

Dream Work: Examining the Effectiveness of Dream Interpretation in Gaining Psychological Insight into Young Adults in Korea

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Abstract : With a sharp increase in the prevalence rate for mental health issues in Korea, there is a need for specific and effective intervention strategies in counseling and psychotherapy for use with Korean clients. With the cultural emphasis on restraining emotional expression and not disclosing personal and familial problems to outsiders, clients often find it difficult to discuss their emotional issues even to therapists. Exploring a client's internal psychological processes bypassing this culture-specific mode of therapeutic communication often becomes a challenge in the therapeutic setting. Given this socio-cultural context, the purpose of the current study was to investigate the effectiveness of using dream work to individuals in Korea. The current study conducted one 60-90 minute dream session and analyzed the dream content of 39 Korean young adults to evaluate the effectiveness of the Hill dream model in accessing the intra-psychic materials, determining essential emotional themes, and learning how the individuals interpreted the contents of their dreams. The transcribed data, which included a total of 39 sessions from 39 volunteer university students, were analyzed by the Consensus Qualitative Research (CQR) approach in terms of domains and core ideas. Self-report measures on Dream Salience, Gains from Dream Interpretations and the Session Evaluation Scale were administered before and after each of their dream sessions. The results indicated that dream work appears to be an effective way to understand unconscious motivations, thoughts, and feelings related to a person's sense of self, and also how these people relate to other people. Current findings need to be replicated with clients referred for counseling and psychotherapy to determine if the dream work is an appropriate and useful intervention in counseling settings. Limitations of the current study and suggestions for future follow-ups are included in the discussion.

Keywords : dream work, dream interpretation, Korean, young adults, CQR

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