

Bridge Drawing

Reference:

Hays, R. & Lyons, S. (1981) The Bridge Drawing: A projective technique for assessment in art therapy. *Arts in Psychotherapy*. (8) pp. 207-217.

Purpose: Bridge Drawing is a projective assessment that may provide insight into a person's functioning, perception of his/her environment as a stable place, and perception of movement or stagnancy.

Ages: No age limit specified.

Materials: 8 ½ X 11 blank, white paper; drawing utensils of choice

Administration: The evaluator hands the client a piece of paper and requests that he or she "Draw a bridge going from some place to some place."

Inquiry:

Ask artist to draw an arrow representing directionality.

Ask the artist to identify his/her location on the bridge with a dot.

Ask the artist to write or speak a few short sentences about the bridge.

Interpretation: Examiner may look for the following indicators.

Directionality: The drawn arrow typically represents left to right travel.

Placement of self: The location of the person may be indicative of how that person is approaching problems/goals.

Places drawn on either side: These places may include named land masses, symbolic connections, and un-named land masses.

Solidness: It is common to see the right side (which may represent the future) depicted as less grounded than the left side (which may represent the past).

Emphasis by elaboration: Certain areas may be given greater emphasis than other areas. Which areas are emphasized?

Construction of bridge: The construction of the bridge may imply the stability and security of the bridge. For instance, what materials were used to build the bridge?

Type of bridge: Most people draw familiar bridges. In some cases, arch bridges represent femininity whereas suspension bridges represent masculinity.

Matter under bridge: What is under the bridge? It is typical to see water. If water is present, is it calm or turbulent?

Vantage point of viewer: If the bridge is seen from above, the person may wish for control. If the bridge is seen from a worm's-eye view, feelings of insecurity/inferiority may be present.

Axis of paper: A horizontal page is more typical. A vertical page may indicate passivity.

Consistency of Gestalt: Are there indications that parts of the picture don't fit?

Incongruence is noted.

Written Associations: The evaluator reads or listens to the picture's verbal caption, and asks questions where deemed appropriate.

Strengths: The Bridge drawing does not necessarily take much time to create, and in most cases, can be completed in one session. It is likely to stimulate a conversation about movement or stagnancy, and goals.

Limitations: The Bridge drawing has not been proven to be significantly valid or reliable. It only produces one picture, which does not provide a lot of information to make an accurate evaluation of how the person is functioning.

Reflection: I like the Bridge drawing even though it is not a precise and proven measurement tool. I perceive the Bridge drawing more as an intervention than as an assessment. The interpretation considerations would aid in observation and in processing.

<http://sara-crafton.blogspot.com/2008/10/bridge-drawing.html>