

PHOTOTHERAPY IN MENTAL HEALTH

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Edited by

DAVID A. KRAUSS, Ph.D.

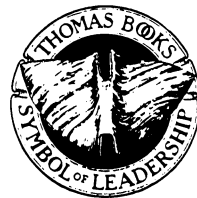
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Photo by David A. Krauss.

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PREFACE

THE scope of this book is photography in the mental health field, with special emphasis on therapeutic uses, rather than diagnostic ones. This therapeutic use of photography has come to be called *phototherapy* and includes the use of photographs or photographic materials by a trained therapist as an aid in the alleviation of psychological symptoms or to aid in the personal growth of clients.

The purpose of this book is to give an overview of the field of phototherapy, to introduce the reader to the history of photography and therapeutic uses of photography, as well as to show how photography is being used in therapy and what concepts of psychotherapy are most applicable. A pervasive discussion throughout the book will be on visual learning.

The plan of the book is to present original chapters by contemporary leaders in phototherapy. The contributors share an interest and expertise in photography and therapy. Many are both photographers and professional mental health therapists. Several of the chapters are illustrated with photographs taken by the phototherapists or their clients. Mental health professionals from four disciplines are represented among the contributors: clinical psychology, counseling psychology, psychiatry, and art therapy, reflecting the editors' belief that no one profession or theoretical stance represents the only or even the best approach to treatment of emotional or behavioral problems.

Phototherapy in Mental Health can be thought of as a companion to the previously published book by Charles C Thomas, Publisher, *Videotherapy in Mental Health*, edited by Jerry L. Fryrear and Bob Fleshman. Although there are obvious differences in theory and practice between phototherapy and videotherapy, both deal with visual modes of therapy and share many theoretical concepts.

We hope that you will find this book of original essays on phototherapy as fascinating and enlightening as we, and we wish you good reading and good viewing.

David A. Krauss
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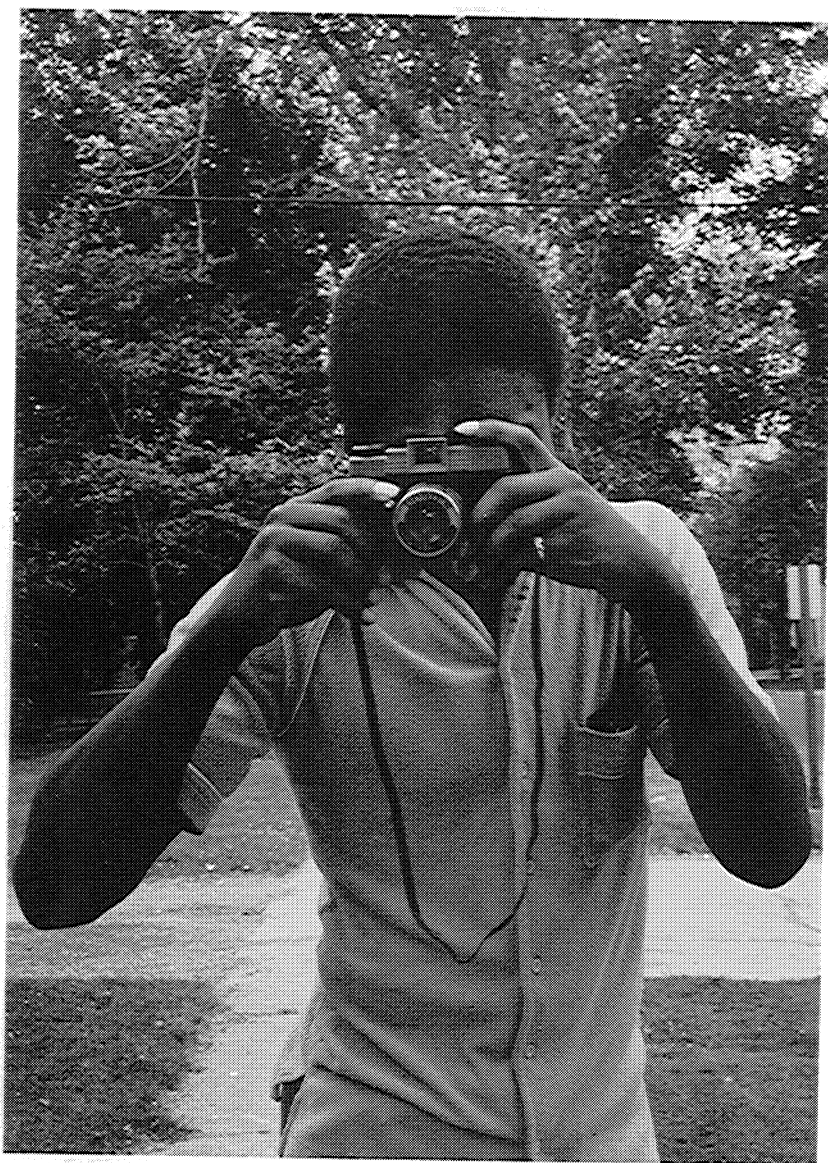


Photo by David A. Krauss.

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PHOTOTHERAPY IN MENTAL HEALTH



Photo by David A. Krauss

Chapter 1

Phototherapy Introduction and Overview

JERRY L. FRYREAR AND DAVID A. KRAUSS

PHOTOGRAPHY appears to have been invented simultaneously in France and England around 1836. Gilman (1976) states that sixteen years later in 1852 Dr. Hugh Diamond presented a series of photographs of the insane to a London audience. Those portraits apparently represented the first systematic use of photography in psychiatry. Diamond advocated the use of photography as an adjunct to psychiatry, and took photographs of mentally ill clients. He maintained that photographs could be used to study the appearance of the mentally ill, that photographic portraits could change patients' self-concepts, and that photographs could be used as a tool in record keeping so that it would be easier to identify readmissions and patients who needed treatment in the future. His paper on this subject was presented to the Royal Society of Medicine in England in 1856, and can be found along with reproductions of fifty-four photographic plates in Gilman (1976).

Gilman (1982) reports on Kerlin's 1858 use of photography in the Philadelphia Asylum. In Gilman's words, "(Kerlin's photographs) emphasize his charges' ability to return to the world outside the asylum, to be normal as well as to appear normal." Gilman has further documented the use of art and media to show how the stereotypical portrayal of the insane has influenced both societal "perception and treatment of the mentally disturbed," (title page) not only in the United States, but in England, France, and Germany. Auspicious as these beginnings were, it was only in the late 1970s that phototherapy began to truly emerge as a distinct discipline with a rapidly growing body of literature.

Phototherapy has been defined by a number of writers. Stewart (1978) has stated that phototherapy is "... the use of photography or photographic materials, under the guidance of a trained therapist, to reduce or relieve painful psychological symptoms and to facilitate psychological growth and therapeutic change" (p. 1). Krauss (1980) has defined phototherapy as "the systematic application of photographic images and/or the photographic process (often in combination with visually referent language and imaging) to create positive change in clients' thoughts, feelings and behaviors."

Fryrear (1980) has divided the literature on the use of photographs in

therapy into eleven broad areas: (1) the evocation of emotional states, (2) the elicitation of verbal behavior, (3) modeling, (4) mastery of a skill, (5) facilitation of socialization, (6) creativity/expression, (7) diagnostic adjunct to verbal therapies, (8) a form of nonverbal communication between client and therapist, (9) documentation of change, (10) prolongation of certain experiences and (11) self-confrontation. To these eleven, we add a twelfth broad area, literature regarding phototherapy training.

Each of these twelve areas will be reviewed in some detail, and this introduction will be concluded by a brief preview of the chapters to follow.

THE EVOCATION OF EMOTIONAL STATES

Phototherapy has been used in relaxation training to help clients achieve a state of altered consciousness, relaxation, and/or changes in pulse rate. The use of 16mm film and still slides as aids in audio instruction or in guided imagery have been employed as part of a program of systematic desensitization (Myers, 1977; Vogel, 1977).

Jaffe and Bressler (1980) discuss the nature of the (guided) imagery process and their thoughts regarding its application in obtaining "diagnostic information, for relaxation, to make positive suggestions to alter physical processes, and in the discovery of an inner advisor."

Krauss (1979a) has stated that photographs have the "ability to immediately trigger memories, trigger affect, put the client back into that feeling state, the initial feeling state . . ." (transcription of dialogue regarding the uses of photography in therapy).

Much of the literature relates to the use of photographs to evoke cathartic emotions within verbal psychotherapy sessions. Akeret (1973) described his work with a young woman who had completely repressed a traumatic childhood experience that had been too painful for her to remember. By blocking the memory of the experience, she had been able to deny that it had ever happened, and progress in therapy was slow. By reviewing and discussing photographs from her family album, the young woman was helped to remember the experience and to release the emotions that had been repressed for so many years.

In a study of the response of psychotic patients to photographic self-image experience (Cornelison and Arsenian, 1960) it was found that the presentation of self photographs seemed to induce emotional catharsis in some patients, particularly those patients who destroyed the unflattering pictures of self. It was felt that the patients' act of destroying the unflattering photograph of self might expiate some of the self-destructive feelings, which would leave the individual with less residual anger to control and which would release more energy to cope with reality. The experience of seeing the self in such an unflattering, psychotic state helped to shock the individual into better contact with the realistic self.