

Conceptualizations of Friendship

– Attachment States of Mind and Conceptualizations of Friendship among Street Children in Bucharest –

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“If my hand hurts, he feels my pain, too”

Abstract

The goal of the present study was to describe “rough” estimates of attachment states of mind and to identify the conceptualizations of friendship employed by a sample of street children in Bucharest, Romania. The relationship of these attachment states of mind to conceptualizations of friendship was examined. Data on the street youth sample was based upon nine months of fieldwork and twenty semi-structured interviews with twenty-six street youth. Results indicate variation in both attachment states and conceptualizations of friendship. Interactions between the two dimensions were operated in a meaningful manner and implications for agencies working with street youth were discussed.

Key-words: attachment states of mind, conceptualizations of friendship, street children, fieldwork, semi-structured interviews

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Introduction

Research on homeless populations around the world has tended to view the homeless as homogenous with similar groups and individual dynamics within each cultural context. Rarely does one see descriptions or analyses of the homeless that emphasize the vast differences, complexity, and multifaceted approaches to living on the streets that are reflected within each homeless

population and homeless person. Adding to the tendency to see the homeless in homogenous terms are assumptions that the homeless are predominantly mentally ill, relationally unstable, and chaotically disorganized in their living. In fact, much of the research to date on homelessness has been focused on risk and psychopathology (Kidd & Davidson, 2007). Judith Ennew (1994) writes, “Most writing about children and young people living on urban streets in developing countries assumes, or even insists, that they live in disorganized, illegal misery. They are described as psychologically and irretrievably damaged, unable to form relationships as the children that they are, and definitely destined for emotional, social, and economic failures as the adults they will become” (pp. 409-410).

These ideas are currently being challenged by research addressing the attempts of children to reconstruct their lost families and create self-supportive networks (i.e., Aptekar, 1988; Lucchini, 1993, 1996; Ennew, 1994), identifying the manner in which street children cope with self-reliance, friendships, spirituality, and caring for others (Kidd, 2003; Kidd & Davidson, 2007; Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud, 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003; Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis, 2001), and in at least one study, displaying that levels of psychopathology for affective disorders, psychotic disorders, and drug abuse in homeless street youth were *not* higher than matched samples of youth who did have places to live (McCaskill, Toro, & Wolfe, 1998). In the midst of this research is the

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The Role of Metaphorical Tales in Optimizing Preschool Children's Development Processes through Experiential-Creative Group Therapy

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Abstract

The paper hereby presents the results of a controlled research aiming at outlining the role of metaphorical tales in the optimization of developmental processes in preschool children. Having observed the necessity to adapt and combine in various percentages the therapeutic techniques chosen to meet the child's needs and developmental traits specific to each age interval, the proposed experiential program uses up to 50 % metaphorical tales in combination with other expressive techniques. The research subjects are 36 children, ages 3 to 6. For the assessment of the results, the following have been used: NEPSY: a wide range of neuropsychological sub-tests performed for assessing neuropsychological development across five functional areas: Attention/Executive functions; Language; Sensorial-motor functions; Visual-spatial processing; memory and learning; and a Behavioral Assessment Grid.

In order to assess the effect of experiential techniques in child development, a paired samples t-test (inner-subject experimental design) has been performed. In the experimental group significantly increased levels of attention, language, memory and learning have been noticed. In order to analyze the statistical significance of evolution for the dimensions assessed using the behavioral grid, Wilcoxon test was performed, a non-parametric test for comparing two paired samples. It has been discovered that all evolutions are statistically significant, p (2-tailed) $<<0,05$.

Statistical analysis triggered validation of the experiment's results. This led to validation of an experiential program using metaphorical tales up to 50 %. In conclusion, activities involving metaphorical tales, and the preschool child's perception of these stories, prepare the ground for the individual's future development, on an aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, emotional, communicational, as well as personal level.

Key-words: metaphorical tales, preschool age child, experiential psychotherapy, creative techniques

Introduction

The preschool period, also known as the second childhood, is the age interval comprised between 3 and 6/7 years old. This period is characterized by a complex and interesting development, with influences upon the individual's future bio-psychic evolution.

The preschool age child goes through this important step, essential for knowledge development, by broadening his experience of the social and cultural environment, from which he assimilates role models triggering an increasingly active adjustment to human condition.

The child interacts with the kindergarten environment, different from the family environment and at crossroads with the social setting. It is under these circumstances that the basis of the child's personality is being formed, by developing the capacity for knowledge, communication and perceptive observation. The fluidity of this psychic ground plan nurtures imagination, behaviors and mental strategies, animated by rich symbolisms and complex emotions. A particularly active role is played by the formation of behaviors involved in autonomy development, through structuring of habits and routines. The child appropriates basic elements of the cultural adaptation background, fully concentrated in the so-called "7 years from home" (Romanian expression alluding to good breeding and formation of good manners in early childhood).

The preschool period can be split into three sub-periods: Early preschool (3-4 years old), characterized by growing interest, aspirations and abilities aiming at satisfying the pleasure of exploring the surrounding environment; middle preschool (4-5 years old), with its processes associated to child's growth: language development expands, play becomes a basic activity, curiosity increases and

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Some Aspects of the Narration's Issue

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Abstract

Families are not the only ones having issues, but the therapist and trainers have problems as well. Of course they can have a different nature and dimension but that does not hinder the difficulty of detaching from their programs or their own narrations. During the (therapy or training) sessions, it can happen for the therapist (or more likely the trainer) to escape from its role re-becoming what he/she is in his/her normal life (having feelings, frustrations, fixed idea, sympathies or antipathies being openly manifested). This happens because there is not an advanced enough differentiation from the emotional dimension that has been described by M. Bowen.

We have to clarify and to clean the relation that is establishing with the stories of our lives. These are some questions that pop up: what rapport do we have with our own life story? Do we contain them or are we contained by them? What is the characteristic or the dimension of our story? Can they be characterized by the concept of fable that is a narration that evolves progressively having as base real and lived events? What does remain of an event that never arrives to be narrated? Are the reality and the solidity of a lived event installed by itself or by the fact that it has been narrated several times? Could we say that the action of narrating invests the deeds and the experiences, transforming them into things with each and every new narration? Here are the questions that we want to find some answers for in this paper.

Key-words: narration, change, detachment, emotional, intellectual.

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Once, when I was walking on an alley in Paris I saw many Russian dolls in a shop window; they were dozens and they were all part of the

same "mother-doll"; it was the same portrait on all faces, but on their chest the episodes of a fairy tale were running and each doll represented a scene. Then, a whole story was about to take place from one doll to another. I suddenly realized that these dolls can be interpreted as a good metaphor for our life. We are the same, or at least this is the way we perceive ourselves, and at the same time, we are going through a travel story, which is the story of our life and in which we are the main characters (this was very well illustrated by the repeated identical portrait on the head of each doll).

Regarding the story of our lives, we are able to recall it, like some scenes focused on a main image that represents the central idea. We know that dolls/puppets can be nested; they contain one another as in a *mise en abîme* (image in an image). This is a *mise en abîme* of the same (the face of the doll), and at the same time, of the life story closed/locked in increasingly deep layers. So, we could say that we are the same in different circumstances, or we might think that this unity, which is the uniqueness (individuality), is multiplied and diversified by the telling of our life story in a strange *mise en abîme*.

As I said before, I saw these dolls in a shop window in Paris, a city that I visited many times. After my first visits, which I had made with my friend, my enthusiasm was so great that I told my parents and my friends about my impressions. By telling the same stories, I have often repeated them and, consequently, they got well fixed in my memory. But in recent years my visits to Paris were solitary and I gave up bothering my friends and parents with my impressions, which were foreign to them, because they did not know, by themselves, the French capital. The major consequence, for me, was that the experienced events had not a

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Behind the Curtains

- Assisting an Experiential Group for Personal Development -

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the manner of organizing and holding an experiential personal development group, the results that were obtained and an analysis of its more personal implications. Thus, not only the “technical” aspects will be dwelled upon, but also those that are connected to the relationship between the co-therapists, and the one between the therapists and the participants. Blockages, communication difficulties, situations that take you by surprise, life script interferences – all these can be treated as lessons to be learned, so that the quality of the assistance can be improved.

Key-words: experiential group of personal development; ego; self-analysis; co-therapeutic relationship

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Personal development is addressed to those who want to improve their personal and social life, by overcoming certain blockages and difficulties, and by activating their own resources. The concept of personal development should not be mistaken for that of counseling or psychotherapy. If psychotherapy is meant for pathological cases and major afflictions, (working with the so called “patients”), counseling is meant for “normal” people who at some point in their lives are faced with an inner imbalance, and it aims for solving interpersonal problems. Personal development aims for the psychological and spiritual optimization and maturation, the harmonizing and unification of the Ego-Self, through a better awareness of oneself and one’s life scenario, in order to set it on a positive path (I. Mitrofan, 2008).

In the following pages I will present the process of and experiential personal development group, (the setting of the meetings, results) as well as my own experience in assisting such a group, difficulties I had, scenarios that interfered with mine, the manner in which I worked with another therapist and all the things I have learned from this experience.

The sessions were held weekly, in December 2008 – March 2009, a session lasting for about 3 hours. This group was designed for students in the Faculty of Psychology, reuniting 9 female students who were 20 and 21 years old, out of which 3 had a double major (both Faculty of Psychology and Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance).

First of all, I should mention that this group was conceived so as to stimulate different facets of the participants’ Ego. Thus, after establishing the relation of trust, which was essential to the revealing of the participants and their involvement in group activities, the group was focused more on the work with the bodily, personal, social and spiritual self, in the mentioned order.

Among **the general objectives** of this group of personal development, there are: *the improving of one’s self image, growth of self confidence and unlocking personal resources*, by means of contacting one’s body and personal strengths. **Specific objectives** were established for each session, including *the integration of rejected parts of the self, favoring assertive communication, stimulating creativity and spontaneity*, so that participants may discover a large repertoire of possible behaviors in different situations, breaking free from the pattern of prescribed roles.

The **methods** used were bodily-expressive (using movement and touch for raising trust in the

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Elementary School Teachers' Promotion of Physical Activity during Recess*

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Abstract

The present study examined elementary school teachers' perceived benefits, barriers, importance and behavioral involvement regarding the promotion of student physical activity during recess. Teachers from a Midwestern school district in the US were administered a three-page valid and reliable survey assessing their overall perceptions. A total of 71 teachers completed surveys (70% response rate). Statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether perceived benefits, barriers, importance and behaviors related to physical activity during recess differed based on teachers' personal physical activity levels, years of teaching experience and grades taught. Results indicated that teachers felt physical activity during recess time was moderately to extremely important. The leading barriers to physical activity during recess were teachers feeling that students received physical activity elsewhere and lack of financial resources. The leading benefits were increased social connections among students and increased awareness of the importance of lifelong physical activity. Regarding teachers' involvement in promoting physical activity, only 14.3% participated in activities with students during recess. Teachers who exercised four or more days per week for at least 30 minutes each session promoted physical activity during recess more frequently than did their counterparts. Recommendations are offered to increase student physical activity during recess.

Key-words: teachers, recess, physical activity, survey, perceptions

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Childhood obesity and overweight continue to pose major problems for many of youth today. Approximately 13% of children 6 to 11 years of age are overweight (USDHHS, 2001). In addition, nearly one-third (31.6%) of 6 to 11 year olds are at risk for overweight or overweight (Hedley et al, 2004). Physical inactivity is one major preventable health risk that contributes to the increasing prevalence of overweight children. Lack of adequate regular physical activity is associated with increased rates of children now developing diseases that initially presented primarily in adults, such as type II diabetes and high cholesterol (Mokdad et al., 2001; USDHHS, 2001).

The promotion of physical activity has become a major focus of public and school health educators for preventing overweight and obesity and increasing healthy lifestyles. The US Surgeon General's Call to Action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity recommended at least 60 minutes of physical activity for children most days of the week (USDHHS, 2001). However, research has

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Acceptations of the Meaning of Change

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Abstract

Out of a number of meanings for the notion of change, I have followed some that refer to the need of replacing something that has become unsatisfying and, on the other hand, some that point out the intrinsic human need towards evolution.

The present paper, following the philosophic mainstream, analyzes the three doors of the process of change, namely the entrance door as the need of change, the exit door as the purpose of change and the inherent trap door.

The dissertation considers various theoretical approach, among which is the systemic theory of the Palo-Alto school, that underlines the two types of change (type I and type II change), the Edgar Morin's theory on the *paradigm* and, last but not least, the Erich Fromm's vision about the existential motivation, motivation being camped somewhere between the two landmarks of "to have" and "to be".

The idea which is underlined in the paper is that change is humanly inherent, no matter the motivational explanation that is being applied to it.

Key-words: change, paradigm, "to be", "to have"

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One can find many meanings to the word "change" (Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language), some that permanently involve passing from one thing to another, from a state to another, particularly from a state of soul to another one. This means that we have a thing, a state of things present and immanent whose contingency is being acknowledged, one way or another, and from here comes the idea or the need for change. A tendency can be noticed here towards transcending a

circumstance, a thing or a state perceived now as inadequate or contingent. The satisfaction with an inner feeling (that is mostly being the subject for the following dissertation) or with a level of attained development involves a limitation, a shutdown of all potentialities and therefore of a possibility of an evolutive transformation. In regards of change, we have a state of things (family, social, professional etc.) *in actu* that does no longer satisfy, but it is the dissatisfaction that pushes one towards an outrun (more precisely a self-outrun) of something archaic, dodgy. Change is the passing from this effectiveness to something that is still *in potentia*. What is still "in deed" must not necessarily be stoned, but more likely shut inside oneself by a horizon that has become a rigid barrier (we could even have very dynamic and full of energy processes, as for example parent-child interactions in the middle of which the necessity of a change should appear). This *in actu* exhausts itself, through its characteristic immanence, which is a fascinating characteristic, then it closes inside and offers, at first, nothing new or even becomes annoying, because it blocks any emancipator and evolutive tendency.

As long as change belongs to the future as pure virtuality, it charges itself with a *fascinosum*, magnetically attracting, and opening the way to the forces necessary for change, and one hopes that the inappetent, mundane, difficult, problematical, or even unbearable present will be erased and left behind. However, the potentiality is also pointed towards the one which manifests as an ideal, presuming that he is capable and powerful, so as to accomplish the passing towards the dreamed future. From that point of view the potential accomplishment becomes a potential individual (or collective) accomplishment, being also a bridge between a saturated contingent (even over-saturated) at a

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