
“Paths
to
Recovery”
Suzanne Engelen

“Paths to recovery” workshop:

- Short introduction
- Suzanne’s example on working with her Miffy voice/vision.
- Irene’s examples about working on recovery (with her own powerpoint)
- You working !!!!!!!!

Short introduction

- Recovery can happen in many ways, shapes and forms.
- It's a very unique and personal experience.
- It's not about the outcome, it's about the process itself!

Short introduction

- We would like to tell you something from our own experiences.

- After that we want you to talk about/share/ or listen to your experiences.

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley



Miffy became a voice and vision when I was hospitalized at age 16.

It was a wall painting in a seclusion room for small children, where I was locked up for three weeks..

I was terrified of it ever since. It has been hunting me for years. Not constantly present. On and off.

Very negative, told me to kill myself, hurt myself etc.

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley

Lesley: She's my 'child' voice. She says she's 6 years old, but emotional she's like 3 years old.

She's "the young Suzanne" who has seen lots of things she shouldn't have seen.

She's very scared of the world and has a great imagination/fantasy.

She's also very creative in her thinking.

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley

Situation 1:

I was hospitalized around Easter 2009 for a time out, to get some proper sleep.
Miffy came back and I completely panicked.

I called my doctor and he told me it was logical Miffy appeared: the hospital was the place where Miffy belonged and I had to let go of all my fears and things that happened when I was 16.

So: I had to do some proper work!

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley

What did I do??

Together with Lesley we coloured two colorbook printings. On one I wrote an affirmation that says that I'm an adult now, that it's my life and that Miffy can't scare me anymore! We hang both of them in my hospital room.

I wrote a letter to Miffy about what was happening when he came into my life and what I felt.

Together with Lesley we burnt her drawing in hospital garden and invited Miffy to come along home with us, but told him, he couldn't scare us anymore.

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley

Outcome???

He came home, stayed for a while. I didn't let him scare me (and in this way protected Lesley).

And after a while I didn't see him anymore.

Until…….

Suzanne's example: Miffy and Lesley

Easter 2011:

Miffy came back, I wasn't scared. The vision got mixed with a flashback from the past, he started to talk about this memory and I , and especially Lesley, got very scared.

So I had to do some work again, but that was impossible, because I had to calm Lesley down first, before I could work with Miffy.

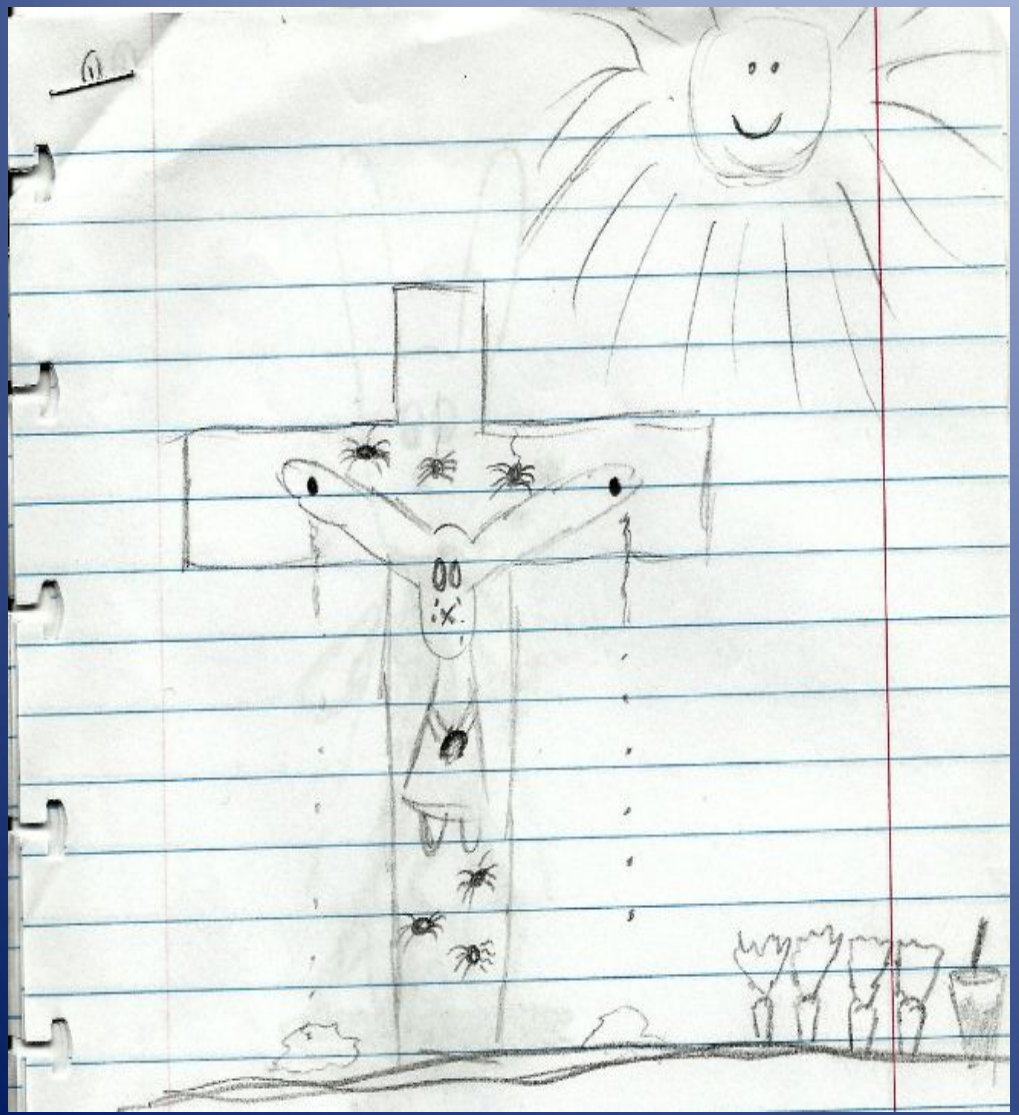
2: Have a look at Miffy and tell me what you really see: How is Miffy looking?



“Miffy is afraid. The ‘lights’ in his eyes are not shining. He can’t talk.

He has a cut in his throat, a lot of blood, with bubbles, sometimes. Maybe Miffy is in pain, but he is not crying. He’s looking sad, just like little doggies do. Maybe Miffy is sad.”

1: What would you do to Miffy if everything was allowed? (all bad things included)?

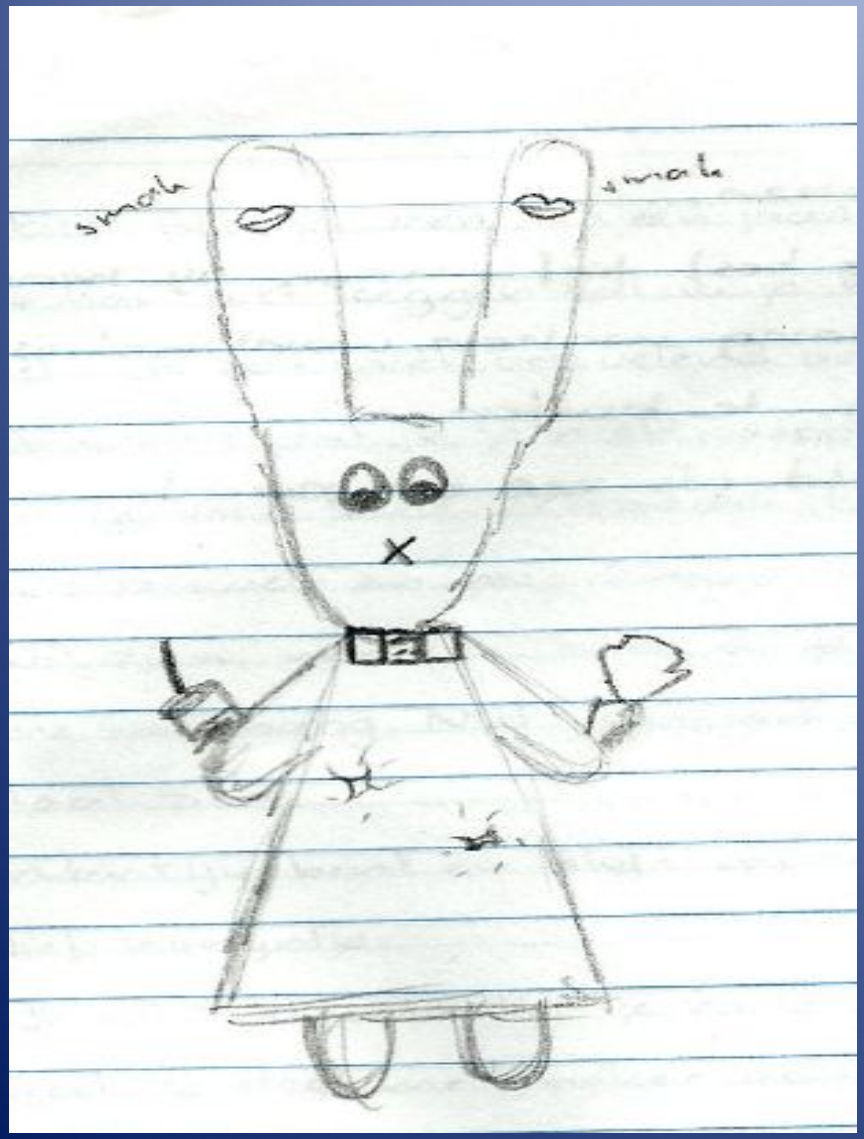


“Miffy is bad, needs to be punished. Crucified just as in church, with nails through his ears so it will bleed and a rope around his hands. And spiders, that will make him afraid!

And the sun is very hot and there is coke and carrots and he can’t grab it. Miffy needs to cry.

It’s his own fault”

3: If Miffy is sad and in pain and you have to be nice to him, what would you do?



"Miffy's dress needs to be washed up, it's dirty and needs to be clean again.

Miffy will get a band-aid on the cut on his throat, but not the brown stuff, because that stings. And Miffy needs a carrot and coke for when he's hungry or thirsty so he can get it himself. And a little kiss on his ears where the nails have been (to make the pain go away)."

What happened?

- After finishing the last drawing Lesley said: “Like this, Miffy is kind of nicer, but he’s still not allowed to scare me again because it’s not funny to cry. Crying tastes like the sea and stings in your eyes.”

- She calmed down and I wrote a letter to Miffy again, to thank him for reminding me that I (still) had some work to do.

Conclusion:

Is my Miffy problem completely solved???

NO!!!! Probably not.

But I know what Miffy represents and that I still have a lot of issues to work on.

I'm still not a Miffy fan, I probably never will be.
I do try to challenge myself.

Irene's examples

(her own powerpoint presentation)

Your stories !!!

Questions to use in discussion groups:

- What does ‘recovery’ mean to you?
- What helpful strategies did you find to cope with your voices??
- How did you find them?
- How do they help you?