

**BILATERAL ART:
AN INTEGRATION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, ART THERAPY, AND
NEUROSCIENCE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Bilateral art is a neurologically-based therapeutic intervention that engages both dominant and non-dominant hands in the creation of images in response to polarized beliefs, cognitions, or feelings. Advances in neuroscience that integrate attachment theory and experience with neuronal development argue for use of the intervention. Retrospective case studies using enhancements of the bilateral art intervention protocol for individuals support these arguments. These case studies demonstrate clinical application of the intervention to a range of presenting problems including differentiation from family of origin, parenting problems, loss, trauma, and self-esteem concerns and provide the first documented evidence of the effectiveness of the bilateral art intervention. Additional case studies reflect development of two different bilateral art intervention protocols that facilitate exploration of relationships. The first protocol adapts the use of bilateral art with individuals to use with couples and it has a dual purpose: to facilitate both openness and integration of polarized thoughts or feelings in one member of a couple and to increase empathy in the other. The second protocol facilitates exploration of and reflection upon a relationship and is applied in the case study to the supervisor-supervisee dyad that is an integral part of the training of marriage and family therapists. Experiences reveal possible contraindications as well as indications for the use of these protocols.

DEDICATION

To Mark, Beth, Mark, and Katie who are the joys of my life.

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