

# **Network Group for Psychodramatists Working with Children and Youth**

**7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 in Munich**



**Courage is doing what you are afraid to do.**

We were very delighted to meet all 30 colleagues from 10 different countries at the 5<sup>th</sup> network group meeting “Psychodrama with Children and Youth” which took place in **Munich, Germany from 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020.**

The following topics were discussed at the meeting

## **Research in Psychodrama with Children and Youth Minimal Training Standards for Psychodrama with Children**

Standards and research are hardly things that we find enjoyable and often they intimidate us. That is why we decided to start with this saying about courage. If we were to express this in the symbolic language suitable for children - Thirty fearless heroes have made their way into the valley of giant numbers and have proven that their magic is effective.

We all had the opportunity to spend a few exciting days in Munich and return home with new inspirations.

Our local host, Bettina and Thomas once again chose a beautiful venue with meaningful name. After “The Temple of Peace “ in Cardiff, this time the name of the venue was “One world house”.

We would like to share two of the highlights of this network meeting. The first one was FEPTO executive board, who also visited us for dinner. Another high point was that Israa from Gaza was able to join us via skype and present her extensive research on the topic.

Below you can find a short summary contributed by the presenters themselves:

**Milena Mutafchieva, Kristina Gotseva-Balgaranova, Ivo Popivanov**

## **Impact Evaluation of the Evidence-Based Trauma Stabilisation Programme for Refugee, Asylum Seeking and Immigrant Families (EBTS).**

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Evidence-Based Trauma Stabilisation (EBTS) Programme. The idea of the programme was born from the present need of more effective work with refugee, asylum seeking and immigrant families. The EBTS-Programme is based on a psychodrama-with-children approach, created by Aichinger and Holl (Aichinger & Holl, 2017) and is suitable for parent-child pairs. The study has a within-subject design with two measurements: pre-test before the attendance in the programme and post-test after the completion of the programme. The psychological instruments, administered in order to measure the effectiveness of the intervention, assessed PTSD symptoms and the level of depression in both children and parents. Fifteen children and 16 mothers from Germany and Bulgaria participated in the study. The results showed significant decrease in PTSD intrusion, PTSD arousal, depression, and dissociation in children. There is a decrease in all scales in the mothers' results but it did not reach significance. Only one decrease is significant: mothers were more likely to share problems concerning their children after the intervention.

**Anna Hajdu**

### **The impact of child psychodrama in 5 groups**

The creation of a special method of child psychodrama has been the fruit of recent decades. It is a therapeutic method that communicates with children in the language of play, facilitates their ability to connect, works with spontaneity and originality, which releases children's creativity and leads to self-healing (Aichinger, 2002). There are not many studies regarding the effects of this method, more research has been launched in recent years, but they are still under development.

*Method:* Five child psychodrama groups participated in the study, with 6-8 children per group, operating under the aegis of one organization. As part of the impact assessment, children completed the following questionnaire at the start of the groups and 20 times later (app. 6 months later): Semantic Selection Test (Szabó, Németh, Nafrádi, 2013), Emotion Measurement Scale (Nagy, 2010) and Rosenberg Self-Assessment Scale (Sallay et al., 2014). Thus, the focus of the study was on the development and change of social skills and self-esteem.

*Results:* Higher values for emotional intelligence can be reported from follow-up studies, and the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem was confirmed. The concept of "myself" and "expression of emotion" proved to be a constant feeling of positive joy, and at the time of follow-up, these concepts were less related to the feeling of fear. And as a result of the child psychodrama sessions, the feeling of fear about self-protection diminished, which means that the thought of self-defense was less and less colored by fear after the sessions. The research could not confirm the positive change in self-esteem.

*Conclusion:* According to the results, the child psychodrama method effectively contributes to the development of children, both socially and emotionally. It strengthens and supports them to be less afraid when they stand up for themselves, and effectively supports the development of adequate behavior in different social situations.

**Dagmar Mingers, Heidi Schaul, Anna-Lotte Kopatz**

### **Summary Research “Pretend we´d make it together”- The Impact of Psychodrama for Children on their Emotional Competences- Psychodrama Groups an Evaluation of the Effectiveness of**

Our research is aimed at the question whether a psychodrama group for children of pre-school age can improve emotional skills, which are a good predictor for lifetime mental health, success and happiness. Our practice-oriented outcome-study which included two rounds of psychodrama groups and control groups with (deep psychological group therapy) and without treatment results in the confirmation of our hypothesis that participation in psychodrama group therapy significantly improves the emotional skills of the children.

**Csilla Nemeth**

Proposing SAI-R (Revised Spontaneity Assessment Inventory) as a tool to assess the effect of psychodrama with adolescents. I talked about Revised Spontaneity Assessment Inventory (SAI-R) test, introduced by Kipper et al. in 2006, to measure spontaneity, the key element of psychodrama, by a self-report questionnaire. The test was translated, and validated in several countries, showed positive correlation e.g. with well-being (CORE-OM), and negative correlation with depression (Beck depression scale). It is easy to use, takes no more than 1-2 minutes to fill out, and it was also validated for adolescents.

It shows promise to be a useful tool in longitudinal studies also to measure the effect of psychodrama based on a Portuguese and our own Hungarian small scale studies in adults.

**Fabian Blobel**

### **"Which theoretical models (about development, groups and psychodrama) should be included in the trainings for PD with children and/or adolescents?" An invitation to a discussion on minimal training standards**

“The invitation for the discussion” about the content in the training for psychodrama with youth, was led by action sociometry in six steps. By this, the questions, which theoretical aspects should be included as minimal training standards could be discussed actively in a short time within the whole group. The range between extreme poles allowed to form subgroups and a stimulating exchange within.

The steps were formed by the differentiation between pedagogic and therapeutic settings, Individual versus Group settings, developmental and pathological aspects, the different approaches to healing and human being and technical content as presentations, thesis, exams or research. Also the question if the formation should include children and adolescents could be discussed.

With the presentation the big need and wish of the group for exchange about minimal training standards of content found a little frame. Because of the magnitude of this topic it was clear from the beginning, that the intervention could just be an invitation for a discussion. To be continued.

### **Israa Shehada Al-Ebwini from Gaza - VIA SKYPE**

#### **The effectiveness of psychodrama to reduce Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms (PTSS) among Gaza children (8-10 years).**

The qualitative part of this research shows how the roles of traumatized children developed from avoidant helpless roles to be powerful and competent roles. Also shows how the traumatized children express recurrent act of Intrusion and arousal symptoms through their roles, and how psychodrama can help. An observation card developed to be used by the caregivers\mothers to monitor the progress of the child changes on mood and behavior. Also the caregivers\mothers have to report some significant situations and how they respond immediately and how they planned to respond in the future. Every two weeks the observation card discussed between caregivers and therapist during the psychodrama process. This helped to sustain the positive impact of psychodrama sessions and increased the relationship and secure attachment between child and mother/caregiver.

### **Larisa Mogunova and Natalia Gorovets**

#### **The Activities of the section "Psychodrama with children" of the Russian Association of Psychodrama**

### **Minimal training standards**

Concerning the topic of Minimal training standards, all participants agreed with the proposal of the steering group that the minimum training standards that apply to psychodrama training for adults must also be valid for child psychodramatists. In addition, we want to discuss the division of training hours further at the next network meeting.

### **Looking to the future**

- Milena Mutafchieva will organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference for Psychodrama with Children and Youth in Bulgaria in 2022. Milena will also be the co - facilitator of this network group together with Stefan.
- We would like to thank Hshe has done for this network group!
- The next network meeting will take place from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 in the beautiful City of Porto (Portugal). Our local host will be Dr. Joanna Saraiva.

***Last but not least: Save the date for the upcoming Children and Youth conference in Zagreb.***

<https://childrenyouthpsychodrama.com/hr/>

And going back to the beginning, remember that Fortune favors the brave.

Warmest regards,  
Milena & Stefan