

is certainly suitable for graduate studies in dance, drama, art, music, and poetry therapy that comprise the whole gamut of expressive and creative arts therapies.

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Donna J. Betts, *Creative Arts Therapies Approaches in Adoption and Foster Care*, Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd., Springfield, IL, 2003, 320 pp., US\$ 65.95.

“Creative Arts Therapies Approaches in Adoption and Foster Care,” edited by Donna J. Betts, is the most comprehensive and thorough exploration to date of the psychological issues among adopted and foster care children. The premise of the book, the illustration of the unique efficacy of creative arts therapies in the treatment of the psychological and emotional difficulties from which many adopted and foster care children suffer, is eloquently conveyed by rich case studies of various creative arts therapies approaches.

Betts divides the book into three parts: Part One: Adoption; Part Two: Foster Care; and Part Three: Transcultural and Transracial Issues, in order to point out the importance of understanding the nature of the unique psychological trauma and the cultural and racial factors that complicate the relationship between the caregivers and their charges.

One of the most common and difficult issues among adopted children is the identity confusion caused by loss of birth heritage. In Part One, the benefit of creative arts therapies in promoting identity integration is explored. The practitioners of art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, play therapy and bibliotherapy offer their unique approaches in supporting the adoptee’s identity quest, and their approaches in working with the respective adoptive families. Therapy specific methods such as the “Bonny Method of Guided Imagery” in music therapy, “Simultaneous Treatment” in art therapy, the use of the “Liminality” concept in drama therapy, and storytelling in bibliotherapy, are introduced with clear explanation of rationale and technique.

In Part Two Betts introduces a wide range of art therapy approaches, mostly focusing on the experience of loss and lack of attachment and the resulting emotional and behavioral maladjustment among foster care children. Here Betts also includes an article about a community-based nonprofit theatre company that provides an unique opportunity for foster care children to express their repressed or non-verbalized emotions, such as anger, shame, feelings of abandonment and powerlessness through the technique of “The STOP-GAP Method.”

Part Three is devoted to the often neglected and relatively unexplored area of cultural and racial concerns between the caregivers and their charges. In spite of the fact that many adopted and foster care children are from different cultural and racial backgrounds than those

of their adoptive parents, few significant studies have been done concerning the emotional impact of such drastic uprooting from one's own familiar environment. In this section several art therapists present case studies illustrating their use of the art-making process for non-confrontational, sensory-based (as opposed to intellectualization based) exploration of identity formation among adoptees of different cultural and racial backgrounds. Several of the authors emphasize that for many adopted and foster children whose placement usually happened in their pre-verbal stage, non-verbal modalities such as creative arts therapies can help bring forward dormant issues that were not understood and were not expressed verbally. One of the authors, Wendy Miller, comments on her studies of internationally adopted children, "Children in internationally adoptive families . . . frequently confront sorrow during their quest for identity. . . this sense of sorrow is not the same as a sense of loss, and consequently their approaches to dealing with sorrow may not be the same as those of coping with loss." (Miller in Betts, p. 259). These children must resolve the emotional differences between their birth and adoptive parent(s). Miller then concludes that creative therapies help with the "resolution of their journey and identity formation, they come to terms with their own profound gift . . . to the adoptive family and to their birth parents: that they will live well." (ibid) Such fine emotional delineation when treating internationally adopted children is essential in effectual results. Part Three concludes with offerings of different types of therapy support groups for transcultural and/or transracial adoptive children and their families.

Betts' book is impressive in its variety of approaches, depth of knowledge and psychological understanding of adoption and foster care, and its generous imparting of information about different creative arts techniques used by the authors. The only weakness of the book is that for some art therapy case studies, there are not enough rich images created by the clients to substantiate the theories. Overall, it is written in a clear readable style that will open the door not only for creative arts therapists and other mental health professionals but also for general audiences including the adoptees and their new families who may be struggling in isolation. After finishing the book, I was left with a feeling of rich understanding of the core psychological issues suffered by the adopted and the foster care children, and another affirmation of the effectiveness of creative arts therapies in addressing them. Betts' book makes a significant contribution to the field of creative arts therapies.

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