

LIKE MOTHERS, LIKE DAUGHTERS

MANUAL

The personal process my mother and I have gone through to heal from our family's intergenerational trauma has the intent to be repeated. The project provides an example that can encourage others to reflect on their family history and possible trauma. To help others along with this personal process, I will provide the following guide to create a similar experience.

The success criteria for such a project would be to focus on the storytelling, not judge the quality of the image, be willing to unravel your family history, accept the emotions that come with the process, and to be prepared to be confronted with positive and negative aspects of the bonds within the family line.

The process has been specified in four exercises based on using photography as a therapeutic art form. The exercises are based on two participants, the parent and the child.

The first exercise is the process of capturing objects that symbolize relevant bonds within the family line. The goal of symbolizing these bonds through objects is to create a lighthearted starting point to touch upon subjects that are too extensive to be expressed in a conversation.

The second exercise was one where the parent documents their child. This envisions how the parent views their child. It can give both, parent and child, another perspective and can lead to new reflections on their bond.

For the third exercise, the roles will reverse. The child will document their parent. The goal is similarly to visualize how the child views their parent. It is likely that this exercise will be more emotional compared to the second one, as the parent is often closer connected to the trauma, as the trauma has reached them first.

As a final exercise, the archival images of the family will be recreated. Both the parent and the child will take on the role of a family member and represent them within the process of photographing. This exercise creates the possibility to feel connected with various generations. Being encouraged to analyze the body language and expressions of the family members shown in the archival photographs and having to embody that person, could lead to a feeling of empathy.

After each exercise, the child and parent will participate in reflective conversations. These conversations are based around the following questions:

1. What did we do?
2. How did we do it?
3. What was our personal goal?
4. Have we reached that goal?
5. What were our feelings during the process?
6. What did the process reveal about our bond?
7. What did the process reveal about the previous generations?
8. What is our conclusion?

These questions create the possibility to open up verbally about the process and the emotions that surfaced. It can also increase the process of examining yourself, each other, your bond, and the bond with previous generations.

By being equal participants within this process of healing, the goal is to create a visual representation of the transferred trauma and to open up the conversation about the experience of the manifestation of this trauma. It can provide the opportunity for the current and the future generations to be more aware of the importance of these generational bonds and to appreciate them more freely.