



Narratives of Art Practice and Mental Wellbeing: Reparation and connection (Advances in Mental Health Research)

Olivia Sagan

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Narratives of Art Practice and Mental Wellbeing draws on extensive research carried out with mental health service users who are also practicing artists. Using narrative data gained through hours of reflective conversation, it explores not whether art can contribute to positive wellbeing and improved mental health - as this is now established ground - but rather *how* art works, and the role art making can play in people's lives as they encounter crises, relapse, recovery or 'beyonding'.

The book maps the delicate ways in which finding a means to tell our story sometimes is the creative project we seek, and offers a reminder of how intrinsically linked our life trajectories are with creative opportunities. It describes the wide range of artistic activity occurring in health and community settings and the meanings of these practices to people with histories of mental turbulence. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, the book explore the stories and various forms of visual arts practices spoken of, and considers the art making processes, the creative moments and the objects which in some cases have changed people's lives.

The seven chapters of the book offer a blend of personal testimony, theory, debate, critique and celebration, and examine key topics of deliberation within the fields of art therapy, arts in health, community arts practice, participatory arts, and widening participation within arts education. It will be valuable reading for researchers, students, artists and practitioners in these fields.

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