

*Using Poetry as a Therapeutic Tool in Psychotherapy.*

Silvia W. Olarte MD, DLFAPA, FAAPDPP

This presentation will address the use of poetry in psychodynamic psychotherapy with specific focus on its use when working with patients suffering from physical and/or psychological trauma. The presenter will briefly address the theoretical and technical principles that guide the use of metaphor in psychodynamic therapies (PT). She will explore the use of certain metaphors that are culturally determined and culturally known and differentiate them from the spontaneous metaphors that the patient and therapist create as part of their work and as with dreams become part of their symbolic language that fosters the therapeutic process unique to a given dyad. The presentation will develop the cognitive connections between metaphor and poetry and focus on the theoretical and technical use of poetry in PT. It will present the use of poems often used by a given culture to symbolically express a given shared social or cultural norm in the society at hand, differentiating this use of published in the public domain poetry from the use of personal poetry, that is, poems created by the patient as result of the ongoing psychotherapeutic work and shared in the session. Within this use of personal poetry there will be a special mention of the use of personal poetry to facilitate the psychotherapeutic work of trauma suffered by a given patient. The presenter will conclude by discussing the similarities and differences between the use of the metaphor as presented and the use of poetry as described, when utilized in the context of psychodynamic therapy. Clinical vignettes will illuminate how the therapeutic process is enriched, facilitated, enhanced, guided, and defined by their use.