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## Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

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Landgarten, Helen B. (1993). *Magazine Photo Collage: A Multicultural Assessment and Treatment Technique*. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 200 pp. \$28.95 us.

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*Reviewed by:* Katherine M. Leonard, Beaverton, OR.

Looking for an inexpensive and easily administered tool that can be adapted to almost any counselling practice? Helen Landgarten presents an art therapy technique, Magazine Photo Collage (MPC), that she has been using for over 25 years. The author suggests "The attraction of integrating Magazine Photo Collage (MPC) into the reader's style of working is that it is simple for the therapist to administer and for the client to produce."

Landgarten adequately prepares us for use of the MPC. Preparing two collections of magazine pictures, one of people and one of miscellaneous items that could relate to therapeutic issues is the core task. She recommends magazines such as *Life* and *National Geographic* that show real people under various conditions rather than idealized fashion models. She also states the importance of using magazines that focus on different ethnic communities so that the collection of pictures reflect the client population that will be using them. She provides a list of culturally slanted magazines and where to find them. This is probably the most important recommendation of the book: clients need to see images that relate to their lives. Landgarten does not say how many pictures to have in each box nor mention the amount of time that may be consumed in gathering and trimming the pictures. She does acknowledge the fact that there can be no standardization of these collections as the selection of pictures will vary from counsellor to counsellor and from session to session as the images are used.

The four tasks of the assessment protocol that involve selecting pictures, pasting them down and telling or writing about the selections are adequately described. The first task is to pick out pictures that "catch your attention" and say whatever comes to mind. The second is to choose four to six pictures of people and write or tell what each one is thinking and saying. The third task is to select pictures that stand for something good and something bad. The fourth task is to pick a picture of a person and tell what is happening to that person and, if the situation will change, what will make it change.

Landgarten suggests questions to ask and guides for analysis. She also presents several examples that reflect different ages, genders, cultures and presenting problems. The black and white illustrations are clear enough for the reader to see the resulting collages. The remainder of the book shows how the tasks and technique can be adapted and incorporated into on-going counselling. In fact, the strength of this book may be in its illustrations. I found the contents of the book immediately applicable.

I presented some of the tasks to several of my clients who have not had experience with art therapy. They were all willing to try it and the results were interesting. A widow found images that reminded her of her husband's

terminal illness and of her mother who died a few months later. She responded to the images with greater depth of feeling than before and began a new level of healing the losses in subsequent sessions. A wife, who had verbally dominated previous conjoint sessions, resisted the idea of collage because she said her husband was the artist. However, she picked out so many images in the first tasks that she made three collages. I noticed that my clients wanted to look at every picture that was in the boxes and were not able to complete four tasks in one session. I found that watching them work gave me additional information about their behaviour. However, it is clear that these tasks are not sufficient in themselves for client assessment. Landgarten states that MPC has not been validated with empirical research and recommends the use of other sources of data, interviews and standardized measures. Unfortunately Landgarten does not refer to the literature on photo therapy nor suggest any basic books on art therapy. You will not become an art therapist by reading this book. Nonetheless, Landgarten does give a thorough presentation of one technique that can and is being adapted to the practices of many different kinds of therapists. I've seen hospice nurses, facilitators of adolescent groups, and music therapists use MPC in their practices. After reading this book, they might become even more sensitive to the creative processes they are eliciting.

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Gil, Eliana. (1993). *Play in Family Therapy*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. U.S. paperback.

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*Reviewed by:* Katharine Oscroft, Edmonton, AB.

It was 1981 when Carl Whitaker first proposed the notion of play therapy as a paradigm for thinking about family therapy. Since that time a few system-oriented writers have attempted to incorporate Bateson's idea of the paradoxical meta-message of play into their thinking and clinical direction, or have encouraged therapists to include play in their family sessions.

However, until the publication of this simple hands-on introduction to play therapy techniques, adaptable to family work, little has been written from a practical perspective.

Gil has written her book to address two practical questions: How can family therapists meaningfully engage even the very young members of a family in the change process and how can child therapists facilitate the child's caregivers entry into the child's world in a healing, supportive and participatory manner.

The perspective of this book is that play is not only a symbolically rich ground through which to gain an understanding of the child's inner and outer worlds, but also the medium through which enhanced communication, understanding and emotional relatedness between family members can be achieved at both verbal and nonverbal levels. To this end Gil presents methods through which the therapist and caregivers become active participants in a therapeutic play process.