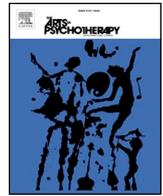




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# The Arts in Psychotherapy

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/artspsycho](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/artspsycho)

## The case report provides essential insight into practice and care in the creative arts therapies



The case report assists in-depth understanding of processes within practice. Publications within *The Arts in Psychotherapy* in 2017 and 2018 included five papers with *case* in the title (Ahessy, 2017; Brabant, van de Ree, & Erkkilä, 2017; Papadopoulos & Röhrich, 2018; Pereira, Muench, & Lawton, 2017; Ram-Vlasov, Goldner, & Lev-Wiesel, 2019). By comparison, *case study* was referred to in 50 papers during the same period suggesting that while case reports in the journal are few and far between, the case report nonetheless remains a vital reference point for research and practice.

Insights from the particular help us build capacities across a wider range of situations (Simons, 2014). Case reports provide in-depth description and reflection as to what happens within sessions; along with accounts of session by session progress for participants. Additionally the insights of the practitioner; their experiences, reactions and beliefs are brought to light through case report in a vigorous, exciting way to promote deep learning about therapeutic practice. We therefore encourage practitioners in the creative arts therapies to submit case reports.

When recently teaching a child trauma study unit in a postgraduate program a student gave feedback in the anonymous end of trimester evaluation that I had diminished their confidence in the therapeutic process by referring to passing doubts I had experienced about my capacity for relating after the first few sessions of working with a child from another culture where we shared no common language. I had previously documented this experience in a published case report (Edwards, 1999). It made me wonder what was so frightening about admitting that therapeutic work is complex; not everything about the client, or their ways of being and relating, are easily understood. Admitting our own self-doubts and caution are important to keep the work safe; to maintain the therapeutic frame when challenges arise.

Reflection on our experiences as therapists is key to perceiving and holding the complexity of practice. We are not performing *interventions*, we are not using *tools*. Instead, we are (mostly) using the self through witnessing, relating, supporting, holding and reflecting with the goal of enhancing the client's strengths to improve their resilience and mastery towards effective solutions. The case report assists in building a real and grounded culture of practice – through early training and later advanced practice - to enhance awareness of self and other; crucial to effective therapeutic engagement. If students never read case reports they may form the view similar to my student above; that every experience of the practitioner should be bounded by confidence, surety and capability. Anything else is denigrated as failure.

*The Arts in Psychotherapy* adheres to the CARE guidelines when receiving case reports.

<https://www.care-statement.org/resources/checklist>

The benefits for healthcare stakeholders of using the CARE guidelines are explained in the guidance as follows -

1. Patients can review transparent information on therapeutic options.
2. Clinicians improve peer-to-peer communication.
3. Researchers use testable hypotheses from clinical settings.
4. Educators have examples to support case-based learning.
5. Authors receive guidance on writing accurate and transparent case reports.
6. Medical Journals support for the evaluation of case reports.

Additionally, trainees can use case materials to become sensitised to the complexity of the clinician role, and to maintain empathic capacity which is known to diminish for medical trainees as they progress (Smith, Norman, & Decety, 2017).

As we continue to develop the capacity of the journal to invite, review, accept and publish case reports, the information above provides guidance for authors as to expectations of the journal in relation to such reports. Report writers are free to include creative methods in reflection and analysis (Edwards, 2017; McCaffrey & Edwards, 2016).

Unfortunately we cannot accept all of the papers that pass through peer review, and many manuscripts do not have the opportunity to be reviewed. Currently we progress about 40% of manuscripts to full publication. We appreciate every author's efforts, and we encourage you to try again if not successful with us. We also hope if you are invited to revise you will undertake the steps requested – revision is a normal part of academic publishing.

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