



PHOTOTHERAPY AND THE THERAPEUTIC HANDLING OF ADOLESCENTS

{Carel van Wyk}

Phototherapy refers to the application of phototherapy techniques by professional/registered therapists to assist their clients to work through their personal psychosocial challenges, whereas *therapeutic photography* refers to the use of photos by any person who is not in therapy with a registered therapist, and doing the photo work as a form of self-help treatment or self-development. The focus of this paper is on phototherapy.

Phototherapy can be explored, explained, described, and utilized from different theoretical perspectives, such as the *Gestalt* theory, family systems theory, and Jungian theory. The main theoretical focus will be Jungian.

According to Jung, clients have to present their problems/disturbances in a “visible form”. Therefore, the utilisation of photos in therapy serves as a primary vehicle to attain the latter. Jung was also of the opinion that symbolic communication {in this context – photos} brings the consciousness and the unconsciousness in contact with each other. This psychological process results in the healing of the psyche. Therefore the aim of the utilization of photos in therapy can be to strengthen the “communication” between the unconscious and conscious. It is the actual deed, in other words, the taking and therapeutic processing of photos, which resulted in psychological growth. Some of the practical applications of phototherapy regarding children and adolescents with psychosocial challenges are as follows: abused children; street children; juvenile delinquents; children who present with scholastic problems; acting out children; children with problems relating to body image and low self-esteem.

