

Drawings and Narratives as a Tool to Encourage Emotional Expression of Negative Life Experiences amongst Children who were Placed out of Their Homes between the Ages of eight and eleven

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This study focuses on children's voices, specifically children who were placed by the state into group homes. Seventeen children (including 12 girls, 5 boys) between the ages of 8 and 11, who were placed into group homes within the last year, participated in the study. The subjects were first asked to draw: "how did you feel when you came to live here?" and then they were asked to describe verbally: "how did you feel when you came to live here?"

The evaluation of the drawings was conducted by five independent judges who were asked to identify the main themes within the drawings. The narratives were analyzed according to a narrative analysis approach and thereafter main themes and categories relating to the children's experiences were inferred.

Results revealed that participants were ambivalent; feelings of relief and well-being coexisted with negative feelings, such as sadness and longing to be with the family. It seemed that the natural need to integrate these feelings was expressed in drawing family members in the boarding school with them.

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