

Personal Storytelling through Artwork: The Effects on the Self-Esteem of At-Risk

Youths

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Abstract

Three at-risk youths were asked individually to write their own personal story, make three pieces of art during three art-making sessions, and then exhibited their artworks in a formal art exhibition. Each participant filled out the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale before and after these activities. They were also interviewed regarding the effects of the activities. The results of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale showed an increase in one participant's self-esteem, a decrease in another and the third stayed the same.

While there was no clear direction of change noted from the self-esteem measure, information from the final interviews showed positive effects on each of the participants. These positive effects included an increase in self-confidence in artistic ability, and a belief that accomplishment was possible beyond earlier expectations. Lastly, one participant realized that he had unresolved past issues that needed attention.

There may be therapeutic value to the use of storytelling, art and exhibition of art. This would be useful to explore in future studies with a larger sample.