

Light Spectrum Assisted Psychotherapy

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Dr. Steven Vazquez is a pioneer in the integration of psychotherapy and light stimulation, whereby a compassionate listener is present to encourage and guide clients through difficult emotions which may arise during phototherapy. He seeks to provide a sense of safety in which his technique, *Confluent Somatic Therapy*, can allow his clients' life elements to flow together into wholeness.

Psychological conditions which Dr. Vazquez may encounter include depression, panic attacks, anxiety, traumatic experiences, shame and guilt, obsessive thoughts and multiple personality disorder. His clients may wish relief from migraine, arthritis pain, irritable bowel syndrome, peptic ulcer, insomnia, coughing and sore throat, which may be physical manifestations of underlying psychological causes.

In considering the meanings of color to a psychology client, in terms of behavioral and physiological responses, one finds two: *associated meanings*, learned from classical conditioning (as in stopping when one sees red), and *inherent meanings*, the natural response to a color found in large numbers of people (regardless of conditioning). When people experience colored light therapy through the eyes, a mixture of associated and inherent meanings may be reported in a very individual way, where any color can mean anything. This is what confuses the idea of what different colors mean. Studying many individual clients' responses over time allowed Dr. Vazquez to gradually put together these generalized color meanings, based on his work with the Lumatron:

- RU - survival issues & sensory awareness
- R - primitive security issues & sexuality
- RO - primitive subconscious aspects/inner child
- O - identity, self-concept, relationship issues
- Y - power & control vs. loss of same
- YG - affection & control issues in relationships
- G - affection, deficiency/distortion of affection
- BG - emotion & cognition of mind & body
- B - expression: introversion & extroversion
- I - clarity vs. confusion; peace vs. conflict
- V - trust vs. mistrust; transpersonal experiences
- W - integration vs. segmentation.

In light spectrum assisted psychotherapy, Dr. Vazquez applies the following criteria to his choice for the initial color to be utilized:

- V - initiate trust
- I - improve clarity of mind
- B - decrease verbal inhibition
- RU - waken the emotionally/physically numb
- BG - awareness of detachment from the body.

Of interest to practitioners of optometric phototherapy are the descriptions by clients of what happens "in the light." Dr. Vazquez has discovered that these observations are rich in psychological content and are worthy of exploration. Some of these and his interpretations are *intruding colors* (unresolved emotional material), *double/overlapping images* (split in inner psyche/inner conflict), *spinning which changes directions* (changes in thoughts and emotions), *shadows* (unresolved emotional patterns), *abstract symbols* (symbolic/archetypal subconscious meaning), *people, faces & visual memories* (direct message from unconscious to conscious mind), *3-D images* (memories), *in/out image movement* (buried psychological material), *distortion* (distortions of body image), *light too bright, intruding, "coming at me"* (personal boundaries violated in past) and *emotional attributes* (personal emotional attributes).

A generative rhythmic light source can be analogous to a moving Rorschach test that provides changing instead of static projections. Such stimulation results in an ongoing visual feedback of previously unconscious psychological content and amplifies unconscious processes beyond usual waking consciousness, resulting in recovered memories, insight or emotional experiences. Rhythmic light stimulation therefore appears to be one of the fastest, most effective methods of penetrating psychological defenses.

An awareness of the complex issues outlined in the above paragraphs is incumbent on all practitioners of phototherapy, so that they may deal directly with them or make a referral to a qualified professional. A failure to recognize and act upon psychologically-driven responses to light stimulation may mean the irretrievable loss of a unique opportunity to intervene positively on the client's behalf.

*Presented May 1993 at the
61st Annual Conference on Light and Vision
Scottsdale, AZ*