
ABSTRACT

Therapeutic imagery approaches for an adult female sexual abuse survivor

FUKUDOME, Rumi

Kyushu Junior College of Kinki University

The case of an adult female survivor of sexual abuse eight years after the attack is reported and the effectiveness of therapeutic imagery approaches is discussed. The weakened body senses and emotions she experienced after the sexual abuse were restored through therapeutic imagery approaches that supported her ability to protect herself in dangerous situations and cultivated an ability to sense safety, which led to the gradual recovery of her scattered body image. These changes have a close relationship with relieving her of self-blame. Although image experiences are generally based on a passive attitude, when images depicting danger after traumatic experiences are shown, passive attitudes change to active ones. Furthermore, searching for new, safe images results in changes to the fixed, passive reaction mode repeated during flashbacks, and supported the client in real life situations. Finally, we found that gender role attitudes of societies, cultures, and families regarding the female body as one “made to have a baby” influenced body images and self-images of female abuse victims.

Key Words: adult female sexual abuse, therapeutic imagery approaches, sensing danger, sensing safety, body image
