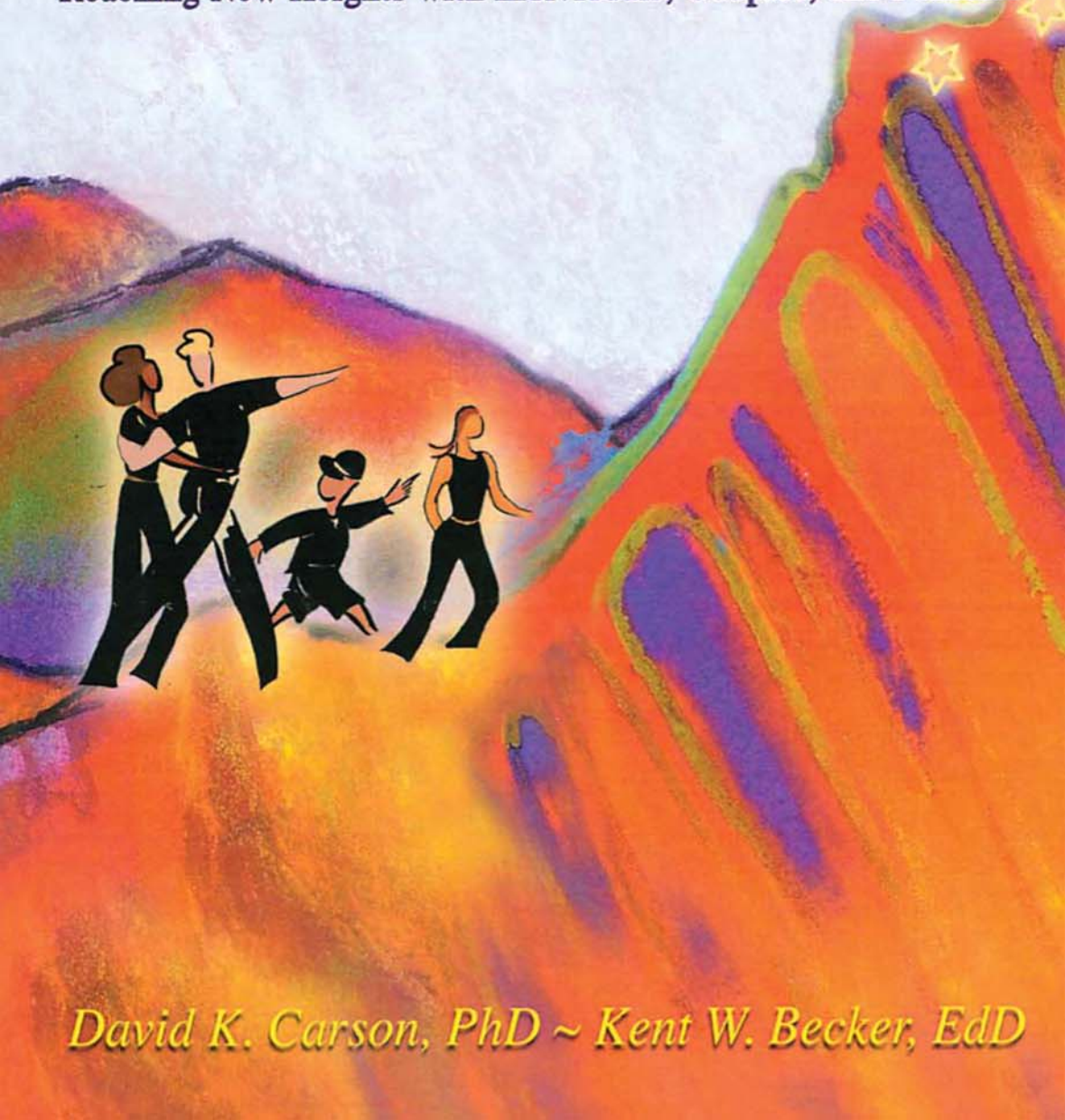


Creativity *in Psychotherapy*

Reaching New Heights with Individuals, Couples, and Families



David K. Carson, PhD ~ Kent W. Becker, EdD

David K. Carson, PhD
Kent W. Becker, EdD

Creativity in Psychotherapy *Reaching New Heights with Individuals, Couples, and Families*



*Pre-publication
REVIEWS,
COMMENTARIES,
EVALUATIONS . . .*

"Creativity in Psychotherapy is an outstanding new addition to the therapy literature. Long overlooked or trivialized by professionals in many disciplines, creativity may well be our best hope for a healthy and rewarding future. Carson and Becker have produced a very readable, yet thoroughly researched and well-organized text that is based on sound professional concepts. It ties together the long-debated beliefs concerning the art versus the science of psychotherapy. What a creative idea to survey counseling professionals about their own creative processes.

The beginning section of the text orients the reader to the creative process, which the authors identify as dynamic, interactive, innovative, and systemic. In the several intervention chapters, there is a good review of prominent techniques in major models of family therapy, and a long list of ideas (garnered from the authors' survey) to create your own activi-

ties and interventions. The chapter on creativity in supervision also emphasizes the reader's personal creative process, and gives unusual depth and breadth to a book about learning and practicing therapy. The supervision process is conceptualized as being positive, developmental, and solution-focused.

This is a unique book for teachers, students, supervisors, and clinicians. If you are one of these, reading this book, or even parts of it, will cause you to reflect on your own life and your professional practice, and you will come away stimulated and enriched. It will refresh your mind and energize your work. What more can you ask?"

William M. Walsh, PhD
*Professor of Counseling Psychology,
Director of Marriage and Family Therapy,
University of Northern Colorado*



More pre-publication
REVIEWS, COMMENTARIES, EVALUATIONS . . .

"No two clients or life situations are the same. Therapists need to use improvisation and creativity to be effective. Creativity is also needed to develop different problem formulations and solutions. This important variable has not received enough attention in the professional psychotherapy literature until this gem of a book. The authors have thoroughly researched the role of creativity in counseling and provide practical suggestions as to how to increase your divergent thinking ability. A book well worth reading."

Jon Carlson, PsyD, EdD, ABPP
*Distinguished Professor,
Governors State University*



"Exciting, inviting, intriguing, informative, and innovative are just a few of the words that describe the content of *Creativity in Psychotherapy*. Carson and Becker have explored a vital, but often ignored, concept in therapeutically working with individuals, couples, and families—creativity. In the process, they

have offered new insight on the subject and how it contributes to health and healing. This book is based on classic research in the field as well as that generated by the authors in a national survey.

Within these pages are ideas that will spark ideas. The authors orient readers at the beginning of each chapter with a 'creative incubation' exercise. They also help readers become more creative in breaking out of their set ways of seeing and being in the world by offering them opportunities for further growth at the end of every chapter. Thus, this work, unlike other books on the subject, simultaneously operates on cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels and presents its material to readers through interactive means. So read this text with an expectation and a realization that in your journey through these pages you will emerge not just more informed, but different, and most likely better, than when you first began."

Samuel T. Gladding, PhD
*Professor and Chair,
Department of Counseling,
Wake Forest University*



The Haworth Clinical Practice Press
An Imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.
New York • London • Oxford

***NOTES FOR PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS
AND LIBRARY USERS***

This is an original book title published by The Haworth Clinical Practice Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc. Unless otherwise noted in specific chapters with attribution, materials in this book have not been previously published elsewhere in any format or language.

CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION NOTES

All books published by The Haworth Press, Inc. and its imprints are printed on certified pH neutral, acid free book grade paper. This paper meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences-Permanence of Paper for Printed Material, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

This page intentionally left blank

Creativity in Psychotherapy
*Reaching New Heights
with Individuals, Couples,
and Families*

HAWORTH Marriage and the Family

Terry S. Trepper, PhD

Executive Editor

Developmental-Systemic Family Therapy with Adolescents by Ronald Jay Werner-Wilson

The Effect of Children on Parents, Second Edition by Anne-Marie Ambert

Couples Therapy, Second Edition by Linda Berg-Cross

Family Therapy and Mental Health: Innovations in Theory and Practice by Malcolm M. MacFarlane

How to Work with Sex Offenders: A Handbook for Criminal Justice, Human Service, and Mental Health Professionals by Rudy Flora

Marital and Sexual Lifestyles in the United States: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Relationships in Social Context by Linda P. Rouse

Psychotherapy with People in the Arts: Nurturing Creativity by Gerald Schoenewolf

Critical Incidents in Marital and Family Therapy: A Practitioner's Guide by David A. Baptiste Jr.

Family Solutions for Substance Abuse: Clinical and Counseling Approaches by Eric E. McCollum and Terry S. Trepper

Between Fathers and Sons: Critical Incident Narratives in the Development of Men's Lives by Robert J. Pellegrini and Theodore R. Sarbin

Women's Stories of Divorce at Childbirth: When the Baby Rocks the Cradle by Hilary Hoge

The Therapist's Notebook for Families: Solution-Oriented Exercises for Working with Parents, Children, and Adolescents by Bob Bertolino and Gary Schultheis

Treating Marital Stress: Support-Based Approaches by Robert P. Rugel

An Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy by Lorna L. Hecker and Joseph L. Wetchler

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: Its Effective Use in Agency Settings by Teri Pichot and Yvonne M. Dolan

Becoming a Solution Detective: Identifying Your Clients' Strengths in Practical Brief Therapy by John Sharry, Brendan Madden, and Melissa Darmody

Creativity in Psychotherapy: Reaching New Heights with Individuals, Couples, and Families by David K. Carson and Kent W. Becker

Understanding and Treating Schizophrenia: Contemporary Research, Theory, and Practice by Glenn D. Shean

Family Involvement in Treating Schizophrenia: Models, Essential Skills, and Process by James A. Marley

Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and Their Families by Istar Lev

Creativity in Psychotherapy *Reaching New Heights with Individuals, Couples, and Families*

David K. Carson, PhD
Kent W. Becker, EdD



The Haworth Clinical Practice Press
An Imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.
New York • London • Oxford

Published by

The Haworth Clinical Practice Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street,
Binghamton, NY 13904-1580.

© 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or
utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm,
and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing
from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Identities and circumstances of individuals discussed in this book have been invented or changed to
protect confidentiality. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Cover design by Brooke R. Stiles.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carson, David K.

Creativity in psychotherapy : reaching new heights with individuals, couples, and families /
David K. Carson, Kent W. Becker.

p. ; cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7890-1578-1 (hardcover : alk. paper)—ISBN 0-7890-1579-X (softcover : alk. paper)

1. Psychotherapy. 2. Family psychotherapy. 3. Creative thinking. [DNLN: 1. Creativeness.
2. Psychotherapy—methods. WM 420 C321c 2003] I. Becker, Kent W. II. Title.

RC480.5 .C364 2003

616.89'14—dc21

2002015322

To my wife, Cecyle: my passion and wonder,
my children, Seth and Sanya: pearls of great price who fill my soul,
and my stepchildren, Farah, Brock, and Shena:
shining stars who brighten our lives
D. K. C.

To my wife, Carol, and daughter, Katie,
for all their patience and love, and the creativity
they have brought to our family
K. W. B.

The more I take risks with my own creativity, the more I learn about myself as well as others, and the more I build associative connections within myself to be used as both verbal and enacted metaphor. I then begin to find ways of bridging to generic situations with people, creating a storehouse of metaphoric processes that later someone else labels as “technique.” Yet, for the therapist-creator, tapping one’s own resources in this fashion keeps oneself and therapy and training alive, interesting, fresh, and even fun at times. And, it invites clients and trainees to tap their own creativity, which is after all, the highest function of a human mind. It is also the goal in therapy for people to “do something different” than what holds them prisoner to their habitual behaviors, thought patterns, and feelings.

Bunny Duhl
in D. J. Weiner’s *Beyond Talk Therapy*,
1999, pp. 95-96

CONTENTS

Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xxi
Introduction: Psychotherapy with Individuals, Couples, and Families As a Creative Enterprise	1
Old Wine in New Wineskins: What Is Creativity in the Context of Therapy?	1
Strengths and Limitations of Creativity in the Therapeutic Process	4
Getting the Most from the Incubation and Breaking Out of the Box Exercises	5
SECTION I: THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY IN INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY THERAPY: HEALTH, DYSFUNCTION, AND RESILIENCY	
Chapter 1. Essential Components of Creativity in Individual, Couple, and Family Treatment	9
Creative Incubation Exercise #1: Setting the Tone	9
Creativity As an Ecological, Contextual, and Systemic Concept	10
Eminent and Everyday Creativity	13
Creativity in Some Prominent Theories of Counseling	14
Creative Problem Finding and Problem Solving	19
The Importance of Divergent Thinking in Therapy	21
The Creative Process in Therapy	23
The Creative Use of Play and Humor in Therapy	32
Breaking Out of the Box: Creating My Box	38
Chapter 2. An Overview of the Role of Creativity in Individual Mental Health, Psychopathology, and Family Dysfunction	41
Creative Incubation Exercise #2: Changing Lenses	41
The Importance of Creativity to Mental Health	42

Creativity, Mental Health, and Psychopathology in Adults: An Overview	49
Breaking Out of the Box: Creating My Metaphor	55
Chapter 3. Creativity and Resiliency in Children, Adults, Marriages, and Families	57
Creative Incubation Exercise #3: A Fresh Perspective	57
Creativity and Resiliency	58
Creativity in Marriage	62
Creativity in Families	68
Other Ways of Facilitating Creativity and Creative Thinking in Children and Adults	72
Conclusion	74
Breaking Out of the Box: Creating Spice	75
SECTION II: THERAPISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY IN THEIR WORK WITH COUPLES AND FAMILIES	
Chapter 4. The Meaning, Importance, and Role of Creativity in Couples and Family Therapy	79
Creative Incubation Exercise #4: Creativity is . . .	79
The Multifaceted Nature of Creativity	81
Summary of Qualitative Findings Regarding the Importance of Creativity in Therapy According to Study Participants	83
Breaking Out of the Box: From the Eyes of Babes (and Beyond)	88
Chapter 5. Characteristics of a Creative Family Therapist	89
Creative Incubation Exercise #5: My Creativity Time Line	89
Qualities/Characteristics of Creative Family Therapists	90
Enhancing Creativity in Individuals, Couples, and Families As Part of the Therapeutic Process	97
Breaking Out of the Box: Finding My Flow	99
Chapter 6. Creative Interventions in Couple and Family Therapy: Therapists' Descriptions	101
Creative Incubation Exercise #6: Creating Options	101
Therapists' Descriptions of Creative Interventions in Couple and Family Therapy	101

Creative Closing Rituals and Terminations in Couple and Family Therapy	116
Contraindications in Using Experiential and Play-Oriented Approaches	119
Breaking Out of the Box: A Session of Possibilities	121
Chapter 7. Barriers and Constraints to Creativity in Family Therapy	123
Creative Incubation Exercise #7: Barriers and Beyond	123
Social-Psychological Inhibitors of Creativity	123
Institutional/Organizational Rules, Policies, and Turfism As Inhibitors of Creativity	124
Responses from Study Participants Regarding Barriers to Creativity in Therapy	127
Breaking Out of the Box: Designing a Creative Ritual	131
SECTION III: CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS IN INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE, AND FAMILY THERAPY AND SUPERVISION	
Chapter 8. Creative Interventions in Ten Contemporary Schools of Thought, Part I: Psychodynamic, Intergenerational, Cognitive Behavioral, and Emotion Focused	135
Creative Incubation Exercise #8: Herding Cats	135
Introduction	136
Psychodynamic Approaches	136
Intergenerational Approaches	146
Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions	151
Emotion-Focused Interventions	157
Breaking Out of the Box: Creating Shifts	162
Chapter 9. Creative Interventions in Ten Contemporary Schools of Thought, Part II: Structural, Strategic, Milan Systemic, Solution-Focused, Internal Family Systems, and Narrative Approaches	163
Creative Incubation Exercise #9: The Five Elements of a Session	163
Structural Interventions	164

Strategic Family Therapy and MRI Brief Therapy/ Communications Approaches	169
Milan Systemic Interventions	173
Solution-Focused Interventions	177
Internal Family Systems Interventions	181
Narrative Interventions	184
Breaking Out of the Box: Elemental Changes	190
Chapter 10. The Importance of Creativity in Supervision	191
Creative Incubation Exercise #10: Competence-Based Reflections	191
Why is Supervision Important?	192
Creativity in Clinical Supervision	192
Supervision and Power Dynamics	194
The Dynamic of Isomorphism	198
Sensitivity to Personality Characteristics and Cultural/ Contextual Factors	200
Methods in Supervision That Can Ignite the Creativity of Supervisees	201
Case Study	203
Conclusion	206
Breaking Out of the Box: My Commitment to My Future	207
Epilogue	209
References	211
Index	229

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

David K. Carson, PhD, is Professor of Child and Family Studies in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wyoming, where he also co-coordinates the Interdisciplinary Graduate Specialization in Marriage and Therapy. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist, a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, an AAMFT-approved supervisor, and a certified diplomate in psychotherapy with the American Psychotherapy Association. Dr. Carson has authored or co-authored more than 70 publications and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Counseling and Development*.

Kent W. Becker, EdD, is Assistant Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of Wyoming. In addition to co-coordinating the Interdisciplinary Graduate Specialization in Marriage and Therapy with Dr. Carson, he serves as the doctoral program coordinator for Counselor Education and Supervision. Dr. Becker is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a licensed professional counselor.

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

In the new millennium, as Dacey and Lennon (1998) have argued, the most valued ability in much of the world will not be intelligence (the capacity to learn and to use existing knowledge), but creativity (the ability to produce new ideas and knowledge). Such an assertion may be especially true in the helping professions, including individual, couple/marital, and family therapy. In this book, therapists' characteristics and techniques that might be labeled as creative or associated with the notion of creativity are carefully examined. Special areas of coverage include

- the concept of creativity in some prominent theories of counseling and family therapy;
- the relation of divergent thinking (central to the notion of creativity) to healthy human development and functioning and its role in the practice of therapy;
- the dynamic, interactive nature of creativity in therapy;
- the circumstances in which increased creative abilities in clients is or should be a goal in therapy;
- some threats or blocks to the development and expression of creativity in therapists and their clients;
- the role of creativity in psychotherapy and family therapy training; and
- the degree to which creativity in therapy is linked to the counseling office.

The importance a therapist places on creativity is no doubt based to a large degree on his or her theoretical persuasions, style of relating, and approaches to helping. On the other hand, although not all experienced clinicians are necessarily creative, it is our view that creativity in all types of counseling tends to correlate positively with the therapist's training, areas of expertise, and experiences in working with individuals and families.

We believe this book fills a crucial gap in both the creativity and psychotherapy literature. It is needed because there has been no inclusive examination to date of creativity in the treatment of individual, couple, and family difficulties. A unique feature of the book is its solid basis in established theoretical principles and empirical research, coupled with its readability and practical utility. It is our contention that the book will be intellectually stimulating and personally enlightening to academicians, practitioners, and therapists-in-training. It is both narrow (specific creative processes and interventions, including, for example, the role of humor and intuition) and broad (creativity related to diversity issues; institutional barriers to creative innovations) in scope. The book also includes a solid integration of both the popular and research-based knowledge on the interface between creativity, resiliency, and pathology—little of which can be found in the literature. Another unique feature of the book is the summary of findings from a large survey of therapists around the United States (conducted by the authors) that highlights various ways in which they view the importance and role of creativity in their work, as well as creative interventions they have found useful. These chapters are extremely important in that they provide viewpoints and information extending far beyond the authors' limited notions and perspectives on creativity. Finally, we believe a chapter on creative supervision will help provide some important closure to the book and address a crucial gap in the literature. It is our hope that through reading this book clinicians will be encouraged to further contemplate the role of creativity, both theoretically and pragmatically, in their approach to working with individuals, couples, and families.

For Whom Is This Book Appropriate?

This book should be considered as the main text in an advanced psychotherapy or marriage and family therapy course that focuses on techniques/applications more than theory, as a supplemental text in an introductory graduate-level (master's or doctoral) marriage and family counseling or therapy course, or as the sole text in a graduate seminar that examines the specific role of creativity in therapy. The book could also be adopted as one of the readings in a graduate-level social work, counselor education, human development and family studies, or counseling or clinical psychology class. Indeed, creativity

is a hot topic these days, and interest is growing rapidly among students and professors in the helping and human services professions.

Although we believe that the book will be a popular text in graduate-level counseling courses, it may find an even stronger audience among practicing family therapists, counselors, psychotherapists, social workers, psychologists, and other human service professionals. This is because of its emphasis on application, as well as the fact that it is replete with examples and illustrations of creative intervention techniques.

There are not many books like this one. We can think of only a few—all of which are distantly related to ours. First, a number of books on the market deal with the creative arts in counseling and other experiential techniques. For example, Sam Gladding's (1998) book, *Counseling As an Art: The Creative Arts in Counseling*, is an excellent compilation. Rosemary Thompson's (1996) *Counseling Techniques* and Ed Jacobs's (1992) *Creative Counseling Techniques: An Illustrated Guide*, are packed with a variety of interventions (and creative ideas for props and other materials), some of which are tailored for working with couples and families. Daniel Wiener's (1999) edited book, *Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*, is another superb resource for the general practitioner and includes chapters dealing with drama therapy interventions, expressive art therapies (including music and dance/movement therapy), and body psychotherapies such as yoga.

One excellent book that does provide some examination of the role of creativity in family therapy is Robert Taibbi's (1996) *Doing Family Therapy: Craft and Creativity in Clinical Practice*. This book has a number of strengths (such as readability, inclusion of pertinent illustrations and case study material, survival tips, and lessons of therapy for therapists). However, our book includes a thorough discussion of several additional dimensions to creativity in individual and family work. These include

- the role of creative and divergent thinking in therapy;
- creativity within the broader contexts of therapy (including organizational and institutional, insurance/third-party payment related, dealing with sensitive ethical issues in therapy, etc.);
- personal, social, cultural, and institutional barriers to creativity in therapy;

- the role of creativity in individual and family dysfunction and resiliency;
- applications of creative concepts and interventions gleaned from contemporary schools of therapy;
- how other therapists view creativity in their work; and
- the role of creativity in the supervision of therapists-in-training.

Taibbi also has little to say about the connection between creativity and humor, creativity and intuition, and other close correlates of creativity in family work. This book includes an engaging discussion of each of these areas and much more.

Other edited books that include creative approaches to family therapy have been edited by Thorana S. Nelson and Terry S. Trepper, including *101 Interventions in Family Therapy* (1993) and *101 More Interventions in Family Therapy* (1998). Both books are published by The Haworth Press, Inc. These edited books are an excellent collection of interventions into a variety of marital and family problems—many of which appear to be innovative, thought provoking, and useful to practicing family therapists. Most chapters are two to five pages in length and include a brief introduction and/or conceptual framework for the intervention, a short description of the intervention itself, a highlighted case study, and, in some chapters, mention of the limitations of the intervention. The strength of these books is their extensiveness of coverage, including the variety of interventions presented and relevance of marital and family difficulties discussed. We sincerely compliment these authors on their work. However, our goal was to write with a guiding theme and purpose in mind (i.e., creativity), blending diverse components of a complex picture into hopefully a meaningful whole. This included an exploration of the cognitive aspects of creative thinking and its importance and role in therapy and client change.

Another book, edited by Lorna Hecker and Sharon Deacon, *The Therapist's Notebook* (1998), is an extensive collection (over 400 pages) of homework, handouts, and activities for use in psychotherapy. This book includes numerous illustrations of practical interventions for use with couples, families, and children ranging from play therapy techniques to imagery to nonverbal/movement exercises. It is a veritable storehouse of information for creative interventions with children, adults, couples, and families.

Jackie Gerstein's (1999) *Sticking Together: Experiential Activities for Family Counseling* not only lays a solid foundation for experiential family therapy but also instructs therapists as to how to set up an experiential program or protocol with couples and families who have children in differing age groups. Most of the experiential games, activities, and techniques involve a fairly high level of physical movement, contact, cooperation, and teamwork among family members in which learning and growing happens as much by seeing and doing as talking with one another.

Two recent books by Angela Hobday and Kate Ollier contain a wealth of creative and experiential interventions. These include *Creative Therapy with Children and Adolescents* (1999) and *Creative Therapy 2: Working with Parents* (Ollier and Hobday, 2001). These books provide therapists with a variety of ideas for helping clients get in touch with and express their feelings, enhance self-esteem and motivation to change, reduce stress, improve coping and problem-solving skills, come to terms with loss, and find creative ways of enjoying one another as family members. However, these resources are generally geared toward working individually with children and adults rather than conjointly in the context of couple and family therapy.

Finally, two recent books by Bill O'Hanlon and associates (one in particular) probably approximate most closely what we have tried to accomplish in this book. *Invitation to Possibility Land* (Bertolino and O'Hanlon, 1999) is a quasi-verbatim account of an intensive week-long training seminar held in Portland, Maine, in 1996. This book introduces readers to possibility thinking and solutioning, especially as conducted in a pedagogical and experiential format. However, O'Hanlon's other book, *A Guide to Possibility Land: Fifty-One Methods for Doing Brief, Respectful Therapy* (O'Hanlon and Beadle, 1997), captures the essence of possibility techniques. Although we have found both of these books remarkably interesting and useful both in our teaching and clinical practice, they are different from our book in several notable ways. These include: (a) our linkage to the constructs of creativity and creative thinking; (b) our groundedness in a number of theoretical perspectives; (c) our emphasis on creativity as a process of self-discovery; and (d) our strict adherence to a discussion of tools and techniques used in individual, couple, and family therapy.

In sum, our book is different from others in that it addresses the processes of creativity within the broad practice of psychotherapy, as

well as couple and family therapy. Its emphasis is on the centrality of creativity to the field of therapy and the dynamic role of creativity in individual and family health/illness and couple relationships.

Premise of the Book

The premise of this book is that creativity in therapy primarily involves a mind-set, a way of thinking about oneself in relation to the individual, couple, or family. This mind-set includes unique ways of conceptualizing presenting difficulties, as well as working cooperatively with clients in discovering and formulating creative solutions, and not simply a grab bag of techniques. However, we also believe that therapy is as much an experience as it is a dialogue. In this regard, techniques and interventions are definitely important components of the therapist's repertoire of skills. The creative therapist continually thinks and acts in fresh ways in response to the constant ebbs and flows of client dynamics and interactions, and employs creative techniques and interventions when they are timely and appropriate. Creative interventions become part of the therapy at that moment and have ripple effects throughout the remaining course of therapy. However, their effectiveness is lessened or lost when clinicians use them in a scattered manner that does not fit into the whole of the therapy process with clients (i.e., as a compartmentalized segment of the session). In sum, more than anything this book illustrates a philosophy of working with individuals, couples, and families. The creative interventions described are but illustrations of our overarching approach to working with those whom we serve.

Surveying the Terrain of Creative Interventions As a Centerpiece of the Book

Part of this book (Chapters 4 through 7) includes responses from therapists across the United States (thirty-six total states to be exact) to a questionnaire that was designed to capture their perceptions of creativity in their work with clients. Using an online methodology we surveyed 142 marriage and family therapists (MFTs). All of these clinicians identified themselves as having a specialized interest and training in couple and family therapy. However, like many therapists, participants in our study reported that they spent a considerable amount of time (more than 60 percent) conducting therapy with indi-

viduals, including children and adults. Hence, although the focus of the study was on their work with couples and families, it is our conviction that responses of these participants can be generalized to psychotherapy practice with individuals. This assertion is based partly on our belief that all therapy is systemic in nature and is not dependent on the number of people in the room.

We constructed an instrument in which both quantitative and qualitative questions were asked (see [Chapter 4](#)). The research was based in part on our conviction that approaches to therapy that are more creative/experiential allow couples and families to communicate their thoughts and feelings freely and in a less threatening way. This process often facilitates deeper awareness of relational conflicts and difficulties, empathic understanding, and emotional healing. These interventions can also assist in uncovering unconscious material, including motivations, projective identifications, intrapsychic conflicts and defenses, and anxieties resulting from past experiences. Further, creative experiencing can enhance the ability of clients to think more divergently, as well as brainstorm potential solutions to real problems. Although the best interventions tend to arise out of the therapist's own creativity in the moment more than in any preconstructed interventions (Whitaker and Keith, 1981), it is our view that spontaneity and careful planning of creative interventions can go hand in hand.

Along with tapping respondents about what creativity meant to them in the context of couple and family therapy, what they thought were the most important qualities or characteristics of a creative family therapist, and blocks, barriers, or inhibitors that kept them from being as creative as they would like to be, we asked them to list three of their most creative interventions in working with couples and families. The participants provided some unique and unconventional responses to this question, in addition to listing a number of techniques and interventions that have frequently appeared in the family therapy and psychotherapy literature. A thorough presentation of quantitative findings from this study is reported elsewhere (Carson et al., 2003).

Outline of the Book

This book is divided into three sections. The Introduction and first three chapters lay the foundation for the book. In [Chapter 1](#) we explore the meaning, role, and various dimensions of creativity in indi-

vidual, couple, and family therapy. In [Chapters 2 and 3](#) we provide an overview of the relationship between creativity and both healthy and pathological individual functioning, as well as family resiliency and dysfunction. [Section II](#) deals with the therapists' perceptions of creativity in their work (obtained in our empirical study) and applications to working more creatively with couples and families gleaned from the information provided by our 142 study participants. In [Section III](#), [Chapters 8 and 9](#) include an in-depth discussion, accompanied by examples, of creative interventions derived from ten popular therapy approaches or schools of thought. [Chapter 10](#) examines the role of creativity in supervision. Here we discuss some creative principles and methods of supervising trainees that we have found exciting and effective over our years of doing clinical supervision.

Each chapter of the book begins with a Creative Incubation exercise intended to help prepare the reader for the material in that chapter, thus increasing the likelihood that some creative experiencing will occur as the information is ingested. We then conclude each chapter with one or more suggestions for how readers might begin Breaking Out of the Box and unleashing their creativity as therapists. Our hope is that this book will provide a variety of topographic maps and supplies for therapists and clients as they climb and conquer new peaks together.

Acknowledgments

The danger in writing acknowledgments is that authors will forget to pay tribute to individuals who have played a pivotal role in the book's inception, development, or completion. Ideas are inspired by many people, from former professors and supervisors to colleagues, clients, family members, and friends. However, our short list must include the following. For all those who are not acknowledged here, we trust you will know who you are.

We wish to thank the 142 therapists across the United States who were willing to serve as participants in our study. It is their creativity that makes up a portion of this book. Without their time, effort, and incredible insights, this book would have never come to fruition. We also want to thank the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) for allowing us to tap some of its members for participation in the study.

It is our pleasure to acknowledge the many creative students we have had the honor of teaching, training, and supervising over the years. Our sincere appreciation is also extended to the individuals, couples, and families who, as clients, have entrusted us with their struggles, hopes, and dreams.

Thanks also to two special friends and colleagues who offered their assistance and many insightful ideas in the writing of two chapters of the book, Heidi Bellis ([Chapter 3](#)) and Dr. Penny Dahlen ([Chapter 10](#)).

We are grateful to Mona Gupton for her help with the initial production of the manuscript. Her technical assistance has been second to none. Also, to my (DKC) department chair and good friend, Dr. Bernita Quoss, for her personal encouragement and profound sense of duty, professionalism, and character that have influenced me for a good portion of my academic career.

The first author would also like to acknowledge Dr. Mark Runco at California State University, Fullerton, for his unique contributions to the study of creativity in children, adults, and families. Years ago,

without knowing, he inspired me to take the plunge into this fascinating sphere, and for that I will always be grateful.

We want as well to offer our sincere thanks to Dr. Lorna Hecker at Purdue University Calumet for encouraging us to pursue this project. Her ideas, particularly in the early phases of this undertaking, were most helpful. We are also grateful to Peg Marr for her suggestions and assistance throughout the later stages of the editing process.

Finally, we want to thank The Haworth Press, Inc., for taking a chance on us from the very beginning. It is our sincere hope that this book will be of great benefit to many. Our special thanks goes to Dr. Terry S. Trepper, editor in chief of The Haworth Clinical Practice Press. His extensive clinical experience, broad-based understanding of the family therapy field, encouragement, and keen editorial skills have been invaluable throughout the publication process.