

## Semiotics

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Semiotics: the study of signs and symbols. The term is commonly used in the fields of philosophy and linguistics. And what do we mean by signs and symbols? Well, they can include such things as words, images, and behaviors.

The research methodologies used in semiotics can include such things as linguistic, visual, and content analysis. Example: what an abused child's drawings suggest to a child psychologist about what the child has been subjected to.

So why do we in healthcare need to know about semiotics? Because narrative approaches like semiotics (hermeneutics is another) are one way for healthcare providers (say those in mental health) and patients to make sense of feelings such as bereavement or trauma as reflected in recurring dreams or visions on the patient's part or as expressed in narratives or art work produced by the patient.

The meaning of a sign is what

The scholars say is so.

Because they know they're awfully smart

They really ought to know.