

Workshop ISPS Congress 2015

**Psychosis and sexual abuse: psychotherapy and art therapy**

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Workshop participants will be introduced to the world of Anna, a young woman who, after years of sexual abuse had developed a severe chronic psychosis.

The patient didn't speak anymore. The therapeutic communication was possible thanks to an exchange of drawings between Anna and myself.

The patient's drawings very impressively document the devastating psychological effects of sexual abuse. The exchange of therapeutic drawings (progressive mirror drawings<sup>1</sup>) makes it possible to visualize the overcoming of the delusional defenses, the reconstruction of the missing identity and other important stages in the process of recovery from psychosis. The drawings clearly illustrate the perverse psychodynamic relationship between the rapist/raped, its repetition and its elaboration in the transference and countertransference.

The clinical presentation will serve as a stimulus to expand the theme of the workshop in a group setting by embracing the psychosocial dimensions such as the use of sexual violence to erase the victim's identity, the sense of ownership of her/his body and emotions for the purpose of sexual exploitation of the victim. Participants are invited to bring in clinical cases, experiences and issues related to the workshop that can be shared. The interactions between the participants will be enhanced by the use of progressive mirror drawings.

<sup>1</sup> Progressive mirror drawing (Peciccia & Benedetti, 1989) is composed of an initial phase where the patient and therapist simultaneously trace a spontaneous drawing on two different transparent sheets of paper; and a second phase, where again simultaneously, the patient completes and transforms the therapist's drawing while the therapist completes and transforms the drawing of the patient.

Peciccia M, Benedetti G (1998). The Integration of Sensorial Channels Through Progressive Mirror Drawing in the Psychotherapy of Schizophrenic Patients with Disturbances in Verbal Language. *Journal of American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 26:109-122