

of emotional, cognitive, and expressive abilities at the individual, group, or community level. Empirical evidence confirms how images can activate and facilitate the communication of thoughts and emotions without the limitation of verbal language, which then contributes to overcome challenges or difficulties some individuals may experience (Uhrig *et al.*, 2016). However, the most relevant finding from this work is that the use of photographs in psychosocial settings cannot be clearly linked to a single model, rather a variety of instruments and techniques have been applied in the current literature.

Some limitations affect the present work. First, the current review is only partially able to address the complexity of some issues still open within the scientific debate. Furthermore, it is possible that some other interventions were not included because authors used different keywords to describe their work, or because of the terminology used to disseminate their experience. Also, articles published in different venues may have been excluded. So, despite its increasing use as an intervention methodology, not many scientific papers concerning the clinical and therapeutic use of photography are currently present in the literature.

Given these limitations, this literature review has contributed to clarify emerging issues at the core of the contemporary debate about this topic, making a distinction between the ideal rules and the actual and current use of photography in psychosocial settings.

The application of photographs is based on the idea that visual media facilitate the access to symbols and unconscious materials (Kopytin, 2006; Weiser, 2014b). Furthermore, since it has been argued that the photographic stimulus might facilitate the re-integration and adaptive reconstruction of emotional elements defensively dissociated from the subjective experience (Wolf, 2007), photographs can therefore serve as a way to promote the unitary and coherent narrative of one's life story. In particular, photographs have the potential to lead to a visual representation of the subject's mental images and internal symbols, thus evoking painful and inaccessible memories, which can then be reassembled and given new meaning in the *here and now* of the intervention (Halkola, 2009).

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