

An Art Therapist's Examination of Wisdom in the Elderly

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Abstract

"An Art Therapist's Examination of Wisdom in the Elderly" considers the definitions of wisdom and the elderly and questions contemporary societal bias against the elderly and the impact of ascribing wisdom in old age. Wisdom is revealed by philosophical and historical views and recent psychological history. The contributions of Jung and Erikson on the subject of wisdom and its development are given. Contemporary psychosocial research into the development of wisdom in old age examines the components: cognition, adaptation, socially centered reasoning, affect, life satisfaction, and personality traits. The antecedents of wisdom, a tripartite model for describing wisdom's psychological competencies and the appropriateness of an expansion of Piaget's developmental theory to incorporate post-formal operations are also included.

Wisdom through creative expression is examined in art therapy, art, storytelling and symbolism. The implications and importance of facilitating the development of wisdom in old age is described. Suggestions such as storytelling and reminiscing in life-review, with their uses in art therapy, are given.