

EXPRESSIVE DRAW-A-STORY:  
A POWERFUL, NO-FAIL EXPRESSIVE ART  
THERAPY DRAWING

JONATHAN HAAG, DAT, LCSW, ATR-BC

"Finding the tool is often half the battle."

Andrew A. Rooney

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INTRODUCTION

- "Finding the tool is often half the battle." ~ Andrew A. Rooney
- In the summer of 1993...started to become more intentional about Draw A Story as a way to elicit an expressive narrative.



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INTRODUCTION

- Art Therapy Background
- 1991-1992: Interned on a child psychiatric unit and 2 different adolescent psychiatric units
- 1993-2000: Adolescent in and out patient psychiatric units and adult chemical dependency
- 2000 – 2002: Mental Health Therapist
- 2002-2018: Art Therapist for large hospice
- 2018 – Present: Assistant Professor of Art Therapy at Millikin University



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## INTRODUCTION

- Therapeutic populations that I have worked with that seem to benefit from Draw A Story:
- In patient and out-patient adolescent psychiatric units
- Adult chemical dependency group
- Individual and family art therapy pre-loss and post loss sessions
- Multi-generational art therapy grief group
- Cancer support groups
- Spouse Loss support groups




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## INTRODUCTION

- I wanted to understand how and why Draw A Story seemed to be therapeutically potent.
- This led me to pursue my Doctorate in Art Therapy.




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## FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP

- Becoming reacquainted with Silver's Draw a Story
- Modifications to Draw A Story to enhance expressive artmaking
- Research Summary
- Create a Modified Draw A Story
- Video Transition
- Your experience along with Questions & Comments




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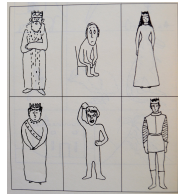
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### BECOMING REACQUAINTED WITH SILVER'S DRAW A STORY

- In 1962, Rawley Silver teaching art to deaf students
- She didn't sign and the students didn't read lips
- Silver began using simple drawings as a way to communicate
- Her concept of stimulus drawings emerged from this process




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### BECOMING REACQUAINTED WITH SILVER'S DRAW A STORY

- The basics of her stimulus drawing approach:
- Choose 2 from the drawings offered,
- Imagine something happening between them
- Then draw the story.
- Give the drawing a title and discuss with therapist




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### BECOMING REACQUAINTED WITH SILVER'S DRAW A STORY

- In my mind, Silver encountered a fork in the road...
- Developed research and assessment protocols to establish a sense of reliability and validity
- Developed assessment criteria using the stimulus drawings for aggression, depression, cognitive skills, and other areas of interest




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### BECOMING REACQUAINTED WITH SILVER'S DRAW A STORY

- Moving in a specific direction often excludes other choices.
- The other path is an expressive and narrative focus, which I found has it's own priorities.




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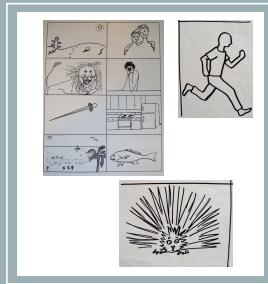
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### MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- I eliminated some DAS drawings that were seldom chosen by my clients in the past and added new images to create a total of 68 drawings in the packet
- This modification increased expressive options and affective range




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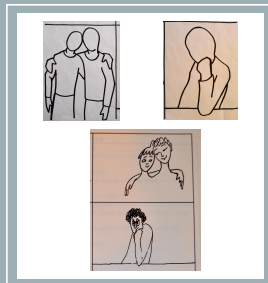
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### MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- I simplified Silver's original images by emphasizing their sense of form and shape to make them easier for the participants to reproduce the drawings




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MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- I also eliminated many of the facial expressions in Silver's images, leaving the faces of most of the figures blank, to allow participants to depict the facial and emotional expression of their own choosing

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MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- I revised those drawings that contained human figures to make them as neutral as possible with respect to gender, age, and ethnicity
- The primary goal is to increase the ability for the participants to project onto the images

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MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- Thirdly, I provided a printed handout of all of the drawing choices instead of presenting a limited number of the drawings on cards, which expanded and made the creative options more accessible

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MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- Finally, I provided a variety of art material (including color) to enhance opportunities for expression.
- Participants could render the drawings free hand or use a light table or a projector to assist in tracing the images or enlarging them.
- These tools fostered participants' confidence and immediate engagement in drawing.




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RESEARCH RESULTS SUMMARY

- Haag, J. (2019). Recontextualizing the draw a story assessment: Expanding the expressive function in art therapy. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*.
- doi:10.1080/07421656.2018.1524101




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RESEARCH RESULTS SUMMARY:  
POINT I  
PRE-STRUCTURED ART MATERIALS

- DAS stimulus drawings served as an "extension of art material" described by Vick (1999, p. 76) with respect to the ease with which the participants were able to create original responses.
- Several participants reported that the DAS verbal directions and drawing packet provided both a starting point for drawing and the means to create it.




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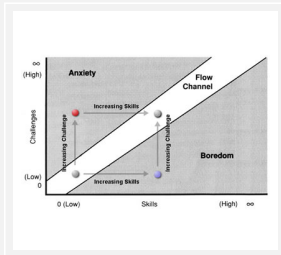
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RESEARCH RESULTS SUMMARY:  
POINT 2

- Encourages the experience of Flow by creating a sense of structure that contributes to a predictable and unambiguous mini-universe.



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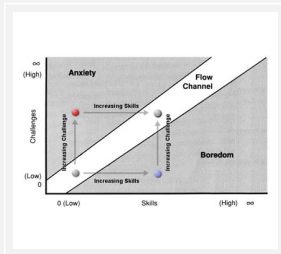
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RESEARCH RESULTS SUMMARY:  
POINT 2

- Both the packet of stimulus drawings, verbal directions, and other tools (e.g., light table, projector) offered the participants elements that increased their artistic skill level in such a way as to enable them to adjust to the challenge of creating an expressive drawing.



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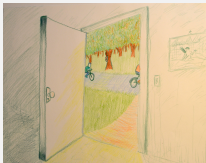
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CREATE A MODIFIED DRAW A STORY



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**VERBAL MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING**

- I told the participants that DAS is like a "drawing game."
- You will create a drawing using the packet of people, places, animals and things...



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**VERBAL MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING**

- The object of the game is "to create a drawing using at least two drawings from the drawing packet that tells a story about how you are feeling and doing after the death of your loved one."
- (The Art Therapist can change the directive based on therapeutic intention)



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**VERBAL MODIFICATIONS TO DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING**

- When you have a drawing selected feel free to start the drawing.
- Subtle difference to Silver's directions



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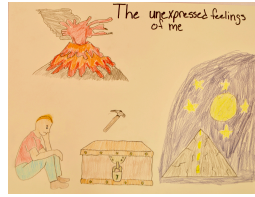
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VERBAL MODIFICATIONS TO  
DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE  
EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- Rules of this drawing game:
- Use at least 2 drawings, but feel free to use as many as you want.
- You can change the drawings anyway you want




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VERBAL MODIFICATIONS TO  
DRAW A STORY TO ENHANCE  
EXPRESSIVE ARTMAKING

- You can use your own drawings as long as you have 2 drawings/ideas from the packet
- I encourage you to draw them free hand, but feel free to trace them or project them
- \*Verbal directions are designed to give permission and options




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CREATE A MODIFIED DRAW A STORY




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DVD OF MODIFIED DRAW A STORY

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MY CONTACT INFORMATION

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REFERENCES

- Haag, J. (2019). Recontextualizing the draw a story assessment: Expanding the expressive function in art therapy. *Art Therapy Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/07421656.2018.1524101
- Silver, R. (2007). *The Silver Drawing Test and Draw A Story: Assessing depression, aggression, and cognitive skills*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Vick, R. M. (1999). Utilizing prestructured art elements in brief group art therapy with adolescents. *Art Therapy Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 16(2), 68–77.

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