



**AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

The Psychologist's Toolbox  
American Psychological Association  
Center for Learning and Career Development

*Presents*

Photovoice and Photo Elicitation: Narrative  
Tools for Therapeutic Practice  
Thursday, September 17, 2020



# Introduction

- ▶ Multidisciplinary and Collaborative
  - ▶ Public Health, Social Work, Primary Care/Family Medicine
- ▶ Storyteller
  - ▶ Narrative Interventions (Intervention Researcher)
  - ▶ Constructivist, meaning-making scholar
- ▶ My work:
  - ▶ Trauma
  - ▶ Stress experienced by seriously ill patients and their families
  - ▶ Palliative/End-of-life care
  - ▶ Bereavement

# Overview

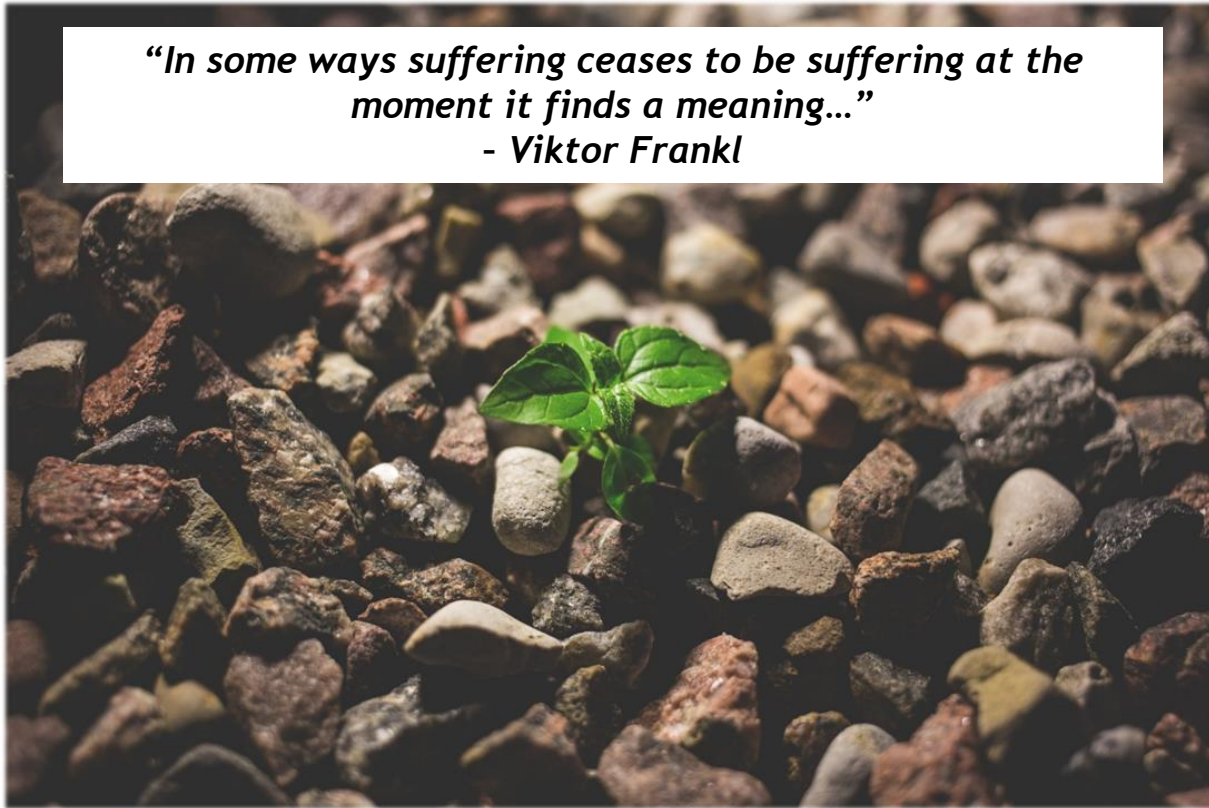
- ▶ Overview of Photovoice and Photo elicitation.
- ▶ Brief description of the differences and similarities between the two approaches.
- ▶ Summary of the Photovoice literature, connecting the link between these visual methods and therapeutic practice.
- ▶ “How-to” implement Photovoice.
- ▶ Discuss implications for therapeutic practice.

# Objectives

- ▶ Participants will successfully review the Photovoice literature and discuss the practice implications for this method.
- ▶ After completing this workshop, participants should be able to describe the steps to Photovoice.

# Constructivism and Meaning-Making

***“In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning...”  
- Viktor Frankl***



# Photovoice and Photo Elicitation

- ▶ What is Photovoice?

- ▶ Answer: A community-based participatory action research method.



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- ▶ What is Photo-elicitation?

- ▶ Answer: Use of imagery to elicit comments

# But, what about Photovoice, specifically?

- ▶ Developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris
  - ▶ Rural women in Yunnan Province, China; decision-making for regional development.
- ▶ Projects often:
  - ▶ Seek to create awareness.
  - ▶ Foster dialogue.
  - ▶ Bring real lives into practice and policy conversations, and plant seeds for change.
- ▶ Photovoice is an innovative way to create social action via amplifying the voices of others.

# Theoretical Underpinnings of Photovoice

- ▶ Critical Consciousness
- ▶ Feminist theory (in the context of participatory research)
- ▶ Documentary Photography



# But, what about meaning-making?

Traumatology  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/trm0000087>

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1085-9373/16/\$12.00

## “Waiting for the Cold to End”: Using Photovoice as a Narrative Intervention for Survivors of Sexual Assault

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Sexual assault is a significant problem on college campuses, with growing public attention. The psychosocial ramifications of sexual assault for college survivors are significant and affect each person differently. Effective interventions that incorporate narrative techniques are instrumental for sexual assault recovery. Photovoice is a narrative method that encourages participants to make meaning of their experiences while integrating trauma into the larger context of their lives. This article highlights an exploratory study of the photovoice method as a narrative therapeutic technique for college sexual assault survivors. The photo-taking, dialoguing, and exhibiting process of photovoice empowered participants to take control over their story and their recovery, as well as to increase campus understanding of the posttraumatic impacts of sexual assault.

*Keywords:* sexual abuse, violence against women, social issues, trauma, feminism

Women attending academic institutions across the country are at significant risk for experiencing rape or attempted rape while in school (Abbey, Parkhill, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrod, & Zawacki, 2006; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Jordan, Combs, & Smith, 2014). Consistently, studies have suggested that one in three to one in four women will be raped during their academic tenure (Abbey et al., 2006; Fisher et al., 2000; Wilcox, Jordan, & Pritchard, 2006). It is understood that the impact of these experiences on educational attainment are significant, and if left untreated, may have lasting effecting on the academic careers of survivors (Jordan et al., 2014).

The experience of rape is often associated with the following forms of psychological distress: posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, fear, suicidality, and generalized anxiety (Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009; Chen et al., 2010; Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jordan, Campbell, & Follingstad,

2010; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001; Tomasula, Anderson, Littleton, & Riley-Tillman, 2012; Yuan, Koss, & Stone, 2006). In fact, one study has suggested that PTSD is more closely aligned with sexual assault than any other psychological health disorders, with approximately 50% of female survivors of rape reporting PTSD symptoms (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995). For college-age survivors who are symptomatic for PTSD, these symptoms impact their ability to attend their regular class schedule and focus on their coursework, as well as to maintain a social life outside their academic obligations (Jordan et al., 2014). Poor functioning can lead to increased dropout rates, as well as social isolation, substance use and misuse, and even suicide (Jordan et al., 2014).

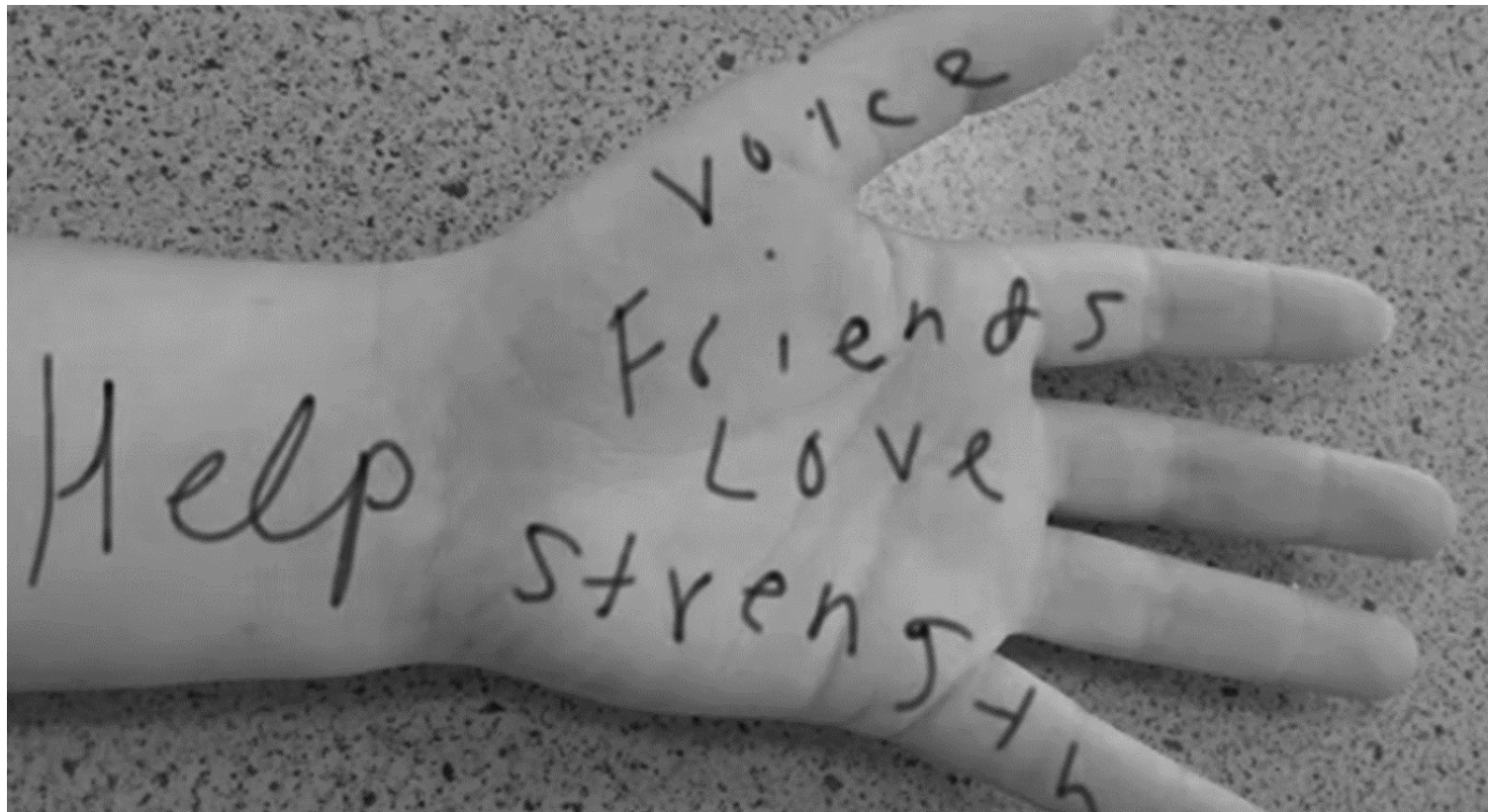
The typical approach to treating PTSD among sexual assault survivors is to employ cognitive-behavioral approaches that utilize exposure techniques and anxiety management as mechanisms

# Photovoice in Practice



*“I look at the trees and I feel like they’ve been stripped of something. While it’s alive inside, it seems so dead outside...I feel like with the right sunlight, water, and time, the leaves will come back. I feel like the tree in winter right now. I’ve been stripped of my courage, trust, my voice...I feel like with the right [care] things will become greener, better.” --Participant*

# Photovoice in practice



# Photovoice in Practice





# Photovoice in Practice



# Goals of Photovoice

- ▶ 3 main goals of Photovoice
  - ▶ Provide voice to those who are marginalized
  - ▶ Instill critical consciousness
  - ▶ Stimulate social action/change (e.g., shift policy)

# Why should you use Photovoice?

- ▶ Taking photographs is rewarding for both the photographer and the people viewing the photos.
- ▶ Creative and person-centered way of sharing stories.
- ▶ Better understanding of one's lived experience
- ▶ Learned skill.
- ▶ Images are understood regardless of verbal barrier.
  - ▶ “a picture is worth 1,000 words”
- ▶ The process is a means for empowerment. Creates opportunity for the voiceless to share their stories.

# Who typically uses Photovoice?

- ▶ People who are marginalized and oppressed.
- ▶ Those who's voice has been ignored.
- ▶ Those who have a stake in their community.
- ▶ Some examples...
  - ▶ NOTE: important to not exploit. Amplify! Amplify! Amplify!
- ▶ How? Involve these folks every step of the way. From inception to completion.



# When to use Photovoice

- ▶ When the method can change an individual or group's perception of themselves, or their circumstances.
- ▶ When an individual or group's needs or problems need to be amplified.
- ▶ When policymakers need to better understand the experiences of a population.
- ▶ Community assessment.
- ▶ Community engagement activities are needed.
- ▶ To document an experience, or site, or event that is about to disappear or become forgotten.
- ▶ To hold policymakers accountable.
- ▶ To inform community programs.

# Photovoice Guidelines

- ▶ Photovoice must...
  - ▶ Be participatory.
  - ▶ Be collaborative.
  - ▶ Involve community members from inception to completion.
  - ▶ Should result in some sort of social action.
- ▶ Participants need...
  - ▶ Training
  - ▶ Support
  - ▶ Tools
  - ▶ Willingness to sit with them in their stories.
  - ▶ Intention to learn from them through their sharing.
  - ▶ Understanding that they are expert in their own lives.

# Photovoice Steps

- ▶ Step 1: Identify at least one community stakeholder to help shape the original goals of project.
  - ▶ Should be involved throughout.
- ▶ Step 2: Recruit participants.
- ▶ Step 3: Train participants.
  - ▶ Technical training.
  - ▶ Ethical photography techniques (e.g., consent for individuals featured in photos & discussion about what should/should not be featured in photos).
  - ▶ Structure aims of project.
  - ▶ Group trust and discussion of expectations for project AND of each other.
  - ▶ Basic counseling/group facilitation skills may be required.
- ▶ Step 4: Photograph images.
  - ▶ 1-2 weeks

# Photovoice Steps

- ▶ Step 5: Facilitate discussion of images.
  - ▶ Discuss and reflect on the experience of taking the photograph, and the meaning of the photos.
  - ▶ Ask for reflection on shared experiences.
  - ▶ SHOWeD method
- ▶ Step 6: Exhibit
  - ▶ Work together with participants to identify preliminary themes.
  - ▶ Identify 1-3 photos per theme.
  - ▶ Collect key quotes to emphasize theme.
  - ▶ Display photos and invite key stakeholders to come witness stories.
- ▶ Step 7: Reflect on exhibit.
  - ▶ From individuals viewing exhibit.
  - ▶ From participants.
- ▶ Step 8: In research...analysis.
  - ▶ Participants should remain involved.

# SHOWeD

S

What do you See  
here?

H

What is really  
Happening?

O

How does this  
related to [y]Our  
lives?

We

Why does this  
situation (or  
strength) exist?

D

What can we Do  
about it?

# Example of SHOWeD in practice



# Example Photovoice Projects

- ▶ First used by Wang and Burris as a tool to empower women who lived in the rural Yunnan Province of China to inform policies and programs that affect them and their community.
- ▶ In addition...
  - ▶ Address a variety of social justice and public health concerns, including health literacy
  - ▶ Better understand experiences of disenfranchisement of women who are living with HIV/AIDS
  - ▶ To explore HIV/AIDS stigma
- ▶ My initial exploration of Photovoice as a therapeutic tool:
  - ▶ survivors of sexual assault who sought justice within a university and community justice system. This study emphasized the therapeutic nature of Photovoice.
- ▶ Photovoice and photo-elicitation as therapeutic methods to help facilitate meaning-making and growth

# Discussion

- ▶ How might you use Photovoice in your practice?



# Discussion

- ▶ What additional benefits could you see participants having to participating in Photovoice?

# Discussion

- ▶ What aspects of the Photovoice process did you resonate with most?

# Discussion

- ▶ How have you used Photovoice methods, or Photo-elicitation in your own work, and how has today's discussion shifted that, if it has?

# Questions?

- ▶ Thank you!
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