Laughing Through This Pain: Medical Clowning During Examination of Sexually Abused Children: An Innovative Approach

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This study examined the role of medical clowns during medical examinations of children who were sexually abused. Three case studies are described, illustrating diverse interactions among the victimized child, the medical clown, and the medical forensic examiner during medical forensic examinations held at the Tene Center for Sexually Abused Children, Poria-Pade Medical Center, Israel. The results indicated that medical clowns play a unique role both in lowering anxiety and fear among children before and during the unpleasant forensic examination as well as in mitigating potential retraumatization of the sexual abuse event resulting from the medical examination. The medical clown was found to assist in creating a pleasant and calm atmosphere, thus improving the child's cooperation during the examination.

KEYWORDS humor, medical clown, medical forensic examination, child sexual abuse, retraumatization

Children who are sexually abused and referred for medical and forensic examination may exhibit anxiety, fear, anger, and resistance prior to and during the examination (e.g., Allard-Dansereau, Hébert, Tremblay, & Bernard-Bonnin, 2001; Bernard, Peters, & Makoroff, 2006; Gully, Hansen, Britton, Langley, &
Dear Vets,

What a thrill to write you and invite you to come and play with me and 10 other clowns and heals for a week long clown trip with us to Guatemala. I am a family doctor for 45 years and a clown for 53 years. I’ve always been a free doctor. For 31 years I have led clown trips all over the world, a total of 150. We allow anyone to come. We don’t require any skill of any kind. We have taken ages 3 – 88 from 50 countries, about 6000 people. We have gone in 5 war zones, many refugee camps, and huge disasters.

I have noticed that whoever goes is remarkably changed by the experience. We visit great suffering with love and fun. It is a great reward to see oneself relieve another’s suffering. The massive amount of play everywhere, with a troupe of clowns, is so enriching and uplifting. We have taken many who were suffering – or felt life wasn’t great for them and the trip turned them around. I remember 3 vets who told me it set their life back in order.

We have gotten the funding to take 10 vets and 11 staff to Guatemala City for 1 week to stay in the perfect hotel, where we have led clown trips for 7 years already. We are close friends with the Fabricas de Sonrisas, a 6000-member clown troupe in Guatemala. We will visit 2 places each day — and be together all the time. Each vet will have 1 staff (clown) buddy just for you.

We will all eat together (the hotel holds only us) — we will have some clown classes and other workshops. This is a trial to see what happens.

We can help with costumes and props — think what your interests are. Are they music and dance, or perhaps puppets? Don’t worry about being good!! The events themselves spark so many possibilities.

Juggling, balloons, whoopee cushions, instruments, sketch pad, stickers, singing (even badly) — it’s all perfect. Please consider the gamble; come and play with us.

I am a World War II baby, May 28th, 1945. My first 16 years I grew up on military bases, mostly out of the US. The only people I knew were on the army base. My father fought most of World War 2, and all of Korea, and I remember him coming home from Korea a shell of a man. He never recovered. I know you can recover—I believe in you, and the power of love and fun are enchanting.

Let’s give it a go.

In Peace,

Patch
Patch's Childhood Photos

Search Site:

http://www.patchadams.org/photo-galleries/patches-childhood/
Wounded Vet Trip

It's been 6 months since we had our first wounded vet trip. I'm so heartened by the results and look forward to the next. Each of our clowns paired off with a vet. I was joined on this journey by Mike. It was like my own dad whispered in Mike's ear and said: "Take my son, Patch, and be for him what I could not be." Susan and I, years ago, introduced the idea that care is bidirectional. That yes, the caregiver gives to the patient, and yes can be invigorated by what the patient gives to the caregiver. It is a friendship relationship. Thank you Mike.

I am closer to my dad, Robert, who died in 1961, leaving me a war orphan. The truth is, he died long before in the hell of the 2 wars he fought in. Mike saw this. Thank you, brother. I want my friends to meet you through these photos from our October clown trip to Guatemala. I cherish that we've talked regularly since and that you have twice been to our building site in West Virginia.

I will see you in Russia in November, precious friend.

Keep wearing that tutu!
Second Annual Veterans Clown Trip G! report from Johnny Glick and Charlotte Huggins

Guatemala City, December 2016

Gesundheit Institute clowns teamed up with US and Canadian veterans, both retired and active duty, for our second foray into humanitarian clowning. Ten veterans suffering the wounds of war(s) engaged in daily excursions to deliver joy, peace, and balloon animals to those in dire need of a loving presence.

We visited children’s hospitals, cancer wards, dialysis clinics, and facilities for profoundly handicapped children. We clowned openly in the streets, for psychiatric patients in locked wards, and in the airports all the way there and back. It was impossible to tell who were the “experienced clowns” and who were the veterans, clowning for their first time. We were a clown troupe—a clown “squad.”

On day one veterans were united in experiencing nervousness toward their new role—that of the “harbinger of joy,” but by day two relaxed into the camaraderie of kookiness. Many conversations over dinner, and as a group addressed the need for this trip and its community-building. What they uniformly expressed was a sense of the walls around their hearts coming down. For the first time in months or years, the veterans felt in touch with their joyful inner child. Rather than hiding their feelings, the veterans felt permission to share this (loving, joyful, goofy) inner child with everyone else.

Veterans from the Gulf Wars, Desert Storm, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and other operations had been recommended for the clown trip by health professionals familiar with the difficulties of war-related trauma (Traumatic Brain Injury, Post Traumatic Stress, Military Sexual Trauma, and other injuries). The Gesundheit staff was eager to offer this trip to another set of veterans, based on our first year’s positive experience. We look forward to offering a third veterans clown trip in Autumn 2017.
Abstract

This paper compares therapeutic clowning and drama therapy, starting with a brief survey of the development of medical clowning as a profession, a definition of the field, and a claim to its ancient link with drama therapy. It then proceeds to analyze four vignettes describing the work of a medical clown in a hospital, and examining them through the lens of drama therapy concepts and theory. The paper shows that the clown's working techniques can be conceptualized using drama therapeutic models and theory, and that using this approach as a method of analysis can serve to enhance the body of knowledge of the rapidly growing profession of therapeutic clowning.

Highlights
Therapeutic Clowing
The role of a clown and a physician are the same—it’s to elevate the possible and to relieve suffering. ~ Patch Adams


The role of humour, laughter and play in healthcare and wellbeing is a hot topic. *Smiles are Everywhere: Integrating clown-play into daily healthcare practice* is a practical handbook aimed primarily at healthcare professionals and those working in healthcare settings who wish to bring play and humour into their work.

Drawing together the authors’ considerable experience in practice, research and training in the use of humour in healthcare settings, this book works to bring theory into practice in a simple, user-friendly manner. Central to *Smiles are Everywhere* is the understanding that healthcare professionals are striving to deliver patient-centred care and that the activities suggested can be integrated into existing methods of care delivery. The book includes:

- A rationale for why and where laughter and play are beneficial in healthcare settings
- Guidelines for integrating clown-plays into your own practice
- Advice on strategies and approaches
- More than fifty clearly laid out activities and ideas developed and adapted by the authors.

Ideal for healthcare professionals as well as anyone working in a healthcare setting, the ideas presented here can also be translated to educational, corporate and training environments.
