

The Use of the
CREATIVE THERAPIES
in Treating Depression



Edited by
Stephanie L. Brooke
and Charles E. Myers

**THE USE OF THE CREATIVE THERAPIES
IN TREATING DEPRESSION**

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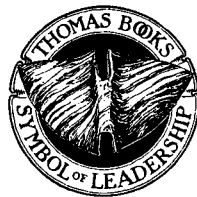
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(With 21 Other Contributors)



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We dedicate this book to an extraordinary person of heart and soul, my mother, Susan “Sue” Foster Myers. My mom taught me through her actions the true meaning of compassion for others, social justice, and love of life. Never one to be content with status quo, she served her community in many roles through grace and hard work, including town councilperson, county legislator, County Youth Board member, and Scout leader. Through these roles, she touched the lives of many people and created necessary change to improve the lives of her community and neighbors. My mom loved to travel and visited Australia, the Caribbean, Ecuador, the Netherlands, Tanzania, Thailand, and Turkey, among other destinations. She passed away in March 2014 while traveling with my father in Australia, her seventh continent. Her passing during the edits of this book increased my personal understanding and empathy of depression and the struggles that come with it. Even in death, she continues to teach. I miss you mom.

CONTRIBUTORS

We extend our deepest appreciation to the following contributors for sharing their expertise and experience regarding their work with chemical dependency issues. Each of these contributors was selected on the basis of his or her experience with respect to clinical issues, diversity in theoretical orientation, or treatment modality. As you read each chapter, it is our hope you will share in our appreciation for the insights contributed by the following individuals:

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PREFACE

The Use of the Creative Therapies in Treating Depression is a comprehensive work that examines the use of art, play, music, dance/movement, drama, and animals as creative approaches to treating depression. The editors' primary purpose is to examine treatment approaches that cover the broad spectrum of the creative art therapies. Well-renowned, well-credentialed, and professional creative art therapists in the areas of art, play, music, dance/movement, drama, and animal-assisted therapies have contributed to this work. In addition, some of the chapters are complemented with photographs of client work in these areas. The reader is provided with a snapshot of how these various creative art therapies are used to treat children and adults diagnosed with depression. This informative book will be of special interest to educators, students, therapists, as well as people working with families and children touched by this diagnosis.

S.L.B.
C.E.M.

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**THE USE OF THE CREATIVE THERAPIES
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Chapter 1

FACING THE BLACK DOG

DOROTHY A. MIRAGLIA AND STEPHANIE L. BROOKE

A light seen suddenly in the storm, snow / Coming from all sides, like
flakes / Of sleep, and myself / On the road to the dark barn, / Halfway
there, a black dog near me.

Robert Bly, “Melancholia” in *The Light Around the Body*

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting our inner images of self and others, metaphors are like mirrors (Kopp, 1995). Metaphoric imagery may be a key that unlocks new possibilities for self-created insight and change (Ronen & Rosenbaum, 1998). The title of this work stems from a power metaphor for depression—the black dog. “Metaphors give us a new way of looking at things, and they deal with those ‘unconscious’ processes of association, image, emotion, memory, and analytical thought” (Mays, 1990, p. 427).

The information about this metaphor and history came from Paul Foley (2014) of the Black Dog Institute. It is said that Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln referred to their depression as “the black dog.” Samuel Johnson became famous for the use of this phrase that he shared in a letter to a friend: “What will you do to keep away the black dog that worries you at home” (as cited in Foley, 2014, p. 7). Going back further, the black dog metaphor and its association with depression were found in the works of Horace and Apollonius. For instance, Horace describes this metaphor as follows: “No company’s more hateful than your own / You dodge and give yourself the slip; you seek / In bed or in your cups from care to sneak / In

vain: the black dog follows you and hangs / Close on your flying skirts with hungry fangs” (Horace, as cited in Foley, 2014, p. 3).

The “dark hound” is an archetypal object of fear: “an ever present companion, lurking in the shadows just out of sight, growling, vaguely menacing, always on the alert; sinister and unpredictable, capable of overwhelming you at any moment” (Foley, 2014, p. 1). Although there are many negative connotations for the metaphor of black dog, Foley notes that black dogs were highly prized by the Romans as guard dogs that had healing power. “In this sense, it is a metaphor of hope: the ‘black dog’ may be to some extent a friend, but he is a bad friend; and as with anyone who renders life miserable and restricts interactions and possibilities, he needs to be left behind, no matter how persistent his pursuit” (Foley, 2014, p. 14). In this chapter, we will discuss the relationship of creativity to depression. Although there is a link between the two, creative art therapists can use their traditions to help clients face the black dog and emerge from depression.

This chapter begins with a short history of depression. Next, we examine how depression occurs across the life span. Children and adolescents will manifest the symptoms of depression differently than adults will for instance. We have a brief section on the relationship between creativity and depression, using some famous examples of artists and musicians who suffered from this disorder. The chapter will end with an overview of the book and the chapters to follow.

CLINICAL HISTORY/DEPRESSION

Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say “My tooth is aching” than to say “My heart is broken.”

C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

The *International Encyclopedia of Depression* (Ingram, 2009) provides an overview about the history of depression. In the 1800s, mental afflictions were known as mania (furious madness), melancholia (partial madness), dementia (weakened psychological resources and behavioral incapacities), and phrensy leading to mental disorganization in the brain. During the first half of the nineteenth century, alienists wanted to know if mental afflictions existed that are a primary disorder of intellectual, emotional, or willingness functions. Esquirol, a French psychiatrist, developed the term lypemania that he believed was a primary disorder of mood (Ingram, 2009). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the term lypemania was replaced with the word depres-

sion. Depression was first called mental depression but the word *mental* was removed by the 1880s when the term was removed from being used in heart physiology. The terms *depression* and *melancholia* were used during this century, with *depression* being a more severe disorder. A German psychiatrist, Kraepelin, associated depression with mania (Ingram, 2009).

Depression was viewed as a form of madness (psychosis) by the early twentieth century (Ingram, 2009). However, clinical experts did not believe depression meant the patient was mad. European alienists, Gillespie and McCurdy constructed minor, neurotic, or reactive depression. The debate began a decade later between those who believed depression was unimodal and bimodal. Although the debate was never resolved, the unimodal perspective was identified as more convenient because of the biological model of depression (Ingram, 2009).

Mental health professionals have a better understanding about what depression is. “Depression—literally, the state of being pushed down—is commonly used to refer to emotional states of sadness, despair, numbness/emptiness/deadness/hopelessness, and related “down” or “blue” moods that often involve a depletion of normal levels of energy, interest, mental focus, pleasure, social engagement, and appetite” (Ingram, 2009, ¶2). Each person has experienced sadness, but this sadness is often short-lived. Depression impacts people differently because it interferes with daily life and can last for a long period of time. Depression can occur when a person experiences bereavement, loses a job, is experiencing a divorce or breakup, or has been diagnosed with a serious illness. Further, Ingram (2009) notes that depression can also occur when a person did not meet a major life goal. The way depression manifests will depend on the person’s age and perhaps, gender. The next section looks at how depression manifests across the life span.

DEPRESSION ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

In some country places, when a child is sulky, it is said “the black dog is on his back.”

P. Foley, “‘Black dog’ as a metaphor for depression”

Depression and Children

Depression in children and teens often looks different as compared to adults. Although depression has been recognized for some time as a problem for children and teenagers, it is associated with great risk of lasting morbidity (McArdle, 2007). The prevalence rates of depression in children and adolescents are estimated to be as high as 5 percent (Calheiros & Patrício, 2014).