

POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND MOTIVATION OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY THROUGH ART THERAPY AS A FACTOR FOR SOCIALIZATION

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ABSTRACT: IN GENERAL THE ART THERAPY IS AN ATTITUDE, PROCESS, WHERE THE PERSON MASTERS A SPECIFIC SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AND FORMS A SOCIALLY MEANINGFUL APPEARANCE AS A RESULT OF THE ACTIVE INFLUENCE OF THE ART THERAPIST AND THE ART PRACTICES. THE SOCIALIZATION IS IN A CLOSE RELATION WITH THE PERSON'S SOCIAL ACTIVITY – A BASIC PROCESS FOR THE ART THERAPY'S EFFECTIVE FLOW. THE ART THERAPY IS FOUNDED ON THE KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT AND IS USED IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS CONNECTED WITH IT: AFFECTING THE ABILITY TO STUDY, THE PSYCHODYNAMIC, BREACHES IN THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP, SELF-REFLECTING DEFICIENCY, SOCIAL CONTACTS, PRESENCE OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS, LOW PERSONAL SELF-ESTEEM, LACK OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY, INFERIOR SOCIALIZATION, ETC.

KEY WORDS: SOCIAL ACTIVITY, SOCIALIZATION, SECONDARY SOCIALIZATION, ART THERAPY WORK, ART THERAPIST, CLIENT, GROUP ART THERAPY, INDIVIDUAL ART THERAPY, FUNCTIONS OF THE ART THERAPY

THE positive direction of the person's social activity is a long and complex process, which is due to the utmost integrity of the term person including a wide sector of human characteristics. It comprises the combination of psychical characteristics and qualities which specify the socially important behavioral forms. On one hand, the personality is built on physical and individually constitutional foundation. On the other, the whole public experience, relations and mechanisms of social interaction is projected on it and the person should adequately fit to it.

*For the specific art therapy area the **personality** can be determined as a combination of psychical and social features which are both a reason and a result of the communication and the interaction between people connected with publicly meaningful activities and relations. Included here are human characteristics such as: activeness, needs and motives; feelings, will and specific characteristics; abilities and interests; ideology, values, aims, view of life.*

THE rich meaning of the term gives a reason for **an art therapy approach to the question of socialization**. In general it is an attitude, a process, where the person masters a certain social experience and forms socially meaningful features under the active influence which art therapy cases through the art methods and practices. The socialization is in a close relation with the person's social activity – a base process for its effective flow.

AS far as the art therapy concerns the transformation of the individual in a state of adequate interaction with the surrounding social environment, it corresponds with art therapy.

However, the art therapy itself can be related to a **secondary socialization** which is a result of the changes that occur in its social surroundings. In this case the term art therapy is used to only describe the correcting processes which occur in the person to respond to the outside stimulations and is in a lower range than the person's overall socialization.

THE art therapy is based on the human development knowledge and is used in different cases connected to it: it concerns the ability to study, the psychodynamic, breaches in the interpersonal relationships, deficiency of self-reflection, social contacts, availability of behavioral problems, low personal self-esteem, lack of social activity, inferior socialization, etc. As a whole the art therapy is an effective method as far as medical, emotional, educational, intellectual, rehabilitation problems and problems connected with the integration in society. People all around the world benefit from the services of the art therapists: people of different age, gender and religion go individually, with family and in groups. Exceptionally good results are observed when applying art therapy to children [10]. In the last years this method is also being practiced in Bulgaria and the number of the art therapy specialists in the country is growing.

ACCORDING to Kurt Goldstein art is a method of overcoming the fear that arises with the conflict, comes from the human behavior and is controlled by the individual's desire for realization. The creative people more easily concentrate their energy and efforts to overcome obstacles and to respond to inner and outside conflicts [9]. Abraham Maslow on his part thinks that the fundamental source of human activity consists in the constant search for self actualization and self expression which however is only valid for healthy people. The therapists task is to help people enjoy these moments and to create conditions for their emergence [2].

ONE of the main differences between the art therapy and the other communication forms is that most of the other ones provoke the usage of words or language as a mean of communication. The researches show that art therapy is very efficient when applied to patients with memory loss as a result of Alzheimer's disease or other illnesses, residual apoplexy, problems with the cognitive functionality, traumatic brain damage, post-traumatic stress, depression, coping with chronic diseases and with getting on in years, etc.

KETI MALCHIODI gives an example of what a session of art therapy includes and how it is different from an art class. "in most sessions of art therapy the focus falls on the inside experience, feelings, perceptions and human imagination...the accent is on the development and the expression of images which come from within the person and not the ones which he/she sees in the outside world. And while in some traditions the art classes may help you paint and draw from your imagination, in art therapy the representation of the inner world, feelings, thoughts and ideas are always exclusively connected with the experience...Another important aspect is the presence of the individual in his or her personal process of giving the art a personal meaning i.e. finding a real story, description or meaning of the art. There are only a few therapies which depend as much on the active participation of the individual" [11, p.24].

THE aim of the art therapy essentially is a kind of physical or spiritual healing. It can successfully be applied to clients with physical, mental or emotional problems as well as clients with diseases, disturbances and socialization difficulties. Every type of visual art can be used within the boundaries of the therapeutic process including painting, sculpture and photography.

THE art therapy can be carried out in different medical, educational or correctional-educational establishments, as every therapist applies his/her own preferred methods of building up the therapy according to the aims and the patient's case. The famous art therapist Susan Hogan describes the reach of the tasks and the parts that the art therapist can apply. This includes the co supplement with doctors, experts, family members and sometimes even community members which are important for taking care of the individual [10].

THE Bulgarian scientists Baikushev and Mitova have found an art therapy program with a few profiles [1]: 1. Fine arts; 2. Music therapy; 3. Artistic speaking, dance and rhythm therapy; 4. Other art methods.

ACCORDING to them "Each of these profiles has a specific techniques and requirements. The philosophy of this kind of therapy however is general: *free expression of feelings, creative happiness, communicating with the world and recovery of certain emotions, sensual, cognitive and motion capabilities of the one that is being treated.*" [1, p. 1]

As a process connected with the psychical health and socialization, the art therapy is being applied in different institutions and establishments with different population groups. Art therapy can be found everywhere – in non clinical establishments, art studios, seminars for creative development, etc. The art therapists themselves are licensed under different denominations depending on their individual qualification and the type of license that is being given in certain country. They can possess licenses as art therapists, family and marriage rehabilitators, psychologists, social workers, professional therapists, etc. They could have received a higher degree in art therapy such as doctor title or could be certified as a creative therapist.

THE art therapists, who match the requirements defined by the national accreditation agency, can work with people of all ages with a wide range of diseases and social deficiencies. They offer services for children, teenagers and adults regardless of whether they are single individuals, couples, families or groups.

THE art therapists choose the materials and the interventions which are suitable for the needs of their clients and the sessions in order to reach particular therapeutic aims and assignments. They use the creative process to help their clients cope with stress through personal enlightenment and to increase their cognitive skills, their memories and capabilities; to improve their interpersonal relationships and reach high self-expression.

OTHER specialists such as medical advisors, social workers, psychologies, etc. and can also combine their work with art therapy methods. Their evaluation of elements from the artworks might actually help understand to what extent the client has accepted and interpreted the directing information.

The connection between the client and the therapist is of a central importance in art therapy and differs from other therapies, as herein a picture or an artifact stays between the client and the therapist. In this way there is a chance for expression and communication and this is especially good for people who have difficulties expressing their thoughts and feeling verbally.

THE art therapy client doesn't need to have prior art skills or experiences. The main task of the art therapist is to give an esthetical or diagnostic evaluation of the client. It is important to give the client the chance to make a change and develop him/herself on a personal level using creative materials in a safe and sympathetic environment.

THE art therapists have considerable skills when understanding creative processes supported by a solid knowledge of the therapeutic practices as well as working with different individuals and groups in different life situations such as: adults with mental disorders, different people with cognitive derangements, presence of child or family problems, palliative care and support for the prisons, socialization deficiencies, etc. The variety of these work areas is reflected when forming the groups and the number of individuals taking part in the art therapy activities [9].

THE art therapist's task is to persuade the client in the following [3], [5], and [8]:

TO feel like a person who introduces him/herself to new worlds;

- ⇒ To lead to an experience bringing creative happiness;
- ⇒ To create a common emotional background connected with the communication for the personality ;
- ⇒ To open himself to the others as well as to his own self;
- ⇒ To see and understand the reality in a new way;
- ⇒ To reveal aspiration to a life filled with beauty, rhythm, harmony; to reach a unity with the outside world and to set him/herself free of inside conflicts and complexes;
- ⇒ To create conditions for personal development and growth;
- ⇒ To build up a freedom of self-expression, understanding of the others and him/herself;
- ⇒ To construct a new point of view and including him/herself in life and the daily routine;
- ⇒ To train the following qualities: labor efficiency, persistency, patience, creativeness;
- ⇒ To train cognitive, motion and sensuous functions;
- ⇒ To distract the attention from intruding problems and prevent them from possessing the mind;
- ⇒ To develop new communication possibilities;
- ⇒ To create a new and positive emotional background;
- ⇒ To build a new world and to stimulate a motivation for desire for creativity and life.

The clients as participants in the art therapy procedure achieve as follows [94]:

- ⇒ Providing a socially acceptable way of lowering the aggression, the tension and other negative feelings; expressing unconscious inner conflicts and emotions through visual images;
- ⇒ Examining the thoughts and the feelings that he/she repress;
- ⇒ Participation in creative activities which contribute to the feeling of empathy and mutual acceptance;
- ⇒ Developing the feeling of inner control;
- ⇒ Concentrating on feelings and sensations;
- ⇒ Possibility for experimenting with kinesthetic and visual sensations and with the perception ability;
- ⇒ Improving the artistic abilities and self-esteem;
- ⇒ The feeling of satisfaction which comes from identifying hidden talents and their development.

THE art therapy is blamed of not stressing strong enough the artistic meaning and value of the artist's work and that it is only examining it from medical point of view. This leads to a

wrong perception of the whole practice as an outsider in art, as it addresses only therapeutic problems [6], [4]. Contrary to this understanding it must be pointed out that the *relationships between the client and the art therapist is one of the central aspects of the art therapy* - they go beyond the medical relations as the image of the socially- active and - related person is created precisely through these relationships.

ACCORDING to Baikushev and Mitova right from the beginning the art therapy and its aim has to be clear so that the desired results can be achieved. They outline a short plan concerning all cases and can be formulated in the following way [1]:

1. *The art therapy object* itself chooses the methods and even the materials for work, so that it is agreeable for him.
2. *The art therapist* has to help him/her but not enforce the choice so that this can be beneficial and serve for state evaluation.
3. *The beginning of the work has to always be mutual*. It is necessary to destruct the person's attention from the initial fears about the chances of coping with these tasks.
4. *Encouragement, cooperation and sometimes help* in critical moments of dissatisfaction with the results (which might sometimes even lead to denying the practical art therapy).
5. *Congratulating the achievements* and stimulating new successes.
6. *Reaching a moment* where it is sure that this is the right (correct, adequate) technique and turning it into a system (part of life, daily routine).

A great part of the mental discomfort is a result of false understanding of the outside world and lack of coordination with the inner world (thoughts, feelings, dissatisfaction and self-criticism) which leads to disharmony. The correct usage of art in art therapy might bring inner desperation into light so that it can be accepted. The purpose of it is its "ventilation".

There is two ways to organize the work- individually or in groups. The choice of one of those is an assignment for the art therapist.

The group therapy posses the advantage, that as soon as the client joins the group there conditions for socialization and communication with other people are already available as well as motivation to compete and be liked. The latest however is not always beneficial for everyone as it might cause traumas for the disciple if carried out unskillfully.

SOMETIMES the work with a group can create difficulties, additional work load and higher demand for attention allocation to the subjects of art therapy. The group can be homogeneous or can consist of clients with different needs. Both cases can include positive as well as negative moments. It might be a question of observation, testing and adjusting to the conditions: what should the structure and the selection be and how can these be corrected if needed during the sessions.

SOMETIMES there are special kinds of groups, i.e. they consist of children and grownups with post traumatic stress disorder after mass disasters or they can be created to cure addictions (alcohol, drugs). The participation of a psychologist or even of a doctor psychiatrist in the work organization becomes vital. The group therapy group should not consist of too many people (2 to 6-8 people) and these should have similar problems and conditions so that a good group work atmosphere can be created.

DIVIDING the groups according to age and condition differences is the first step in every art therapy activity. Mixed groups can also be formed which to certain degree can even have

an advantage. The methods and the approaches should take existing problems which are strictly individual into account

The individual education has certain conveniences for the art therapist and the subject of treatment- spending more time on work, evaluation and adjusting to the program and the specific needs of the client. On the other hand the stimuli of the group are missing: communication, resocialization, developing the client's ability for interpersonal relationships. Also such therapy is more expensive and economically disadvantageous. However the individual work makes it possible for the art therapist to devote all his time, attention and concentration to one person. For this reason it gives great results in more severe cases.

Generally the requirements for preparation and conduction of the art therapy can be presented in the following way:

1. **THE** beginning of the lessons with the therapy subject (or subjects when group lessons are concerned) begins only after finishing the functional diagnosis and choosing an approach and a method as described earlier in the paper.
2. **NATURALLY**, the fitness evaluation of the client continues (hidden and unannounced) in the initial phase of the education.
3. **THE** chosen educational program must be discussed with the parents (when children are concerned) or the relatives of the client and they should be instructed what their attitude towards the art therapy should be. A tentative program must be discussed with the trainee or his relatives if we are talking about a child. Of course, the program can be changed according to the results, tastes and wishes of the trainee.
4. **THE** relatives have to be informed of the materials (if it has been determined that they will provide them) and the room (if the art therapy is carried out at home) that will have to be provided. The therapist should better choose materials which price corresponds of the material well being of the family. It goes without saying that the most valuable for the purposes materials should be made use of. The colors and the materials should be chosen by the instructor who knows how those should be to used and what kind of influence these should have on the trainee.
5. **TO** avoid surprises and misunderstandings, the number of lessons, the time, the mean of transportation and each lesson's price should be settled in advance.
6. **IN** any case leading are the emotional experiences and wishes of the client and the art therapist's drive to inspire the love of art and to "infect" the subject with a desire for work.
7. **THE** regular evaluation and praise of the subject is extremely important. It must be expressed in front of the relatives or they should at least be informed of the advancements, so that they are not indifferent to the efforts, endeavors and finally the results from the education.

THE art can in fact create new wonderful worlds: imaginary but at the same time absolutely real. It can turn into reality many of the fairy tale wonders. For the problem people this might not only be joy and pleasure but also a way to improve oneself (physically and cognitively) and develop skills and emotions. In some cases the art therapy might become a foundation for the development of skills and knowledge applicable in the business world. In any case, it brings joy and satisfaction, emotions, light and mental outlook expansion.

TO sum up the following **conclusions** can be drawn:

THE following functions of the art therapy contribute to the correct guidance of the children:

- ⇒ **Socialization function.** By directing the children's social activity towards society values, powerful socialization mechanisms are put into motion. In this way the children can be actively included into a complete, socially important life and activity.
- ⇒ **Developing function.** By using different forms of art therapy the conditions where each child feels more successful and can cope with a difficult situation is formed. In the same time self-respect and self-esteem are built. They learn to verbalize their emotional experiences and be open and spontaneous when communicating. Bit by bit they gain experience about new work forms, art, control over their own feelings and behavior and social competences.
- ⇒ **Educational function.** The art therapy interaction is built in such way that the children can learn correct communication, empathy, tender feelings towards other coevals, teachers and parents. This contributes to the moral development of the individual, its orientation in the system of moral norms and assimilation of ethical behavior.
- ⇒ **Therapeutic function.** In the art process an atmosphere of good will, understanding communication and security is established. Under the art therapist's control each child gets the possibility of being heard and to attract attention to its own personality.
- ⇒ **Correctional function.** Practically the art therapist helps the child analyze the content of its emotional condition. By reproducing variety of new situations in the child's life it can build more adequate relationships in society.
- ⇒ **Diagnostic function.** The art therapy has considerable diagnostic abilities. In spite of this it is not a diagnostic method in the traditional sense. This is a very delicate and human way of understanding the child, of finding out what its interests are and of identifying the anxiety from its problems.

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