

Conjoint art work as non-verbal therapeutic communication between mother and child

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The purpose of the present study was to examine whether sessions of conjoint art works of mothers and their preschool children have therapeutic components that can change the mother's perception of their relationship and the child's self-perception, compared to control groups.

21 dyads of mothers and their preschool children (4-6) participated in the study. The children had a wide range of problems as reported by their kindergarten teachers. The intervention program consists of 10 sessions of 45 minutes, once a week. Study groups were divided to three: **Art group** (a conjoint visual art work of mothers and children group), **Story group** (a conjoint story making of mothers and children group) and **Control group** (mothers and children who did not participate in any of the above groups). Three types of questionnaires were conducted (demographic, mother's perception of relations with her child and Index of Parental Attitude), one projective test (the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for young children) and feedback interviews. The three groups filled in the questionnaires and projective tests twice 9-13 weeks apart (before and after the intervention).

The findings were divided in two: The statistical findings showed (1) The **general mother's perception of her relationship with the son/daughter** and, the **reciprocity** scale showed significant improvement in the control group. The **warmth** dimension showed a significant improvement in the control group and ascent trend with marginal significance in the story group. (2) **Child's general self-perception** showed marginally significant improvement (parametric analysis was significant) in the art group and marginally significant improvement in the control group. **Perceived self-acceptance** dimension showed significant improvement in the control group and descent trend with marginal significance in the story group. **Perceived acceptance of the mother** Scale showed marginally significant improvement (parametric analysis was significant) descent trend with marginal significance (parametric analysis was significant) in the story group. It is important to address these findings within the limitations of the sample size as well as a careful reference to the marginal significance of some results. The feedback interviews findings can be concluded only for the art and story groups. It seems that **mother's perception of her relationship with the son/daughter** was improved according to mothers' reports both in art and story groups, though it's difficult to determine which group applied the largest improvement.

This study was the first to investigate the conjoint art work of mother and child as an isolated variable that may affect the characteristics of relationships and emotional characteristics of the child. Since this study is preliminary, it provides a starting point for further investigation and consideration of many questions on this subject.

Keywords: dyadic treatment, art as therapeutic instrument, nonverbal communication, mothers and their preschool children, art therapy, conjoint art work, conjoint story making .

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