

2019 PHENND Conference: Trauma & the Arts
2 April, 2019

Art as interventions in child social services

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As a nurse & an art historian

intrinsic nature of art (2007)

- * a language written in images

research on art & well-being (2009)

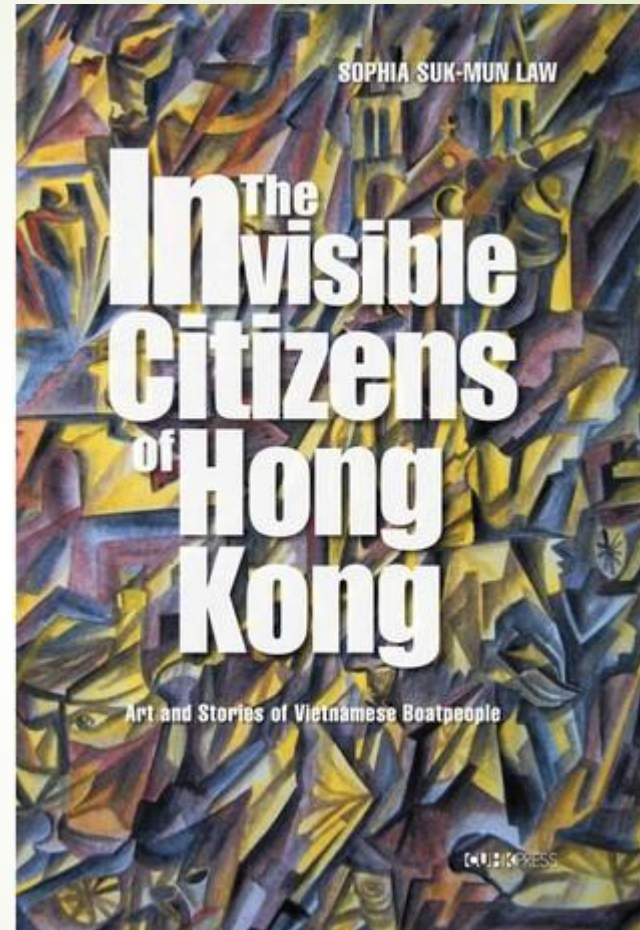
- * the expressive & communicative power of art
- * art as healing

Projects on using art as interventions in social services (2010)

- * individuals (specific needs & developmental growth)
- * community (united as a whole)
- * art facilitation/art therapy projects



Art & Trauma



2009-11. Invisible Citizens: Art and Stories of the Vietnamese Asylum Seekers and Boat People in Hong Kong. http://commons.ln.edu.hk/vs_sw/21/

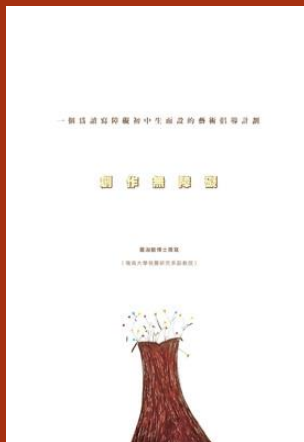
Community Art Projects



2011-13 Study on using art facilitation for **SEN** (Special Education Needs), collaborated with 3 secondary schools and an NGO.
http://commons.ln.edu.hk/vs_faculty_work/3/

2014 Hong Kong Our Home – A community art project for **ethnic minority** children in Yuen Long, collaborated with YL District Office)

2014 Colours of Dementia – A 6-month art facilitation project for elders with **dementia** & their care-givers, collaborated with Hong Kong Alzheimer Association.
http://commons.ln.edu.hk/vs_faculty_work/6/



2014-18 i-dArt Institute – a 3-year art curriculum for **persons with disabilities**, collaborated with TWGH Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex, TWGH.

2015-16. Touching the Earth - **Environmental Art** Workshop at Lai Chi Wo.
<http://touchinglcw.wix.com/laichiwo>

Art as intervention for child victims of family violence

2010-11. Art facilitation for youth in Tuen Mun under the Court Order of Protection and Care (collaborated with SWD, HKSAR)

2012. Colour my Growth – A summer art program for child victims of family violence. (collaborated with SWD, HKSAR. http://commons.in.edu.hk/sw_master/5277/)

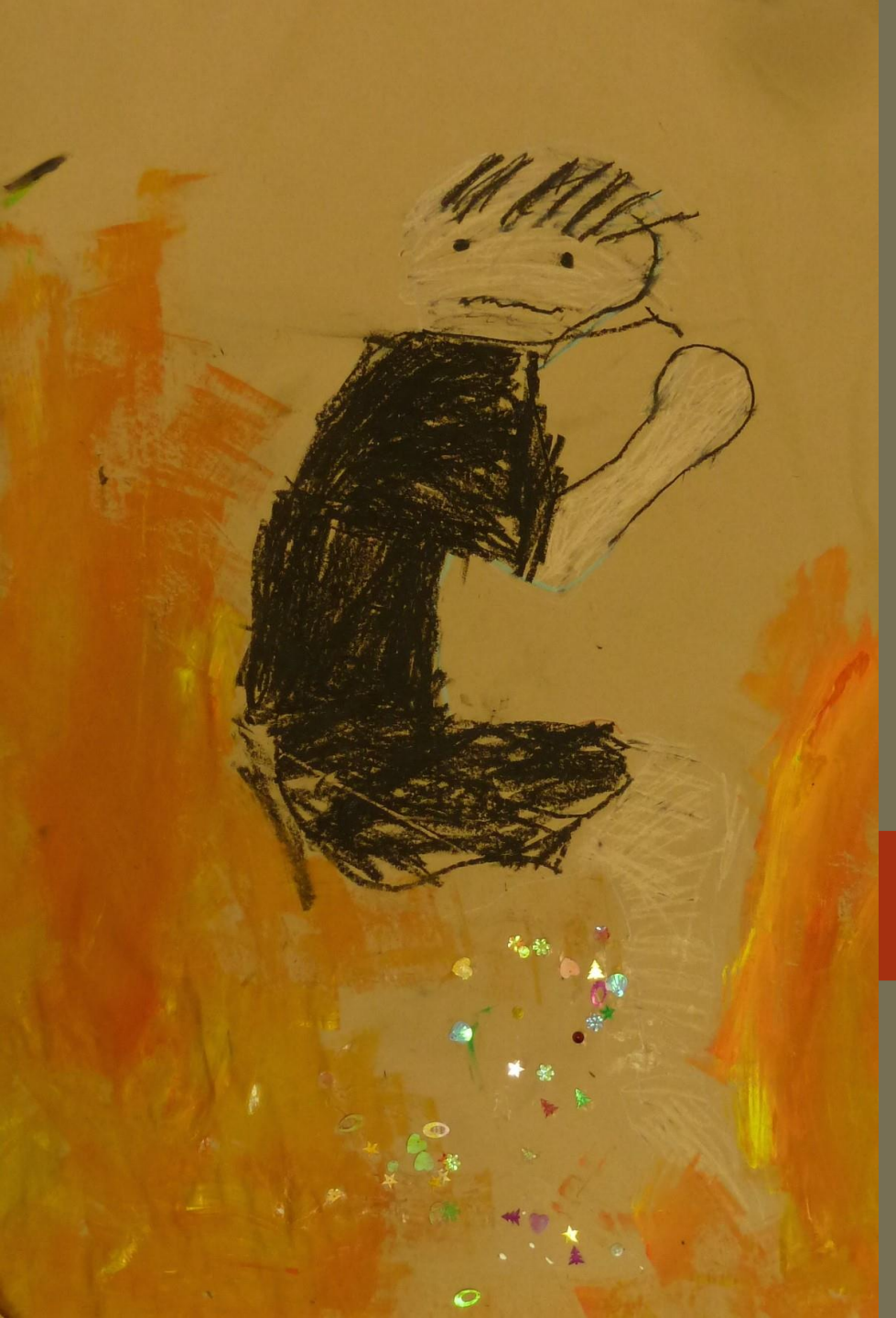
2013 - 14. Study of Art as a Language for Children under FCPSU (Family and Child Protective Services Unit, SWD, HKSAR)

2015 - 18. Art as intervention in serving secondary child victims of family violence (collaborated with TMFCPSU, HKSAR). http://commons.in.edu.hk/sw_master/5046/

2016 - 17. Art as a language for children with traumatic experiences (collaborated with SWD, HKSAR)

2017 - 20. Art as intervention in serving child victims of family violence (collaborated with SWD & a secondary school). http://commons.in.edu.hk/sw_master/5046/

2019 - 20. Art as intervention in serving secondary child victims of family violence (parent-child art therapy) (collaborated with TMFCPSU, HKSAR).



Art as interventions
for serving
child victims
of
domestic violence

(2010 – present)



Art as a language for child victims of domestic violence

inter-professional collaboration

| period | No. of children involved | No. of social workers (SW) artists (A) /art therapist (AT) involved | No. of researchers involved |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2012-12 | 10 aged 8-12, direct victim | 3 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2013-14 | 8 aged 9-12, direct victim | 3 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2015-16 | 24 aged 7-11, secondary victim | 5 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2016-17 | 16 aged 7-11, secondary victim | 5 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2016-17 | 8 aged 7-12, direct victim | 4 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2017-18 | 10 aged 8-12, direct victim | 4 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2017-18 | 10 aged 12-15, direct victim | 2 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2018-19 | 12 aged 8-12, direct victim | 4 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |
| 2018-19 | 11 aged 13-16, direct victim | 2 (SW) 1 (AT) | 2 |



Domestic violence & Childhood trauma

- inter-professional efforts
- social workers (family oriented)
- therapists: artists/art therapists (child oriented)
- academia (theoretical & research investigation)

All the series are structured on a child-oriented, psycho-educational approach.



Child victims of trauma

- language skill
- situations too complicated to understand
- cognitive and psychological development
- very confused emotions/values
- repressed emotion

For young child victims, language has great limitation.

When language fails, images work.

Theoretical framework

Art – an innate behavior unique to human

- biological origin (anthropology)
- cognition and vision (neurosciences)
- symbolism and aesthetics (philosophy of art)
- art as expression and exploration (cognitive psychology)
- art making as an affirming experience (art therapy)

Images come before words

art as image writing

Art applies to all – ages, intellectual abilities, literate/illiterate



Where did art come from?

- as a human activity
- a very close relationship between art and human



Hall of the Bulls, Paleolithic c. 15,000-13,000BC cave painting, Lascaux



Biological Nature of Art

art evolved as play

exploratory

external world

social bonding

Art & Human Evolution

hands eyes coordination

pattern, space recognition

precursor of written languages

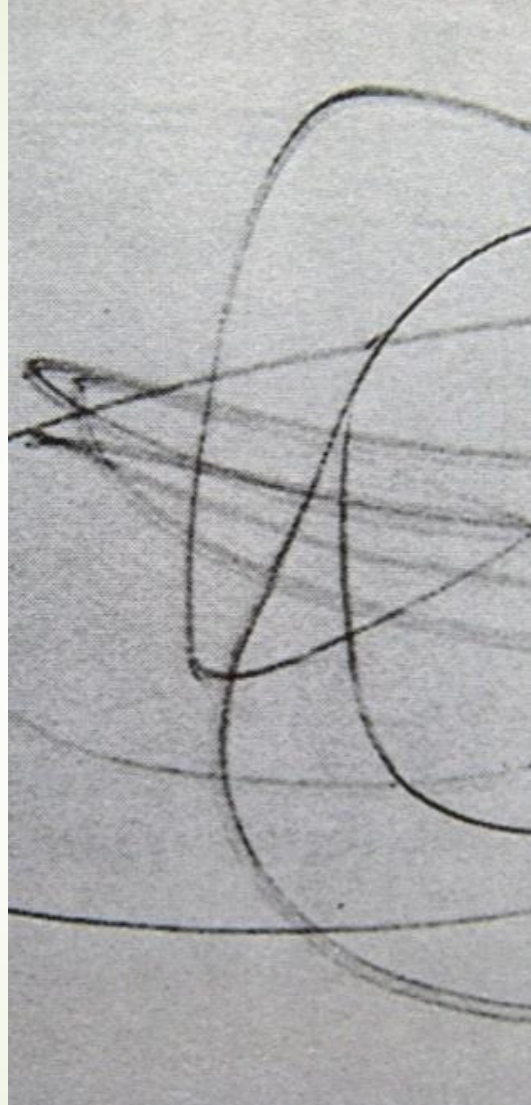
imagination

sharing

communication



*Human is born to create
Art: a language written
in images*



cognitive & Emotional memories

Seeing comes before words

Visual has the most complex neurological network among the 5 senses



Images and Memories

memories are
retrieved in the form of
images





Traumatic Memories

Even what we hear must be attached to a visual image. To help recall something we have heard rather than seen, we should attach to their words the appearance, facial expression, and gestures of the person speaking as well as the appearance of the room. The speaker should therefore create **strong visual images**, through expression and gesture, which will fix the impression of his words.

Carruthers, Mary, The Book of Memory (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 94-95

Traumatic Memories

- defense mechanism
- repressed, hidden, dissociative nature
- do not integrate with active memories
- have strong sensorimotor & highly visual qualities
- best retrieved by non-verbal means



panic attack

fragmented, incomprehensive, confused

unspeakable

intrusive

When language fails

These acts of creating images pierced small holes in my sense of isolation. The joy I once had in spoken language, the release in confiding and sharing, the pleasure in intellectual exchanges with others, might now have other expressions, however inchoate and primitive. If I could not speak what I felt, I would draw and write it.

C. L. Osborn, *Over My Head: A Doctor's Own Story of Head Injury from Inside Looking Out* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews Mcheal, 1998)

Iconic communication

- our grasp of non-verbal communication is **less sophisticated than spoken languages**; therefore **less established defense patterns**
- visual thinking
- relies on senses
- spontaneous art drawing can provide **a vehicle for bringing even deeply repressed trauma to the surface** where it can be balanced by the outer world.

Art is all about Senses

- independent of language, intellectual, communication skills
- more direct
- spontaneous and intuitive



Art & Trauma

Process & product

- **nonverbal** in nature, these symbols and images are often difficult to express clearly in verbal form.

- **here & now** - images is shaped by energy, sensation, and colour with its own rhythm, volume, and weight

- uniting the **conscious & unconscious** representations from our past are expressed through **images and symbol**

Once an image has been pictured, and **whatever was once internal becomes physically manifested.**

The process of art making

image making, visual thinking

nonverbal (less structured, direct)

genuine Creativity (engaging, here & now)

a liberation of inner self

all about senses (emotional memories)

The image is a holding place of meaning already structured by psychological processes, servicing them as the carrier of affects, phantasies, and displaced meanings.

Griselda Pollock, "The Image in Psychoanalysis and the Archaeological Metaphor", in G. Pollock ed., *Psychoanalysis and the Image* (MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 4.

Art Making

- art form offers an added means for working with internal splits and polarities
- integrating them into new wholes
- expand the boundaries of objective reality

making the invisible visible

Visualization of trauma as healing

Memories are organic and continuously being (re)constructed

Traumatic memories

- repressed, incomprehensive, fragmented
- liberation of repressed emotions
- non-processed emotions
- re-visit
- acknowledge
- reprocess
- re-evaluate
- process in full



What can be seen **effects a change** in the artist from an unconscious to a conscious state.



Art Making

- **affirmative** power
- intimacy, satisfaction
- **self-directedness**
- richness of texture
- colors, forms
- exploring, articulation
- problem solving
- **self identification**

- **sharing, recognition**

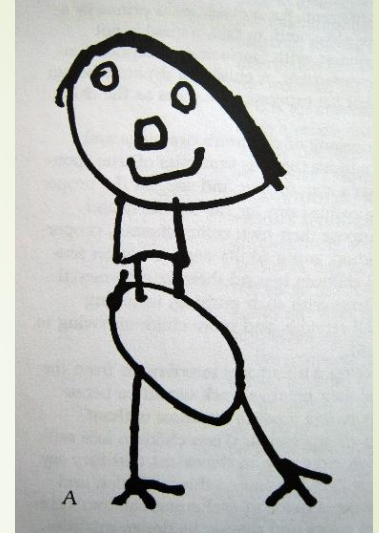
Children's Drawing

more direct and expressive than verbal expression

self projection; symbolic meaning

self expression:
through constructive forms to feelings, emotions and
thoughts

Images:
visualization of thoughts and feelings



*Art as interventions
for serving
child victims
of
domestic violence*

(2013 /14)

Inter-professional collaboration

Initiated by social workers – **Family & child Protective Services Unit**


actual needs in the services

young children undergoing traumatic experiences

a core working team: social workers, art therapist, researchers

Participants – social workers, research assistant, art therapist

Regular meeting – once in every 4 sessions of workshop (4 – 6 weeks)



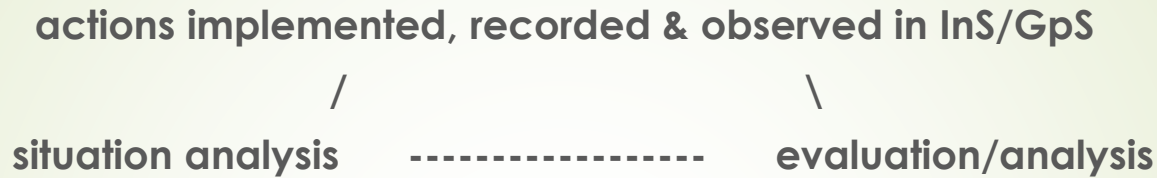
1-year project 2013/14
8 direct child victims of domestic violence
age: 8 to 11

symptoms & behaviors (at the time of recruitment)

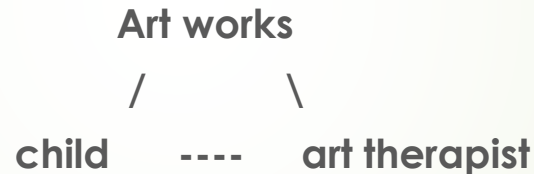
- tears pouring down without a single word during a counselling session
- outburst of emotional control (fighting in school, hit the clinical psychologist)
- strange and incomprehensive behaviours (licking things on the street, cutting things with scissors at home)
- inappropriate emotional responses (laughing or flat emotion to misery or pain mentioned)
- scratching limbs when feeling frustrated
- defecating while bathing
- wet bed, nightmares

Methodology

1. Action research



2. Art therapy



3. Psycho-educational approach

- child-centered – expression and liberation of their emotional needs
- participatory – experiential, exploratory play and creation
- art facilitation – no judgement, non-verbal

Objectives

1

to provide a **non-verbal platform** for these children to **release their inner emotions**

2

to **facilitate articulation** of thoughts and feelings through the uses of **images as writing** for these children

3

create a **joyful, self-directed and safe platform** for the child victims to release their inner feelings through creativity

4

facilitate effective counselling and **promote developmental growth** for the child victims

5

promote **interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing** among professionals in the social services, art therapy and academia

6

study the effects of **using art in the social services for child victims** of family violence

7

train the trainers in the use of art for child victims of family violence in the social services

Structure

- ▶ **Group sessions (GpS) :**
 - age, gender, traumatic exposure
 - ▶ in between intervals of Individual
- ▶ **Individual Sessions (InS) :**
 - specific needs
 - child-centered
- ▶ **Stages:**
- ▶ **Initial – Mid – Final -Closure**



Program structure 2013/14

| Feb/13 | Mar - May | June* | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov /Dec | Jan/14 | Feb/14 |
|---|-----------|-------------|--|------|-----|------|---------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Initial stage (building trust/safety and group cohesion) | | | Mid-stage (exploration/ self-identification) | | | | Final stage (enhancement and closure) | | Closure |
| 3 InS for each child | | Exam period | InS for each child | | | | InS for specific cases | | Farewell party |
| 0 | 9 GpS | 0 | 0 | 4GpS | 0 | 4GpS | 0 | 2GpS | 1GpS |

Distribution of Individual Session (InS) and Group Session (GpS) across the period from Feb 2013 to Feb 2014

Total number of sessions completed by each child throughout the year 2013/14

| Child/sex/age | total no. of GpS | duration of GpS | total no. of InS | duration of InS |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Child A/f/12 | 18 | 37 hr | 16 | 795 min |
| Child B/m/9 | 8 | 17 hr | 13 | 450 min |
| Child C/f/11 | 15 | 31 hr | 6 | 225 min |
| Child D/m/11 | 15 | 31 hr | 4 | 150 min |
| Child E/m/10 | 19 | 39 hr | 8 | 330 min |
| Child F/f/9 | 9 | 19 hr | 7 | 240 min |
| Child G/f/9 | 16 | 33 hr | 9 | 480 min |
| Child H*/m/11 | 4 | 9hr | 1 | 20 min |

Total number of art therapy sessions and duration completed by the eight children
 Each GpS lasted for 2 hours but the last GpS, a farewell party, lasted for 3 hours.
 child H* quitted the project in April 2013

A case study – InS1





A case study – InS2

InS3



InS in July:
paper clay



女

怪物老鼠和菊(草)

2 series of 20-session program 2015

for **24 secondary child victims** of family violence
collaborated with **2 different FCPSUs**
age: 8-11
duration: 6-month

psycho-educational approach

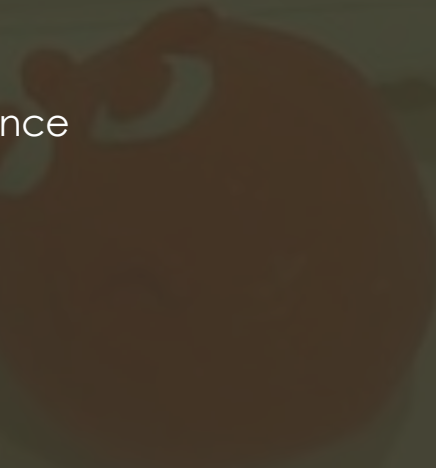
specially and well structured
cognitive & emotional needs
witnesses & victims of family violence

theme-based (issues and needs)

- ▶ personal boundary
- ▶ different emotions
- ▶ resources for resilience
- ▶ from a distance to a progressively more personal perspective

key objective:

***expressing their inner thoughts and feelings in a self-directed
and non- verbal way***



Basic structure of the 2 series

3 stages:

Initial stage – ice-breaking

Middle stage – creation

End stage – preparation for proper closure

| Distribution of the 20-sessions | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Stage | Initial | Middle | Ending |
| duration | 3-4 sessions | 12-14 sessions | 3-4 sessions |

Basic structure of each session

*2 hours and 5
components:*

- **Free Play**
- **Discussion/Warm up
games**
- **Creation**
- **Cleaning**
- **Sharing**

Duration for each of the 5 components in a 2-hour workshop

| | Component | duration |
|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | Free play (2 sections structured in the beginning and at the end) | 20 + 20 mins |
| 2 | Discussion/ Warm up-game | 15 mins |
| 3 | Creation | 40 mins |
| 4 | Clean up | 10 mins |
| 5 | Sharing (approaching the end of the workshop) | 15 mins |



Evaluation

- **qualitative measures**
- **direct observation** (detailed documentation of each child's performance)
- **art work**
- **pre- and post-series questionnaires** (Rosenberg Self-esteem, Goodman Strengths)
- **semi-structured interviews** (with both the child victims and their parents)
- **attendance**
- **feedback** from social workers, parents or carers
- regular core working team meeting

- **Session Observation Sheet** (RA)
- **Performance Sheet** for each child (art therapist, social worker and RA).
- **engagement, teamwork and expressiveness** were graded on a 5-point scale



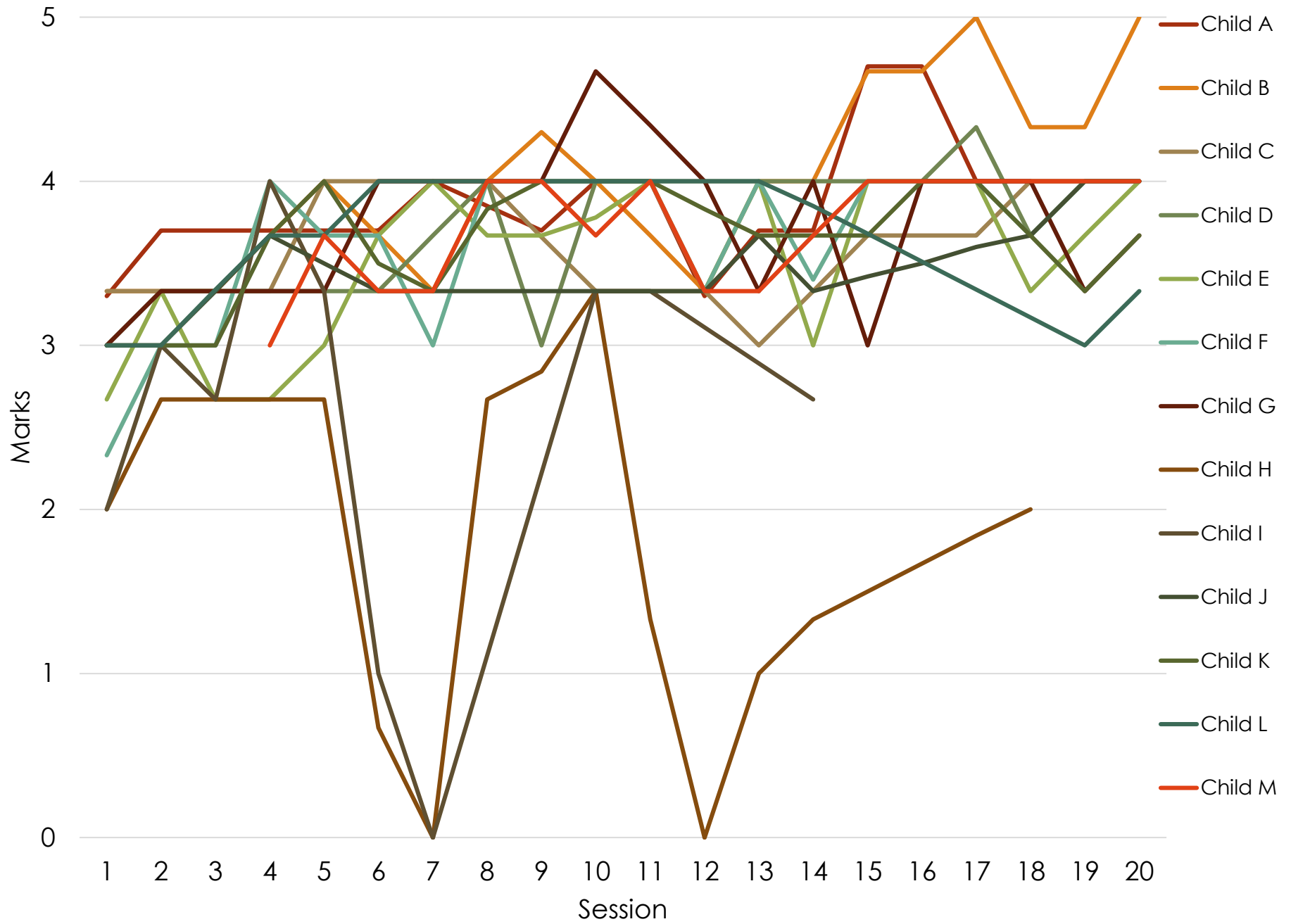
Attendance

| Series 1 | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| CHILD | No. of sessions attended | Attendance % |
| A | 17 | 85% |
| B | 19 | 95% |
| C | 18 | 90% |
| D | 19 | 95% |
| E | 18 | 90% |
| F | 20 | 100% |
| G | 18 | 90% |
| H | 14 | 70% |
| I | 10 | 50% |
| J | 14 | 70% |
| K | 20 | 100% |
| L | 12 | 60% |
| M | 17 | 85% |

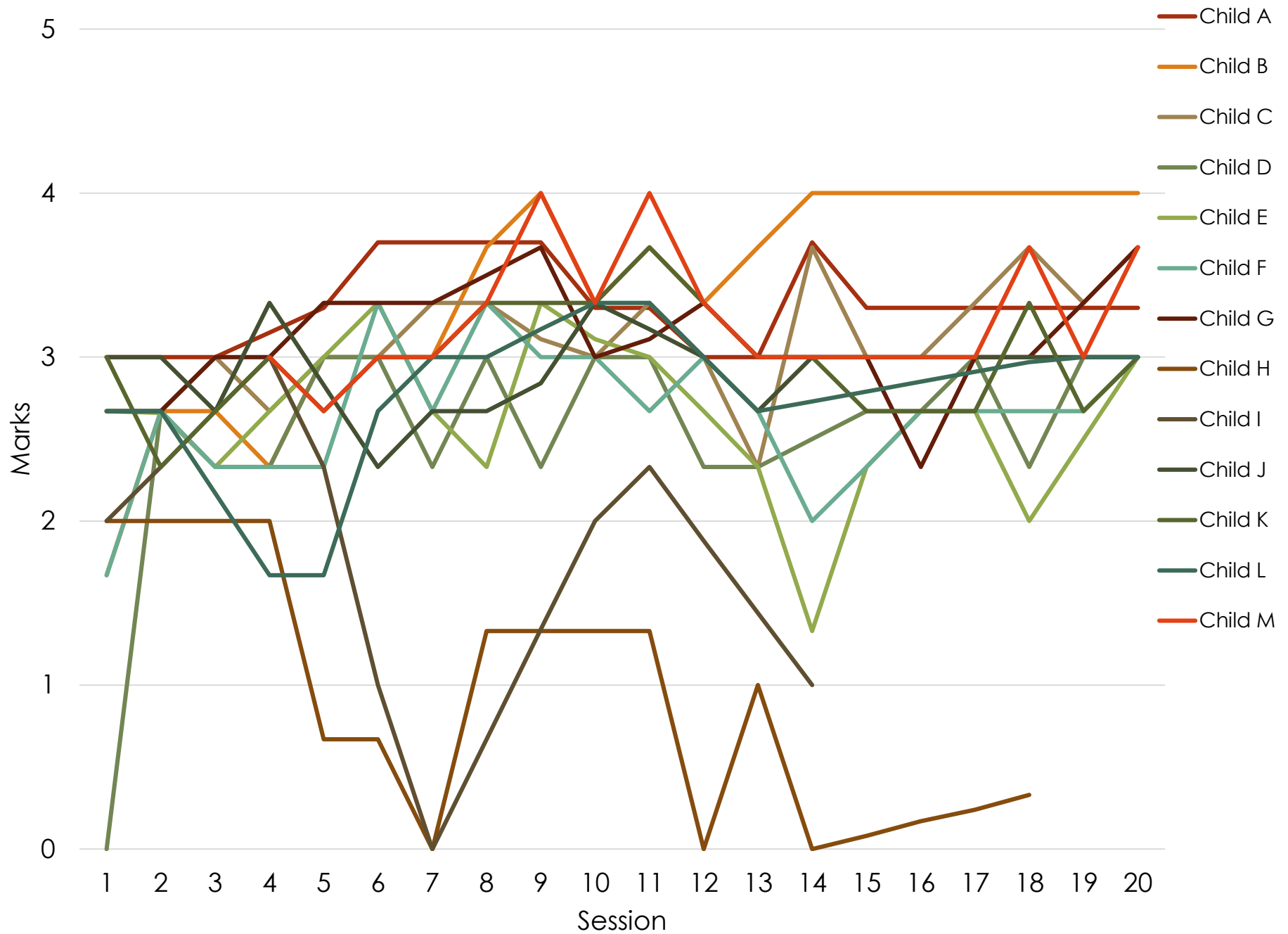
| | Engagement | | Team work | | Expressiveness | |
|-------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | first | last | first | last | first | last |
| CHILD | Score | Score | Score | Score | Score | Score |
| A | 3.3 | 4 | 3 | 3.33 | 1.7 | 3 |
| B | 3.33 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1.67 | 4 |
| C | 3.33 | 4 | 2.67 | 3.67 | 2 | 3 |
| D | 3 | 4 | 2.67 | 3 | 2.67 | 4 |
| E | 2.67 | 4 | 2.67 | 3 | 2 | 2.667 |
| F | 2.33 | 4 | 1.67 | 3 | 2 | 3.33 |
| G | 3 | 3.67 | 2.67 | 3.67 | 1.67 | 3.67 |
| H | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0.33 | 2 | 3 |
| I | 2 | 2.67 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1.33 |
| J | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3.67 |
| K | 3 | 3.67 | 3 | 3 | 2.33 | 2.67 |
| L | 3 | 3.33 | 2.67 | 3 | 2.33 | 3.67 |
| M | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.67 | 2.67 | 3.33 |

Series 1: Comparison of the first & last performance index (number of child victims involved: 13)

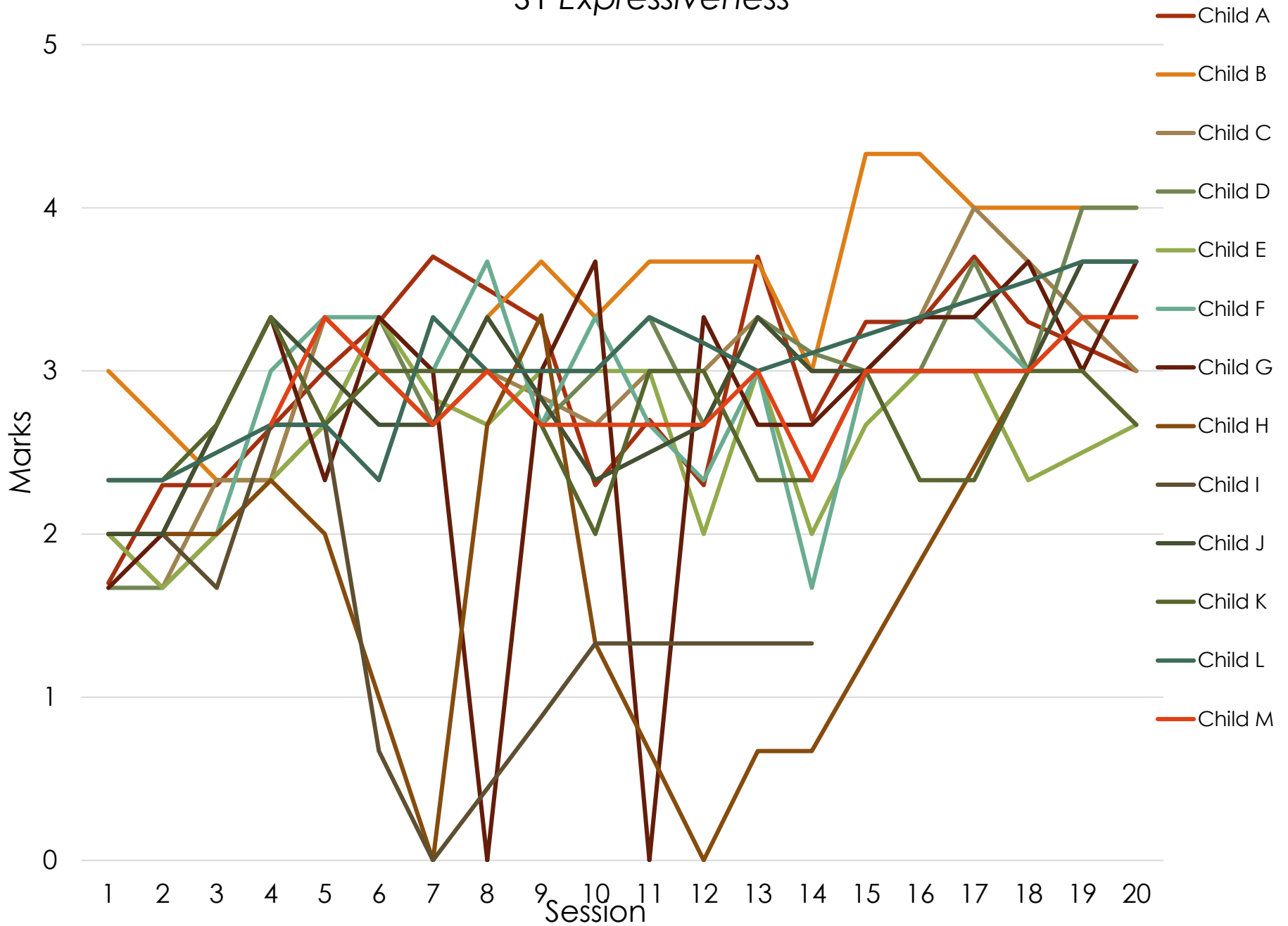
S1 Engagement



S1 Teamwork



S1 Expressiveness



Findings

Some common features shared by child victims

Findings



often have lots of **secrets to hide**



ideas of **killing, death and weapons** are common in their works



have mixed feelings and **confused emotions**



have **boundary issues**



expression of **younger victims** is **more direct** and straightforward

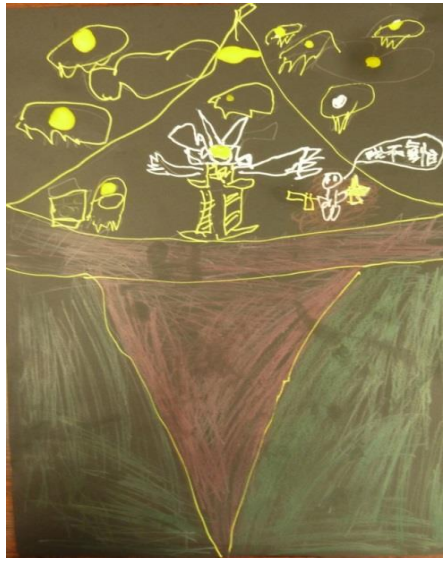
Findings

the effectiveness of using art

- ▶ Art gets children **engaged and connected**
- ▶ Art facilitates **expression, articulation and imagination**
- ▶ Games and creative processes are effective in **revealing the hidden emotions** and specific needs of a child victim
- ▶ Art and creation can **contain negative emotions**
- ▶ Art **promotes positive values** for the child victims
- ▶ Art **enhances social interaction**
- ▶ Train the trainers through inter-professional collaboration









ART

*as intervention in serving
secondary child victims of family violence*

INTRODUCTION & MANUAL

<https://works.bepress.com/sophialaw/bepress>

SOPHIA LAW

Areas to be improved

- Evaluation
- Longitudinal studies of the impact
- Sharing of the vision/findings
- Training

Art as a language for children in need

- liberation of complex feelings
- better understanding of self
- support
- sharing
- respect



Art Facilitation in social services

- **attitude** – autonomy, no hierarchy (authority)
- **space** – venue, grouping
to provide a trustworthy, safe and free environment
- **materials** – different media
- **process** – expressive actions/reactions
to allow and observe any signs of release of inner emotions

Special training on knowledge of the uses and observation of the interactions of different media

Thank You!

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Thank You!

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