

## Video Art in Counselling and Therapy: Methods and Applications

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### Abstract

*This paper examines the use of video in the practice and methodology of counselling and therapy, attempting an overall literature review and critical evaluation of its applications up to date. Traditionally, video has been used as a form of feedback in the context of therapy and counselling, as well as in the education of therapists and counsellors. In the current practice of psychology, the use of video is not restricted solely within the therapeutic session, but can also be extended to the in-between periods, that is the time periods between meetings/sessions. The use of video is aimed at responding to specific problems, emotional and cognitive distortions, which appear as a result of people's traumatic experiences. Video has multiple applications in counselling as well as Art therapies, such as drama therapy, visual therapy etc. The technological possibilities of video can be utilized in the context of adopting strategies that reinforce interaction with patients and interplay during artistic therapeutic activities. Besides, designing therapeutic approaches based on creating films and videos has been placed in the centre of innovative endeavours. The use of video affects therapeutic change along with responses, the experiences of counselees and counsellors, it improves and reinforces the result of therapy and counselling.*

**Keywords:** video; counselling; therapy; Art therapy

### 1. Introduction

The use of video for the purposes of counselling and therapy, as well as in education and social sciences, has been a widely spread practice for several decades. Recently, however, emphasis has been placed on more creative and innovative video applications, especially in psychology, counselling and psychotherapy.

Besides, the development and use of new technologies in the practice of counselling and therapy, have had a significant impact on the change of models of providing such services, resulting in the current discourse on distance counselling and therapy through the internet, email or videoconference (Wagman, 1984; Lawrence, 1986; Abney & Maddux, 2004). At this early stage of video use in therapy and counselling, this use was directed towards providing feedback during the session to those in counselling/treatment. Moreover, many therapists and counsellors use video recordings in their practice of art therapy as a vital element of the therapeutic process, used as an extension of artistic practices and means, while simultaneously obtaining documentation of the process, which could not be saved otherwise (mixed use in the latter) (McNiff & Cook, 1975). The use of video has significantly infiltrated the practice of art therapies, in drama therapy, music therapy, dance therapy etc. (Koch & Fuchs, 2011). In drama therapy in particular, the video is used as an organic part and a tool for the exploration of dramatic metaphors, along with other tools such as photography and masks (Petitti, 1989).

A new epistemology of media is established especially with the use of video in therapy and counselling practice (Costello, 2002), which substantially affects the quality of the services provided and the scientific methods of counselling intervention. However, the practice and use of video is also connected to certain issues of code of conduct and work ethics, which must be examined with uttermost care (Shaw & Shaw, 2006).

## **2. Video as an art**

Video as an art form stems from two other art forms, cinema and photography, which were developed following developments in technology. Considered initially as a lesser version of the art of film-making, the expressive and artistic possibilities of this art form were better understood with time, especially regarding the unlimited possibilities for experimentation it provides (Meigh-Andrews,2013).

Video as an art form appears around mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in America and Europe in various terms: video art, experimental video or even artists' television. This new type of artistic creation was based on various esthetic and ideological quests of the time and it was also connected to social and political activism to a large extent (Meigh-Andrews,2013). At the same time, film and video creations have often been acknowledged as works of art and in some cases they are released on a limited number (Balsom, 2013). Additionally; it is a quite popular and accessible expressive means, which people have been familiarized with to a great extent. Video is developing in the same cultural environment as computer art and was accepted as an art faster than other forms (Taylor,2014).

It is an art form that has contributed to communication research and to the construction of collective and individual identities, while it is placed among innovative methods (Ortlieb, McVee, & Shanahan,2015).Video art emerges as a new and powerful form of representation through an esthetic juxtaposition with commercial television, while its contribution to social change is increasingly being recognized. Especially after the mid-70s, the interest is at its peak and there is a climax in the number of artists, institutions, exhibitions and seminars, as well as the scientific activity devoted to the study of video art (Taylor, 2014). Concurrently, special artistic currents are gradually developed, such as abstract video (Jennings & Mondloch, 2015). During the 60s, video was placed in the range of artistic media, whereas today is a methodological tool for various other art forms such as dance, music or theatre. It is a complex expressive artistic medium, the development of which goes hand in hand with the technological progress, while it comprises qualities and possibilities of other art forms such as visual arts, photography, music, from which it is differentiated nevertheless, introducing a new expressive-artistic language video (Jennings &Mondloch, 2015).

## **3. Video art in the practice of general counselling**

There is a multiplicity of video applications in the practice of general counselling, both in face-to-face and online counselling, as can be seen in the relevant literature review. In online counselling, important applications of video technology focus on the following (Liu & Gentile, 2008):

- A. Introductory informative video for the counsellor and the counselling process. The creation of a video clip in which the counsellor presents themselves is important.
- B. In an online counselling process, videoconference tools can be utilized (Liu, L., Maddux &Smaby, 2006).
- C. Storytelling can be accompanied by and combined with the possibilities of video to add images, sound, as well as communication during the session (Bassoppo-Mayo, 1997).
- D. Video is utilized to evaluate the session.

Additionally, it is observed that video is utilized in training and session supervision, as well as in the assessment of counselees' cases. The counsellor's training in these supportive technologies is important for the successful integration of the video. Training counsellors in new technologies is essential; it optimizes their positive attitude towards the use of video and new technologies, while helping them to achieve their proper implementation (Liu, Maddux&Smaby, 2006). Not only has video has been integrated in diagnostic assessment and counselling intervention during conventional physical sessions, but it is also expanding to provide distance mental health services(Baker & Ray,2011).Currently, the capacities of video are more and more being utilized in distance/online counselling, as shown by relevant references.

Besides, video allows recording and better utilization of the "metaphors", as a special strategy,for managing problems that counselees are facing (Young & Borders,1999). Metaphors are a useful tool that facilitates counselees' self-awareness and personal change, as it ensures access to aspects of the conscious and the unconscious (Matthews &Dardeck, 1985).

Research has shown high rates of satisfaction among counselees in counselling programmes via videoconference, almost equivalent to or the same as those who participated in a face-to-face counselling intervention (Richardson, Frueh, Grubaugh, Johnson,Egede,&Elhai, 2009). Counselling through video is nearly just as satisfactory and effective as a form of intervention, and this fact is confirmed by counsellors through the feedback they receive from their counselees(Veder, Beaudoin,Mani, Pope, & Ritchie, 2014; Steel, Cox & Garry,2011).

## **4.Video in School Counselling**

In a school setting, video can be used in many ways, especially today when children and young adults are quite familiar with its use through computers and smart phones.

In the context of school counselling in particular, video can be utilized in all the functions and roles a counsellor performs in a school, such as: information, orientation, empowerment and facilitation (Ryan & Whitman, 1970), as well as other functions such as research, support, decision making, skill training and development etc. Furthermore, the use of video is important as a kind of technique or method in interpretation, behaviour modification and exposure to new stimuli.

A new trend is the use of videoconferences in sessions with parents, since such sessions are now essential for optimal management of children with problems (Wright, 2011). Also, video, especially in the form of videoclips, is the right means for a counsellor to teach children self-regulation skills, helping them to develop inner mechanisms to control their behaviour. Additionally, in the case of parents who resist admitting their child's behaviour and problems at school, video can be used as evidence that may bend such behaviour of parents and urge them to deal with their child's problems. It can also be used for sessions of psychoeducational nature (Wright, 2011).

Apart from the utilization of video as a mere recording medium, a form of feedback or intervention technique, it can also work as an empowerment method by engaging children and adolescents in activities of making videos or films with stories or recordings of activities. Video making is a collective work that reinforces the cohesion of the school team, enhances collaboration and motivates children to participate and engage in school activities (Pellitteri, Stern, Shelton, & Muller-Ackerman, 2006). Therefore, the use of video can be established as a complex artistic medium for the development of skills, promotion of self-awareness and as a vehicle for behavioural change.

At the same time, the use of video contributes to prevention at school and to specific projects and actions. There have been created videos of educational and counselling nature that can be used in the context of school counselling (Thompson, 2012), thus contributing to fighting negative stereotypes and to developing cultural self-awareness and communication skills. Even video games are often used in the context of counselling (Degges-White & Colon, 2014).

### **5. Video in therapy**

For decades now, video has been recognized as a medium for providing therapy, which on one hand has increased access to therapy for challenged individuals (Manchanda & McLaren, 1998) and on the other hand it offers a new significant range of possibilities for enabling personal change.

The use of video is a complementary method/technique for the assessment of the therapeutic process and is considered a complementary therapeutic method, the results of which have been found positive by research so far (Costello, 2002). Recording sessions on video is quite helpful for psychiatric patients.

Some therapists (Gasman, 1992) assign to individuals in their treatment to watch the recorded therapy sessions again, intending to reinforce the therapeutic process and the patients' involvement/cooperation and also to extend it to activate the counselees in-between sessions. Replaying the video of the therapy session helps patients gain a realistic perception of themselves (Alpert, 1996), which consequently helps them to evade their cognitive distortions and to understand the resistances and defensive mechanisms they are using.

Video is utilized as a therapeutic tool in the context of various therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive-behaviourist, psychodynamic, and systemic therapy. In cognitive therapy, video feedback is utilized as a technique to restore the distorted image (Stopa, 2009), to integrate changes and to discuss personal difficulties (Clark et al., 2003). Also, the contribution of video use in the treatment of phobias is significant, as it constitutes a basic tool in the process of familiarization with phobic stimuli and their treatment (Stangier, Heidenreich, Peitz, Lauterbach, & Clark, 2003). In the therapeutic process, the therapist can examine the fears and promote ways of response or help the individual realize their actual size and their excessive response. Additionally, it can be used as a means to prepare patients when they are to be confronted with stress-provoking tasks or activities (Harvey, Clark, Ehlers & Rapee, 1999).

It must be pointed out that patients with mild intellectual disabilities have benefited especially from video use because, via the video review of the sessions and the simultaneous therapist-guided discussion, they can confront their difficulties and change their behaviour. In other words, video is a basis for developing insight and psychological thought about the personal emotional processes of such patients (Burford & Jahoda, 2012).

A special dimension here is the utilization of the technology of interactive video for therapy, even though certain limitations have been pointed out since this technique allows loss or distortion of some aspects of non-verbal communication such as extra-lingual communication, eye-contact etc. (Manchanda & McLaren, 1998). Finally, it must be stated that in remote areas, video can be utilized to provide individuals, especially children and adolescents, with distance psychological services via videoconference. Despite the limited research, evidence obtained so far shows that distance therapy is especially effective in accommodating not only diagnostic but also therapeutic needs of children and adolescents (Chakrabarti, 2015).

## 6. Video in family therapy

The use of new technologies has spread in family counselling and therapy for gathering research findings but also as a strategy in therapeutic intervention (King, Engi & Poulos, 1998). Within this range of new technologies, video use is considered to be important for offering help and support in the context of family therapy (Wels, 2002). It offers significant assistance both to the supervision and the professional development of family therapists (Barker & Chang, 2013). Educational material of this kind in the form of video (CD-ROM) has been developed for training in issues of family therapy, along with a printed handbook for studying. It presents both basic theoretical principles and applications in real conditions (Nichols, 2005).

Many family therapists begin their acquaintance with family therapy through readings, as well as by systematically watching educational videos, in order to integrate conceptual and perceptual skills that will help them to better understand the cases they manage (Barker & Chang, 2013, σελ. 112). In this case, the family must give consent and be informed as to the use of video-recordings, which can also constitute the best form of clinical records. Clearly, the purpose of video is not to replace direct communication, on-site observation of the therapeutic session or the scene of interaction; however, it aspires to complement and assist it. In this sense, the cases of families or some of their members who resist the recording of sessions are rare. In any case, therapists must ensure consent of the family, inform them about the benefits of the recording and the ways it is to be used, as well as its filing in the archive (Lowe, 2004).

Video enables the family members to examine ways of communication, as well as their behavioural models, thus forming a basis for therapeutic change. It also facilitates self-awareness since one comes face to face with oneself. For these reasons, it has become a source of inspiration for the development of therapeutic techniques and interventions in the field of family therapy. There is also the relative technique of videotalk, where the family members are asked to imagine the desired changes shown in a video (Hudson & O'Hanlon, 1991; O'Hanlon & Wilk, 1987).

## 7. Video in supervision

The use of new technologies and especially video has infiltrated in the practice of counselling and therapy and the relevant literature suggests that it has had a positive impact (Goss & Anthony, 2009). Supervision is carried out by specially trained counsellors and aims at providing help/support to professional counsellors in the treatment of cases, management of difficulties and the assessment-evaluation of the counselling intervention (Wheeler, 2007).

There are various ways of integrating video in the practice of supervision in counselling/therapy, the most important of which are:

- Playing the video-recorded session and conducting discussion
- Recording the process of supervision and utilizing it for the professional development of the supervisees.

Obviously, video use during the supervision session is mainly of educational nature for the supervised counsellor because, through supervision of certain cases, they develop skills, improve their technique (Goodyear, 2014) and generally find support in managing their own difficulties. In other words, they find support in their personal and professional development (Wheeler, 2007). Supervision improves not only the skills of the therapist/counsellor but also the counselling practice per se, contributes to securing the quality and validity of the intervention, as well as its successful outcome (Watkins, 2011). Therefore, the use of new technologies and video affects the effectiveness of counselling and therapeutic intervention. Besides, the use of new technologies and video is utilized in the education of those offering supervision and is a means to conduct supervision of the supervisors themselves (Watkins, 2011). In other words, video use provides feedback and opportunities for improvement of the counsellor/therapist as well as the supervisor, while it can also provide substantial material for research in the field of supervision by obtaining data and educational material for counselling and therapy education (West & Clark, 2004).

Moreover, video use helps with utilizing the supervisor as a model professional rather than merely an instructor, while it may help in studying the non-verbal behaviour and the exploration of blind-spots, as well as the way the counsellor treats the counsellee (Houston, 1990). Tony Rousmaniere and Jon Frederickson (2015) maintain that traditional supervision is asynchronous, which means that it takes place after the therapeutic session. The recordings of both the supervision sessions and counselling intervention may reveal, on one hand, valuable information about the counselling process and, on the other hand, at the level of supervision, aspects and elements that have not been brought to the surface or have been overlooked (Hill, Crowe & Gonsalvez, 2016; James, Allen & Collerton, 2004).

Video recording the counselling session also helps to overcome issues regarding memory distortions or inadequate understanding of the material (Haggerty & Hilsenroth, 2011). It also constitutes a basis for the development of further reflective practices in the supervision process, as well as their transference to the field of counselling intervention. Practical applications of video in the supervision setting enhance counsellors' self-awareness, encourage self-exploration and improve collaboration between supervisor and supervised counsellor (North, 2013).

Rachel Huhra, Cynthia Yamokoski-Maynhart, and Loreto Prieto (2008) summarize some of the advantages of video application in the practice of supervision, which are: a) it allows access to realistic elements of the session, b) it offers the possibility to store and process information, c) it helps counsellors foster skills of self-analysis and enhancement of self-awareness. Furthermore, Diener, Hilsenroth, & Weinberger (2007) report that video use allows access to and reliving of the session, as well as the emotional conflicts experienced during the session, and that it optimizes the effectiveness of the therapy and the dynamics of personal change.

The current use of new technologies and video technologies enables live and synchronous supervision sessions, thus offering immediacy to the supervision session and providing help to both the therapist and those in treatment. Additionally, there are possibilities for conducting supervision from a distance, which is time saving. Distance supervision is usually offered both in the context of training counsellors and therapists and in the field of general counselling, although several theoreticians maintain that there may occur code of conduct issues, confidentiality etc. (Orr, 2010; Brandoff & Lombardi, 2012).

### **8. Video in therapists' and counsellors' education**

Video is the most accurate clinical record, and this is the reason why it provides the basis for education, offering the necessary material for the organization of the supervision process. In their book *Basics of family therapy*, Barker and Chang (2013) sum up how and why video is integrated in therapists' education, as follows:

- Therapists and supervisors can examine their work from an observer's viewpoint.
- Both the supervisor and the therapist can examine the difficulties and mistakes in the application of principles and methods.
- Supervisors can examine the progress of supervisees and design individualized interventions to improve on their weaknesses.
- The supervisor can use videos to show the application of therapeutic techniques, as well as the commentary on the way they are applied; they can also record physical role plays with the trainees to educate and improve them.

Arthur Bodin (1969) maintains that counsellors and therapists in training are becoming more and more familiar with the use of new technologies and video, especially in their training for the achievement of learning objectives and skills acquisition. The use of video in therapists' training can be seen in the following situations:

- Use of videos created for educational purposes
- Use of videos by the trainees.
- Use of videos for the education of therapists via experiential workshops and exercises, i.e., self-presentation, communication etc.

The therapist who uses video in the clinical practice ensures an additional source of knowledge for themselves, because they have the chance to watch it again and have self-supervision of the clinical work themselves. It is also a significant source of feedback for the person in counselling/treatment, whose reactions can secure them an additional source of learning for the therapist themselves (Bodin, 1969). On the other hand, it is also a form of evaluation of the progress of therapists and counsellors in training (Kramer & Reitz, 1980).

Concurrently, counselling trainees acquire skills in addition to experiences in utilizing video in their clinical practice; they are trained to use a powerful tool in the therapeutic process, but also to adhere to the code of conduct by avoiding problems deriving from its application. It must be noted that the integration of video in the therapeutic practice in the field of family therapy is subject to the limitations and the methodological and ethical principles imposed by each theoretical school. Moreover, the supervisors themselves have to be trained in the use of video as regards both face-to-face supervision and distance use of clinical material online (Rosenfield, 2012).

Over the past two decades, special software has started to be developed aimed at training counsellors with the use of interactive video in simulation conditions, which is utilized in postgraduate specialization of counsellors (Engen, Finken, Luschei & Kenney, 1995). This software sights the teaching of counselling skills and can be utilized during both the theoretical teaching of counselling courses and the students' Practicum (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Walker, 2009).

### **9. Critique and Code of Conduct issues**

However, many clinicians have been critical of the drawbacks regarding video use in child and adult men's therapy, as its use may affect the participants' behaviour (Degges-White & Colon, 2012). Besides, there is a risk of violating confidentiality or leaking content.

### **10. Summary of Conclusions**

It is generally observed that video is regularly utilized in the practice of counselling and therapy in its various strands and aspects. It is applied as a tool and a method of counselling intervention as well as a dominant element in the education of counsellors and therapists. Besides, video is classified among the visual research methods not only in counselling and therapy but also in other social sciences.

Video is successfully utilized in the education of counsellors and therapists in nearly all theoretical approaches, even the most traditional ones such as the psychodynamic approaches. In certain theoretical approaches, such as the cognitive-behaviourist, several techniques have been built upon the function of video and the possibilities it offers. In systemic therapy it is an extension of other therapeutic practices and methods such as the mirror technique.

However, a number of issues concerning the code of conduct are related to the use of video in therapy and counselling, which counsellors and therapists should be aware of.

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