

The meaning of the Holocaust experience in therapeutic Professional selection among third generation to the Holocaust

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The purpose of this study is to illuminate the meaning of the Holocaust Experience in therapeutic professional selection among third generation to the Holocaust who have chosen Art therapy as a profession. This study was conducted in a qualitative-phenomenological approach. Fourteen arts therapists, that are third generation to the Holocaust, from different types of art therapy, participated in this study. The research tools included semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The research findings show continuity of a caretaking and savior role within the family that ran through the three generations. The third generation was exposed from a young age to the need to care for another, was raised by parents who were parental-children and created special relationship with the first generation which made them feel empathic to others suffering. Besides carrying a family message, the selection of therapeutic profession gives the third generation the experience of being in control and anxiety abatement. This in reaction to existential anxiety experience that characterizes their grandparents, their parents and themselves. The choice of art therapies outcomes the search after a symbolic language that allows handling of feelings and hurtful issues, even without the use of explicit words, a sort of alternative to the lack of emotional dialog within the therapists families. The arts enable the therapists' personal development and expression. The therapists that are third generation to the Holocaust fulfill the savior role through their choice in the profession of art therapy, a role that was developed as a result of the Holocaust traumatic experience in their families.

Keywords: Holocaust, Trauma, intergenerational transmission, Third generation to the Holocaust, Art therapy, Professional selection.

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