

Coping Mechanisms that Predict Resilience among At-Risk Romanian Youth

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Abstract

Introduction: Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt positively in the context of significant adversity. Knowing which coping mechanisms have a major influence on the way at risk adolescents manage to develop psychological resilience is important in the counseling and therapeutic process.

Objectives: The main aim of this study is to identify the coping mechanisms that predict psychological resilience among at risk adolescents. Subsequently, the factors associated with individual resilient resources are examined.

Methods: The participants were 252 urban Romanian adolescents, from ninth through twelfth grade, (mean age = 16.2 years, 64.7% females and 35.3% males), recruited from five high schools in Bucharest. Data were collected on psychological resilience; its scales: individual, relationship and contextual resources; coping mechanisms and stressful events experienced within the last two years. Multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict the general psychological resilience, the individual, caregiver and contextual resilience resources.

Results: The statistical analysis indicated that psychological resilience is predicted by six coping mechanisms: positive interpretation and growth; use of socio-emotional support; religious approach; active approach; and with a negative association – expressing the emotions and substance consumption. The individual resilience resources have similar predictors, except the behavioral deactivation, which is also negatively associated.

Conclusions: These findings have implications for the practitioners interested in promoting and building resilience, providing an evidence-based resource for the intervention programs.

Keywords: *psychological resilience, adolescents, risk factors, coping resources*

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The Use of Expressive Techniques in Family Assessment and Psychotherapy

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Abstract

In his work with families, the psychotherapist often meets difficulties of communication between children and their parents. The oral communication has been disturbed by dysfunctional relational patterns.

When the oral techniques of communication don't have results anymore, the expressive techniques can be very useful. The psychotherapist can use the drawing, the storytelling, the role-playing, the guided fantasy and the playing with puppets like mediators of family relations, by implying them in the same kind of activities. With the help of these techniques, the parents and the children enter the playing world. Thus, they become more relaxed and the emotional communication is obtained more easily.

I will present in this article the methods of psychological evaluation in which I used expressive methods as ways that helped the identification of the roles and patterns of communication between family members.

Keywords: psycho-diagnosis, expressive-creative methods, children, family

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Research on the Use of TEMAS - Tell Me a Story Test in Clinical Assessment of Children with a History of Abuse

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Abstract

Introduction: *Seizing the signs of abuse is one of the challenges that clinicians dealing with child protection cases have to cope with. Maltreatment is often at odds with the normal functioning of the child leading to interpersonal difficulties and delays in development.*

Objectives: *The aim of the study was to establish TEMAS reliability to assess the specific symptoms of physically, emotionally and sexually abused children. TEMAS test is a multicultural thematic apperception test designed to help clinicians to gain a better understanding of both strengths and deficits in cognitive, affective, intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning of the children.*

Methods: *75 children aged between 7 and 14 were involved in the investigation and tested using the Tell me a story Test. The subjects were divided in three groups, based on their clinical history, as follows: 25 children came from classical protection system, 25 children are in the care of a professional caregiver and control group consisted of 25 children without a history of abuse.*

Results: *Results indicate that there are significant differences between the non-clinical and the clinical groups ($p < 0,01$ / $p < 0,05$) for several functions measured by TEMAS.*

Conclusions: *TEMAS proved to be a sensitive instrument in assessing the various function of children's personality that can be used as one component of a multi-method assessment battery and can easily be incorporated as such and adapted to Romanian specificity.*

Keywords: *maltreatment, child abuse, temas test*

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Chronic Pain Management in the Unifying Experiential Psychotherapy (U.E.P.) Framework: Principles and a Working Protocol

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Abstract

Introduction: *Pain affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide and is a primary complaint resulting in physician visits. The roles of cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral factors in the development and treatment of chronic pain have been acknowledged long ago. Psychological treatments to chronic pain have been shown to be successful, with effect sizes generally in the medium to high range and, more recently neuroscientific evidence has confirmed these findings by providing basic knowledge on the neural correlates of psychological modulation of pain experience.*

Objectives: *As medical interventions frequently cannot resolve chronic pain completely, the need for psychological management approaches to chronic pain is increasing. Yet, two shortcomings remain pervasive: (1) many professionals and patients remain reluctant in using them, (2) these approaches remain with no good reason confined to only a few psychotherapy schools. The following article aims to provide a conceptual background on the bases of experiential pain management.*

Methods: *Techniques, principles and guidelines portraying to the U.E.P. philosophy that stem out from the conceptual background will be presented in the second part of the article in which an experiential psychotherapy protocol for pain management will be outlined.*

Results: *The techniques discussed here have proven to be effective in clinical settings on a variety of pain conditions.*

Conclusions: *Due to the increasing involvement of psychologists and psychotherapists in the assessment and treatment of disease-related pain, such as pain secondary to cancer, arthritis or fibromyalgia, applicative methodologies and guidelines need to be provided in order to aid practitioners in their endeavor. Unfortunately, highly personalized (patient centered) approaches such as the experiential ones are harder to disseminate and their efficacy is difficult to quantify in naturalistic settings.*

Keywords: *pain, management, relief, multidisciplinary treatment, psychological intervention*

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The Symbolic Experiential Approach of Creative Improvisation through Literature Technique within the Unifying Personal Development Group

– Case study –

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Abstract

Introduction: *Creative improvisation through literature is an experiential and creative-expressive technique which uses the spontaneous story-writing in order to help someone knowing himself better but also to overcome some existential jams, both in the personal development group and individual counseling.*

Objectives: *The aim of this paper is to harness the way of intervention within creative improvisation and in the same time emphasizing the diagnostic and symbolic-projective valences of this technique by presenting a case study of a group participant within a unifying personal development group.*

Method: *In this case study, we used the creative improvisation through literature technique, applied in an experiential way, but also combined with other creative-expressive and experiential techniques.*

Results: *One of the results we have seen is the fact that the participant from the case study made some important changes in her life as a sign that the intervention was successful. Another result we have made is a symbolic-projective analysis of the metaphors from her stories, mapping the usefulness of the technique in the experiential diagnosis and also the metaphors dynamics according to the changes she did in her life.*

Conclusions: *Given the positive results of the creative improvisation through literature technique, we propose to continue the study, using it in the unifying personal development groups and highlighting its positive results both by qualitative and quantitative measures.*

Keywords: *literature, expressive - creative therapies, personal development*

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The Imagogenogram and the Fractals. Interflows in the U.T. Paradigme^{vi}

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Abstract

Introduction: *The Imagogenogram and the fractals. Apparently distinct working techniques in Unifying Therapy (U.T.). However...*

Objectives: *In this paper, I set myself to carry out a presentation of the two techniques, a description of my findings during the individual and group psychotherapy practice. The findings emphasize interflows within the framework of the U.T paradigm.*

Methods: *During the personal development and analysis workshops I often used the Imagogenogram or the fractals boards as a projective-provocative pretext, aiming to trigger and then facilitate the progress of the psychotherapeutic démarche (work).*

Results: *The Imagogenogram and the fractals have always proved to be “powerful” psychotherapeutic instruments, being extremely helpful in decrypting personal and transgenerational scenarios as well as for re-signification and integration of the findings.*

Conclusions: *Given a deeper analysis of the above mentioned techniques, they have numerous elements in common and emphasizing them implicitly underlines the elements that grant them the “strength” mentioned earlier – which is very useful in choosing the methods, the psychotherapeutic techniques and exercises and especially in understanding the interior-exterior dynamics, the way we can access and re-establish in an easier and a more “complete” way what we contain and the way this content is expressed outwardly.*

Keywords: *transgenerational analysis, perpetual clew model, the holographic principle*

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