

New Observations on Medical Expressive Arts Therapy Setting in a Pediatric Hemodialysis Open Unit

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This paper addresses the challenges faced by art therapists while practicing in Hemodialysis open space unit at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center -Jerusalem. Children who are confined to bed having medical treatment receive Expressive Arts Therapy (EXAT). These areas are intentionally built into an open space environment designed to be accessible for the medical staff. Inevitably, noises, sounds, sights and smells become an integral part of the therapeutic space, the opposite of conditions necessary for emotional therapy.

Therapeutic open space is a new working model. It requires a complete set of therapeutic principles, techniques and approaches. This paper will compare the ideal and classic therapeutic space to an open space setting. Using a display model, techniques and therapeutic approaches to a therapeutic working place without walls, time or fixed duration, will be explored.

Clearly, EXAT is of substantial importance despite these extreme conditions, as these children would not be receiving therapy otherwise. There are therapy rooms in the hospital, but children that cannot move from their medical treatment areas must have EXAT come to them. Open space conditions are found appropriate and often more effective in the hospital environment. The processing work done has similar results to conventional therapy. Moreover, there are advantages to open space EXAT practice, such as legitimizing the expression of emotions in public and regaining a measure of control.

Keywords: Medical Expressive Arts therapy, Hemodialysis Pediatric Unit, Open space, Therapeutic Setting, Model.

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