



Unfurling a Child's Altered Pattern Through Art

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Abstract: How to take, or witness a case through a child's drawings. How to observe and make the connections that can lead to a prescription, when the patient has little language.

Keywords: Art, case witnessing, inner pattern.

Acronyms: CWP= Case Witnessing Process
LOE = Level of Experience

"The scribbles of any child clearly indicates how thoroughly immersed he is in the sensation of moving his hand and crayon aimlessly over a surface, depositing a line in his path. There must be some quality of magic in this alone."¹

We need, as practitioners, to find ways to understand and communicate with children when they have little language. The non-verbal language of the child is pure and fully intact, thus enabling them to express their inner pattern through such languages as facial expression, gesture, movement, and also through art, drawing, painting and dancing,

I find Art is the best way to understand children. It enables me to understand the child's inner disturbances and helps me explore the child's imaginary world ~ how he feels, perceives, senses, reacts and copes with himself, his illness and the whole world around him. Since art facilitates a direct communication to the child's innermost self, it becomes very easy for a homœopath to understand the pattern by exploring through art. In the case witnessing process itself (art exploration process), the art opens the child's doors of communication. It gives the child ample scope and space for expressing and processing emotions that may be difficult to put into words. It also makes his verbal expressions more accessible and gives him an opportunity for the externalisation of his deeper self.

It provides the child with an insight into the issues he is subconsciously dealing with, which creates an awareness of his deeper emotions thus helping him to move towards healing.

In scientific research it has been found that children as young as 18 months begin

to express their individuality and their subconscious self.² Art is one of the channels for the child, through which to externalise the deeper self thus making 'art' is a very important aspect in child's CWP.

The different forms of art that we can explore in homœopathy are

- Drawing
- Craft
- Dance
- Poetry
- Singing
- Story telling
- Drama
- Playing any instrument

Of all these various types of art expressions, drawing is the simplest way to understand a child. It is most universal and convenient. Drawings are valuable in building rapport, facilitating communication, in opening up a new area to explore and understand their unexpressed feelings, perceptions and the sensations.

When the child is drawing, the whole process of his drawing ~ how he draws, the movements of his fingers, fast, jerky or slow, his choice of colours etc. is observed. This drawing is not used suggestively nor is it interpreted because each child has his own imaginary world, which only he can explain. In a way he is the actor, director and producer of his life. Hence the child's description of the drawing and his feeling and perception about it are understood. Thus, when the drawn images are supported by the child's verbal explanation about them, it allows the broader concepts to be read at a glance and in depth.

Children of different age groups have different types of drawing. For example children from

1. Edward Hill: http://quote.robertgenn.com/auth_search.php?authid=1756 (last accessed November 2009)
2. Dennie Wolf, Psychologist, Harvard University, USA.

2-4 years of age are known as a 'Scribbler age group'. During this age, a child leaves marks randomly responding to a period of muscular development. Their drawing is in the form of scribbles. They can't draw forms. So, how to understand such scribbles? Psychologists³ say that children have representational abilities before they produce any form while drawing. These abilities are made comprehensible in their pattern of drawing, their way of sketching, the chronological order in which they draw, and the child's scanty explanatory words, illuminating gestures and the descriptive sounds made by the child. These marks can stand for certain things to them or can stand for some motion, movement, some pattern, vibration or sound. All these belong to the child's inner self, his inner vibrations, his own energy pattern which he tries to express through these random drawings. The homœopath also observes his method and speed of drawing, which will reveal a part of his personality.

Wolf,⁴ a psychologist, observed an 18 month-old child who took the marker and hopped it around on the page, leaving a mark with each imprint and she gave the explanation as: "Rabbit goes hop hop." This child was symbolizing the rabbit's motion, not its size, shape or colour. The meaning was carried primarily by the marker itself, which stood for the rabbit, and by the process of marking, the child was representing a rabbit's movement. Moreover, the dots themselves stood for the rabbit's footprints. Through their random drawing, children of this age group create a sense of pattern. Thus, what the child feels / perceives / senses about the drawing is taken into consideration for the homœopathic case taking.

The above concept seeped in deeply when I observed this case of a three year old boy in my clinical practice.

During the Passive case witnessing process⁵, we observed that as soon as the child entered and sat on the chair, he started spontaneously drawing and talking. He drew something on the paper which just appeared as scribbling of lines in circles.



Exploring the art of a child

But when we asked him about the drawing, to my utter surprise he said that this is a dolphin. The child was already at the delusion level and was opening up readily. So we went along with the natural flow of the child and became Active

early in the case witnessing. The aim was to take the child further and find the focus of the case.

In Active and Active-Active case witnessing process, he continued to draw. When asked to describe a second drawing, he said that "these are all dolphins which are moving in circles, they move in water like other fishes. These are a group of dolphins and they go up and then come down."

While the child drew, we observed that he murmured something. On carefully listening we understood that he was singing a poem about fish. When asked what else he likes, he said animals, birds, fishes and blue-coloured fishes.

In another drawing also he did the same scribbling and described it as 'dolphins dancing together in circles.' Now the focus was getting clearer, so we asked him to draw something more. While he was drawing the mother said that he wants everyone in family together. (He will want everyone at the dinner table together, and for an evening walk together etc.); he always needs everyone around him.

When asked to describe another drawing he said these are five fishes swimming together and all of them are dolphins.

Analysis of the case

- High energy
- Animated talk
- Liking for dolphins, animals, birds, fishes. This clearly indicated the Animal kingdom.
- Wants everyone in the family.
- Always needs everyone around him.
- In all the drawings many dolphins are moving together, dancing together in circles. This confirmed the Mammal theme. (All the Mammal remedies have the general theme of togetherness, group, family, caring for young ones, maternal instinct, bonding with family.)
- Water.
- Moving in circles.
- Dolphins.
- All together ~ synchronicity.
- Go up and come down.
- Poem about fish.

These peculiarities entirely cover the source details of dolphins.

The remedy given was *Lac Dolphinum* 1M

In his follow ups also he always drew dolphins.

Follow-up: Child did very well on treatment. Within three months his attacks of bronchial asthma stopped and constipation improved in six months. The child's overall growth and energy level improved. He is on placebo now for a year and doing very well in every aspect.

The 4-7 year age group is called the 'Pre-schematic age group', and the 7-9 year group is called the 'Schematic age group'.

3. Ibid.

4. Quotation from Dennie Wolf, Psychologist, Harvard University, found in Making sense of children's drawings, John Willats, 2005. New Jersey. <http://books.google.co.uk> (last accessed November 2009)

5. To understand the Case Witnessing process, refer to: A Journey Into Human Core- Dinesh Chauhan 2007, self-published, India.

During this age, children develop symbols for objects and they draw intuitively. So their drawing is mostly in the form of symbols or in geometric shapes. Their concept of the human figure is partially developed.

Age 9-13 is called the 'Realistic age group'. Here children's drawing takes form. Here shape changes into form and their drawing shows emotion. This is the age where the expressive ability is developed. They can explain their imagination, perceptions and thoughts through it. When the homœopath asks him to describe it, he can describe his feelings, perceptions, sensations and the pattern of it.

Whatever age group the child is in should not matter to us. The most important thing that we should absorb is that all children irrespective of their age can express themselves very clearly.

We ask a child to draw when we witness that he has either started abstractly moving fingers on the table, or when he wants to say something but he is not able to express it, or when he voluntarily asks for a drawing paper and spontaneously starts drawing.

Art exploration process

This reminds me of a case of a five-year-old boy, where verbally the child was not communicative but his body spoke a lot. During the long pauses that the child took, we observed that he continuously moved his fingers on the table in a semicircular motion. Also in between he kept making an action of drawing a circle. This was suggestive of his high non-verbal energy. At this juncture, the child was given papers to draw and from thereon the whole case opened up smoothly. Earlier there was only an energy pattern with no verbal correlation but while describing the drawings, the hand gesture became appropriate to the verbal language. The child himself connected the 'semicircular motion of fingers' with the 'bursting of black bombs, small bombs coming out; everything breaking; fire'. This whole phenomenon which the child explained pointed out the radioactive substance...*Uranium nitricum*, which he child received as simillimum.

We ask:

- Draw whatever comes to your mind.
- Draw some more things that come to your mind. (Keep giving new papers until he adds something new or until he makes connection to the subconscious areas like dreams, nightmares, imaginations, fears, phobias, incident which had a deep impact, chief complaint.)
- Until he keeps on drawing new things, we ask him to draw more.
- Until the **focus** becomes clear through his drawings to us or to him we ask him to continue.
- Or until the whole pattern goes to one particular source, you may see that at this point the patient will want to verbalize what he is doing.
- Tell him to start explaining each drawing till you understand the focus in the drawing.
- Once the focus becomes clear, ask questions according to the level of experience.
- Then we tell him to draw that **focus**.

For further information we ask:

LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS ASKED.

FACT -	Describe this drawing?
FEELING -	How does it feel to draw this? How does it feel when you see this drawing?
DELUSION -	Describe the image drawn as imaginary as possible?
SENSATION -	What is the experience in this? What happens inside your body? What is the bodily sensation in this?
ENERGY PATTERN -	Describe that pattern?
IF HE IS PROJECTING	How it will feel to that thing/ that object/that person i.e. on whomever he is projecting

We keep doing this until the child is able to relate to it completely and describe it to us as vividly as possible, making him visualize and live his pattern. Our basic aim here is to make the focus clear in order to go ahead until a clear picture of the child's world emerges in front of our eyes.

We formulate our questions according to the level of experience of the child. Then we keep moving towards the whole altered pattern until he makes a connection to his being. In some children, who live only in the imaginary world of drawings, the entire case witnessing is done through this.

Words→ Focus→ Phenomenon→Pattern→ Source

As I said in the first paragraph, drawing helps me to understand the inner disturbance of the child patient. Following a child's scribbles to the deepest levels unlocks the magical essence, and often leads to the simillimum.

Bibliography

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