



Children and Trauma: Art Therapy Written Video Transcript

= you think was happening?

It was burning all down, melting.

Uh-huh. And how did—what did you think about that or how did you feel about that?

I feel very scared.

Very scared? Uh-huh.

And this is the terrific benefit of art with children is that they can tell us something about [00:00.20.00] what's going on inside of them that is beyond what they're able to articulate.

Did you see these things happening?

On the TV.

On TV. So, you know that they happened because you saw them on TV. And how does that make you feel?

Scared.

Scared, yeah.

But it's very important [00:00.40.00] to realize that we're anchoring things in the child at the same time that we're encouraging them to draw. If the child has drawn a picture of how frightened they were, how scared they were, or the kind of catastrophe that they're afraid that they could be involved in, [00:01.00.00] that if we just leave them with that that really is what we have left them with. And that is what the child walks away with having been anchored in them. So, it's very important to go on to the next drawing. And to say, "How are you different now? How are you wiser [00:01.20.00] because of this? How are you stronger because of this?" Or, "How are you more prepared should you ever be in a disaster again? And where is your hero self? Where is your strongest self?" And to get that drawing out.

All of us have been through a tremendous [00:01.40.00] experience together. Everybody in this room has been through an incredible experience together. And we're all survivors of that experience. And that makes us a little bit different than people who haven't been



through. And it makes us a little bit different than the way we were before the earthquake. So, [00:02.00.00] what I'd like to you do to now for your last drawing is to draw a picture of yourself prepared and ready.

We got all food (on the) can and water.

Uh-huh.

This is our blankets and pillows. Here's (our cans).

So, you've got your supplies. You're really ready. And if the power goes out this time [00:02.20.00] you're going to have a flashlight, huh?

Yeah.

One of the strongest examples in which we've been able to identify at-risk children though has been when the children draw themselves before the earthquake and after the earthquake. And many of the children, I'm glad to say most of the children, [00:02.40.00] will draw themselves before the earthquake as maybe simple-minded or very small or very sweet or very pleasant. And then when we ask them to draw themselves after the earthquake they draw themselves with muscles, they draw themselves enlightened, that their brains [00:03.00.00] are bigger. Some of them are able to hold the world over their heads. But some of them will draw themselves weaker, falling apart with maybe just head and a skirt and a blouse and there are no arms or legs and there's no face. [00:03.20.00] So, it's a very graphic example that this is an at-risk child that needs to have more attention. And it also is a wonderful map for the teacher or the counselor or the therapist. Because this child knows [00:03.40.00] that there is this difference. This child knows that they're in trouble.

No one wants to believe that disasters will happen and that our children will be exposed to seeing and hearing and feeling such terrifying things. But disasters do happen. What I think is important is that we as [00:04.00.00] adults realize that we're not helpless in the recovery period, that we can help children in their recovery, that by school personnel, mental health personnel and parents working together we can give children the opportunity to talk about their feelings and to move forward through the healing. [00:04.20.00]

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