

The Subjective Experience regarding Death and Dying of elderly Arab Women in Community and Elderly Housing via Bridge Drawing Task

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The subjective experience of elderly Arab-Israeli women living in community or in elderly citizens' home regarding anxiety from death and dying, is examined using verbal tools an Art Therapy Assessment. One hundred elderly women, aged 65 years and older, have been interviewed using a translated version of demographic questionnaires and the anxiety from death and dying questionnaire (Gigini, 2007) and have been asked to draw a Bridge. After The Bridge Drawing (Hays, & Lynos, 1981), the women were interviewed using half-structured questionnaires. The method used in this research is the mixed- method (Lawrence et al., 2011), including quantitative and qualitative approaches. The literature review shows that the subjective experience of elderly Arab-Israeli women is limited, particularly using projection tools.

A quantitative analysis of the research questionnaires showed a significant difference in anxiety from death and dying between the two research groups. Women who lived in a community reported a higher level of anxiety from death and dying than women living in elderly citizens' home. However, a significant difference was found in the projection element, as women living in elderly citizens' home argued that The Bridge is unsafe to pass. A significant difference between the two groups was also found in the global dimensions of the Bridge Drawing, examined using the Formal Elements Art Therapy Scale (FEATS) of Gantt & Tabone (1998): the prominence of Colors, Space, Applied Energy and Coherency. The women living in a community drew more detailed, colorful and coherent drawings, than women living in elderly citizens' home. A dichotomous logistic regression of the anxiety from death and dying variables showed that women who have a high level of anxiety from dying tend to draw the matter underneath the bridge, whereas women with high levels of death anxiety tend to draw asymmetrical drawings.

Research findings are discussed regarding the differences between the two groups and the relations between the drawing's elements and anxiety from death and dying. Moreover, the discussion deals with the restrictions of this research as a pioneer study, and future directions for further research in this area.

Keywords: Subjective experience; elderly Arab-Israeli; anxiety from death; "Bridge Drawing".

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