

Using Creativity to Increase the Identity of Adolescents in Foster Care  
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Abstract

Life story books have been shown to be an effective tool for addressing personal issues when working with youth in foster care. The final product can be used as a transitional object, as well as to create a sense of connection with ones' past. Adolescents in foster care lack close adult role models to provide examples of successful identity conflict resolutions. Therefore, this connection with their past becomes especially crucial. Art therapy has been shown to increase ones' sense of identity, and can be combined with concrete data to develop an answer to the question, "Who am I?". The four youth in this study completed artistic projects based on their past, present, and future, in a therapeutic situation that allowed them to symbolically exert control over their lives. The youth all displayed increased insight, and produced material for further discussions, but the results only revealed a trend towards improvement of their sense of identity. The results, however, display the need for art therapy services with this population.