
Imagery as a Therapeutic Tool for Suicide Ideation: A Narrative Review

*La imagería como herramienta terapéutica para la ideación suicida:
Una revisión narrativa*

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ABSTRACT

According to the Commission for the Prevention of Suicide at Puerto Rico (P.R.), suicide is listed as the third leading cause of violent death on the island. Between years 2000 to 2021, 6,329 deaths due to suicide have been reported. Approximately every 29 hours, a person dies from suicide in P.R. Recently, mental imagery conducted by the individual or produced by the therapist has been studied as a potential method to counteract intrusive suicidal imagery (ISI) that usually occurs in people with suicidal ideations. It provides a new innovative method that could be applied in the therapeutic setting when working with this population. However, there is a lack of clinical research in this area. This narrative review aimed to explore literature that accounts for the use of imagery in suicidal therapy scenarios. Studies were added from 2017 to 2022 using PubMed, APA PsycInfo & Pro Quest One Academic databases. Keywords used were: imagery and suicide, imagery treatment for suicide & imagery techniques for suicide. Twelve studies were identified. Results from the studies indicated that patients with suicidal ideation reported formulating mental images associated with suicidal idealizations. Studies also suggest a reduction in suicidal ideation in patients when using imagery in therapy. Results suggest, the use of imagery as a therapeutic method counteracts suicidal ideation within patients with suicidal ideation. Further research should explore which type of imagery works best for these patients and establish a structured therapeutic method using this technique.