

Exploring the Feminist Perspective on  
Art Therapy: Use of Mandalas by Deaf Women  
BIS Research Project  
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### Abstract

This paper is a review of the research related to the idea of using feminist art therapy, more specifically Mandala, to help Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence.

*Key words: Women, Men, Patriarchy, Feminist Perspective, Oppression, Art Therapy, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Hearing, Domestic Violent Situation, Abuse, Community, Society, Individual, Self, Self-Esteem, Self, Inner-Beauty, Awareness, Mandala, Creation, Image, Healing, Process, Conscious, Unconscious*

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My eyes are closed, feeling the heat of his breath on my skin. I am pushed up against the wall with my oldest daughter in my arms. I am hoping and praying to God nothing will happen to my children. Our youngest is sleeping beside me, as he gets closer to the bed. The baby in my womb is still as I shake within my bones. Matt, my husband, places his hands around my neck; he is screaming and spitting hateful words, "You stupid fucking bitch!" His friend walks in the room and says, "Matt, it's time to go!" The hands that were once placed on my neck are no longer there, but he leaves a mark behind for show. My oldest daughter and myself have been left with night terrors and emotional scars. As he and his friend walk away to leave the house, I am now able to call for help. I wait to hear the car start to take off and that moment is when I call my parents and say, "Come and get me!" It is just a few weeks into December 2008 when this event takes place.

It was not until December 22, 2008 that I received a temporary protection order. That day I walked into the court-office almost backing out and not going through with it. I had to file a report on my own with the history of abuse that Matt had committed. A woman walked in with her face all black and blue, makeup on to help cover up as much as she could. I began to stand up to leave thinking I do not have anything on me like that to prove he had hurt me, but it was at that second the office lady called me back. She told me that a lawyer would not help me because of the lack of police calls. I did not have a case. I started crying. The lady told me that just because I did not have a case did not mean I had not gone through an abusive situation. She gave me more papers to fill out as she directed me to meet with the judges on my own to see if one of them would look at my case.

In telling me I did not have a case and should not even waste my time with going forward. I was made to feel that the wounds from my husband were nothing and that I was nothing. I looked at her, sacred to death, but I was not going to let her tell me what I had been experiencing for the last two years was nothing. I walked into two different courtrooms where both judges signed my protective order. At that moment, I grew in strength and courage to want to fight back against those who do not believe abuse without marks exists. This begins my research study on why it is important to look beyond the bruises of a person's skin.

Too many women experience domestic violence and too many women like myself are not taken seriously. Of particular concern to me are the issues faced by Deaf women who experience domestic violence. Deaf history of self has been oppressed for many years. Over the years, society has pressured Deaf people to be just like the hearing population, damaging their sense of self. Women in any cultural background experience a loss of sense of self after going through domestic violence. However, Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence have a triple-barrier to reforming a sense of self. To help Deaf Women in a domestic violence situation, creating a Mandala can be a useful tool in the healing process when one is searching for self. This paper is a review of the research regarding the possibilities of using feminist art therapy, more specifically Mandala, in helping Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence.

### **Definition and Terms**

In this review the definitions of keywords are unique because they are defined within the context of domestic violence. The definitions are also linked to their usage in my three minors: Women and Gender Studies, American Sign Language, and Social Work. Feminist perspective and Patriarchy are key terms throughout the study. To fully understand a Deaf woman's struggles in a hearing society, we need to define the basic terms. A feminist perspective on issues

requires consideration of equality. Feminists critique the traditions of women's subordination. They argue that is patriarchy reflection of social organization (Dictionary.com, 2015). For this research we are referring to the patriarchy as the power men hold in society.

American Sign Language is the language of the Deaf community in the USA and Canada. Deaf Studies is the study of the Deaf community, culture, and language. For this review, we are looking at culturally Deaf women who have gone through domestic violence. Deaf with a capital "D" refers to individuals who view themselves as members of the Deaf community. They share cultural beliefs, values, and language (Holte & Dinis, 2001). They do not see themselves as having a disability, but as having a culture and a way of communication that is different from the majority population (Devore, Kruger, Obinna, Osterbaan, & Sadusky, 2005).

According to Sego Lily Center for the Abused Deaf (2015) and Utah Domestic Violence Coalition (2016), domestic violence is a harmful pattern of repeated force on an individual. Sexual abuse is non-consensual, sexual force. Sexual abuse can include sexual assault, marital rape, invasion of personal space in a sexual content, and forced sex. Emotional abuse consists of the internal bruises that one does not see. They are the unnoticeable ache, the catalysts for conducting this review. Economic abuse involves money. It keeps the victim dependent on the abuser for financially stability. Psychological abuse is connected to emotional and mental abuse. These elements combined affect the inner self, a person's inner-beauty. It results in the sense of self loss.

The Social Work perspective is about serving people in our society. It involves trying to find a balance between a person's cultural beliefs, her/his biological background, and existing biases amongst social norms and standards. For this review, terms about art therapy, inner-beauty, Mandalas, the concept of self, consciousness and the subconscious are applied.

According to the American Art Therapy Association (2016):

Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art-making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages. It is based on the belief that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight. Self is best defined as, “a person or thing referred to with respect to complete individuality” (Dictionary.com, 2015). Self also involves a concept of the internal connection to one’s psyche. To know one’s self is to be aware of internal and external conflicts. Inner beauty is a unique phrase in this review. It is defined as separate entities: Inner and Beauty. Inner is defined as, “of or pertaining to the mind or spirit; mental; spiritual”. Beauty is defined as, “something extraordinary” (Dictionary.com, 2015). One’s inner-beauty is the mental sense of what is extraordinary about who she/he is. Inner-beauty is not directly visible, but an individual’s actions do give us a glimpse of her/his inner-beauty.

Fincher (2010) defines a Mandala as a circular design. It is a word that means, “center, circumference, and magic circle.” Mandalas show healing processes that bring self-realization and changes within an individual. One of these self-realizations is inner-beauty. Each individual that creates a Mandala will have a different concept of what inner-beauty is for her/him. Our self-interpretations of what inner-beauty looks like can create great meanings on a conscious and subconscious level. Mandala are tools that can increase self-awareness in an individual. They are also a form of art that has been used in many different cultures and eras.

Our consciousness is composed of events, experiences, emotions, and thought processes of which we are aware. Conscious being “aware of one’s own existence, sensations, thoughts, surrounding, etc.” A Deaf women who has gone through domestic violence is not always consciously aware of her situation. Her sense of self is lost. Different forms of abuse pull her in

various directions internally. Her consciousness is in turmoil and cannot find the light.

Subconscious is defined as, “1. existing or operating in the mind beneath or beyond consciousness” (Dictionary.com, 2015). While going through a domestic violence situation, her subconscious also becomes empty. We need to reach out and find alternative ways for Deaf women who experience domestic violence to rebuild their sense of self.

### **Feminist Perspective**

A feminist perspective in therapy, especially for women who have gone through domestic violence helps them understand issues of power. Domestic violence has a long history in our society - men have been abusing women for years. Men are suppressing women by not allowing them to find their fullest potential as individuals. Our patriarchal society tells them this is acceptable. Men have the power over women. Throughout our biblical history and from a historical legal standpoint, society tells us that women are property. Women have been fighting over these many years to get past the biblical and legal viewpoints and earn the right to vote and hold religious authority. However, men abusing women is still too pervasive in our society. Many are still blinded by the patriarchal opinion that men can control women with violent force. The concept of “minding your own business” still hinders the recognition of what happens to women behind closed doors. We have increased awareness and laws against domestic violence, but we often continue to treat women as victims and to reinforce negative self-images among women.

Wight (1989) writes of the changes in our society regarding violence. We are now more aware of and have terminology for different types of domestic violence. Forms of therapy are being used for women who have experienced domestic violence. Wight (1989) argues using a feminist therapeutic perspective among the social workers, therapists, counselors, and facilities would be helpful. If we can have a better understanding of how to look at treatment from a



feminist view, we are more able to connect to these women's needs. Wight (1989) uses the term feminist as recognition of "the powerful socio-political sexist limitations that confine human expression and growth." An abuser's sense of control over a woman has been influenced by our patriarchal society. When compared to men, women are seen as minorities or as second class citizens. Women in domestic violence situations have a disadvantage in our society when this power is for men.

The treatment and therapeutic perspectives used with women who have experienced domestic violence are all male-based. The therapist viewpoints are masculine and structured to help men retain power for themselves and within society. As Wight (1989) explains, "women's psychology and model of maturity is based upon as masculine model." Women seeking help are prone to receive help from men. This is where Wight (1989) declares a feminist perspective is needed. A feminist perspective would better fit with a woman's growth of identity than the traditional model which fits the growth of a man's identity.

If we use the feminist perspective approach to treat women who have gone through domestic violence, they become valid people in their own process of healing. Their healing is not confined by a patriarchal goal. They are no longer seen as the individuals who provoked the violence in their situations. Women are no longer seen as what men see them as or what they claim them to be - subservient to men. They will be able to think for themselves, create new meanings, and have stronger psyches.

Feminist therapy wants to bring what is imbalanced in a woman's life back into balance. "A basic agreement of feminist therapists, however, is the need to validate the existences of socio-economic and political oppression of women in whatever theoretical perspectives(s) they choose to adapt" (Wight, 1989). They do not want to over-push the one sided values of the patriarchy - they want to bring the equality that a woman so deserves when healing. Political

stances are very well grounded in society and the oppression of women is very strongly rooted as well. In feminist therapy, the process of what is happening between the therapist and client involves agreed upon goals. These goals involve how to achieve self-power and move away from the abusive situation.

One of the best ways women can connect to themselves is through art. Women can connect to the “nurturing side, become a survivor, and grow beyond the survival” (Wight, 1989). Since art is a way to express emotions and subconscious pain, it is a tool that is less threatening in its process of healing. A woman is able to let her anger out in a safe way through art. The art approach is giving her the tools to call the anger out for what it is and to see past the anger. She is also able to use the art to see the emotions that have caused her the anger in the first place. By sorting out her emotions and pain through art therapy, she is able to see her inner growth. The subconscious is being released in a piece of art. Her meanings are her meanings and the interpretations are her own. “Art therapy, because it utilizes visual media, seems well suited to the survivor’s therapeutic need to image alternatives to her previously enforced helplessness” (Wight, 1989). Through her art creation, she is no longer helpless. She is able to see that women are indeed individuals with fully developed identities. She empowers herself in the process of art therapy. Her conscious actions are now her own.

Art is a very powerful tool that can assist in the most traumatic events if we allow ourselves to have the support from a feminist perspective. Art has no barriers in classifying what is good or bad. Art can reflect just this in her life and those moments can be altered by her own actions. Women need to let go of what the society tells them in a one-way, patriarchal source, and experience instead a more fluid way of life. We can use a feminist perspective to provide women who have gone through domestic violence with tailored therapy to identify and process

the deepest pain and emotions. We can use this same approach to help men to connect better with women and help stop or reduce violence.

### **Critical Analysis**

Critical analysis of feminist theory helps us to understand it more fully social control. Rehavia-Hanauaer (2012) researched about habitus in our society. A habitus is an “internalized set of structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). Habitus is formed as we internalize our social structure and thus to continue the social control of a patriarchy. Social control includes the internalization of visual images that can mold our understanding of gender norms. A feminist approach to art therapy helps women express what they have experienced without reference to the visual representation of women which reinforces the patriarchal society.

Social structures equal social control. We internalize what we learn, then start the process all over again. This becomes a cycle between the habitus and social control. Habitus is something rooted within our systems and the cognitive part of self. So this means the beliefs regarding the power of others and the power within a social class are being taught to the members of society and give the power to those that have been historically told they hold the power. We do not question why this happens because we are trapped in the cycle. An example of this cycle: I am trapped in my situation because I say I am trapped because I have been taught I am trapped therefore I am trapped. The patriarchal system controls this cycle that is telling us that what we are and what we should be doing. Two categories that involve our genders are our place in sex roles and in labor roles. They also control the gender power of a relationship within a woman and in external society.

Feminist critical analysis reveals that the habitus of gender is so deeply rooted that we do not see the invisible structure that holds us prisoners. Feminist theorists aim to help women in

the “emancipation” and “enlightenment” from a social structure (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). The power of relations in patriarchy involves the “disadvantage” and “disempowerment” of women in the system (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). This goes along with how patriarchy influences women’s mental health diagnostic criteria and services. Historically, women’s mental health diagnoses have been created under a system where the norm is considered to be men’s mental health standards. In the feminist art therapy, “subjective reality” becomes the individual’s reality (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). The visual images socially constructed in our society become part of the individual’s daily perspective. These images become part of a woman’s reality. “In an analysis of pictorial representations of women in the discipline of medicine and psychology has shown how women are represented historically as threatening the moral order and social stability of society; as dangerous and dishonest and more controlled by our biology than men” (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). Women are seen as disruptive to the patriarchal social structure. Women’s views are not considered legitimate and original. Women are shown as subordinate to men even in pictorial representations.

Often in a patriarchal society, women are seen as medically ill. The habitus does not view her as anything but as the male’s subservient to his norms. Women are considered medically ill compared to man at his healthiest standpoint. They do not take women’s differences from men into consideration, so she must be ill. Feminist art therapy empowers through enlightenment. Women are gendered subjects that need to be treated outside of the patriarchal views of society. We attempt to identify our bodies as feminine or masculine through acculturation (Rehavia-Hanauaer, 2012). To do so, women need to be able to explore and be aware of culture and social construction to be able to experience themselves genuinely.

### **Feminist Therapy**

When we look at a practicing therapist in the field, we are using the model of the patriarchal society. This becomes a huge downfall in assessing art therapy involving women. We view women as the “other” in our social construction. Male hegemony comes to define women. Because he has the control and power over her, she is suppressed and unable to explore other perspectives. Hogan (2012) describes the social theory connecting women’s health to her gender as defined throughout history. Hogan (2012) stated:

representations include images that in this analysis are not seen as ‘mirrors’ that simply reflects reality; rather, representations in this usage are conventions and codes that express those practices and forms which condition our experiences and therefore in part constitutes our reality.

This notion of reality is different between the men and women. Each individual social construction including a woman’s class, race, and age are representations of those differences she may include onto her well-being when it comes to art therapy. Revisiting the social theory, the history of women, her male hegemony structure experiences, and consciousness are structured based on those differences. Throughout history women have been called a moral threat and a disrupter of the social stability. Women need to be controlled. Her health is a matter of concern to her male counterparts. Her monthly pre-menstrual syndrome can have affects on her moods and be detrimental to her health. She is also seen as a feeble, weak, childlike being that is more animal-like or savage, because the patriarchal society has declared she is best needed in the private sphere. If she enters into the public sphere, she is unlikely to be able to make quick decisions. Educating a woman will affect her ability to be a mother and could physically affect here womb (Hogan, 2012).

These social views are from the male dominant society - views that give them more power in controlling women. This all connects to art therapy in that in traditional therapy her

emotions and feelings are not important to the views of the male therapist. Her inability to be more than what men want her to be leads to her behaviors being seen as diseases. In order to recover from her disease, she is better off not speaking and just listening. Historically in therapeutic treatments for women in society, even in traditional art therapy, she is not seen or considered to be an individual. To change this, we must see her for her experience, age, class, race, and sex (Hogan, 2012).

Another part to the dependence is the power difference between men and women. Men have been determining what is “normal” in society for years based on “traditional male attributes.” After study, women’s power in relation to the therapist/client relationship is achieved by “equalitarian” principles (Burt, 2012). Women are able to recognize and are in control of their own experiences. Women become the experts and therapists regarding themselves. This guidance allows women to gain personal growth and development. To free men and women from the power of client and therapist is to help them assimilate to each other’s characteristics so they may be able to recognize the inequality of the social views in mental health care.

When we can see the benefits from both men and women, it brings a change into the society. This change is what feminist therapists are working toward for the betterment of the sexes. Men and women have been limited by their sex roles from society for too long. There are many frameworks and theory models in feminist therapy to help make sure these losses are not for nothing. They must be aware of the many differences and loopholes the society has put in place for men and women in sex roles. To lose sight of the differences can be damaging, causing mental abuse and taking power from the client. These are major ethical issues on what could happen if we are not aware and clear with the framework (Burt, 2012).

### **Deaf Women and Domestic Violence**

During the course of our life, we may need to use some sort of professional services. These services may include counselors, therapists, social workers, and other health care professionals. For Deaf and Hard of Hearing women who have experienced domestic violence, some of these professional services are limited. “Programs and services for the deaf and hard of hearing victims of domestic violence are scarce” (McCabe, Minizi, Hasselt, & Vanderbeek, 2011). Unfortunately, Deaf women are at higher risk to experience domestic violence than Hearing women. Deaf women are a minority group in need of services that best fit their culture. The limited and scarce amount of research regarding Deaf women is a barrier to receiving appropriate help. Many types of resources, counseling, advocacy, and educational programs are accessible to the majority of the hearing population but not frequently for the Deaf community. Many professionals are not knowledgeable regarding communication styles within the Deaf culture. Deaf women are: “doubly challenged in that they must cope with language and communication barriers present on their environment and also manage the effects of their status as a women” (Holte & Dinis, 2001). Deaf women become isolated within these barriers not only from the hearing society but also from Deaf male counterparts.

The history of oppression in the Deaf community has been long recorded. However, Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence face a triple barrier in society. Our social structure categorizes who is considered disabled. We are told who is healthy and who is not. This social construction defines a woman as different and inferior to the male norm. A Deaf individual is a minority. A woman is a minority and a domestic violence victim is a minority. Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence are considered triple minorities because of these barriers in society’s views (Garland-Thomson, 2005). These barriers are situations that are not part of the male’s norm, which brings more isolation to the Deaf women. When they are

separated, they are individual minorities, but when combined together they become a triple barrier.

A Deaf woman's sense of self has been pressured to fit into a hearing male's norm. The social norm is that you must learn how to speak and hear. Deaf women have been oppressed by the hearing society so for them to reach out to a community not of their own is difficult. These women are called disabled and are challenged by the society's notions of normal. Patriarchal structure is particularly demeaning toward women with disabilities. To be disabled, which has a negative connotation, adds to the triple barrier (Garland-Thomson, 2005). These are issues of political, economic, and social discrimination.

The self-identity of what Deaf women should be and who they want to be continues to be a state of confusion. When we are able to understand the political, economic, and social discrimination women face we can better identify the naiveté society has about Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence. Women with disabilities work on self-identity, intersectionality, and investigating embodiment (Garland-Thomason, 2005). Deaf women's individual identity has become a social-political issue. We are creating stereotypes of what it means to be Deaf and defining Deafness as the degree to which an individual does not participate in Hearing culture.

Society claims Deaf individuals are disabled. However, cultural Deaf individuals do not want the normal hearing identity. They are culturally capable individuals. Deafness is seen as something wrong in society and the society will claim a need to fix any wrongs. Society wants to fix the political issue of Deafness instead of seeing individuals with Deafness as positive or as unique individuals. Society places stereotypes that oppress the identity of Deaf women. It has placed a negative connotation on Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence. Many



members of society wonder how or even if domestic violence is possible within the Deaf culture. The naiveté of society at large has caused Deaf women to be reluctant to seek help.

### **Deaf Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is something that both Deaf and hearing women struggle with. Holte and Dinis' (2001) worked with a mix of women who were culturally Deaf and culturally hearing. Their research involved how these women identify with social influences, family life, educational background, and employment. Each of these concepts affected the women in different ways. Deaf women are at greater risk of having lower self-esteem compared to hearing women. Holte and Dinis (2001) developed four questions to give definitions of self-esteem within each woman's situation. First was the self-concept of "confidence, satisfaction, and self-pride." The second was defined by a "sense of self", knowing one's self, of who they are. The third involved "similarities" and "differences" in self-esteem. The last concept defined self as "self-ability" or "I am capable" (Holte & Dinis, 2001). Feelings are used to describe the self. Both groups used feelings in their language to express the definition.

Each woman had found self-esteem. One of Holte's and Dinis' (2001) findings was recognizing interconnection between each individual's cultures. Both groups of women, Deaf and hearing, believed social support to be an important and empowering factor when one is developing self-esteem. They also noted that developing the psychological self is an important way to build one's self-esteem. A person's will to change is powerful, and the willingness needs to be there for them to succeed. Action along this path shows the person's willingness to develop self-esteem. Some of the actions a person can take to develop self-esteem include taking risks, setting goals, and completing goals. Holte and Dinis (2001) also noted that environment has an effect on one's self-esteem. The environment of self-development for these women was through education and the accomplishments they succeeded in achieving for themselves.

Life experiences have been different for both groups of women (Holte & Dinis, 2001). One of the biggest factors is the language barrier the Deaf women experienced. Language barriers had strong effects on the way they were taught to communicate while growing up. The women who are hearing did not feel language impacted their self-esteem as did the Deaf women. Education may be a positive way for one to find self-esteem, but the experiences of one's education were not all the same among the women, especially in the struggles or opportunities each undertook. The women who received higher education, both hearing and Deaf women, found self-esteem development as part of their educational experiences and found it to be beneficial (Holte & Dinis, 2001).

When we look back in time to some of the first feminists, such as John Stuart Mills and Harriet Taylor Mills, education was one aspect women were asking for to increase their self-esteem (Mill, Mill & Rossi, 1970). Women wanted more than just to be a housewife; they wanted to have a "sense of autonomy" (Holte & Dinis, 2001). Deaf women are fighting for the same sense of self as did women from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A sense of autonomy for both groups is important in one's finding of self-esteem. Having pathways to empower oneself is a necessity that Holte and Dinis (2001) identified in both groups of women.

### **Deaf Theory**

Deaf theory has many similarities to feminist theory as both involve political and diverse issues. Deaf people have been oppressed just like women in the social construction of patriarchy. The Deaf community fights their way out of oppression that has been brought upon them by the same system, the power of one group to control another. The system feels and sees Deaf people and women as incapable individuals. Deaf people have suffered from these types of power imbalances based on their disability (not hearing). Women have suffered based on their biological difference from men.

Aristotle perceived both women and Deaf people as being lesser than hearing men. Women were “inferior”; Deaf people lacked “cognitive abilities” (Bienvenu & Smith, 2007). These thoughts are still prevalent in today’s society. Deaf culture’s concepts, which are similar to feminist theory, are that Deaf individuals need to bring knowledge of their own experiences to society just like women did. Some feminists believe men are their enemies and some Deaf believe Hearing are their enemies. For each to move forward in their movement, self- knowledge of one’s own experiences is needed. Each group needs to stop seeing themselves as victims and take control of their own actions. Both groups fall into the category that the patriarchy has placed them in, but to make changes they must challenge society’s ideas about who they are (Bienvenu & Smith, 2007).

In the first wave, feminist women were fighting for “liberation” - the right to be equal. Deaf individuals are also fighting for their rights for equality with the hearing world. Their life experiences should be seen with an individual approach instead of being dismissed in favor of society’s misconceptions. By not seeing their differences in a negative light, Deaf people have fought to be equal in education, marriage, voting, and society. When society sees a Deaf person, they do not see them as having rights to equal education. Society believes we should make a Deaf person into hearing person. There was a push for equality of education which led to the idea of mainstreaming Deaf individuals into the hearing world. It was not providing an equal right in the education system to teach Deaf individuals in the language of their own culture (sign language) but instead mainstreamed them into what the patriarchal hearing system wanted (teaching lip reading and oral speech). Trying to give equality backed fired and oppressed the Deaf community even more. Deaf were viewed as needing to become part of the hearing society and thus Deaf society was devalued. (Bienvenu & Smith, 2007)

When we compare the key points of Deaf theory and the feminist perspective, both Deaf individuals and women are seen as the “other.” Each group is dehumanized in being the “others” but when they are able to define for themselves a sense of value and to reflect on their own experiences, they are better able to describe what part of “other” they really are to the society. Each person’s experiences are different from another and that also includes within the Deaf community. Not all Deaf individual’s experiences of oppression have or will be the same. (Bienvenu & Smith, 2007)

Deaf individuals already have questions within their community about who they are. When we start asking society to not view differences among people, Deaf individuals wonder if they are ever good enough. A feminist perspective parallels Deaf theory in redefining and bringing value to the community. Deaf individuals are working to break free from the oppression that the patriarchal society has placed on them (expectations of being hearing). Exploring the oppression of women may help them focus and look into Deaf issues in a new way (Bienvenu & Smith, 2007)

Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence lose both their sense of self and self-esteem. The loss of one’s inner-self has great consequences. A Deaf woman who was experienced domestic violence becomes, “nothing more than an abstract principal” of what the society thinks she should be (Mill, Mill & Rossi, 1970). Carl Jung, a psychologist who studied the unconscious self, said “the unconscious and the conscious are synthesized into a higher consciousness, which may, indeed, be impossible” (Young, 2001). To believe in the impossible is possible but it is through the will of the community that we can come together and provide resources for all.

We have turned a blind eye to the Deaf community on issues like abuse. Obinna, Krueger, Osterbaan, Sadusky, and Devore’s (2005) research shows that Deaf communities are at

a high risk of abuse and sexual assault. Women in this community are at the bottom of the list of groups we prioritize to help. Law enforcement is working with local communities about recognizing cultural differences. There needs to better understanding of the different issues that are at hand. Deaf women have been oppressed by the hearing society. To reach out to a community that is not of your own is difficult. Deaf women are also being isolated within the Deaf community based on the community's close tight connection with itself. They reluctantly seek outside of themselves for help. Deaf women do not feel that the deaf community will help them if they report domestic violence (Obinna, et al., 2005). There is a great need for individuals in law enforcement and the Deaf community to participate with one another to make changes to this current situation. The groups definitely need more resources from each other to become more familiar with cross culture differences.

To address this issue, individuals within the Deaf community and law enforcement have sought to look again at groups that have been set up to assist the Deaf community and see how they can collaborate more with law enforcement. Obinna et al. (2005) research has shown that the Deaf community and the majority population (hearing) have denied acceptance to each other because they are not part of the norms each society has placed on individuals. They also have found law enforcement wrongfully placing Deaf individuals in jail because of disliking them for being Deaf. These types of issues need to be changed by simply becoming aware of each other's cultures. Many of these differences are from a political and community perspective.

People with disabilities, minority cultures, and women are often powerless in the patriarchal society. If you fit into any or all three of the categories above, you are an at-risk person. Women who are considered to be disabled and are within the Deaf community are at a higher risk for sexual assault. Services for the Deaf community are limited (Obinna et al., 2005). Most types of services are programed for the hearing culture, so Deaf women become more

isolated in this situation. This lack of services needs to be changed to make resources more accessible to the Deaf community. One way to address this is by gathering a group of professional and Deaf members to discuss outcomes for the Deaf community. With their research, Obinna et al. (2005) found there is a lack of sexual education among Deaf freshmen students. The hearing community has created myths about the Deaf individual's sexual activities. These myths have affected the Deaf community for years. The majority of health professionals have a lack of knowledge regarding Deaf people and their culture which perpetuates these myths. With their research, Obinna et al. (2005) are looking for understanding of sexual perception and how the Deaf community can help to change these perceptions.

Another problem is a lack of government services, agencies, and community resources in providing services to address cultural differences. This also includes having limited alternative healing processes available to Deaf women who have gone through sexual assault. The study cited above explored different types of useful tools to better serve both communities. One of the themes that the group found is differences among interpreters regarding qualifications and certification (Obinna et al., 2005). Not all interpreters are qualified in legal matters but all interpreters must be certified to interpret. Interpreters help law enforcement and the deaf community in breaking down barriers. However it is difficult to appropriately serve the community when there are very few people qualified to interpret in legal matters and it takes extensive time to receive an appropriate interpreter.

The police force is not knowledgeable about the Deaf community and they have very little interaction with each other. Community barriers do create problems between the two especially in an emergency situation. The Deaf community uses facial expression, body movements, and their hands to communicate. If a police officer is unaware of the norms of sign language they can add false meanings and cause more harm to the Deaf individual. For instance,

a Deaf individual was placed in jail because the police officer thought they were drunk based off the way they were waving their hands and their speech. Cross culture knowledge can help avoid many incidents and false assumptions (Obinna et al., 2005).

Identity within the Deaf community is important. Many outsiders are unaware of the big “D” verses little “d” in being Deaf. For those who are socially, culturally, and linguistically involved they are considered to be big “D”, “Deaf.” Knowing what a Deaf individual prefers also helps identify the connection to Deaf culture and their language. When police are able to learn the cross culture differences, they are better to serve the community at large. In working to understand the difference, Obinna et al. (2005) research shows that police forces and a nonprofit organization worked together in exchanging culture knowledge to the benefit of both.

The key to all of this research and collaboration is education. When we educate the Deaf community better about sexual activities, they are more aware of sexual assaults and how to prevent them. When we educate police, they are better able to serve and keep the communities safe. Training is what is needed within police enforcement and to have policy manuals to be help break down barriers. Across the board in creating this research paper, we have read a lot about the lack of knowledge, the lack of education, and the lack of understanding between the Deaf community and the hearing community, and between men and women. The best thing we can do to stop oppression is by working together, by sharing and communicating, so Deaf women can receive services at all levels (Obinna et al., 2005).

### **Feminist Art Therapy**

Art Therapy has become the women’s profession in connection to the mental health field. It has taken the idea of a man’s perspective, the “traditional male attributes,” and created a more feminist approach (Burt, 2012). “The profession of art therapy seems to be operating without an awareness of the sociopolitical structures that oppress women who work as helping professionals

or are clients who utilize health care” (Burt, 2012 ). When searching for art therapy in the medical literature, we find very few resources compared to the traditional male approach on therapy. This difference shows a power imbalance between the social and political aspects of men and women’s mental health. Burt (2012) speaks about how the contexts of healing and mental illness are interrelated to each other. Pathological dependency is considered part of the traditional treatment framework regarding autonomy and independence, which is part of the patriarchal system.

Feminist Art Therapy takes away from the traditional client dependence. The connection of healing is based more on separateness and autonomy in art therapy. “Separateness” is the sense of self whereas “autonomy” is the independence of self (Burt, 2012). In the feminist framework on art therapy women are able to understand that their experiences are different from men. In understanding those differences, women must know that social and political values are involved in the traditional views of therapy. Some of those views are socially constructed by our society and lean toward the patriarchal perspective. When we give women choices beyond those views, women are able to set and pick their own goals.

Within art therapy, women can become aware of the habitus by looking at the mental, emotional, and physical points of female identity to see how the habitus restrains them. The habitus is telling them that they are mentally ill so they become victims of the cycle - internalizing the belief that they are ill and are the cause of their own problems. By becoming aware of the thoughts that have been placed in them by the habitus as to where and when women can understand their political, social, and economic roles in society, they become aware of the oppression. The knowledge of the oppression leads to enlightenment and emancipation with their own understanding of identity. This is all done with feminist art therapy through recognizing these constraints that have been placed on women.



In the political sense, women's bodies are seen as men's property. Women fight for their rights to self and freedom, but the social structure promotes men's rights and property viewpoints – this can be seen in the patriarchal pro-life stance when women become pregnant. One of Hogan's (2012) arguments is that men sexually use women's bodies in ads and commercials. Women's bodies are the battleground regarding who has control over whom. Within society, men confirm these arguments in body fights where they still have authority over women. Women are still considered men's property and men have the right to make decisions about women's health. Women are the object of male political agreement.

Because of a man's rights to a woman's body, art is another social and political stance showing who is in control within society. Over the many years men have been depicting women as objects of their desires. Her naked body is for his pleasure. Her figure drawn or painted is filled with male meaning. Her own desires and feelings are not represented, again the male gets control over how she is seen in art. Much of art is masochistic to women. She is the sexual object to the male; for her to want to be in his picture or fantasy, she must enjoy being that sexual object. Because she is indulging the male's power and control, she feels guilty, which is why she is said to be masochistic in the historical perspective of art (Hogan, 2012)

Art therapy is seen and controlled by men. Men's political and social construction of women affects female health. The male therapist puts in his interpretation of the images a female client may draw down on paper. The interpretation all comes back to the Freudian perspective of penis envy. So to put the feminist perspective in the art therapy world is to acknowledge her differences and leave out the male interpretation. To better understand the value of a woman in social structure, we need to stop the oppression from the patriarchal society. She will be able to be true to herself in her drawing and experience healing. As member of society, we can then appreciate her life not for what men say it is, but embrace her differences as her own. She is her

own tool in her interpretation of the artwork she draws. With this she gains control of her social dynamics. The connection between a woman and her therapist is only but a tool to guide her in her creation of art.

The feminist approach allows a woman to be supported by the therapist and not controlled. At this point her body is connected to her emotions. Her connections are then part of the conscious and subconscious part of herself. So in allowing her to interpret her own drawings and not enforcing a patriarchal view on her, society is not abusing her psyche. Using the feminist art therapy approach, she is fashioned to end the oppression of the patriarchal views of women's health and the lack of her own life knowledge. She is a human being with thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs, and can now be in control of the medical challenges the patriarchy has placed on her throughout history.

According to the American Art Therapy Association (2016), to be an Art Therapist one must have a master's degree and board credentialing through the Art Therapy Credentials Board in the United States. An Art Therapist must understand both disciplines: art and therapy. Knowing art history and the connection it has to therapy work helps to gain the trust of clients. According to Malissa Morrell (2016) a credentialed Art Therapist in Utah, art is a unique source of communication. It gives many avenues for an individual to discover feelings and thoughts. "Not all of our thoughts or feelings are 'pretty'-expressing them doesn't always look pretty, either". Art therapy can be applied with anyone: adults, children, males, or females, groups and individuals.

In the feminist perspective, women are allowed to explore beyond the knowledge ingrained in them from society. In doing this, women are able to find their historical knowledge internally and externally. Our patriarchal social view of art has been male. When individuals can see the views of others, like women, we experience the knowledge of those surroundings that is

gained through knowledge of one's self. Patriarchal society has been telling people what is and is not art and history. These views can affect an individual's own personal views and progress of self-knowledge. Art therapy can challenge those social views regarding what woman are allowed to express by using art. Art therapist Viva Davis Halifax (2003) states:

Over the past thirty years, feminist thought has further contributed to the recognition that the inner life of individual cannot be treated without the understanding that she developed in an oppressive culture; one which views her as inferior and deficient.

Art is a process that can bring value to the self. What individuals experience will be "bound to make an appearance in our lives, consciously or unconsciously" (Halifax, 2003). As a society, we should not want women to be considered objects anymore. They should be able to experience life as individuals. To draw is to gain a sense of a person's own life perceptions. She/he gets to see life as an engaged individual in society. The growth that comes from art therapy in the creation of art can help to separate the views of the patriarchal society which have considered women objects. In the creation of women's art, their images show the personal and political voice that is attached to their conscious and unconscious thoughts (Halifax, 2003). Women are their own worst critics, but they get to decipher their art creation and learn the differences that do not originate from the patriarchal society. Art therapy is the observer for women's art. It helps by processing their internal images drawn onto the creation. Women are the best people to be their own change makers in life and give meaning to their art, but it is the therapist who will ask the questions on the areas the women ignore. This is to help them dig deeper into the meanings without over- stepping their therapist views. The therapist must be careful not to push or correct the meanings that the women have shared, instead the therapist is to listen and encourage self-growth.

Art therapy involves the historical knowledge of an individual. She may have many backgrounds with many sensitive subjects and one must be cautious how they navigate through these images. It is the personal story of the individual's life that we are seeing from their images. How they perceive their surroundings and actions is their life experience. A therapist must acknowledge and separate out her/his own biases to avoid pushing their own views onto the client. Art is a practice in which feminist theory is trying to teach the patriarchal society to see outside their own views and actions (Halifax, 2003).

### **The use of Art Therapy in Recovering from Domestic Violence**

Jones (2012) discusses in her article how women do not know who they are when entrapped in a domestic violence situation. Women lose their sense of identity. A therapist who works with an individual under these circumstances must be aware of the "social construction of gender" (Jones, 2012). These constructions can better inform therapists when using art as a tool. Through therapy, women can become aware of a social structure that can empower her sense of self.

Abuse is complex; each form of abuse that a woman goes through has different consequences. These consequences cause different levels of awareness. Bruce Perry (1997) reminds us, "Some of the most destructive violence does not break bone, it breaks minds... Emotional violence does not result in death of the body, it results in death of the soul." Violence is mainly seen as a physical form with bruises and broken bones but there is also emotional and psychological forms of abuse - the kind of abuse that is invisible. To assist in healing these types of abuse no medical doctor is able to put on a Band-Aid or patch it up.

Art therapy from a feminist perspective looks at a woman's abuse and healing progress by identifying her individual experience. Art therapy from a feminist perspective can help women heal their emotional well-being. Using art as a tool to help these emotional processes,

enables a women to control her self-identity. “She is the creator and author of her visual message” (Jones, 2012). This message is not controlled by men but she can see how she perceives the patriarchal roles she carries within her. There is a history of men having power over women. Men have been dominating women and the social construction has embedded cultural behaviors of violence and abuse. Once a woman is in an abusive relationship, men have control over her through intimidation. This helps give men a stronger position in the social construction. As a man is able to break down the woman’s sense of self by causing fear in her, she then loses her self-esteem and personal empowerment. Women not only lose the sense of self but also her internal sense of a spiritual soul.

There are two types of power: one type of power kills the spirit and the other type of power will nourish the spirit. In an abusive relationship, the male’s control of a female kills off her spirit. This is also called “power over”(Jones, 2012). Many of these “power overs” are reflective in the cultural media that aids and shapes rape culture. Within the media, culture, and society, women are seen as sex objects, subservient to men’s desires, submissive to the men’s needs. Women are depicted as being the property of men; men can do whatever they want to with women. A woman’s life of abuse and turmoil leads her down a path of numbness and self-loss. Her life now is made up of conscious and subconscious symbols. These symbols are what a woman relies on to survive in the world. Through the use of art therapy, a woman can navigate her conscious and subconscious by allowing her to take control of the images she creates. When she can comprehend the self-awareness of who she is and what the patriarchal society places on her, she can begin to change. These changes can include altering boundaries within her relationships and with society.

By finding self-autonomy, a woman is able to reconnect her sense of self. Art therapy images have a multilevel frame of creation so when she is able and ready to revisit these

creations, she is able to reconnect with her conscious and subconscious. Images give back the sense of loss to those who have gone through trauma. These images are a source of communication from her soul to the world around her. She is able to express her sense of the emotions that have been released and did not require words. A visual outlet can help bring out the deepest of feelings that have been buried. Art therapy can be a great tool to for women who have experienced domestic violence.

We are still seeing the cycle of abuse within our society repeating itself in the lack of resources for women and children to get out of vulnerable situations. The history of women's experiences are repeated in ideas regarding how to better assist women (individually or in groups). We need to be aware of gender and the mental conditions that domestic violence brings to women, but also to her cultural context needs. To acknowledge these features while in an art therapy session one must be aware of their own cultural identity (Slater, 2003). We are also not finding enough resources for boys and men when in abusive situations. There is not enough research on men in art therapy, domestic violence, and outcome treatments. The whole reasoning behind Slater's (2003) research is that we need to focus heavily on not just gender but on cultural differences within a group and among individuals. Art therapy interventions are becoming a life-saving source of connection to the individual body and in groups of cross culture differences.

Liebmann (2012) also wrote about her findings in group art therapy sessions. Her study started at a facility called New Parents Infant Network (NewPin). The group was comprised mostly of mothers. NewPin focused heavily on women's issues and oppression. The group was started by a social worker who wanted to find a balance between different ways of communicating. One of the communication methods used art as part of therapy and also talk therapy. As noted above, art therapy is a creative way to help people express emotions and

feelings. Encouraging personal empowerment, group support, and creating a safety zone is a concern to all who organize therapy sessions.

Liebmann (2012) and the group set up the ground rules for the first session. As new individuals came into the group they always reviewed the rules so everyone knew them. As time passed, the group added some additional rules of their own. Liebmann (2012) worked with the group to bring themes each week for them to create. There was an average of 4 to 5 women a week participating in the sessions. She did not participate at first in sharing emotions with her creations, but when it got closer to the end of the group when funding was getting cut she started to share. In her research she wrote about the clients, sharing what it was like to be part of the group, personal changes, their personal backgrounds, and her own views of the groups. In her conclusion, she found that even in a group setting through using art as a tool for therapy, women found themselves being empowered by sharing their experiences, and finding their voices. Her research showed the creation of art is a great tool in helping women from an emotional standpoint.

### **Mandala as a Tool**

One method to research the concept of identity is by using a tool called Mandala. Larson and Pisarik's (2011) empirical study took college students to prove Jung's method of Mandalas being a helpful tool to relax and calm individuals in their search for self and a sense of direction. To truly find oneself, an individual explores beyond the knowledge of what they know. When one does this, the process of accepting one's self becomes an internal awareness. It is also a journey of personal growth.

Mandalas are a tool to create awareness of the internal forces of self. To be true to one's self, an individual's needs, wants, and desires are to be accepted within and not from the society's views. All people go through the journey of life, but they do not always accomplish the

process of self-actualization. Maslow's theory of self-actualization states that people may get a glimpse of themselves over time, but in the Jungian theory of Mandalas individuals are able to connect to themselves through a more direct process of self-actualization. It is a tool that allows people to see internal subconscious conflicts and bring them to the conscious self. Clarity is gained in this journey that helps one pursue the Maslow theory of finding the "true-self" (Pisarik & Larson, 2011).

Pisarik and Larson's (2011) empirical data on Mandalas have proven that the tool helps with healing. Brown (1997) has proven that applying Jungian theory to one's conscious self is helpful in a counseling session. He also believes that society needs to give more credibility to holistic research and studies. Pisarik and Larson (2011) and Brown (1997) all note that fellow professionals often doubt an abstract tool of healing. Everyone's process of healing occurs at a different pace.

Henderson and Rosen's (2007) empirical study on Mandalas spoke about how many resources for healing are writing based to get thoughts and emotions out. They recognize that what the written word could not possibly do is help those who are not skilled in a writing express themselves fully. To look toward a non-writing based healing resource, they studied Carl Jung's method of creating a Mandala. They found in their research that creating Mandalas gave relief and decreased PTSD symptoms (Henderson, Mascaro & Rosen 2007). One of their participants thanked them for introducing them to an alternative way to express their inner emotions that were previously blocked. Henderson et al. (2007) suggested these type of studies should be explored further, particularly with children who have been abused and have a lack of written or verbal skills for expressing their emotions/thoughts. Mandalas again show themselves to be a great tool to bring self-awareness.



Based on this research, Mandalas would also appear to be an excellent tool for Deaf women who have gone through domestic violence. Violence leaves unmarked bruises on domestic violence victims. Based on Henderson et al. (2007) suggestion that Mandalas would be a great tool for children who have gone through abuse, it is not difficult to imagine how powerful this tool could be for Deaf women who have gone through abuse.

Brown (1997) argued that art techniques needed to be expanded among therapy professionals and colleagues. People search for answers in their surroundings (i.e. society, friends, and family) but they lose sight of themselves by being so outwardly focused. A person's inner thoughts do not always match up with the available words/language and society desires everyone to communicate their feelings using words. People often forget to pay attention to the emotions and feelings of their inner selves; they forget to look within and see what is really happening. To search for one's self, a person must start looking internally and find a more accurate way to express her/his new self-knowledge beyond language – art therapy using Mandalas is one way to do this (Brown 1997; Henderson et al., 2007, Pisarik and Larson 2011).

Many people in society are brained-washed to perceive and think the same way. The educational system, professional doctors, therapists, counselors and some social workers are taught to see an individual as an object that fits their curriculum. In speaking about the tension between society and our inner-selves, Young (2001) states, “ It may be important to understand the inner sacred spaces in order to develop more effective relationships between the inner and outer spaces.” Our inner-self is not being engaged in everyday life decisions. Individuals have become accustomed to society's way of life. A person's self-reflection is not their own any more. By using an abstract process in reconnecting self with drawings, individuals can reconnect to the inner-self.

Carroll (1991) described drawing as a powerful writing tool. Her research studied visual images that enhanced perspectives when it came time to write. From a previous study, the researcher used this same concept of self with younger children. When Carroll (1991) used this approach she worked with middle school and high school students. The student's writings were richer in emotions, and details were brought out through the use of drawings. Carroll (1991) was able to demonstrate that even her students could find meaning. People tend to limit themselves in U.S. society with one-way thinking. Using art, they can help fully express inner feelings that can bring awareness and healing. Words can be quite empty without visuals.

Morrell (2015) heard art therapy would be a good for kids, but she argued it would also work for adults. Throughout her career individuals would tell her how great art therapy is, but just for kids. That is a misperception many of us are guilty of holding. We frequently associate creating art to express our feelings as being only for children. However, one only has to look at the recent trend of adult coloring books to see how creating visual art can assist many adults. Our society judges what is best for adults regarding how to heal emotional, physical, and mental wounds. "There are all kinds of experiences and feelings that don't have words (Morrell. 2015)." Art therapy creates a new direction for adults when dealing with emotions, memories, and changes.

How we see ourselves in society is different from how we see our inner-selves. One way to balance the two perspectives is through a Mandala. A Mandala is circle. Fincher (2010) references how circle imagery has been present throughout the ages to symbolize the self and important life cycles. For instances, image of the sun, cycle of the moon, the zodiac, Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, and Stonehenge have all stood out as important circular symbols. "The symbol of the circle represents the most important aspect of life, namely, the ultimate wholeness" (Hwangs, 2011). Circle imagery can continue to be seen in contemporary Western culture in the concept of

the circle of life and the shapes surrounding birth. Fincher (2010) connects the shape of human eggs, the mother's belly and womb, and the entry of a baby into the world through a circular opening to the long history of associating circles with self-creation. The circle of a Mandala can be created in two or three- dimensions with different types of mediums.

One of the strengths of the Mandala is that it has been constructed by a number of cultures over the ages. Cultures as diverse as Tibetan Buddhists monks, Native American tribes, European Christian Saints/mystics, and Japanese individuals. The elaborate Mandala sand paintings made by Tibetan Buddhist monks are some of the most well-known Mandalas world-wide. It is believed that a Mandala ceremony can help heal, restore, and protect (Anderson, 2002). Fincher (2010) states "growth toward wholeness is a natural process that brings to light one's uniqueness and individuality." A Mandala can bring personal growth to one's consciousness as they go through the process in making one. They can be a great tool for healing the internal turmoil as one is freely drawing emotions inside the circle.

While the structure of a Mandala is a circle (often within a square), multiple theorists and researchers divide a Mandala into different concepts of self. Some divide the circle in half, with the upper half as the conscious self and the lower half as the unconscious self (Hwangs, 2011, Fincher, 2010, Young 2001). In a Mandala, Hwangs (2011) defines the concepts that make up the self as: person, action, individual, and knowledge/wisdom. Young (2001) alternately defines the concepts of the self as consciousness, spiritual, socio-emotional, and cognitive. Fincher (2010) attaches additional meaning to the images within the Mandala's quadrants based on their positions within the quadrants of the circle, using a clock face as a guide. For instance, an image drawn at a position relative to 3 o'clock on a clock face would have different meaning than an image drawn at the 12 o'clock position. Despite the varying definitions theorists have assigned to the sections of a Mandala, the ultimate interpretation comes from the person who created the

Mandala. The creator is the only one who can interpret the images and relate them to their own life experiences and self-development. While the Mandala structures of different theorists and cultural groups can provide guidance and promote insight, an individual is not limited by these structures in the interpretation of their own Mandala.

When a Mandala is divided into defined sections, the different pieces not only come together to construct the self, but they are also connected to each other. Fincher (2010) summarized how Jung felt that a circle was the most appropriate visualization of self-development. By moving around the circle of the Mandala, we can see how the different components of self interact with one another. Taking Hwangs (2011) Mandala quadrant definitions, we find that the person quadrant involves a person's concept of themselves based on their social and cultural backgrounds. A person takes into consideration what society expects of them. This is where the influence of the patriarchy can be seen on a person's concept of themselves.

While there is no single way to move around a Mandala's circle, many traditions assign value to a clockwise pattern (such as can be used with walking meditation) whose importance goes back to the sundial. Moving clockwise around Hwangs' Mandala circle, we come next to action. The actions an individual takes in life are directly influenced by their social concept of themselves, by society and its components like the patriarchy. Action is the ability to do. Next comes the quadrant of the individual, where a person can illustrate their biological selves. A person's actions influence whether their physical needs are being met.

Self-identity brings awareness to "dual of self" (Hwang, 2011). Person, action and individual quadrants are the big pieces combined together to create the inner-self of the Mandala, but we cannot forget the last quadrant of self is through knowledge. Knowledge comes from logic thinking on one's moral self and social self. One is able to integrate the two with how the

society wants an individual to fit in. We are able to do this by rationalizing our experiences as we personally grow into “cognitive maturity” (Hwangs, 2011).

The Tibetan monks have eight steps in the ceremony to create the Mandala. These steps are purification, meditation, orientation, and construction of the mandala, absorption, ritual of destruction, reintegration and actualization (Anderson, 2002). It takes all seven steps to get to the process of actualization. The inner-self is able to find, “order from chaos, to understand and accept”... “so we can act in the truth of balance and beauty in our everyday lives” (Anderson, 2002). When we are able to find balance in our life, the individual part is found in our self-reflection. Self-reflection is our internal awareness of self and society; this goes back to what Hwangs (2011) was speaking of regarding “cognitive maturity.” With the exposure of one’s internal awareness and life experiences, one’s individual self starts to emerge (Hwang, 2011). Self is a rational thought process from the inside. It is not the physical self of what people see, but it is the self that does not get seen. Mandala shows how our life makes up our individual selves plus the interconnectedness of each reality: life and inner-self. We are able to experience the internal personal growth during and after the creation of the Tibetan Mandala.

Mandala images are from one’s inner-self consciousness and unconsciousness, “mental imagery can be quite powerful and are often very helpful in counseling process” (Brown, 1997). Our Western culture is focused on the logic, scientific, and tangible concepts of inner-self. The healing process has been for many years based on measurements. These types of processes are using the left hemisphere where we rely on mathematical and scientific proofs. Brown (1997) speaks about how our consciousness changes are best seen from a therapist perspective in the right hemisphere. This way of thinking is outside the view of society’s norms and is an abstract way to measure self. Brown states (1997):

Imagination can also help people integrate diverse energies in a way the rational mind can never do. Through mental imagery, they can see how these forces operate and fit together in complimentary ways. People can initiate and witness a dramatic process of transformation by cooperating with the laws and operations of the unconscious mind and, by consequences, begins to act in ways that naturally reflect their increasing integrity and wholeness.

The Mandala's circle shape is the "ultimate wholeness" to a conscious self (Hwangs, 2011). Mental imagery is exactly what a mandala is creating: that wholeness. Trust must be founded within the individual sense of self. It becomes a slow transformation of awareness when the individual is able to connect to their inner-self because they have trusted the self within them. Creativity should not be looked at as the abstract form of experiences. Pisarik and Larson (2011) researched the empirical side of a Mandala. Do these abstract circles really help the experiences in healing? To answer the question, Jungian techniques of: "Self is positively related to psychological well-being as defined within the humanistic counseling tradition (i.e., personal growth and development, self-awareness, self-acceptance)" (Pisarik and Larson, 2011). To be true to one's self, one's wants and needs, is in the society's eyes to find that inner-self.

Mandalas are used to create the opportunity to find what Pisarik and Larson (2011) call "authentic self." When the individual is able to look at their creation and to interpret what the meaning is for them, the measuring of one's experience cannot go unnoticed. Mandalas have become a positive tool to work with when finding one's inner-self. It also has become a tool to help reduce stress and anxiety. In designing a Mandala, participants became relaxed (Vennet & Serice, 2012). The process of creating a Mandala has been proven by Brown (1997) to also center the individual.

Self-drawings of Deaf individuals have been researched by Lev Wiesel and Yosipov Kaziaz (2005). In their research, they wanted to know how the Deaf individual thinks and how they see themselves. These drawings become a language for Deaf women. But portraits may not help connect the inner self-reflection with how Deaf individual's think. Lev Wiesel and Yosipov Kaziaz (2005) state "they are still aware of their deficiencies in controlling the stimuli from the environment and must cope from within a hearing society." Lev Wiesel and Yosipov Kaziaz (2005) credit art with helping to help boost one's understanding of self. In these ways, Mandalas help express the inner-self in individuals.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the review, Mandalas are a tool that could help Deaf women who have experienced domestic violence. There is no available research to date on this topic. However, the empirical study of Pisarik and Larson (2011) has provided validity to this review. If you follow the studies that Carl Jung did on unconscious self and his personal use of a Mandala, you will see that Pisarik and Larson (2011) have also given this review on Mandalas creditability. Hwang and Fincher's (2011) research outlines the process of how a Mandala could be created. Their definitions of the parts of the self and how they come together to create self-identity show Mandala to be a unique form of art therapy that helps individuals connect to their inner-beauty.

According to Finchers' (2010) techniques of interpretation, one way of using a Mandala is to encourage the individual to list all symbols, colors, shapes, and numbers in her Mandala and give the associations. The individual will also write a summary of those meanings and explain what their inner-beauty looks like. This process allows the individual to become aware of their inner-self. The interpretation comes from the women who participate in search of their inner-beauty. Holte and Dinis (2001) state, "a handful of studies exist that examine self-esteem in hearing women from a phenomenological perspective." They also continue to say that there are a

few studies that have focused on Deaf women's self-esteem. When we speak about self-esteem, our experiences shape the psychological side of an individual.

Kwang-Kuo Hwangs' (2011) research speaks about how one can come to a logical finding when looking at all four sides of the quadrant of self. A sense of autonomy can be accomplished in a different way from the inside out through one's own reflection. Women who have experienced domestic violence often find their rational self scattered in all directions. In finding how the self is put together with a use of a Mandala, the women can have a way to start looking at their inner-selves. They might be able to understand how patriarchal society has shaped their identity and allowed domestic violence to disrupt their lives. Through recognizing the influence of the patriarchy, these women can then work to rebuild their self-concepts outside of patriarchal societal rules.

Art therapy has been used to help researchers learn about individuals, but helping the individuals learn more about themselves is where this review diverges from Lev Wiesel, Yosipov Kaziav (2005). Mandalas give Deaf women a way to learn more about self and connections to their inner-beauty. Vennet and Serice (2012) have shown that using a Mandala is an abstract tool for healing. Carroll's (1991) outcomes of drawing do not limit the ways of expression, they expand the inner thought process. Art is a form to which we often turn a blind eye to because the patriarchal society does not encourage focus on expressing one's inner emotions. In creating a visual image, like a Mandala, our subconscious thoughts and emotions come to the surface and bring awareness to the individual's consciousness. In creating a Mandala, a Deaf woman who has gone through a domestic violence situation, may come to face her inner turmoil and find a healing inner-beauty. Creating a Mandala may bring awareness and healing as a Deaf women creates and reflects on the images that have been hidden from her.



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