

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Book Review by Arnell Etherington

**Art Therapy in Private Practice :
Theory, Practice and Research in Changing Contexts**

Edited by James D. West

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This book is a rich compendium of sixteen writers' thoughts, feelings, and insights into addressing art therapy in private practice in the UK as well as the writers' experiences of private practice therapeutic work in situ and a brief view of academic research. The book is divided into five sections: Contexts and Collaboration; Working with Children, Families and the Child in the Adult; Training and Transmission; Governance and Supervision; and Research. The themes provide a broad stroke of considerations within the category of private practice of art therapy.

Within **Part I: Contexts and Collaboration**, four differing practice contexts are explored in a varied way. For example, in Frances Walton's chapter 'From Public to Private and Back: Art Therapy in the NHS and in Private Practice' the career progression of one moving from the various structures in the ever-changing NHS to considerations regarding the move to private practice are reviewed. The history of service(s) provided by the NHS is remarkable and informative as to the relationship of art therapy within its context. The differences in the two services is clearly illustrated.

Part II: Working with Children, Families and the Child in the Adult has 2 chapters. Nili Sigal in 'My Parents Say that Every Minute Costs Money' has looked at private work with a fresh perspective that may be of interest to readers. Of particular regard, is the interview with a parent whose child had been in art psychotherapy for four years. As the author reiterates at the beginning of the chapter, the breadth of this chapter's topic could fill a whole book in and of itself.

In **Part III: Training and Transmission**, within the chapter by Themis Kyriakidou entitled 'Towards Private Practice: Aspects of Training and the Cycle of Learning' there is a review of the work of providing employment workshops for art therapists with an emphasis on continuing skill development, especially referencing becoming a private practitioner. This includes the experience and maturation as an art therapist, and the particularities of the role. Also, some of the requirements of working in an isolated context and being your own manager, as well as the function of HCPC and BAAT in qualifications are areas that are well reviewed.

Present in **Part IV: Governance and Supervision**, is a wealth of thoughtful consideration. In the chapter by David Edwards, 'By Private Arrangement: Supervision in Private Practice', supervision, considered essential in both training and as a form of continuing professional development, is examined with particular reference to supervising someone in private practice. What are the responsibilities, which type of supervision (clinical or managerial), is the supervision didactic or instructional, and how does the supervisor support the supervisee as the 'wounded healer', etc? Considerations of the development and depth of this supervisory relationship are a few of the topics contained in this chapter.

In **Part V: Research**, Anthea Hendry in the chapter, 'Painting a Picture of Art Therapy Private Practice: Data from UK Survey' reviews the information gained from the BAAT survey in 2015 which includes types of practice, source of payment for service, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, typical hours/week engaged in art therapy private practice, location of practice, charges, client profile, services offered, clinical orientation, etc. These interesting results, be they 3 years old, begin to give shape to the art therapy private practice world within the scope of the survey.

A rather important addition is the *Appendix I: BAAT Core Skills and Practice Standards in Private Work* which was developed in cross-reference to the BAAT Code of Ethics and the HCPC Standards of Proficiency. These guidelines set a framework for the private practitioner.

As Chris Wood in the *Foreword* suggests, the contributions reflect the 'conversation-so-far about the private sector' (p.15). James West in *An Inconclusion* reiterates '...this book represents a first attempt to explore the relatively new field of art therapy in private practice' and as such '... it is necessary to hold back from conclusiveness and appreciate the forming landscape.' (p.148)

The landscape that is forming of art therapy in private practice is quite important to a continuing dialog with education, professional organizations, practitioners, service users and their support systems. Hopefully this publication and its successors can inform and stimulate such dialog.

Arnell Etherington Reader, Ph.D. is an Art Psychotherapist and Clinical Psychologist