

Social Determinants Associated with on-demand Abortion in Romanian Women. An Exploratory Research

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Abstract

Introduction: *The literature on the social aspects of on-demand abortion is scarce. For many years, our country was among the first in Europe concerning the number of abortions. The World Health Organization has published alarming statistics on the number of abortions performed on demand. The existing research must be interpreted according to administrative, cultural, religious, financial particularities, in the larger context of the societal traits, at a given time. We must also take into account the existence of alternatives to abortion, and also the socially transmitted models that shape the choices of women with “unwanted” pregnancies. To reduce the number of pregnancies that end in abortion on demand, it is important to know the factors that contribute to or maintain this behavior. Social factors have been considerably neglected, the existing research generally focusing on investigating the psychological effects of abortion.*

Objectives: *The aim of the research was to identify the sociocultural factors that contribute to the occurrence of unwanted pregnancies and the decision to have an abortion in Romania.*

Methods: *The data were collected through anamnesis, interview, micro-inquiry, marital satisfaction standardized tests, administered to 280 women with unwanted pregnancies, aged between 15-49 years, who participated in the study. This exploratory study used an in-depth interview to highlight the factors associated with taking the decision to undergo an abortion on demand.*

Results: *The determinants that potentiate unwanted pregnancies and abortion on-demand in Romania are: age, level of formal education, background (rural/urban), quality of marital relationship, existing children, financial difficulties, unemployment, beliefs perpetuated in the family or group of women – abortion seen as an acceptable behavior, no use of/ mistrust in contraceptive methods.*

Conclusions: *The research identified the social determinants to understand the factors that increase the incidence of women experiencing unwanted pregnancies who undergo abortions on-demand, in an attempt to develop programs to prevent such situations and psychological counseling guides for women falling in these categories, in order to decrease the abortion rate in Romania (given the psycho-affective impact on women and their families, produced by unwanted uterine surgery, which often is seen as the only solution to such outcome), and in order to raise awareness and understand repetitive patterns and adequately address women’s needs.*

Keywords: *social factors, unwanted pregnancies, uterine curettage, particularities of society, exploratory study, social context, marital satisfaction, power dynamics*

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When Dragons Become Heroes: the Resignification and Integration of Negative Emotions through Expressive-Creative Techniques

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Abstract

Introduction: *The present study was centered on the positive role that expressive creative techniques and creative meditation, in particular, have on the ability to emotionally regulate, provide meaning and integrate negative emotions.*

Objectives: *The main objective of this study was to develop a module of personal optimization and self-knowledge, in an experiential group, using as a basic tool “The Story of the Hero”, which includes a set of creative meditations focused on emotional regulation, resignification and integration of emotions. We also aimed to highlight statistically significant differences intra-group, through pre-post-test measurement of emotional regulation capacity in the experimental group, and to emphasize statistically significant differences inter-group, between the experimental group and the control group, regarding the general ability of emotional regulation.*

Methods: *The study combined quantitative research with qualitative methods: experiential group intervention, through creative meditation and expressive-creative techniques. The instrument used to measure the capacity for emotional regulation was Perth Emotion Regulation Competency Inventory – PERCI, for which an adaptation was made for the youth population of Romania.*

Results: *From a quantitative point of view, significant differences were found in terms of an increased general capacity for emotional regulation in the case of the post versus pre-test experimental group ($\text{sig} = 0.046 < 0.05$). Also, statistically significant differences were observed between the control group and the experimental group, post-test, in terms of the capacity for general emotional regulation ($\text{sig} = 0.04 < 0.05$). From a qualitative point of view, the participants in the personal optimization group gained a clearer vision of how they related to their own emotions, understood and overcame some of the blockages in the relationship with their emotions and learned to access useful resources in creating an authentic contact with themselves.*

Conclusions: *The expressive-creative techniques and creative meditation used in the personal optimization and self-knowledge group had positive effects on both the ability to regulate emotions and the attitude of participants regarding their emotions.*

Keywords: *basic emotions, emotional regulation, experiential group intervention, personal optimization, self-knowledge, creative meditation, The Story of the Hero*

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A Psychotherapeutic Intervention Example in the Case of a Depressed Adolescent

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Abstract

Introduction: *Anxiety and depression are prolific topics in the specialty literature, since they are some of the most frequently encountered mental health issues among adolescents. The current study investigates the counselling intervention and its subsequent effects in the case of a teenager with anxious-depressive symptoms.*

Objectives: *The main objectives of the counselling intervention were: improving self-knowledge through emotional expression; shaping identity through the construction of a positive self-image; ameliorating of anxious-depressive symptoms, by increasing self-esteem and developing positive interpersonal relationships.*

Methods: *Draw-a-Person Test, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI) have been employed in order to assess the emotional state and personality patterns of the concerned teenager. The intervention approach has been client-centered, relying on Rogerian dialogue techniques, such as active listening, reflection of the feelings, paraphrasing, as well as Ludotherapy specific methods. We have employed creative techniques with artistic support such as Collage, Six-piece story making, Clay modelling.*

Results: *After the administration of the psychometric and projective instruments, the following findings emerged concerning the teenager: perceived inadequacy and low self-image, as well as the need of recognition and admiration were noticed. The participant further manifested low self-esteem, as well as the belief that he was unworthy of love, which made him channel his resources towards academic performance, that culminating with social withdrawal and denial of his emotions. A significant decrease on the Introversive scale was noticed, which suggested openness and progress in terms of understanding one's emotions. The client's lack of self-disclosure as well as the lack of intrinsic motivation for change, represented added limitations to the study.*

Conclusions: *Although the level of anxious-depressive symptoms remained unchanged, the therapeutic process brought significant improvements on the level of interpersonal relationships and self-expression, adequately responding to the needs of an introvert nature. There are several steps that could be undertaken by the teenager as further directions meant to complete the therapeutic process and foster change, e.g. participating in social activities to develop communication skills and to expand his vision and passion; taking part in team games, as to strengthen confidence, resilience and perseverance.*

Keywords: *self-esteem, self-identity, fraternal relations, social anxiety, adolescents, depression*

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Experiential-Eclectic Psychotherapeutic Intervention in Anxiety-Depressive Disorders

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Abstract

Introduction: *In this paper we treat anxiety-depressive disorders by using various forms and techniques of existing interventions/ therapeutic approaches. We start from the premise that multiple techniques use, essentially, the same structure, being changed only the names of the elements used, as illustrated in the case study of a young woman with clinical level depression and anxiety. So, a vast arsenal of therapeutic techniques can help the client to explore more easily and integrate relevant experiences, at their own pace.*

Objectives: *The objectives were exploring the degree to which the client felt and was aware of her condition, examining family, transgenerational and intergenerational influences on the social dimension, activating and using creative resources to strengthen the masculine self, re-signify and integrate experiences in a creatively expressive way. Building interdependent healthy relationships and cultivating and flourishing existing personal relationships was another goal.*

Methods: *The main psychotherapeutic method used in the present intervention was Unification Therapy (I. Mitrofan). A second method used in combination with the Unification Therapy was G. I. Gurdjieff's approach known as the Fourth Way or 'the way of the sly man'.*

Results: *An improvement was observed on all the operating plans of the client's existence: her posture became more vertical, her tone was more assertive and deeper, she achieved a better self-care level (groomed, dyed hair, use of makeup and a lack of dark circles under the eyes). The tonicity/ vitality was increased, the client re-engaged in erotic relations, she started to use the phrase "I feel" more often. The relationships with family members have also been improved.*

Conclusions: *The use of an eclectic approach through the Unification Therapy method provides a step-by-step journey with the client through the trauma, given a constant feel of growth. Gurdjieff's Fourth Way provides a deep understanding of the Self through the constant act of "self-remembering" and through always knowing where the client lies in relation with themselves within a moment of crisis.*

Keywords: *growth, personal development, self-remembering, Fourth Way, here and now, self, witness state*

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Humanistic Experiential Psychotherapy for Depression: a Case Study

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Abstract

Introduction: Past research has identified creativity as an essential psychotherapeutic factor in the treatment of depression. Nonetheless, using creative-expressive techniques to alleviate depressive symptoms within a humanistic experiential framework still remains a challenge for both scientists and practitioners.

Objectives: This study is aimed at presenting a humanistic experiential psychotherapy (HEP) treatment protocol, based on visual creative-expressive techniques for depression.

Methods: The single-subject design was used to illustrate the psychotherapeutic process and to provide preliminary evidence related to the HEP approach for depression. The humanistic experiential treatment consisted of 20 weekly sessions.

Results: The results showed that the HEP treatment reduced depressive symptomatology.

Conclusions: The current study provides preliminary evidence that may guide the development of an extensive trial, to test the efficacy of the HEP treatment protocol for depression, as well as to identify underlying mechanisms of change.

Keywords: art therapy, creative meditation, creative-expressive techniques, somato-genogram

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The Experience of Loneliness Approached through the Perspective of Unifying Experiential Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Introduction: *This paper approaches the experience of loneliness and its adjacent types, aiming to define it, to distinguish between loneliness as a symptom or cause, to explore different causal perspectives, to describe ways of dealing with this experience and to find ways to intervene in the psychotherapeutic practice, by building and applying techniques from the method of Unifying Experiential psychotherapy, such as Art Therapy, Role Play, Creative Meditation, Drama Therapy, Writing Therapy, within a support and personal development group.*

Objectives: *The main objective was building and applying an intervention and personal development plan by using methods and techniques specific to Experiential Unifying psychotherapy, focused on the experience of loneliness.*

Methods: *The group consisted of 7 people, 2 men and 5 women, all aged between 20-25 years. It was assumed that after the devising and application of an intervention and personal development plan using methods and techniques specific to Unifying Experiential psychotherapy there would be statistically significant differences on the perceived level of loneliness among the participants of the support and personal development group – measured with SELSA-S, on the perceived level of anxiety and depression, and on personality trait scores of the Dependent, Narcissistic, Histrionic, Compulsive type (measured with MCMI-III).*

Results: *The hypothesis was not confirmed. However, taking into account the comparison between the mean of the measured pair-variables, it can be observed that the perceived level of loneliness, anxiety and depression, and the scores of the Dependent personality traits decreased, while the scores of Histrionic and Compulsive personality traits increased, according to research expectations.*

Conclusions: *Considering the existing pre- and post-test differences, the limits of the research must be defined – sample size (7 people), the number of sessions (10 meetings), the number of evaluations (pre- and post-test only) and the effects of establishing the state of emergency on the members of the support and personal development group. These issues can be considered in future research.*

Keywords: *loneliness, aloneness, emotional isolation, social isolation, support and personal development group*

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