The Power of Imagery in the
Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music
Abstract

This case study examines mandala drawings created by Elena, a client who attended a series of sessions over a 10-week period of The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (BMGIM). The power of imagery is reflected in Elena’s drawings, which also reflected her personal process. Elena was able to develop independence within her family dynamics and recover from symptoms of Persistent Depressive Disorder.
Introduction

The Bonny Method is an individual music therapy method in which the client reports images as they occur while listening to classical music in a focused relaxed state. Helen Bonny developed the method in the early 1970s and called it Guided Imagery and Music. The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music is a music-assisted integrative therapy that facilitates explorations of consciousness, which can lead to transformation and wholeness (Clark, 2002).

The Bonny Method session is divided into four phases: (1) the prelude, during which the practitioner’s goals are to understand the present problems and build rapport with the client (Bonny, 1978a). The contents of the interaction serve as a guide for the practitioner in choosing appropriate music for the session and appropriate focus for the client to consider; (2) the induction, which prepares the client for music listening and is the bridge between the outer and inner life of the listener/traveler. A brief relaxation is fostered during the induction; (3) the musical journey, during which the music selection is played. The task of the practitioner is to be attentive to the imagery, as well as to the music, and to assist the client in allowing the imagery to emerge through a non-directive dialogue (Bonny, 1978a); and (4) the postlude, during which the session is integrated as the client draws parallels and meaning from imagery (Bonny, 1978b).

The practitioner facilitates the generation of images by encouraging and supporting the listener in his/her experience. In addition to generating images, music also provides structure, emotional support, and dynamic movement to the images. Imagery in this context is defined as “any feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, memories, fantasies, or experiences stimulated by music” (Summer, 1985, p. 85).

Individuals become more involved in imagery experiences while listening to music, as it provides structure and can become a “projective screen” that encourages involvement (Goldberg,
Music, which is essentially ordered auditory information, is thought to help organize the mind that attends to it and therefore, it reduces psychic entropy, or the disorder we experience when random information interferes with goals (Short, 1991). Siegel (1986, p. 158) recognized that emotions and imagery are transmitted through the central nervous system (CNS) as information that interacts to influence healing. Imagery allows patients to tap into a powerful resource: the power of the mind to take an active role.

Goldberg (2002) explained that the emotional elements of music; instrumental timbre, vocal color, dynamics of pitch, intensity and harmony may act directly on the autonomic nervous system (ANS) to evoke an emotional response. In addition, she stated that emotion and image are bound, and one may lead to the other when the other is out of conscious awareness. A focus on physiological sensations evoked by music during GIM sessions often leads to overt emotion or emotionally laden images. Music directly affects the ANS, as reported by Achterberg (1985).

Many researchers have developed clinical applications of imagery in treatment as well (Danahauer, Marler, Rutherford, Lovato, Asbury, McQuellon, & Miller, 2006); Sahler, Hunter, & Liesveld, 2003). Danahauer et al., (2006) reported the benefits of listening to music selections and guided imagery to decrease anxiety and pain for women undergoing a colposcopy procedure. In contrast to material directed by the practitioner, Siegel (1986, p. 156) suggested that imagery spontaneously produced by the client may be the most useful treatment and cites the artwork of patients with cancer as an example of spontaneous image-related material. Within healthcare theory and practice, there is an increasing awareness that the state of one’s mind has a significant effect on the body (Sahler et al., 2003). The Bonny Method of GIM is one music therapy technique in which music is used to generate images. (1983) described an assaultive patient in the prison system who presented with anger management issues. The patient depicted vivid
pictures and related to them during the GIM sessions. The images were significant to his struggle with losing his grandmother and to his negative feelings about past relationships. GIM provided means for the client, who was in denial, to break through his resistance and gain a greater understanding of himself. Through GIM, he was able to access his inner world and experience a release of intense emotions (Nolan, 1983).

In a randomized controlled study of eight nonclinical participants, McKinney, Antoni, Kumar, Tims, and McCabe (1997) found that participants had significantly lower levels of depressed mood following a series of six weekly GIM sessions. In a study on the absorption and control of mental imagery, Burns (2000) states that understanding music’s impact on imagery can assist clinicians utilizing music and imagery interventions (p35). In addition, Rusell (1992) found that the combination of music and imagery was a healthy and helpful coping strategy for college students experiencing stress.

This Method uses specifically programmed classical music to stimulate and support a dynamic unfolding of inner experiences in service of physical, psychological, and spiritual wholeness (Bonny, 1978c). A fundamental assumption of GIM is that music and imagery can be a powerful means of self-exploration leading to the discovery of unconscious material. The interaction among listener, music, and guide is what makes GIM unique. Originally used with individuals seeking relief from depression, life transitions, and personal growth, The Bonny Method has since shown its clinical effectiveness. Recent medical outcomes have demonstrated the healing effects of BMGIM in cases of head injuries, cancer, AIDS, rheumatoid arthritis, and other psychoneuroimmunological disorders (Burns, 2001; Bonde, 2005; Gimeno, 2010; Goldberg, et al., 1988; Jacobi, et al., 2001-2002).
In a GIM session, a common technique is to have a client create a mandala as a way to process the imagery experienced during the listening phase. Essentially, in its traditional form, a mandala is artwork contained within a circle. Pickett (1996-97) stated that the use of carefully chosen western classical music paired with mandala creation might offer a window into what lies beneath conscious thought. In clinical settings, music and mandalas have been used to address therapeutic goals, including but not limited to the following: to promote receptivity, to stimulate or relax a person, to evoke affective states and experiences, to evoke imagery and fantasies, and to stimulate peak and spiritual experiences. In nonclinical settings, these art forms have been used for self-exploration, to foster self-awareness, to reduce stress, to stimulate creativity, for spiritual practice, and for training or supervision purposes (Bruscia, 2002; Bush, 1995; Marshall, 2003; Merritt, 1996). Hearns (2009-10) used GIM combined with mandala drawings and interpretations to help a client confront a history of domestic abuse. Operating from the premise that the mandala images are “a product of who we are at the moment” (Hearns, 2009-10, p. 57), Hearns and her client discussed the metaphors presented in the images, advancing toward the goal of her client’s self-discovery. Körlin (2007-8) also used mandalas as a means of recording images induced through Music Breathing (MB), an adaptation of the Bonny Method. Körlin’s patient, who was suffering from PTSD, gained insights into his condition through the mandalas in a manner similar to Hearns’s patient. Of these two studies, drawn from a much larger pool of studies mixing mandala and GIM methodologies, Hearns’s process of using mandala drawing in conjunction with music and imagery most closely resembles that of Elena’s case study.
Client: Elena

Background Information

Elena is a South American woman who recently immigrated to the United States. At 38 years old, she began participating in GIM sessions. During her initial assessment, she reported feeling low and having no desire to do things. Elena expressed having difficulties adjusting to the culture in the United States, especially since her knowledge of English was limited. In the GIM sessions, Elena primarily spoke Spanish. Her husband, on the other hand, was more fluent in English, while Elena’s mother, María, did not speak English at all. Elena was a mother to two daughters, ages nine and seven, and one son who was 5 years old.

Elena’s mother and father were present in her life as she was growing up. However, her father was an alcoholic. She recalled that when her father was drunk, he became emotionally and physically abusive. During this time, Elena relied on her mother’s protection and reported feeling unsupported and abandoned by her as a child. Elena’s father died when she was young, and her mother, María, moved to United States. When María left, Elena went to live with her older sister in her hometown. She reported how difficult this time was and how she missed her mother. Elena started exhibiting symptoms of traumatic separation. María would periodically return to South America. Later in life, Elena moved to the US with her children and her husband. Following Elena, María moved to the US permanently and settled in Elena’s house.

Since Elena was the youngest daughter of three siblings, she felt responsible for taking care of her mother after her father’s death. Perhaps because Elena felt abandoned by her mother as a child, she was searching for maternal attention. Elena reported that the responsibility of taking care of her mother was overwhelming, as she was trying to please her all the time. Additionally, Elena appeared to lack a sense of self-identity, as she focused on pleasing others more than
taking care of herself. Moreover, Elena also felt alone due to her husband’s busy work and school schedule. Elena was able to find social support, however, through the congregation at her church, which she attended weekly.

Elena was referred to the GIM practitioner from a bilingual church member. A psychiatrist did not evaluate Elena, nor was she on any antidepressant medication. Her chronic sadness, which is characteristic of Persistent Depressive Disorder, might be considered an adjustment reaction to her immigration to the United States. Her difficulties can be interpreted as a complicated grief reaction, given the nature of her relationship with her deceased father, though he died long ago. Moreover, the nature of her relationship with her mother, which was difficult from an early age, also gave her frequent sadness.

Elena described that she tended to withdraw from peers. During sessions she used self-defeating statements that revealed a lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Her mood appeared depressed, and she often reported feeling frustrated. The practitioner assessed the core of her depressed mood as related to fusion with her mother’s personality. The main goal addressed in the GIM sessions was to develop Elena’s self-identity and independence. Elena wanted to live her life as an individual without constant demands from her mother and family members. The problem she presented in her treatment was that she was showing behavior and feelings that were not genuine. She wanted to be authentic in her life and identified herself separately from the person she was pretending to be.

Elena underwent a series of ten GIM sessions. During this time, she was able to connect with her inner self and gain insights into her life. The sessions were based on the reflective mode, which theory states as the patient’s response to the music as it reflects her internal processes (Bonny, 2002). Elena’s receptivity to the music allowed the music to lead her. Her
experiences with the music suggested unresolved conflicts that she was facing internally, stemming from past relationships and early trauma. The music evoked the flow of images and emotions throughout the sessions. In each session, the induction connected Elena’s personal reflection with her previous mandala drawings. Elena drew a mandala after each musical journey. All of her drawings contained concrete imagery that reflected her internal process in the music experience. Most of her drawings depicted scenes in nature. The mandalas provided access to unconscious issues in a creative and non-verbal manner. All music selections in this study are complete musical programs from Helen Bonny’s collection that were compiled by the author during her training in the Therapeutic Art Institute. The type of inductions given followed a continuum from the previous session. The client in each session reflected during the prelude on the most prominent image that was telling her where she was at the present moment. The following section chronicles Elena’s musical journeys and describes the mandalas to which these ten journeys gave rise.

**Elena’s Therapeutic Process Through Mandalas**

**Session 1. Mis Pasos (My Steps)**

Music Program: *Imagery*

This was Elena’s first session. The prelude provided a safe container for her to disclose personal information, family and clinical history. Because it was Elena’s first experience with GIM, the practitioner selected the Imagery program for a general exploration of inner personality. An image was given during the prelude to facility image development while the music was playing.
During the music, Elena imagined herself safely at the shore of a lake in her native country. Even though she was alone, she felt at peace in nature. Elena used to visit this lake as a child and endorsed feelings of homesickness. In the music, Elena felt safe in the present as she consciously traveled to the lake. Although she was alone, she was able to feel relaxed, as she absorbed the memories of the nature surrounding this place.

During the postlude, Elena processed the contents of her mandala drawing, which represented a lake in her hometown in South America. She reported feeling both peaceful and homesick as she processed her drawing (see Figure 1). She mentioned that she did not feel at peace in her daily life and remarked that her husband was frequently absent while searching for work outside the home. Elena started feeling alone and experiencing a tremendous amount of pressure in regard to raising three young children without much spousal support. As Elena reflected on her inner resources, she was reassured by her sense of peace during the musical journey. She realized that she could transfer this inner resource of peace to her daily life. This experience empowered Elena to access the inner peace already existing in her heart. The practitioner validated her feelings and encouraged Elena to increase her awareness by reconnecting with this inner space when needed.
Session 2. Crecimiento (Growth)

Music Program: Caring

During the musical journey, Elena described her first image to the practitioner as a field of flowers. As she was looking at this field, one of the flowers caught her attention. The flower was pink, fragile, and bending toward the sun. Elena said that the flower was weak and needed a trestle to support it. As she moved in the imagery, she noticed and described weeds around the solitary flower. She said that these weeds were denying the solitary flower the power to grow. Later, she explained how changing the soil and adding more flowers would promote support for the lone, pink, fragile flower. After taking care of the weak flower, Elena noticed how the flower became strong and powerful, able to stand on its own with minimal support. Here, Elena connected the metaphor that the lone, fragile, pink flower was she, and it allowed Elena to understand that, with support, she would grow strong like the flower. At this point, Elena reached the insight of the importance of taking care of her needs first.

The mandala is shown in Figure 2. As perceived by the practitioner, the position of the sun in this mandala is closer to the ground, as opposed to the typical position of the sun high in the sky. In addition, the bed of flowers drawn at the bottom of the mandala is bending over
toward the sun. During the postlude, Elena reflected on the symbolism her drawing displayed. She explained that the bent-over flowers represented a lack of support in her life. Elena commented that she was feeling alone and expressed that everything was going in the wrong direction.

As open discussion developed, Elena’s body language conveyed that she was sad and tired. These feelings were explored as being related to the lack of support from her husband in the home environment and the demands from her mother and children. Elena reported that she felt the need to be alone and, at the same time, felt the need to be more engaged with her husband. She stated that she wanted to be open and share her feelings with him more.

As Elena identified herself as the solitary flower, she reflected on the obstacles in her familial relationships that were obstructing her inner “beauty” and “growth.” She expressed not knowing what to do about this particular issue. However, she was able to disclose the reason for her unhappiness. Her perceptions of other people prevented her from being herself. She ruminated on the meaning of the flower and agreed that the strong flower was a symbol that helped her increase self-actualization and self-expression during times of vulnerability.

Session 3. Claridad (Clarity)

Music Program: Peak Experience

During the prelude, Elena reported experiencing feelings of guilt and frustration while dealing with conflicts at home pertaining to her mother and sister. This was the first time that she expressed concerns about them. She explained that she wanted to set boundaries to avoid being abused by relatives. During the induction, she was invited by the practitioner to bring back the image of the garden. During the music, she saw herself with a helper in the garden. She reported
that this person helped her to “embellish” it. She provided details about how she invited her family to experience the beauty of the garden, but only her mother and husband were present. She reported that the family disappeared from the garden, and she found herself in front of a mirror. She described that she saw a body with no face. She said, “I am missing an important part of my body; I am missing half of me.” She expressed the need to get closer to the mirror to find herself. She began to see the whole body, yet the face was unclear. Elena stated, “I can’t find my true identity, I do not feel this is me.” She started shaking her head and finally saw her face in the mirror.

Following the music, Elena drew her body as she had seen it in the mirror (see Figure 3). The mandala depicts how Elena’s body is connected with her emotions. The mouth is closed, which may symbolize a lack of communication. In addition, the face on the drawing appears to be very sad. Moreover, arms and legs have been omitted from the drawing. The mandala suggests Elena’s feelings of being powerless.

As she reflected upon the drawing of her body, Elena noticed that her closed mouth appeared powerless. She realized and reported that she takes on the burden of others and this upsets her. She said that she wanted to find clarity and to communicate with others better.
Elena processed the session, she recognized a starting point in which to distinguish herself from others.

**Session 4. Comunicación (Communication)**

*Music Program: Transitions*

In this fourth session, Elena said that she felt content, as she was seeing some progress in her interactions with her husband, who was more involved in the home. She reported becoming more aware of keeping in touch with her responsibility to herself. In this session’s imagery, she saw herself locked into a room. She wanted to take the initiative to open the door. This effort produced tears, as she said that she was unsure of the dangers or risks beyond the room. She said, “I feel unable to talk. . . . I feel sad.” Her tears during the session indicated her awareness of her personal needs, but she expressed guilt for needing something for herself. She explained that the white door without a handle symbolized her desire to not take action, but rather to wait for someone else to open the door for her. She realized that she had to take responsibility for the changes that would give her resolution. She reported that she was starting to open up in her awareness of who she really was.

The mandala Elena drew during the postlude shows a door starting to open, indicating that something was about to happen (see Figure 4). Her drawing portrayed an inaccessible white door that has no knob or handle, and it looks hard to move.
During this session, Elena started doing more of her personal work and seeing some changes. She still reported fears that other people would not accept her. She was afraid of what would happen when she said the truth to the external world. “I need to let them know what my needs are. I need to express myself more,” she said. She reported that she needed to express herself more freely and openly. Elena was still in the process of being able to state what her thoughts and needs were. Although Elena was becoming more self-aware, she was struggling to remain present through the trials she was facing. Elena was encouraged to stay connected to the process, as struggle is a significant aspect of change and personal growth.

Session 5. Sobreponerse (To Get Over Something)

Music Program: Relationships

When Elena started the fifth session, she was trying to convey many thoughts about what had occurred in her family relations over the week, as well as trying to manage or avoid the guilt that she reported feeling in the past. Through the induction, the practitioner encouraged her to be in touch with her feelings of frustration. During her musical journey, Elena reported a bird at the base of a tree facing the world and observing other birds flying. The bird was in the process of
taking the initiative to fly but was fearful. The bird began to explore the area of the tree for small
details of plants and insects. Elena stated, “Things and people are not the same as I am . . . I do
not belong there.” She reported seeing flowers growing, and the environment became warmer.
In the postlude, Elena displayed some insights in regard to the meaning of her imagery and
became aware that she could make the decision to stay alone or to move. Elena reported that the
experience brought her confidence and readiness for her own flight or exploration. She would
take action instead of hiding in the room, as she had reported doing in the past.

In the mandala she drew during the postlude (see Figure 5), there is a small bird standing
beneath a tree. It may be interpreted that Elena was staying still on the ground. One can see that
she is not standing on the roots, but close to the trunk of the tree. There is the question of
whether the meaning of the roots signifies her past with her mother, or with the family and the
possibility of not being her own person.
Session 6. Progreso (Progress)

Music Program: Nurturing

During the Prelude, Elena reported finding herself fighting against her emotions and sometimes acting in a way that she disliked. She explained that she was angry with her mother for telling her what to do and how to behave. She reported that it was important to be able to express her thoughts.

In her imagery during the musical journey, Elena reported seeing the bird from her previous trip climbing the tree. The bird was following a light as it was climbing at its own pace. In the postlude, Elena reported that she identified with the bird; she said that she knew she was alone, and she felt no fear to move on. She reported feeling that her solitude was a source of comfort. Elena reported feeling that she was progressing. Elena reported that she was fighting against her emotions, so the practitioner gave support encouraging her to stay in this moment of tension and to bring awareness of what needed to be expressed.

The mandala Elena drew in the postlude is shown in Figure 6. According to the practitioner’s interpretation, the bird that was possibly frightened in the previous mandala is
climbing the tree. It might be alone without fear. Elena might be moving along and making progress.

Session 7. Disfrutar (Enjoy)

Music Program: Positive Affect

In the prelude, Elena reported that she went with family members to Los Angeles on a trip. She told the story about one financially successful brother who was causing her distress. That brother was dominant in family decisions. She said that it was sometimes difficult to control her emotions or frustration in the dynamics with this brother. She was becoming more aware of the challenges posed by her family; although, she was still blaming herself for the conflicts.

As the music listening began, Elena reported seeing a path that became clearer as she got into a lightened area. She described herself walking ahead and noticing that no one was telling her what to do. Elena reported an encounter with dark places on her path, but she did not hesitate to keep moving to find the “open spaces.” She said, “I am not alone; there is energy behind me. Some people are waiting for me to take the first step.”

In the postlude, Elena shared that she realized that she was becoming a “leader” and in pursuit of a goal. She reflected on the realization that she needed to find the motivation to keep up the journey. She described a bridge that appeared before a river or a lake that she paused to enjoy. She reported feeling secure and safe without disappointment.
Elena called the mandala shown in Figure 7 “Enjoy,” a title that she said reflects her power to face challenges, to be able to overcome risk, to make her own decisions, and to enjoy the end results of her efforts. The practitioner encouraged Elena to be fully attentive to the present moment, so that she might allow herself to find and open these inner spaces. This is a positive mandala; although, there is still a railing between her and the scene, as Elena is not looking out a window as in Figure 5. She could be expressing her confidence, as she drew herself outside on her own.

**Session 8. Mi Refugio (My Refuge)**

Music Program: Caring

In this session, Elena began to discuss abandonment issues that she had experienced in South America and reported being abused by her father, who was alcoholic. She reported feeling that she was not always protected by her mother. Elena explained that she was struggling at home in the effort to communicate effectively with her family and understand her own value in the home. In her imagery during the music listening, she described being at home looking out an open window.
After the music, Elena drew an open window (see Figure 8). This suggested that she felt safe at home, a refuge to which she can return. Nature could be a source of peace for her. During the postlude, as she described looking at her drawing, she said, “I am in my home. This is my refuge. I am safe and tranquil.” This session brought her to a crossroads in her personal process. She expressed a mix of bliss in this realization and conflict with her desire for independence. Elena said that she was facing the challenges, creating space for the heart to see itself as lovable, and feeling ready to make essential life-style adjustments.

**Session 9. Mi Jardin (My Garden)**

Music Program: Creativity 1

During the prelude, Elena reported her difficulties as she was trying to be herself. She expressed the frustration and experience of a lack of understanding from her close family members. In her imagery during the music listening, she described going from a dark place to an open space with a sun rising. While in darkness, Elena was silent and afraid to be alone in that space. Over time, however, she reported being able to accept her fear and began to cry. Upon crying, the darkness split in two, transforming into a sunrise.
The mandala she drew after the music is shown in Figure 9 and shows two gardens. The gardens are symmetrical, leaning in toward one another, but separated from each other by a red space. The flowers in the gardens are purple. These gardens mirror the darkness Elena experienced previously, which was also split into two.

In the discussion of the mandala drawing, Elena noticed that the two gardens could represent her in balance with the outside world. She said that she was able to see these two worlds separately. Elena became aware of the identity separation that was happening despite the emotional turmoil that she was experiencing. She commented on having encountered all of these feelings and aspects of the heart that were hidden. Elena was seeking to resonate with her innermost being and reality. In the drawing, the flowers on both sides of the garden are settled and separated. The two sides suggest that Elena might be able to differentiate herself from others.

**Session 10. Vida Propia (Own Life)**

Music Program: Peak Experience

This was the final session, and Elena went over all her mandalas to analyze and integrate what she had learned over the process. She expressed her awareness of her inner process and
how she was able to take control of her problems. Instead of reacting with avoidance, she said that she was seeing the connections in the mandalas with her process of growth. She reflected upon being able to separate herself from the outside world and to see who she was as an individual. During the music listening, Elena noticed and reported that she was in a large, luxurious home with a large window. There was a party in that mansion. She described her feeling of being like a stranger in the house and how she was keeping herself separate from the group. Suddenly, however, she said that she felt like part of the group and felt “invited” to join the group. She explained that there were many people, but that she saw them as individuals who were not talking to each other. She explained that they were isolated, and the place became uncomfortable to her. She said that she would have liked to meet the partygoers, but at the same time she didn’t feel comfortable to do so. She realized that she didn’t have to be there and went to the garden outside. As she went outside, she reported feeling regret, low self-esteem, and guilt for having left the salon. Elena reported that she wanted to return to the party, and she then felt involved again.

Her mandala depicted the party (see Figure 11). There are at least eight people in the drawing, some of whom are sitting on a couch, others are standing and interacting in a warmly lit
room with big windows and a plant. In this drawing, Elena represented herself with other people for the first time. She is not looking out the window, but rather doing something as she is participating in life.

During the postlude, she expressed new insights about her ability to be connected with life and to communicate with other people. In her conscious mind, she felt that the external world was not controlling her anymore. Significantly, Elena stated that she wanted to continue to engage with life and follow her “path,” allowing her world to come into existence in a new way.

**Conclusion**

The ten GIM sessions supported Elena in significant ways, as she began to make important decisions about the relationships in her life. Initially, feelings of helplessness, dependency, and guilt were frequent, but these diminished over the course of the sessions. The changes in her imagery represent her journey to a stronger sense of identity. She grew in self-worth and confidence, following her own intuitions that were based on her own needs and desires. Reflecting upon her drawings was significant, as Elena was identifying the symbolism in them and how they were related to her personal process. Elena was able to be in touch with her weakness as well as her strengths. During closure, she reviewed with the practitioner the sequence of mandalas that she had drawn during sessions. Elena was able to relate with great insights the progression of her personal journey that was reflected in her drawings. She reported having developed an individual sense of self, as well as a sense of security in trusting a deeper awareness within her consciousness. Specifically, the mandala drawings helped Elena to become aware of her personal process.
In the current study, the drawing and postlude discussion are equally important to the therapeutic process. The mandala concretizes the client’s subconscious state. As in Elena’s case, the prompt to draw does not always produce drawings that depict the musical journey. This would suggest that the mandalas grant the client and facilitator deeper access to the client’s internal state. When the facilitator questions the client about the drawings, her interpretation evolves from the client’s response. In other words, mandala work is a two-part, client-driven process, which would fail to deliver results if either party were omitted.

Based on results from this and past studies, the researcher would recommend using mandalas in GIM therapy in all cases, excepting those involving a patient unwilling or unable to draw. When the client is disinterested in drawing, other means of concretizing the subconscious may be utilized. Writing, for example, is one effective means of processing a musical journey and may be used instead of mandalas to ground the patient.

The results of this case study attest to the effectiveness of using a series of GIM sessions to enhance several aspects of the self. Elena’s mandala drawings were a representation of the unconscious mind that gave her valuable information, thus allowing her to believe in her inner self. These experiences were very powerful to her. Implications in the field of GIM are significant, since this case study illustrates how Elena’s drawings enhanced her self-awareness and empowered her to access her inner strengths.
References


