

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ART THERAPY ON CHILDREN WHO
HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMATIC GRIEF**

by

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I declare that "The Psychological Effects of Art Therapy on Children who have experienced Traumatic grief" is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of reference.

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Signature
(Sandra Carew)

.....

Date

In I oving memory of my father , Bernard,
To my caring and support ive mother , Col I een,
My I oving husband, Mart in
And our chil dren Jul ia, Nina and Liam

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ABSTRACT

The Psychological Effects of Art Therapy on Children who
have experienced Traumatic grief

This thesis investigates the literature on trauma and grief in order to explore the existence of the phenomenon of traumatic grief in children. Appropriate therapies are explored for treating traumatic grief in children. The focus in this research is on non-directive art therapy as the literature has found it to be useful in traumatic circumstances. The therapeutic relationship and the focus on containment are valuable in addressing the primary need of the child in therapy especially when traumatic grief is to be addressed.

A qualitative case study approach was chosen. Two case studies were selected to investigate the phenomenon of traumatic grief in children. Purposeful sampling was used to select the cases to observe the phenomenon of traumatic grief. The case studies included pre-therapy and post-therapy assessments, which included cognitive, emotional and behavioural assessments. Art therapy was found to address the problems in the two cases.

Key Concepts

Traumatic grief; children; trauma; PTSD; attachment; bereavement; grief; loss; art therapy; containment; psycho-educational assessment; assessment of drawings; non-directive therapy

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