to this [*Bridges program*] class." Bob also alluded to her notion of liberty when she described her *Abstract Landscape* drawing for the group, "There's the bird. It's for freedom. It's the peace. Tranquility."

Participants introduced the idea of financial freedom—specifically, winning the lottery—more than once. Princess remarked that, "I've got my fingers crossed for that 22 million [lottery] this week. I bought a ticket.," while Winter suggested that, if she could picture her life as she wanted it to be, her life would, "[involve] a lottery win." Winter went on to explain that, "if I ever won that 35 million [dollar lottery]...half of it...goes to charity. I do not need that kind of money. That is foolish. I've lived on nothing my whole life....My kids. My friends in [the *Bridges program*] class. I'd make sure everyone in my classroom here was taken care of

for the rest of their time....My son would go to a decent school. I'd have a decent car....That's all I need....Big freezer full of food. And cupboards....I'd go east and my most important thing in my life...I'd like to see the Northern Lights, so I'd go north....I've no desire to travel....My own country is the best country in the world. It has the most beauty. It has it all. That's all I need."

Similarly, Ashlee observed that, "I'd make sure my mom and my dad are taken care of...because they've always been struggling all their lives. And I'd make sure they had their huge house and [that they'd] go on their trips and my mom would never have to work again in her life. My daughter...my son...they'd be taken care of. I'd make sure that I'd put money away for them....[I'd take] Trips with them. Disney World....My sister...[she] takes and takes and takes. And my mom works so hard. [My mom] always has second-hand stuff....[So] I'd buy [my sister] a Hallmark card. [Everyone laughs]....She's just very selfish....I'm selfish too, some days." Didi decided that, with her winnings, "I would have a house built for my daughter and her kids. Their dream house. Their castle....[My daughter has] always wanted a castle....[I would also] ask *Bridges* what I could do. Because I think [the *Bridges* program] should go on." On the other hand, Brody's concluded that, should she win the lottery, "I'd phone Sir Richard Branson and [say]...'I'd like to go on your spaceship.' [Everyone laughs]. I would! I'd go to outer space."

Theme 5: Nurturing

Within this cluster of themes, participants focused on small indulgences, mindfulness, art, nature, spirituality, and food. For example, Ashlee shared that,

“When I get really sad, I like to go to the spa or [go] tanning....I can’t draw so...with [the spa]...you get your nails done or [you have] a pedicure. It makes you feel so much better about yourself....[it helps boost] your confidence....I don’t want to rely on a guy to make me feel better, so I do [these things] for myself.” Didi, on the other hand, stated that she does, “the ‘focus thing.’ [I take note of] Where I [am].....When I’m feeling lost or down—it’s almost like a grounding thing. So, I look around...this is here and that’s there...I had to learn [to stay focused]...so that I don’t wander off in my brain.”

Priscilla finds that art-making is a comfort to her: “I was not feeling well, the last week. And you know what I wanted to do? Colour and draw....I learned that from someone in the hospital. A young lady, she was 19...a teenager...she said, ‘You want to colour?’ And I said, ‘No.’ [She said] Yah, it helps you to colour. That’s why I do it....It’s very relaxing.”

Enjoying nature was also a way that participants found helpful when seeking solace. Ashlee observed that, “I like the water and the beach. It’s just so relaxing....I just love the water, [and] walking with my dog.” While she described her *Creative Visualization* drawing, Winter noted that, “I love sitting and listening to the birds and the water and the breeze. I just love the sound of the grass.” Didi responded to the serenity of Winter’s picture by pronouncing, “If I had a car, I’d take myself there.” Brody indicated that she enjoyed nature, but she experiences the greatest pleasure when she spends time with her daughter.

In her *My Garden* drawing (see below), Brody pictured herself sitting with her daughter and her daughter's teddy bear.



Figure 6. Brody. My Garden

Spirituality also offered comfort to some of the participants. Priscilla revealed that, "I pray a lot. And I do believe there is something for everyone. I've just got to keep moving. Not backwards. Just forward."

Participants identified that one of the easiest ways to find comfort and experience immediate gratification was eating something they enjoyed. For example, Cleo stated that, after expressing a desire to eat fish, "I came home and there must have been fifteen pieces of salmon sitting there and three different kinds of salad and I [said to my friend]...'You're IN, brother!'" Winter declared that her favourite food was, "Black forest cake....It's expensive. [But] It's a real treat for me." Priscilla stated, "I sit down, watch my favourite soap opera, and I just eat chocolate and ice cream. [and] I say, 'I don't care.'"

Theme 6: Voice

The journey to discover their individual and collective voices—participants' personal truths and their significance as women—was the most significant aspect in this theme cluster. For example, Cleo identified that, "With people I don't care about, I can be myself....But on the other side, when I do care, that's when...[I] bite my tongue. On the other hand, Makit declared that, "If I know the guy, then I'll just tell him what I think. Where to go and how to get there. If I don't know him? I don't say a thing. They could talk me down till they're blue in the face and I'd just sit there....It goes in one ear and out the other. And sometimes, if I feel brave enough, I'll just look at them and tell them to fuck off. Most of the time, I just don't say anything to anybody. I just go on with my day."

In her Creative Visualization picture (see below), Priscilla created an image illustrating the freedom she felt when, after separating from her abusive husband, she was able to reclaim her authentic voice. She envisioned herself wearing a sheer night gown, flying through the air and was delighted that no one was around to tell her that she was not wearing any clothes.



Figure 7. Priscilla. Creative Visualization

In Priscilla's *The Day I Will Never Forget* picture (see below), she illustrated how her voice had been silenced by her experiences with IPV. Priscilla is clearly visible in the mirror (the reflected world), but she is barely visible in the bed (the real world).



Figure 8. Priscilla. *The Day I Will Never Forget*

While processing her picture called, *My Garden* (see below), Priscilla stated that, "I'm here. On earth. That's why I always put a big tree [in my drawings]. That's what it's about. My big tree. I see myself. Me there. Alive....I have a picture that I wanted to enlarge. That picture of the tree that I'm standing on...it's a huge tree....when I see myself [in that photograph] I think, 'I'm still alive.'" Having survived IPV, Priscilla has begun to find her authentic voice.



Figure 9. Priscilla. My Garden

When thinking about where her source of her strength and resiliency, Priscilla observed that, "[My parents are] very loveable and caring. So I guess I got [those traits] from them. I grew up like that....if you have something to say, speak up. Don't put your head down. Just look forward and don't ever look behind you. If there's something that's bothering you, leave it behind. Lock it up and don't go back until you are really strong."

Participants differed in their ideas about how and why women are significant in Canadian culture. Cleo maintained that, "Society itself doesn't appreciate honesty that way in a woman. Being herself. They have expectations and that's how it is. [The expectations for women in this society include being] Skinny. Intelligent...but quiet. Unopinionated....I'm different than a lot of other women...I'm not scared to say something back to a man. That's what get's me in half the trouble I get in." When Brody told the group that her boyfriend and her female roommate were spending a lot of time together, Ashlee noted that, "[Brody's roommate] is a pretty girl, too." Winter's response to this comment was, "Ugly people can be bitches, too. So, it's not just because she's pretty. It has nothing to do with it. It doesn't matter. Looks are nothing. If you're easy and you're a bitch, the world is your oyster."

Discussion

*Winter: "There are three kinds of people: reality people, pessimists, and optimists....
As far as I'm concerned. [The glass] was full. It's half-empty.
So what's there is gone. That's what's left, so none of this, 'Oh, it's half-full.'
Cause it never gonna get full again. That's it. It's done. Done."*

Brody: "I always look at it and I'm like, 'What's in the glass?'"

The purpose of this study is to explore, through the use of art in group therapy, the relational experiences of women who have survived Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Despite some improvements in intervention programs, statistics suggest that 1 in 4 women still experience violence at the hands of current or past marital or common-law partners (Statistics Canada). When women no longer trust their own experiences as a source of knowledge, when they are no longer able to be their authentic selves, when they accept that their violent partners are all-powerful, their voices have been effectively silenced by IPV. According to the literature, the efficacy of treatment plans for IPV survivors depends upon "clinical efforts...[that are] directed towards countering emotional withdrawal and social isolation" (Perez et al, 2007). Therefore, this study is grounded in Relational-Cultural Theory, a feminist approach that similarly asserts the need for "growth-fostering relationships" as a means of combating the isolation experienced by so many survivors of IPV.

Art therapy was chosen as an intervention model for this study because the use of art in therapy has been shown to ease the fear and anxiety of a survivor's traumatic experiences (Malchiodi, 1990). Likewise, group therapy was chosen as the modality because it empowers women to connect (Zust, 2000) and it, "breaks the isolation so often associated with abuse" (Kelly, 2006).

Because they perceived themselves as lacking in artistic skills, some of the participants in this study were initially fearful that their performance would be faulted or criticized by other group members. As time progressed, however, participants began focusing more on understanding and communicating the significance of their artwork, rather than fretting about the efficacy of their drawing skills. When Priscilla asked what it meant when she could see herself in the mirror but not in the bed, she was posing the question to herself *and* to me. She was attempting, in essence, to translate the visual language of her drawing into a verbal narrative that made sense to her. Priscilla also seemed fearful of the meanings that I may have inferred from her picture. Indeed, Priscilla's concerns were valid: censoring verbal communication (what one consciously chooses to say) is far easier than censoring visual communication (what one unconsciously discloses in artwork).

Participants did, initially, seem wary of my motives for establishing a therapy group and particular concerns were raised about my identity as an *art therapist*. Although Priscilla, Princess, Pixie, and Didi expressed an interest in creative expression and the art-making process, some participants worried that I might be able to "read" the symbolic language of their drawings in a way that could violate their privacy and expose feelings they were not yet ready to disclose. Despite assurances that I regarded the participants as experts on their own lives and that I would not be diagnosing them or their artwork, Winter challenged my intentions and my "language" proficiency when she demanded to know what I thought her *Creative Visualization* drawing meant. Ashlee was also

suspicious of my intentions when she asked if the Creative Visualization exercise was supposed to mean something. Bob was more direct when she pronounced that I had devised a plan to “win” by purposely tripping the participants up during our discussion about abstract paintings.

Banks (2006) maintains that, “the abused do not feel as if they have any power in the [abusive] relationship” (p. 39). With this thought in mind, I was acutely aware that, as the *art therapist*, I had assumed an authoritarian role. Makit immediately made her concerns clear when she flagged this power differential for the group by stating that she would draw an abstract picture because I had asked her to—despite her dislike of this non-representational style. In terms of Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), if I wanted to enter into “growth-fostering relationships” with these participants, I needed to prove to them that I was willing to empower, respect, and accept them.

As the literature suggests, the symbolic language of their drawings seemed to help participants safely recall, translate, and communicate the chaotic and terrifying images of the traumatic events they experienced (Curtis, 2005). For example, when Winter drew a picture called, *The Day I Will Never Forget*, she was subsequently able to talk about the guilt she felt when she signed the do-not-resuscitate form moments before her mother died. For Winter, this drawing certainly “[evoked] the construction of verbal representations” (Mayer & Sims, 1994), whereby she was able to create a cohesive, chronological narrative that helped her make meaning out of this traumatic event (Rothschild, 2000).

On the other hand, some participants clearly needed to distance themselves emotionally from their artwork. Priscilla's "black cross," Makit's "sad and scared faces," and Bob's intention to "bullshit" her way through the first session suggest that some participants were not able—or perhaps they were not ready—to identify the significant images in their drawings. These women seemed torn between the need to process their drawings and the need to quell the acute emotions or memories that their drawings awoke (Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005).

Some participants were ready to talk about their traumatic experiences but, in order to protect themselves from the anxiety they were feeling, they allowed their drawings to become transitional objects—that is, they separated the artist/storyteller (*me*) from their artwork/narratives (*not me*). The most memorable examples of this separation occurred, first, when Brody observed that her picture was angry "for" her when her boyfriend left her alone on her birthday and, second, when Didi alternated between first and third person narratives as she described her initial phone call to Victim's Services.

For the women who participated in this study intimacy does, indeed, have a dark side. The trauma of their IPV experiences, however, did not dominate their artwork or their stories; rather, when participants did disclose details of abuse, many chose to focus on traumatic events that occurred in their childhoods. Perhaps the memories of their IPV experiences were too recent and too painful for participants to touch. Or, perhaps the thread of abuse trailed back to a time when participants felt the first sting of violence and neglect. Whatever the reason, the relationship that many participants kept visiting was the abusive

and/or neglectful bond they had with their mothers. For example, when Didi mentioned that her grandchildren thought she loved one more than the other, Didi suddenly recalled the pain of competing with her siblings for the love and attention of her own mother. Makit empathized, remembering how her mother had frequently left her to fend for herself when Makit was a child. Despite feeling abandoned and isolated at a very young age, Makit resolved not to fall prey to her "relational inheritance"—the notion that she was doomed to repeat the ineffective behaviours of her parents. Instead, she actively pursued a different way of knowing and being: she consciously created a protected environment and a healthy, loving bond with her children.

Similarly, Princess wondered why her mother has emotionally abused and neglected her, why her mother had so unfavourable compared Princess to her sister. As self-reliant as Makit and Princess have learned to be, these women continue to yearn for warm, caring relationships with their mothers. Both Makit and Princess long to hear their mothers say, "I love you," "I'm proud of you," and "I'm sorry." Both want to model for their mothers how benevolent caregivers should behave with their children. Sadly, both continue to wonder if they did something to deserve the maltreatment and indifference they experienced as children. On the other hand, Winter's view of the dysfunctional relationship she had with her mother seemed to be moderated by the grief of her mother's passing. She tearfully admitted that the relationship with her mother had been tempestuous; but, since her mother's death, Winter said that she had come to the realization that her mother was the only mother she would ever have.

I sensed that, for some participants, I came to represent a mother figure—which could explain both their lack of trust in me and concurrent (though seemingly antithetical) desire to please me.

Few participants spoke directly about IPV. Princess alluded to the fact that her husband had been a negative influence on her children's lives. Priscilla, the only participant to speak about the aftermath of her *past* experiences with IPV, revealed that her sons blamed her for breaking up the family. She also disclosed that she had considered committing suicide more than once. Now, she is grateful to be alive.

Brody was the only participant in this study who spoke directly about *ongoing* issues with IPV. As a child, Brody learned that violence is an acceptable form of expression and she has carried this belief with her into her current romantic relationship. She was able to make the connection between the violence she experienced as a child and her own violent behaviour toward her boyfriend, but Brody's sense of meaningful connection has eroded so much that she believes she literally has to fight to be seen and heard. Banks (2006) suggests that "for survivors of violence, intense longings for connection co-exist with an equally intense fear of being hurt again....There is often a sense of despair at feeling so alone" (p. 27). For Brody, the fear and despair are real: Brody's boyfriend went to a bar with her (attractive, female) roommate, leaving Brody alone on her birthday. Brody fights to stay connected and, when each battle is over, she ushers her emotions back into "sleep mode." Despite her

belief that she no longer feels anything, Brody's carefully constructed composure faltered during one art therapy session when she thought the group had lost interest in her story: "I'm sorry. If you guys [participants] want to draw, I'll just sit here. [Begins to cry]. I'm having issues." Brody both longs for and fears connection.

Banks (2006) further maintains that, "The potential for closeness with a friend, family member, romantic partner, or therapist can physically trigger the feeling of violation even when there is an intellectual understanding that little threat exists" (p. 27). Certainly, participants in this study were particularly passionate about the theme of trust. Makit, for example, was eager to explain that, because she does not trust anyone, she is no longer vulnerable and, therefore, she cannot be hurt. Likewise, Priscilla identified that she cannot be authentic in a relationship when someone has broken her confidence and her trust. Some of the participants were also willing to talk about what they did to protect themselves when they felt violated or threatened. Ashlee insisted that she is a vengeful person when she is angry and Winter informed the group that she has used lethal force in the past in order to protect herself from harm.

While analyzing the theme of trust in the transcripts, I noticed a particular type of language pattern that began to emerge among some of the women. I called this rhythmic pattern, for lack of a better name, "push, push, retreat." What I found was, some of the participants would make two definitive statements, followed by either an explanation or a disclaimer. For instance, Ashlee said to

Brody: “[Your boyfriend is] ignorant to you. He’s just using you. I’m sure he loves you.” When analyzed, Ashlee’s statement conforms to the rhythm. **Push:** “[Your boyfriend is] ignorant to you.” **Push:** “He’s just using you.” **Retreat:** “I’m sure he loves you.” She repeated the pattern later with another response: **Push:** “I think there’s something going on [between your boyfriend and your roommate].” **Push:** “Honestly.” **Retreat:** “Maybe it’s just me.”

Princess also used the same pattern: **Push:** “I’m not a scribbler.” **Push:** “There. I’m done.” **Retreat:** “I feel very out of place.” And, again: **Push:** “I’m not an artistic person, so it takes me a lot to get into art.” **Push:** “I’m done. I’m not doing anymore.” **Retreat:** “It’s just not something I’m used to.”

I suspect that this pattern of speech is specific to women because women are usually collaborative rather than authoritarian in their interactions. In other words, after revealing an authentic thought or feeling, women often worry about how the person listening to the statement will react. Further examination of this speech pattern in relation to the concept of authentic voice versus the *strategies of disconnection* used by women to survive violent encounters with abusive partners would, in my opinion, be a positive addition to the literature on IPV.

Ultimately, the trauma that women experience every day is often ignored—even condoned—by a culture dominated by white, middle-class, heterosexual men. Adrienne Rich (1996)—feminist, poet, and essayist—deftly captures the climate of our society when she writes:

When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you...when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength, but collective understanding—to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard. (p. 167)

Of all the responses I recorded during this study, Priscilla's were the most metaphorical—and the most representative of women who have lost touch with their voices and their identities. On many occasions, Priscilla made a clear distinction between her authentic self and her mirror self. At times, I got the impression that Priscilla did not feel alive unless she could see herself in a drawing, a mirror, a photograph, or a video. I felt that she needed to reassure herself that she does exist and that she does matter. For example, Priscilla took flight in a sheer gown in her *Creative Visualization* picture (see Figure 7) because she wanted to see herself flying. Similarly, when asked to draw, *The Day I Will Never Forget* (see Figure 8), Priscilla depicted herself giving birth and, in her picture, her mirror self was clearly visible while her real self appeared "hollow." In fact, Priscilla added her real self to the drawing at the last moment—almost as an afterthought. Finally, when she drew a picture called, *My Garden* (see Figure 9), Priscilla recalled a treasured photograph that shows her standing on the roots of a giant tree. When she sees herself in that photograph, she knows she is alive.

For me, Priscilla is the visual representation of Adrienne Rich's social critique. For a time, Priscilla's reality was constructed and managed by her abusive husband. In order to remain connected to her husband, she cleaved herself into two parts: her authentic self and her mirror self. Her authentic self continued to fade until it became invisible. Her mirror self grew strong with the counsel of her husband, her family, and her society. Through personal strength and growth-fostering relationships, Priscilla came to discover that she does not want someone telling her what to do. She wants to be free to make her own life decisions. Priscilla has taken the first steps in the journey to rediscover her authentic self and to regain the power of her voice. In time, she will not have to see herself in a mirror to know that she is alive.

If, as Banks (2006) suggests, isolation is "at the heart of suffering," then a group model informed by Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) can be a powerful antidote for women who have been exiled by IPV (Kelly, 2006). Before I began this study, the women in the *Bridges* program had already spent two years together, sharing a classroom, getting to know one another. The meaning and value that the participants in my study placed on *Bridges* became evident as, time and again, they identified how the program had empowered them to make healthy connections.

In the transcripts for this study, participants mentioned or alluded to the *Bridges* program no less than eight times: four times within this study's *Intimacy* theme and four times within its *Freedom* theme. *Bridges* emerged as part of the

Intimacy theme when Makit identified that *Bridges* is a place where people with trust issues can come together and create mutually satisfying, authentic friendships. The program was mentioned again when Winter assured Brody that, although the women participating in *Bridges* sometimes have off days, they are still willing and able to support each other. Pixie identified that the *Bridges* women have supported her through some very tough, emotional times. She hoped that *Bridges* would never end.

Bridges emerged as part of the *Freedom* theme when Priscilla disclosed that—after the trauma of her abusive marriage—the program had offered her an opportunity to create a better life for herself and for her children. Winter announced that, if she wins the lottery, she will look after her friends in the *Bridges* program for the rest of their lives. Didi agreed, stating that, with her lottery winnings, she would supply the required funding to keep the *Bridges* program running. The *Bridges* program set the stage for my study. The participants already felt safe and, for the most part, connected to one another before I arrived.

Sunderland (2006) argues that, “it is not possible to access the brain’s ‘joy juice’ naturally without emotional connection with others” (p. 91) and the joyful rewards that flow from these connections are, according to RCT—the *five good things*: (a) zest, (b) empowerment, (c) clarity, (d) increased self-worth, and (e) the desire for more relationships. Through mutual empathy, respect, and acceptance, most of the participants in this study were able to experience one or

more of the *five good things*. For example, Priscilla experienced *zest* when she imagined she was flying. Didi felt *empowered* when she acknowledged that with the support of her friends, she was able to phone Victim's Services. Cleo exhibited *clarity* when she asserted that she is done apologizing for her past behaviours and she is now ready to focus on the future. Makit felt an increased sense of *self-esteem* when other group members told her that she is "a very good, reliable friend," "fun to be around," and that she was "especially" beautiful when she was pregnant. And last, but never least, Didi felt the desire to develop *additional healthy relationships* when she renewed her relationship with her sister.

The women of the Bridges program are remarkable. Despite the traumatic events that have had an enduring impact on their lives, these women found the courage to move from isolation to connection.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Clinical Practice. The findings of this study support the inclusion of art as a effective tool in group therapy. Art may be used to cultivate early cohesion in group process, provide containment, and encourage visual/verbal expression. The structure and design of this study can be easily replicated and modified for use in clinical interventions.

Future Research. Further investigation into the effects of growth-fostering relationships on IPV will assist in the development of effective treatment plans for women experiencing IPV. Further exploration of RCT will help to determine if and how this theoretical approach can be applied to a wide range of clinical issues.

Limitations

The women who agreed to take part in this study may have felt coerced into doing so because of their loyalty to and their appreciation of the *Bridges* program and, as a result, their responses may have been tempered by their feelings. Next, not all women in the *Bridges* program chose to or were able to participate in this study; thus, there was no way to compare the progress of the women who did participate against those who did not (control group). Finally, although this study was built around an art therapy intervention, participants still required the ability to formulate and verbally articulate their thoughts, feelings, and stories.

Summary/Conclusion of Discussion

If turbid waters are stilled,
they will gradually become clear;
If something inert is set in motion,
it will gradually come to life.

Tao Te Ching

As seen by the responses of the women who participated in this Canadian study, using art as an intervention technique has advantages: it assists in the expression of thoughts and feelings, it encourages communication, and artwork can be used as a transitional object to help provide containment and keep participants safe. RCT contributes a clear and accessible road map for women experiencing the isolation of IPV, encouraging them to develop, maintain, or re-establish growth-fostering relationships. By synthesizing the visual (artwork) and the verbal (narratives), a powerful, blended language is created, allowing women to be seen and heard in a unique and important way. Currently, few studies address the potential benefit of linking RCT and art therapy as an effective intervention for women suffering from the isolation of IPV.

References

- Anderson, L., & Gold, K. (1998). Creative connections: The healing power of women's art and craft work. *Women & Therapy, 21*, 15-36.
- Banks, A. (2006). Relational therapy for trauma. *Journal of Trauma Practice, 5*, 25-47.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Brooke, S. L. (1995). Art therapy: An approach to working with sexual abuse survivors. *Arts in Psychotherapy, 22*, 447-466.
- Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2005). *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile 2005*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.ca>
- Carey, L. (2006). *Expressive and creative arts methods for trauma survivors*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Chicot, R. L. (2007). Art therapy with child tsunami survivors in Sri Lanka. Art therapy: *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 24*, 156-162.
- Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as a phenomenologist views it. In R. Vale & M. King (Eds.), *Essential phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Corey, G. (2005). *Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy* (7th ed.). Toronto: Brooks/Cole.
- Comstock, D. L., Duffey, T., & St. George, H. (2002). The relational-cultural model: A framework for group process. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 27*, 254-272.
- Curtis, A. S. (2005). *Women, trauma, and visual expression*.
www.amystaceycurtis.com
- Enosh, G., & Buchbinder, E. (2005). Strategies of distancing from emotional experience: Making memories of domestic violence. *Qualitative Social Work, 4*, 9-32.
- Gardner, H. (1994). *The arts and human development: A psychological study of the artistic process*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Gilligan, C. (1992). Reply to critics. In M. J. Larrabee (Ed.), *An ethic of care: Feminist and interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 207-214). New York: Routledge.
- Hagood, M. M. (2000). *The use of art in counselling child and adult survivors of sexual abuse*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Hogan, S. (1997). Problems of identity: Deconstructing gender in art therapy. In S. Hogan (Ed.), *Feminist approaches to art therapy*. New York: Routledge.

Horowitz, M. J. (1978). *Image formation and cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

The International Development Research Centre. Ottawa, Canada. June 2009.
http://www.idrc.ca/fr/ev-106468-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Jordan, J. V. (2004). Relational learning in psychotherapy consultation and supervision. In M. Walker & W. Rosen (Eds.), *How connections heal: Stories from relational-cultural therapy* (pp. 22-30). New York: Guilford Press.

Jordan, J. V., Kaplan, A. G., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I. P., & Surrey, J. L. (1991). *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center*. New York: Guilford Press.

Kelly, V. A. (2006). Women of courage: A personal account of a wilderness-based experimental group for surviving abuse. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 31, 99-111.

Leight, S. B. (2002). Starry night: Using story to inform aesthetic knowing in women's health nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37, 108-114.

Malchiodi, C. A. (1998). *The art therapy sourcebook*. Los Angeles, CA: Lowell House.

Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.) New York: Harper Collins.

- Mayer, R. E. & Sims, V. K. (1994). For whom is a picture worth a thousand words? Extensions of a dual-coding theory of multimedia learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86, 389-401.
- McMurry, M., Schwartz-Mirman, O., & Maizel, S. (2000). Art therapy: Indications for treatment of choice. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, 27, 191-196.
- Meekums, B. (2006). *Creative group therapy for women survivors of child sexual abuse: Speaking the unspeakable*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Miller, J. B. & Stiver, I. P. (1997). *The healing connection: How women form relationships in therapy and in life*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Miller, J. B. (1988). Connections, disconnections, and violations. *Work in Progress*, No. 33. Wellesley, MA: Stone Centre Working Paper Series.
- Molloy, T. (1997). Art psychotherapy and psychiatric rehabilitation. In K. Killick & J. Schaverien (Eds.), *Art, psychotherapy, and psychosis* (pp. 237-259). London: Routledge.
- Pérez-Testor, C., Castillo, J. A., Davins, M., Salamero, M., & San-Martino, M. (2007). Profiles in a group of battered women: Clinical and care implications. *Journal of Family Violence* 22, 73-80.
- Rich, A. (1986). *Blood, bread, and poetry: The location of the poet*. Blood, bread, and poetry. New York: Norton.

- Rodríguez, M. A. , Sheldon, W. R. , Bauer, H. M., & Pérez-Stable, E. J. (2001).
The factors associated with disclosure of intimate partner abuse to
clinicians. *The Journal of Family Practice*, 50, 338-344.
- Rothschild, B. (2000). *The body remembers: The psychophysiology of trauma
and trauma treatment*. New York: Norton.
- Simonds, S. L. (1994). *Bridging the silence: Nonverbal modalities in the
treatment of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse*. New York: Norton.
- Singh, A. A. & Hays, D. G. (2008). Feminist group counseling with South Asian
women who have survived intimate partner violence. *Journal for
Specialists in Group Work*, 33(1), 84-102.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends
2006*. <http://www.statcan.ca>
- Statistics Canada. (1993). *Violence against women survey*.
<http://www.statcan.ca/>
- Stout, C. J. (1999). The art of empathy: Teaching students to care. *Art
Education* 52, 21-34.
- Sunderland, M. (2006). *The science of parenting..* London: D. K. Publishers.
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation*.
New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Tzu, L. (6th century BC). *Tao te ching*. (V. H. Mair, Trans.). New York: Quality
Paperback Book Club.

- van der Kolk, B. A. (2007). Trauma and memory. In B. Van der Kolk, A. McFarlane, & L. Weisaeth. *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society* (pp.279-302). New York: Guilford Press. Psychiatric Press, Inc.
- Wadeson, H. (1987/1995). *The dynamics of art psychotherapy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Waller, C. A. (1972). Art therapy with adult female incest survivors. *Art Therapy* 9, 135-138.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1975). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In: *Through paediatrics to psycho-analysis* (p. 229-242). London: Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1953). (1980). *Playing and reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. (Original work published 1971).
- Wylie, M. S. (2004, Jan/Feb). The limits of talk: Bessel van der Kolk wants to transform the treatment of trauma [Electronic version]. *Psychotherapy Networker*. http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/Networker.pdf
- Yalom, I. (1975) *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Zosky, D. L. (1999). The application of object relations theory to domestic violence. *Clinical Social Work Journal* 27, 55-69.

Zust, B. (2006). Meaning of INSIGHT participation among women who have experienced intimate partner violence. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 27, 775-793.

Appendix A

Letter of Information/Consent

Appendix A

Letter of Information/Consent Bridges: Women's Links to Learning and Success

You are invited to take part in a 3 year research study being conducted by a research team at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario to test the effectiveness of an alternative education program for women who are experiencing abuse, or are survivors of abuse, who do not have their high school diploma or GED, and who face barriers to going back to school related to experiences with violence, feelings of self-confidence, and lack of support.

We are comparing the experiences of women who attend currently available adult education classes at G.A. Wheable Adult Education Centre to the experiences of women who will participate in a new program. If you agree to be part of this research, you will be assigned by chance (like by the flip of a coin) to be part of either the currently available classes at Wheable, or Bridges (the new program). Bridges will be open to women who are learning at the literacy and basic skills level, or those who are working toward high school credits. It will be held at G.A. Wheable Adult Education Centre. Women in Bridges will be in a class with women only and have access to resources such as free counselling, free daycare for preschool children, bus tickets to get to and from school, and school supplies. If you are not assigned to be in Bridges and you attend the regular classes at Wheable, we will give you a spot in Bridges as spaces become available. We think people will be on this 'waiting list' for 3 to 6 months. Everyone will create a safety plan with a counselor.

If you decide to participate you will first be interviewed about your educational history, family responsibilities, and your experiences with violence, poverty and health. The interview will be audiotaped and typed onto paper. You will be asked to complete surveys that measure the type and frequency of the violence you have or are experiencing, and how this affects you. The interview will take about 1 hour, and the surveys will take about 2 hours.

Some of the interview questions and surveys might make you feel sad or upset, because we will be asking about difficult things like abuse. If this happens, please tell the interviewer and she will discuss these feelings with you or provide you with some contacts if you would like counselling.

Once you have completed all these interviews and surveys, you will be randomly (that is, by chance) assigned to either the regular school program or Bridges. You will have an equal chance of being assigned to either program. Once you are in the program, you will be asked to complete the same interviews and surveys approximately every 8 or 10 weeks (about 5 times per school year), until the research project is over (summer of 2009). If you are in the regular program at Wheable, no one will know you are part of the research study except you and the researchers. If you are in the Bridges program, the only people who will know you are in a special program are you, your classmates, your teacher and the researchers. The researchers will look at your school records to see your grades and how much you have completed in each course, how

many courses you have taken and how many you have completed.

You will not be paid to take part in the study; however, if you are in the Bridges program you will receive the resources mentioned above. Participation in this program is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your future academic status. You do not have to do the interviews and surveys in order to be in the program. You have the right to be given all important information about the program you are in, the study, and what you will be asked to do. You should only agree to take part if you feel happy that you know enough about these things. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you may be asked to return for a final interview. You do not give up any legal rights by signing the consent form.

Your answers will be kept confidential except in the case that you report you are planning on hurting yourself or someone else. All research records will be stored a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at the Faculty of Education. Tapes of the interviews will be listened to only by the members of the research team and all information collected for the study including the audiotapes will be destroyed 5 years after the end of the research project.

Your confidentiality will be respected. If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published. Representatives of the research team may require access to your records for the purposes of monitoring the research, and the Research Ethics Board of the University of Western Ontario may contact you directly about your participation in the study. If you have any questions about the conduct of the study or your rights as a research subject you may contact The Director, Office of Research Ethics, University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or by email at ethics@uwo.ca.

If you have any questions about this study, or have any comments to make now or at a later date, please contact Dr. Susan Rodger, ext. _____ at the Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario. This letter is yours to keep for future reference. However, if you believe that keeping the letter will present any danger to your safety, please ask the researcher to hold it for you. Thank you.

Dr. Susan Rodger

Dr. Alan Leschied

Dr. Anne Cummings

I have read the Information/Consent document, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Date

Signature

If applicable:

I translated the above letter and consent form in the _____ language.

Printed Name of Person Translating Document

Signature

Date

Appendix B
Ethics Approval (NMREB)



Office of Research Ethics

The University of Western Ontario
 Room 00045 Dental Sciences Building, London, ON, Canada N6A 5C1
 Telephone: (519) 661-3036 Fax: (519) 850-2466 Email: ethics@uwo.ca
 Website: www.uwo.ca/research/ethics

Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. S. Rodger

Review Number: 12468S

Review Date: August 2, 2007

Revision Number: 1

Review Level: Expedited

Protocol Title: Women's Links to Learning and Success

Department and Institution: Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

Sponsor:

Ethics Approval Date: August 2, 2007

Expiry Date: August 31, 2009

Documents Reviewed and Approved: UWO Protocol, Letter of Information and Consent (comparison group), additional co-investigators, Poster

Documents Received for Information:

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above referenced revision(s) or amendment(s) on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. If you require an updated approval notice prior to that time you must request it using the UWO Updated Approval Request Form.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of monitor, telephone number). Expedited review of minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered. Subjects must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the NMREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to this office for approval.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

Chair of NMREB: Dr. Julie McMullin

Deputy Chair: Susan Hoddinott

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

Denise Grafton (dgrafton@uwo.ca) Jennifer McEwen (mcewen4@uwo.ca) Ethics Officer (ethics@uwo.ca)

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

cc: ORE File

Appendix C

Example of significant statements and emergent themes from one session

Group 2 Session 4: Data Analysis (Colaizzi, 1978)

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>What I would like you to draw today is [a picture called], <i>The Day I Will Never Forget</i>.</p>		
<p>Didi: <u>I was given a turkey breast with dressing. I did not like it. And then after I ate it, and I shared with my sister, I looked at the brand and it said "Maple Leaf."</u></p> <p>But you know that [the listeria outbreak involved only] sliced meat...not whole meat.</p> <p>Brody: It's okay, Didi.</p> <p>Didi: <u>...the next day I had diarrhea like you wouldn't believe. It was not fun.</u></p>		<p>Food</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Health</p>
<p>Brody: <u>I'm still eating [sliced meat].</u></p> <p>Honey...don't do that.</p> <p>Brody: <u>But they're still selling it. I thought it was fine.</u></p> <p>Winter: There's [still traces of it] in the [meat processing] plants.</p> <p>Brody: <u>Well...if I'm meant to go, I'm meant to go.</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>That's true.</u></p>		<p>Food</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Trauma</p>
<p>There are things you can do to help speed that up or slow it down. Walking down the middle of the highway will help speed it up.</p> <p>Brody: <u>Yah, but, if you were hit by a car then obviously you were meant to go.</u></p> <p>I think you have a certain amount of control within that idea.</p> <p>Brody: <u>I don't know.</u></p>		<p>Trauma</p> <p>Power</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>...you don't want your child to grow up without her mother.</p> <p>Winter: <u>No.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>My mum is, like, "I'll take her away from you" and I'm, like, "Oh, God."</u></p> <p>Brody: Ah, I forget what I said to her. [inaudible]. <u>I'll write a will and in my will I'll write I do not want my mum to have my daughter. [Laughs] I love my mum—she's my mum—but as a person, I just do not want...</u></p>		<p>Fear</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Freedom</p> <p>Health</p>
<p>Brody: So <u>the aliens didn't come yesterday.</u></p> <p>The aliens?</p> <p>Brody: Yah, <u>they were supposed to.</u></p> <p>I didn't know that.</p> <p>Brody: I was telling you last week about October 14th.</p> <p>I remember you talking about the aliens, but I didn't realize it was a specific date.</p> <p>Brody: Yep. <u>They were supposed to be here yesterday.</u></p>		<p>Identity</p> <p>Time</p> <p>Creativity</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>...if you have more than one kid...can love them all the same? Do you like them all the same? Are there differences?</p> <p>Didi: That's hard because I know my grandchildren...you know, like I'll pay attention...<u>"Nana, you don't love me as much as D."</u> So...and I say [to my daughter], <u>"What am I doing wrong?"</u> You know? I'm trying not to. It's just, you know. Four kids. <u>It's very hard to do equal</u>, but I don't mean to. Like, I'm not...<u>I love them all the same. I tell them. But, you wonder what goes through the kids' minds. Why do they say that?</u></p> <p>Didi: You also wonder, you know, like...<u>you look at the way you were raised from your own mother and, then, when you see signs ...this one gets more. And how come, you know...oh, wait a minute. I'm your daughter, too. Like, hello! I'm down here. You know?</u></p> <p>Didi: <u>You eventually go through it. Or go past it. I have to look after myself. That's the way I look at it.</u></p>		<p>Love</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Clarity</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>Brody: <u>...I'm afraid I'll have a baby with someone I actually love.</u></p> <p>Brody: Because if I have another baby with someone I actually love...</p> <p>Winter: <u>What are you afraid of?</u></p> <p>Brody: How I might, you know...</p> <p>Didi: Yah. <u>I went through that.</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>[You're afraid you'd] put [your daughter] behind because of somebody else?</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>I'm not saying that I would, it's just...</u></p> <p>Didi: Yah. <u>It's a fear. Yah. I think we all went through that.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>Because I love [my daughter]. [She's] my life. But, her father...</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>[Your daughter's] father is a small part of [your daughter]...a small part.</u></p>		<p>Fear</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Freedom</p>
<p>I'm wondering if it's just easier to be with certain people more than others.</p> <p>Didi: <u>Certain kids...At certain times. It all depends where your mind is, too.</u></p>		<p>Time Coping</p> <p>Conflict</p>
<p>So, what is [your daughter] thinking in this picture?</p> <p>Brody: I don't know. Probably, like, <u>I'm cold.</u></p> <p>Didi: <u>Give me that bottle or the boob!</u> Something about the way the lips are.</p> <p>Winter: I don't know. <u>"Where am I?" She wouldn't feel your heartbeat.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>She's probably like, "Where's mommy?"</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>...she didn't feel that heartbeat or the warmth of your body, right?</u></p>		<p>Creativity</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Power</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>Brody: <u>Yah, when she was first born, I would lay on the couch and the only way I could nap...because she did not like the bassinette...I'd have to put her on my chest, then she'd sleep on her side with her head like, up here and her little hands underneath my chin. And then she just outgrew it. And I'm like, "Oh."</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>Thank god. [My son] still does that.</u></p> <p>Don't you like that?</p> <p>Winter: <u>I do, but...</u></p> <p>How old is [your son]?</p> <p>Winter: <u>Four!</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>But the other day...Monday when I was at my mum's, my friend and I went over there for supper and we were watching <i>One Tree Hill</i>, I was just lying on the couch with her and she fell asleep on this side...just like she used to and I was, "Aw."</u></p>		<p>Love</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Fun</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Time</p> <p>Power</p>
<p>What kind of expression does [your daughter] have on her face [in this drawing]?</p> <p>Brody: I don't know. [Laughs]</p> <p>Winter: <u>Bright eyes. The world!</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>That's how she was. She was aware of everything. Right from the beginning.</u></p>		<p>Love</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Power</p>
<p>Brody: <u>When she was born, I had the radio--well I had my own cds--and she [would] turn her head toward the sound of the music...</u></p>		<p>Time</p> <p>Love</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>Who would like to go next?</p> <p>Brody: Didi! I was just joking, Didi.</p> <p>Didi: Yah, I know. <u>Mine is something that I will never forget.</u> Right? <u>I was in a car in a parking lot and my [worker] was there.</u> And I was there. And I can remember over here [points] there was a road with some lights. And there was a [donut shop] and my [worker] went over and got [a coffee]. Walked over. I was on the phone and these are all apartment buildings. Over here...a school. And the doctor's office, which I just got out of. Actually the car was...we were on our way out, but someone picked up the phone. So we were kind of like this [gesturing with her hands]...she kind of backed up and was right there. And, <u>I was on the phone for 2 hours, talking.</u> And, [the grocery store] was over here. And, <u>I'll never forget that phone call.</u></p>		<p>Creativity Freedom</p> <p>Conflict Time</p> <p>Fear Trauma</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Clarity</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Coping</p>
<p>This is, obviously, an incredibly powerful drawing.</p> <p>Didi: Yah. Cause <u>I had to do the 'focus thing.'</u> <u>Where I was. And I can remember the details.</u> Where I was.</p> <p>Okay. When you say, 'focus' thing'...what do you mean?</p> <p>Didi: Okay. <u>When I'm feeling lost or down—it's almost like a grounding thing. So, I look around,</u> you know? Okay. So, there [are] apartments. There's a school. You know? And, okay, <u>this is here and that's there. Okay. And someone's telling me, "It's okay. It's okay." And, it's okay. Actually, I got through the phone call over this...this was a very big thing that Didi had to go through. Yah.</u></p>		<p>Time</p> <p>Trauma</p> <p>Coping</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>I only want you to say something if you feel comfortable...Do you want to talk a little bit about the phone call?</p> <p>Didi: <u>I had to make a phone call to Victim's Service. Just different things. What happened to me in the past. And Didi's doing something about it. Yah. It's going...it will be helpful and I will say my worker is there for me. Which I always thought. Then, I have someone else for support, too. Yah, so... Those are big things, so... And just knowing that it just recently happened...it's still there and that's why I focus.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>The cops told me to phone Victims Services. I didn't. They phoned me.</u></p>		<p>Power</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Creativity</p>
<p>Winter: <u>Your focusing. Very difficult.</u></p> <p>Didi: Yah. <u>I can still remember everything.</u></p> <p>Winter: Mm-hm. <u>I'll bet you can.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>...I couldn't do something like that. My mind's always all over the place.</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>That's what I need to learn to do [i.e. how to ground]...and to stay focused.</u></p> <p>Didi: Oh, <u>I had to learn for a long time. I had to learn for me, so that I won't wander off in my brain. But, you know...with doing this it will help you in the long run...which I'm finding out now.</u></p>		<p>Time</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Creativity</p>
<p>Didi: <u>It helps with good supportive friends, too. You know. And I never thought..."Uhh, I [could] do this," but...with the support I figured...no. Something's got to be done. There [are] procedures and steps that I have to go and do for safety, so...</u></p>		<p>Coping Identity</p> <p>Power Love</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>Winter? Do you want to describe your drawing?</p> <p>Winter: <u>The day my mum died.</u></p> <p>The day your mum died. How long ago was that?</p> <p>Winter: [barely audible] Seven years.</p> <p>Didi: [Looking at Winter's drawing] Oh, in a hospital bed.</p> <p>Winter: [barely audible] <u>I signed the [do not resuscitate] paper and she died.</u></p> <p>Didi: <u>Maybe she was going through a lot of pain.</u></p>		<p>Trauma</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Identity</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>Winter: <u>I took her there. I'll never forget it.</u> And the nurse coming in...she goes, "Oh." She said, um...there was a lot leading up to taking her there. <u>My mum did not want to die in the hospital.</u> Anyway...[becomes teary]...<u>I took her there. I was going to bring her home. She was going to be there for the weekend so they could give her her medication...cause my sister and brothers were looking after my mum at her house and they messed up her medication</u> and she'd had a bad night the night before. I got the VON to come in and I got palliative care to come in <i>that</i> day. <u>She was fine that day.</u> I got her medication back, but they needed to...they were going to <u>put her in the hospital and get her medication completely straight. Plus, she was a bit dehydrated and she had thrush,</u> right? <u>Cause they weren't taking care of her. And my mum...she would protect my brothers and sisters. And do I hate them? I do hate them all. [Crying] I hate myself more because I should have done something.</u> Anyway...<u>she didn't feel good that night, so my brother came and got me and I went over to the house and she needed to go to the hospital,</u> so I said, "Okay, sure." She couldn't even talk. She was just whispering. And I took her. And I watched the ambulance. And I was behind the ambulance. <u>Took her in her room and I thought, "Monday, you're coming home. That's it. Enough."</u> Anyway...<u>the nurse comes in and we're getting my mum all prepped up and [the nurse] says, "Oh, there's a form her for resuscitate or not has to be signed."</u> [Crying] I said, "Oh, I'll sign it." And I <u>signed it and she [mum] died.</u> [inaudible] <u>My mum and I had lots of ups and downs. And we fought like crazy, I mean...horrible fights. But she was my mum and that's all I ever had. She's gone. And there isn't a day that goes by that I don't miss her. And I'm sorry for every fight we ever had. That...is the day I'll never forget.</u> [Crying] [Whispers] Sorry.</p>		<p>Time</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Trauma</p>
<p>[Some participants are crying with Winter.]</p> <p>Didi: [crying] <u>I hate to see anybody crying.</u> Sorry. Sorry. [Pause] <u>I guess I know what [Winter's] going through right now.</u></p> <p>Brody: <u>It's hard to lose a parent.</u></p> <p>Winter: [Trying to collect herself] Anyway. That's my day..</p>		<p>Empathy Identity</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Trauma</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>If I've read you right, I know you have a hard time trusting.</p> <p>Winter: <u>Mm-hmm.</u> [Still very teary]</p> <p>I am also incredibly honoured that you would share this. I never expected it.</p> <p>Didi: <u>Especially [since] she remembered right from the day...and what she had to go through.</u></p>		<p>Time</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Intimacy</p>
<p>Didi: <u>She got the hospital bed right down to the tee. And the chart right there. With the windows. Whoa. After she told the story. Good artist. Very good.</u></p>		<p>Coping Creativity</p>
<p>[I whisper] I am so sorry.</p> <p>Winter: <u>I should have gotten her out [of the hospital].</u></p>		<p>Fear Identity</p> <p>Trauma</p>
<p>I knew that [if my mother died] it [would be] a lot less painful for her. And a lot less confusing. I get that part, but there's also the part that you have inside of yourself...</p> <p>Winter: <u>The selfish part. I call it the selfish part.</u></p> <p>I'm not sure that calling it 'selfish' does it justice...but the part where you <i>really</i> had a connection with your mum. Right?</p> <p>Winter: <u>Mm-hmm.</u></p>		<p>Conflict Trauma</p> <p>Identity</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Coping</p>

Significant Statements (Group/Session/Page)	Formulated (General) Meanings	Emergent Themes
<p>My hope for you is that you will be able to remember the things that were really great about your relationship with your mum and the rest of those things will fade away...that you get to the point where those other things—the more painful things—will take a back seat to the things where you'll remember your mum and you'll smile because she did something goofy.</p> <p>Winter: Well, she would...you know, <u>it was funny because we were going up to her room...they took her upstairs to palliative care and she had false teeth and so she took them out...she was making this funny face and I'm thinking, "She's going to be okay." You know what I mean?</u></p> <p>Winter: <u>She outlived what they said she would live anyway, but...[pause] she made a funny face and everything.</u></p> <p>Yah. And you just weren't ready.</p> <p>Winter: <u>I don't think you're ever ready for your mum to die.</u></p>		<p>Fun</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Trauma</p> <p>Coping</p> <p>Conflict</p>
<p>Brody: <u>I was 12. When my mum passed away...</u></p>		<p>Power Coping Trauma</p>