Rediscovery of value system via existential factors : brief art therapy with an older adult on the psychiatric ward / Lee Wei Shy

Abstract

Fragile self-esteem seems to be the common feature of inpatients on the psychiatric ward in Singapore, regardless of their clinical symptoms. Inpatients participate an average of three to six art therapy sessions before their discharge, some just one - some on the day of their discharge. Due to clinical constraints of the psychiatric ward, the brief art therapy that I adopt focuses on reinforcing inner strength as the therapeutic benefit. I identify three dimensions to building inner strength: value system, meaning in life, and self-esteem. Of the three dimensions, the value system regulates the individual's perception of meaning in life and level of self-esteem. An internalised value system guides the individual's choice of cognition, affect, and behaviour. These three basic functions - cognition, affect, and behavior - to a large extent determine an individual’s efficacy in dealing with his existential ultimate concerns and his quality of life. These three functions also play an important role in recovery from or relapse of clinical complaints.