

Hello I saw you on the ABC today. Thank you for your courage in asking for help. The following may or may not be helpful. I did a training in Integrative Arts Psychotherapy many years ago in the UK and although I do not practice I am still passionate about the whys and hows of the human condition. My feeling about the amount of mental and emotional distress in all parts of society, particularly western, is there is a deep gulf and discrepancy between the outer and inner lives of people. There is not enough engagement with our complex, beautiful rich, and sometimes terrifying inner worlds at a deep or meaningful level. There is an unhealthy focus on achievement and externals making the human soul more and more desperate and hungry. We need to find bridges between the internal and external, finding ways to have a meaningful dialogue. And more time and care are needed to develop the internal world, listening to it and finding safe ways to express it with the help of experienced 'companions'. Then there would be more balance between the two realms. My experience is that the arts of all modalities, in a safe and held environment, are powerful and profound tools in helping the inner world of the child (and adult) have a voice. I feel very discouraged by the lack of recognition of psychotherapy in Australia and even more dismayed that psychology and counselling trainings seem to be purely academic with barely any or no personal work for trainees in terms of their own process. How can you be with another's despair if you have not been in that place yourself? These symptoms we are seeing in our children are about the soul needing a voice and no amount of clever psychological techniques such as CBT will address the soul's deep malaise. I would suggest a very good book called 'Poiesis: The Language of Psychology and the Speech of the Soul' by Stephen K. Levine <http://www.amazon.com/Poiesis-Language.../dp/1853024880>.

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