



## Room with a view

creative therapy studio

# Drawing within: art as therapy

### *Interview: Glenda Deed, creative therapist*

Glenda Deed offers a professional creative approach to therapy that allows people the freedom to explore personal issues in ways other than talking. Clients participate by drawing or creating small sculptural artworks. The most common media are crayons; chalk or pastel and her shelves are lined with a variety of interesting and colourful objects. "It is important to the work that the tools are simple and it helps if they're easily transportable," she says.

"Clients come with diverse motivation, it might be the age old questions of purpose and meaning, while others seek to expand creatively or progress in a specific area of functioning. Utilising a structured model that includes both talking and drawing, different things will emerge. I use a triangle of words; images and feelings. This allows clients to look more closely at key themes, refining as they go. They might be keen to draw something specific or, I'll give them a drawing cue based on what they are experiencing. Once there is starting point the client seems to become energised and the process seems to spontaneously evolve"

Most sessions involve work with colour, which in itself is healing. People intuitively choose their own objects, symbols and colours".

"I strongly believe we all have an elements of wisdom and strength, which when given an environment of support respect and encouragement, healing and resolution will naturally occur."

"Colour and images contain powerful metaphors

and at a subconscious level creative therapy allows acknowledgement and practice of those innate abilities. With this enlarged realm of reference the clients' art becomes tangible and deeply symbolic of their personal discoveries."

Glenda's motivation stems from always having worked with people. "I have always been involved in pastoral care in my church, and through my own art making have found keys that work for people across the board. Artistic flair is not a prerequisite for this kind of work".

Her process is mostly person centered. I'm only working with what people want to bring, confidentiality and respect are essential." My tools for creative therapy stem from Interactive Drawing Therapy, Jungian psychology and Gestalt methods. All of these explore both the "dark and the light sides, seeking to integrate all the parts that make us who we are. Sometimes in Christian contexts we want to cut off the darkness."

"Creativity in a therapeutic model is very useful for younger people who often instinctively pick up the crayons as they talk, something we tend to lose in adulthood. This approach can also benefit people who have difficulty verbalising or for those facing relationship breakdowns – where talking can be just more of the same. In creative therapy people can't 'do it wrong' because it is experiential, and everything is valid."

A great variety of people have come to enjoy the approach. Issues such as: creative blocks, life direction and greater spontaneity, to relationship difficulties, grief and loss, depression. "The kinds of life themes that affect us all, no-one is exempt but taking steps to work through these require courage and strength and I am often in awe of people's experience and commitment." In one client's words, 'This course has lifted the fear of performance and allowed me to enjoy the thrill of creation.'

Glenda completed a two-year degree-level diploma of counselling at Integrity College where she focused on relationship centered and experiential modalities. She has undergone further training in art and spirituality since then. Her research paper was entitled "Using Art In Therapy." Glenda's sessions are run from a welcoming room above Southern Ballet in the Arts Centre ... which she shares with the CS Library, just opposite their office.

**Based on an interview by John Stringer**

