

The Birth of a Therapist: The Conscious and Subconscious Processes that Influence the Development of the Art Therapist's Professional Identity

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The objective of this qualitative research is to describe and analyze the developmental experience of the professional identity of Art Therapy students during their studies. The emphasis is on internal and subconscious processes. The research population included eleven graduate students of Art Therapy at the University of Haifa. The research posed a question as to whether there exist and what are the specific conscious and subconscious processes that affect the formation of the professional identity of the Art Therapist during their training period.

The research had two stages. During the first stage, eleven students were asked to draw themselves as future Art Therapists from their current perspective as students at three points in time: (1) at the beginning of their studies, (2) at the end of the first year, and (3) by the end of their training. During the second stage, semi-structured interviews were held toward the end of their training, during which drawings were observed. The conclusion from this research shows that there are three major phases in a person's development as a therapist: (1) A shift from clarity to ambiguity, (2) A shift from searching 'outside' to searching for an 'inner voice', and (3) Multiplicity of the 'self'.

The findings may provide a basis for future research in the field, encourages efficacy of the therapist's training program, and contributes to the ability to improve the selection process of candidates of Art Therapy studies (Deaver, 2002; Reid, Dahlgren, Petocz & Dahlgren, 2011).

Bibliography:

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