TURKISH JOURNAL OF
APPLIED
SOCIAL WORK

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ABOUT

Turkish Journal of Applied Social Work is an international refereed journal. The journal started its publication life in 2018. The present scientific journal is published in December and June, with two issues per year. The working languages of the journal are English and German. Turkish Journal of Applied Social Work is meeting the academic community with the first issue in December, 2018 and the processes required to be screened in many indexes have already started. Our journal, which is the first academic Social Work Journal in Turkey operating in foreign languages (English and German), is planning to have a new lease on social work and expects the support of the authors. Any publications which can contribute to the development of the social work academic field and the related areas are welcome to our journal.

AIM

Turkish Journal of Applied Social Work started its publication life in 2018. This journal has embarked on the Open Access Policy with the idea that scientific information produced by academics, professionals, and others can be accessed by anyone, both locally and internationally, without any limitation.

SCOPE

Any publications which can contribute to the development of the social work academic field and the related areas are welcome to our journal. Academic studies which were carried out by academicians from social work field, social workers, social work undergraduate and graduate students, professionals from different professions working in the field of social work, and other academic units with social work on mind are the scope of this journal.

PUBLICATION POLICIES

Turkish Journal of Applied Social Work is an international refereed journal that adopts double-blind peer-review process. Editorial board of our journal follows Editorial Policy of the Council of Scientific Committee.

PUBLICATION PERIOD

Our journal is published twice a year in June and December. Publications are made from the following areas, which will contribute to the development of social work discipline and contribute to the literature: Other disciplines assessed in relation to Social Work, Sociology, Medicine, Psychology, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Human Rights, Social Policy, Philosophy, Law, Economics, Health Management, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Gerontology, Geriatrics, Child Development, Special Education.

☪ EDİTÖRLERDEN

Değerli akademisyenler, uygulayıcılar ve okurlarımız;

Yayın hayatına 2018 Aralık ayında başlayan dergimiz, Aralık ve Haziran aylarında yılda iki sayı olmak üzere yayın hayatına devam etmektedir. İlk sayıdan itibaren Türkiye'de sosyal hizmet alanında sadece yabancı dilde çalışmaları kabul eden ilk ve tek sosyal hizmet dergisi olma özelliğini taşıyan dergimiz, bu sayıdan itibaren sadece İngilizce çalışmaları kabul etme politikasını benimsemiştir. Dergimizin kurullarında ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde, onlarca farklı üniversiteden birçok akademisyen yer almakta ve yayın süreçlerine katkı sağlamaktadır. Dergimiz birçok ulusal ve uluslararası akademik endekste taranmakta olup, Dergimizin yüksek prestijli endekslere de başvuru süreci devam etmektedir. Türk Uygulamalı Sosyal Hizmet Dergisi Üniversitelerarası Kurul doçentlik ve Yükseköğretim Kurumu akademik teşvik kriterlerini sağlamaktadır.

Bu sayımızda, eğitim, adalet, aile danışmanlığı ve klinik sosyal hizmet alanlarında önemli katkılar sunan beş makaleyi sizlerle paylaşmaktan mutluluk duyuyoruz. Her biri, alanında uzman araştırmacılar tarafından kaleme alınmış ve önemli bulgular ortaya koyan çalışmalardır.

"Okul Yöneticilerinin Bakış Açısıyla Okul Terki Algısı" başlıklı makalede, okul terkini önlemeye yönelik stratejilerin geliştirilmesi için okul yöneticilerinin perspektifinden değerli görüşler sunulmaktadır. Eğitim sistemimizin en kritik sorunlarından biri olan okul terki, bu çalışmada derinlemesine ele alınmış ve çözüm önerileri tartışılmıştır.

"Çocuk Cinsel İstismarında Adli Görüşmeci" başlıklı makalede, çocuk cinsel istismarına ilişkin adli süreçlerde görüşmeci rolü ve bu süreçte karşılaşılan zorluklar analiz edilmiştir. Adli görüşmecilerin, çocukların travma yaşantılarını en aza indirme ve adaletin sağlanması açısından taşıdığı kritik önem vurgulanmaktadır.

"Kuşaklararası İlişkilerin Sistemik Aile Danışmanlığı Açısından Değerlendirilmesi" makalesi, aile içi dinamiklerin ve kuşaklararası ilişkilerin sistemik aile danışmanlığı bağlamında nasıl ele alınabileceğini incelemektedir. Aile danışmanlarına ve terapistlere, kuşaklararası çatışmaları anlamak ve çözmek için pratik öneriler sunmaktadır.

"Çözüm Odaklı Kısa Süreli Terapi: Sosyal Hizmet ile İlişkisi ve Uygulama Örneği" başlıklı makalede, çözüm odaklı kısa süreli terapinin sosyal hizmet uygulamaları ile nasıl entegre edilebileceği ve bu terapötik yaklaşımın pratikte nasıl kullanıldığı detaylı bir şekilde anlatılmaktadır.

Son olarak, "Sosyal Hizmette Varoluşçu Terapi" makalesi, varoluşçu terapinin sosyal hizmet uygulamalarında nasıl kullanılabileceğini ve bu terapötik yaklaşımın sosyal hizmet uzmanlarına nasıl bir perspektif kazandırabileceğini ele almaktadır.

Dergimizin bu sayısına katkıda bulunan değerli yazarlarımıza, kıymetli görüş ve değerlendirmeleriyle bizlere destek veren hakemlerimize ve dergimizin sizlerle buluşmasına katkı sağlayan ulusal ve uluslararası danışma kurulu üyelerimize en içten teşekkürlerimizi sunarız.

Yeni sayımızda yer alan değerli çalışmaların sosyal hizmet alanının bilgi birikimine katkı sağlayacağına ve başta sosyal hizmet akademisyenleri, uygulayıcıları ve öğrencileri olmak üzere tüm okuyucularımıza yeni bakış açıları sunacağına inanıyoruz...

Keyifli okumalar dileriz.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Elvan ATAMTÜRK	**Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zafer DANIŞ**
Editör	**Baş Editör**

🇬🇧 FROM THE EDITORS

Dear academics, practitioners, and readers,

Our journal, which started its publication life in December 2018, continues to be published twice a year in December and June. Our journal, which has the distinction of being the first and only social work journal in Turkey to accept only foreign language studies in the field of social work since its first issue, has now adopted the policy of accepting only English language studies from this issue onward. Many academicians from numerous different universities at the national and international levels take part in the boards of our journal and contribute to the publication processes. Our journal is indexed in many national and international academic databases, and the application process to highly prestigious indexes is ongoing. The Turkish Journal of Applied Social Work fulfills the criteria for associate professorship of the Interuniversity Council and academic incentives of the Council of Higher Education.

In this issue, we are pleased to share with you five articles that make important contributions in the fields of education, justice, family counseling, and clinical social work. Each article is written by researchers who are experts in their fields and present important findings.

In the second article titled "Perception of School Dropout with the Perspective of School Administrators", valuable insights are presented from the perspective of school administrators for the development of strategies to prevent school dropout. School dropout, one of the most critical problems of our education system, is discussed in depth in this study, and solutions are explored.

In the article titled "Forensic Interviewer in Child Sexual Abuse", the role of the interviewer in forensic processes related to child sexual abuse and the difficulties encountered in this process are analyzed. The critical importance of forensic interviewers in minimizing the traumatic experiences of children and ensuring justice is emphasized.

The article "Assessment of Intergenerational Relations in Terms of Systemic Family Counseling" examines how family dynamics and intergenerational relationships can be addressed in the context of systemic family counseling. It offers practical suggestions for family counselors and therapists to understand and resolve intergenerational conflicts

"Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: Relationship with Social Work and Application Example" explains in detail how solution-focused brief therapy can be integrated with social work practice and how this therapeutic approach is used in practice.

Finally, the article "Existential Therapy in Social Work" discusses how existential therapy can be used in social work practice and how this therapeutic approach can provide a perspective to social workers.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our valuable authors who contributed to this issue of our journal, to our referees who supported us with their valuable opinions and evaluations, and to our national and international advisory board members who helped our journal reach you.

We believe that the valuable studies in our new issue will enrich the knowledge base of the social work field and provide new perspectives for all our readers, especially social work academics, practitioners, and students.

We wish you an enjoyable and insightful reading experience...

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Asst. Prof. Elvan ATAMTÜRK
Editor

Prof. Mehmet Zafer DANIŞ
Editor-in-Chief

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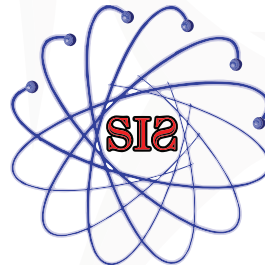
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TURKISH JOURNAL OF
APPLIED SOCIAL WORK

PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL DROPOUT WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Okul Yöneticilerinin Bakış Açısıyla Okul Terki Algısı

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ABSTRACT

In today's society, school dropout is a widespread problem in every country, regardless of whether it is a developed, developing or underdeveloped country. It is a social as well as an educational problem with multiple causes, although the dropout situation of each child differs from each other. The aim of this study is to evaluate the causes of school dropout from the perspective of school administrators and to present a description of this problem from the perspective of administrators. According to the results and evaluations obtained, the problem will be addressed comprehensively and suggestions will be made to fill the literature gap. The data obtained in the study were analyzed qualitatively using an inductive approach. School administrators working in Sakarya province participated in the study. According to the results obtained, these administrators mostly emphasized that the family factor is the main cause of the existing problems, as well as the compulsory education process, i.e. the forced attendance of the child to school, financial difficulties, academic failures of the child have significant effects on the dropout and absenteeism of the student.

Keywords: Adolescent, dropout, absenteeism, school administrator.

ÖZET

Okul terki günümüz toplumunda gelişmiş, gelişmekte olan veya gelişmemiş ülkeler fark etmeksizin her ülkede görülen kapsamı oldukça geniş olan bir sorun durumudur. Her çocuğun göstermiş olduğu okul terki durumu birbirinden farklılık göstermekle birlikte birden çok sebebi olan sosyal ve aynı zamanda eğitsel bir problemdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul terkinin nedenlerinin okul idarecileri gözüyle değerlendirilmesini sağlamak ve bu sorunun idarecilerin gözünden betimlenmesini ortaya koymaktır. Elde edilen sonuçlara ve değerlendirmelere göre sorunun kapsamlı ele alınması sağlanacak, literatürel boşluğun doldurulması için gereken önerilere yer verilecektir. Çalışmada elde edilen veriler, tümevarım yaklaşımı kullanılarak, nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmaya Sakarya ilinde görev yapan okul idarecileri katılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre söz konusu idareciler çoğunlukla var olan sorunların temel sebebinin aile faktörü olduğunu vurgulamışlardır, bunun yanısıra zorunlu eğitim sürecinin yani çocuğun okula zorla gelmesinin, maddi olanaksızlıkların, çocuğun akademik başarısızlıklarının öğrencinin okul terki ve devamsızlığı noktası önemli etkileri söz konusudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşlılar, huzurevi, kognisyon, teknoloji, sosyal hizmet.

INTRODUCTION

School dropout is defined as a student's premature departure from the school where he/she is studying and the emergence of situations of non-attendance or inability to attend the current level of education. School is an environment where the individual not only undergoes the education and training process but also engages in social activities and events. When the school environment is considered in this context, it contains many elements, it is a mixed place where both the emergence of dropout, the education and training process and socialization are seen. When the concept of school dropout is examined in the literature, it is associated with the concepts of dropping out of school, dropping out and leaving school in Turkey. Until the 18th Ministry of National Education Council, there was no literary definition and content in the literature (Özdemir et al., 2010).

Two types of definitions are emphasized in the concept of school dropout: formal and functional. In its functional meaning, it is seen as a problem in which the effects it will have on the future life of the student and the reasons that lead to the problem are investigated. In the official sense, it is considered as a compulsory education process in terms of the time that the student should spend in education and training activities in terms of age and population age (Santibanez & Guarino, 2021).

According to the researches, it has been observed that individuals who drop out of school are unemployed or even if they get a job, they do not work in this job for many years and work with low salaries. They are more prone to crime and feel serious anxiety about the future (Karapür, 2017). When school dropout is analyzed in terms of gender, it is at a higher level in females compared to males, and considering OECD data, this rate is 41% for males and 46% for females in Turkey. At the same time, Turkey is the 6th country with the highest rate among OECD countries (OECD, 2015).

Multiple reasons for school dropout are emphasized. According to the general maladjustment theory, students drop out of school due to different behaviors observed in themselves, and not feeling belonging to school and alienation from school over time are among these factors. The maladaptive group membership theory, on the other hand, looks at school dropout and peer relationships, and if

there are problems in peer relationships, these people are more likely to drop out of school. School socialization theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the structural features of the school in school dropout.

If the principal or other employees working in the school have an apathetic structure, it becomes possible for school dropout to occur.

According to the Family Inadequate Socialization Theory, the educational level and background of the family are influential on students' dropping out of school.

Failure of the family to support the child's education leads to increased dropout.

According to the structural characteristics theory, the fact that an individual belongs to a different religion, ethnicity, gender and demographic characteristics in a school causes dropout (Taylı, 2008:91; Zorbaz, 2018:25-26; Küçükarslan, 2019:228).

There are certain risk factors related to the causes of school dropout and these are expressed in three different ways: social risk factors, academic risk factors and risk factors arising from behaviors related to academic status.

- Social risk factors are risk factors arising from an individual's race, gender, ethnicity, family structure and the city and socio-economic structure in which they live.

- Academic risk factors include an individual's innate talent, test scores on exams, or a history of grade repetition.

- Risk factors arising from behaviors related to academic status; school grades, failures, communication and interaction with the school are included in this scope (Lee & Burkam, 2000:4).

At the same time, in another study, it is mentioned that it is difficult to determine the causes of school dropout and that there are two different risks for students to drop out of school. The first one is individual factors, which are related to students' characteristics, attitudes, behaviors and experiences, and contextual factors, which are related to students' relationships with their families, schools, communities and peers (Rumberger (2019:7).

METHOD

The research is a qualitative study in which the data obtained through a semi-structured form were used to determine the views of school principals working in different school types in Sakarya province on school dropout and absenteeism.

Semi-structured interview technique was used to collect the data. The main purpose of qualitative research is to reach the emotional depth of the inner worlds related to the subject by examining the

sample in more depth (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Interviews were conducted in line with this purpose.

Working Group

This study was conducted with 30 school administrators from different school types in Sakarya province. The administrators participating in the study were informed about the purpose and content of the study. Of the participants, 21 were male and 9 were female administrators who have been working as administrators in educational institutions for many years.

Data Collection Tool

In order to collect the data, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers based on the opinions of field experts was used.

Data Collection

30 school administrators in Sakarya province were asked to answer questions about the reasons for student absenteeism and dropout, their awareness of absenteeism and dropout, the effects of school administration, teachers, friends, families, social environment, academic achievement anxiety on absenteeism, and the strategies used by administrators and teachers to reduce dropout and absenteeism. They were also asked for their opinions and suggestions on how to reduce dropout and absenteeism. The interviews lasted approximately 40-50 minutes and data collection was conducted at the institutions where the principals worked.

Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the permission of school principals. The data obtained were coded line by line on a special form. The coded pages were read one by one and the main concepts were extracted and written on the analysis pages (Cohen & Manion, 2007). Considering the reliability of the research, "direct quotations" were used in the opinions of the principals. In this way, the necessary concepts and relationships will be reached to explain the collected data. The initials of the high schools where they work were written in parentheses.

Ethical Consideration

Necessary permissions (ethical, administrative, etc.) were obtained before starting the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. After a detailed explanation, informed consent was obtained from the participants.

FINDINGS

The qualitative data obtained as a result of the analysis are given below in codes, themes and categories by making direct quotations from the content of the interviews with school principals.

Findings on the Reasons for Students' Absenteeism and Dropout

As a result of the interviews with school administrators, factors such as insufficient financial means, academic failures, inadequate readiness levels of students, lack of importance attached to education by the family and indifference of the environment constitute the main reasons for school dropout. In addition, some administrators emphasized that the obligation to attend school, the increase in the number of foreign students, the high number of courses and heavy courses, and the misguidance of students in secondary school were important in school dropout.

> "Financial inadequacies, academic failure, foreign nationals, lack of expectations and goals for education, wrong circle of friends outside school (ADL).

> Dislike of school and reading, lack of readiness, obligation to contribute to the family, technology addiction (SAL). Family disintegration, economic inadequacies, low cultural level (ŞEOAL), absenteeism and dropouts increase as course failure increases in students who choose the wrong school from middle school and attend Anatolian high school (SERAL), economic conditions, environment and family conditions have an impact (SEAL), negative social interactions at school, problems in classroom interactions, some parents demand that their students continue the high school part of compulsory education in a formal way (KAL)."

Findings Related to Awareness of Students' Absenteeism and Dropout Tendencies (Student-Family-Administrator Awareness)

In response to the question 'awareness of students' absenteeism and dropout tendencies', school administrators tried to look at the question from the perspective of parents and students in a multidimensional way. While some administrators stated that both students and parents were not aware of absenteeism and dropping out of school, that is, they did not care about this situation, others stated that they were aware and cared about it.

School administrators also noted that some parents develop moods based on the period after their child starts school. "*Some of the students drop out of school out of necessity and some consciously (SAPAL), Parents are aware of the situation by saying let's get him started, let's give him one last try, but this process can sometimes turn into a painful process between the school and the parents (AIHL), It doesn't make much difference for divided families (SERAL), Students are aware of their absenteeism, they think they can go to open education and finish high school (SİHL), Those who are absent to help with family chores are generally uncomfortable with absenteeism (SAPAL), They are definitely*

not aware. School environment, achievement status, etc. (ADL), Students are aware of absenteeism, classes are informed by branch teachers in advance (FSL)" at the same time, there were also administrators who expressed opinions about students' awareness *"Students' awareness of absenteeism is generally low. Many students are not aware of the seriousness of issues such as absenteeism and dropping out of school and do not know about the long-term consequences of these issues. The fact that our parents stand behind their students' absenteeism is seen as a major negative (KAL)".*

Findings on the Effects of School Administration on Students' Absenteeism and Dropout

In response to the question about the effects of school administration on students' absenteeism, some school administrators emphasized that school administration had little effect, that absenteeism over 5 days and not being able to get a document reduced absenteeism, and that a few students could be brought to school through home and parent visits. Lack of interest in students and too many rules and regulations also lead to absenteeism. School management should also control absenteeism.

> *"Positive attitude of the school administration and strong communication decreases dropout, while harsh, rude and hurtful approach increases dropout (ADL); Failure to take care of students sufficiently, not treating students as adults, lack of a culture of forgiveness (EİHL); The school administration's very strict work on issues such as dress code and etc., apart from the regulations, may be effective, this may have little effect (SAPAL); A few students can be won through home and parent visits (SIHL); The issue of not being able to get a document in case of absenteeism of 5 days or more has reduced absenteeism (SEPAL)";*

there is also a view that school administrators have no influence on school absenteeism;

"Maybe it's 1% (FSL)"; Those who care about tracking absenteeism are concerned *"Regular follow-up of absenteeism reduces dropout (ŞEOA)".*

In addition, some administrators emphasized the early intervention processes of the administration in absenteeism, *"By monitoring students' absenteeism and academic performance, school management aims to intervene early in students' problems and keep students in school. In this way, it can improve students' academic achievement, make students happier and more successful at school, and increase students' future job opportunities. Therefore, it is extremely important for school management to work seriously on students' absenteeism and dropouts and develop various strategies to ensure that students stay in school (KAL)".*

Findings on the Effects of Teachers on Students' Absenteeism and School Dropout

According to the data obtained from school administrators to determine what kind of effect teachers have on school absenteeism, teachers' ignorance of students' problems and speaking in a demoraliz-

ing and insulting way; teachers' inability to make students like the lessons, teachers' inability to give self-confidence to students, teachers' inability to get down to the level of students, and teachers' inability to produce solutions for the negative climate that develops in the classroom environment affects them. In adittion, there are also opinions that teachers have little or no responsibility for student absenteeism and school dropout. When all opinions are evaluated, it is seen that although teachers' indifference is the main reason for dropout, teachers' teaching style at the beginning and end of the semester is also effective in absenteeism. *"Teachers' ignorance of students' problems and their humiliating and demoralizing attitudes in class increase dropout rates (AIHL); Having zero-performing teachers, teachers' failure to get down to the level of the students' achievements, the negative climate in the classroom environment (SAPAL); Teachers are indifferent towards students who are absent and likely to drop out (SIHL); Regular follow-up of teachers can reduce parental indifference (SERAL); No effect is seen (ŞEOAL); It is around 5 percent due to ownership (FSL)".* In addition to these views, the psychological (motivating) effect of teachers was also mentioned; *"Teachers can also track students' absences and intervene early in students' problems. Thus, they can find solutions to improve students' achievement by keeping them in school. In this way, teachers can also increase students' self-confidence, make them more self-reliant and contribute more to students' plans for the future. Therefore, it is extremely important for teachers to work seriously on students' dropout and absenteeism and to develop various strategies to ensure that students stay in school (KAL)".*

Findings on the Effects of Peers, Friends and Social Environment on Students' Absenteeism and School Dropout

According to the data obtained from the school administrators to determine what kind of effect friends and peer relations have on school absenteeism, school administrators emphasized that they have a great effect at this point, that this effect is less in primary school, that the family should play a role in following up friends, and that friends have an incentive for absenteeism. In some views, its impact is mentioned but not emphasized as the most important role."*The wrong environment of friends increases school dropout and even negatively affects the efforts to ensure student attendance. (ADL); Wrong choice of friends, dilemmas with the desire to get along with friends, Socialization in virtual environments (FSL); The social environment of the student and the school has a great impact on school dropout. Sometimes students drop out even if they do not want to (AIHL); they may be absent due to motivations such as proving themselves, hanging out with their friends (SAPAL); Negativities, bad examples, etc. in the environment where the student is suddenly in, the abundance of negative activities in the environment, the desire to spend free time (SEAL); The high number of school courses and the fact that in schools without exams, friends may influence each other and drop out of school (SIHL); It negatively affects school attendance by creating role models (SERAL)."* Some school administrators have influence, but not completely *"It has an impact but it is not among the most important reasons, around 20% are influenced by their friends (ŞEOAL); Students are often under the influence*

of their peer groups and these groups can influence students' behavior and decisions. Friend groups can influence whether students stay in school or drop out. For this reason, the choice of a student's peer group is something that students should pay close attention to, as the peer group can influence the student in good and bad ways. Students can make more informed decisions about peer and friend influences and increase their tendency to stay in school (KAL)".

Findings on Family Influence on Absenteeism and School Dropout in Students

According to the data obtained from the school administrators in determining what kind of effect the family has on school absenteeism, school administrators emphasize that the family has a great influence on this point compared to other variables. Factors such as socio-economic structure, cultural variables, the family's status as a model, the family's expectations from the student, etc. directly affect this. At the same time, the educational and socio-economic level of the family has a direct impact. In addition, the lack of interest of families with children in vocational high schools also affects this situation.

> *"The family has the greatest influence on student success and absenteeism. With close attention and follow-up, there is no absenteeism (ADL). The culture of poverty, divorced and dispersed families, unnecessary and too much tolerance, family businesses (FSL), Indifference, economic and division affect a lot (AIHL), Family's indifference is very effective as they do not face any negative consequences in case of absenteeism (SAPAL), The family expects success above the student's capacity, the student whose academic level is not sufficient prefers absenteeism and dropout (SIHL), Family and the economic and cultural level of the family are the most important factors (SERAL)".*

In addition, the fact that the family has a seasonal worker structure also affects this situation. For example, according to one administrator, *"Families' livelihoods or being agricultural workers (SEOAL)"* covers this. Some administrators also emphasized school-family cooperation; *"The family has a great influence on students' absenteeism and dropout rates. Families can motivate students to stay in school, direct students to activities that are in line with their interests, and ensure that students participate in out-of-school activities. In addition, by providing academic support to students, families can help students succeed in school (KAL)."*

Findings on Academic Achievement Anxiety and Its Effect on Absenteeism and School Dropout in Students

When school administrators were asked to determine what kind of an effect academic achievement has on absenteeism, the data revealed that school administrators think that absenteeism increases especially in students for whom the goal of academic achievement causes intense anxiety. They also

believe that those who do not achieve academically tend to be absent. Fear of being unemployed after school can also lead to absenteeism.

> *"Having academic success and the goal of academic success have a positive effect on students' attendance and success (FSL); Expecting academic success from students who do not have academic success leads to absenteeism (AİHL); Students do not want to follow a course they do not like (SAPAL); Academic success anxiety can help students succeed in school, but it can also increase their tendency to drop out of school. Students may experience anxiety as a result of failing in some subjects or comparing themselves with successful students. This anxiety can make it difficult for students to stay in school and may strengthen their thoughts of dropping out (KAL)". Apart from this, the opinions of school administrators from schools where there is no academic anxiety are that this situation does not affect the students too much. "I don't think it has much effect (SİHL), They don't think about it much (SERAL)"*

Findings on the Strategies Applied by Administrators and Teachers to Reduce Absenteeism and Dropout among Students

When we look at the strategies implemented by administrators and teachers to reduce absenteeism and dropout rates, we see that they emphasized the following main topics: intensive activation of the counselling service, development of projects, healthy interactions with parents, and special attention to follow-up by the administration.

"Notifying the parents of absences on the same day and at the end of the day, trying to solve the student's family environment and problems through home visits (ADL); First of all, the school administration makes efforts to communicate and inform the parents. When parents are informed in a timely manner, they can intervene in absenteeism and the situation of abandonment decreases (FSL); Visiting families, guidance of students by the counseling service, improvement of environmental and economic conditions (AIHL); Notifying parents of absences via SMS, one-to-one interviews with absent students (SAPAL); Parent communication, following up and taking care of students, sending absenteeism letters to parents (SEAL); Showing the school's garden environment and sports activities are effective (SIHL); One-to-one meetings with parents, reporting absences, vounseling teacher, social activities, school fees (SERAL); Absenteeism prevention projects, positive climate created in the classroom, positive climate created in the school, increasing social activities (SEOAL)." In line with the strategies of administrators and teachers, the administrators itemized them as follows;

"Early Intervention: *School administrators and teachers can intervene early by monitoring students' absenteeism and potential dropouts. This can ensure that students are supported to stay in school and have access to the necessary resources.*

Academic Support: *Teachers can help students succeed in school by providing academic support. This can boost students' self-confidence and keep them in school.*

Directing to Areas of Interests: Orienting Students to their interests can make them more motivated to stay in school. This can reduce student retention and dropout rates.

Family and Community Cooperation: School administrators, teachers and parents can collaborate to ensure that students stay in school. It is also important to use resources available in the community to help students stay in school.

Extracurricular Activities: Engaging students in out-of-school activities can make them more motivated to stay in school. These activities can increase students' self-confidence and keep them in school.

Student Support Programs; School administrators and teachers can develop student support programs to help students stay in school. These programs can be designed in accordance with students' needs and can provide support for students to stay in school (KAL)."

Administrators' Opinions and Suggestions for Reducing Student Absenteeism and Dropout

The opinions and suggestions of the administrators for reducing absenteeism and dropout rates in schools focused on reducing the duration of compulsory education, conducting comprehensive research by the ministry and directing children to open or distance education programs if they do not want to go to school. It was mentioned that efforts should be made to connect absent students with their social environment and that vocational secondary schools should be opened. *"Attendance can be prevented by connecting absent students with their close friends, and by including them in activities, competitions, projects, etc. at school (SAPAL); Each child should be educated according to his/her interests and abilities, vocational secondary schools should be opened (FSL); The Ministry should conduct more detailed workshops on absenteeism (SIHL), Compulsory education should be abolished except for primary school (SERAL); Students who do not attend should not be forced, there should be open secondary school or distance education starting from the 6th grade (ŞEOAL)".*

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the research and the data obtained, school administrators see the family as the most important reason for students' absenteeism and school dropout.

At the same time, financial inadequacies, students' lack of goals, students' unwillingness to study and read, economic conditions, excessive number of courses, parents' lack of interest, and academic failure of the child are other factors affecting attendance and dropout.

Administrators do not have a clear and definite view on their awareness of students' dropout and absenteeism. Some of the administrators think that they are fully aware, some think that they are partially aware, and some think that they are not aware at all. However, proportionally, school ad-

ministrators think that there is no clear awareness of students' dropout and absenteeism. Therefore, first of all, families should be informed about the seriousness of the situation and students should be reached through their families.

There is a dominant view that school administration does not have much influence on school dropout and absenteeism in terms of self-criticism. Only some practices within the school trigger dropout and absenteeism. For example, the harsh, rude and oppressive attitude of the administration, not protecting the student, not treating the student as an adult, and not caring about forgiveness trigger dropout. Some school administrators made suggestions on school dropout and absenteeism and emphasized the impact of increasing the function of the guidance service, regular follow-up of absenteeism and healthy communication with the family on reducing absenteeism and school dropout.

 In this respect, studies should be carried out for group counseling and group guidance activities that are structured and have specific stages, psychological counseling services should be carried out by school psychological counselors, and group guidance services should be carried out by class and branch teachers at school. It is emphasized that school administrators have little influence on teachers' views on absenteeism and dropout, and it is mentioned that some teacher behaviors trigger the process.

For example, monotonous teaching, disinterested behavior, and an oppressive attitude in the classroom are seen as a triggering factor for absenteeism. From this point of view, teachers should include different approaches that students are not used to, such as hybrid model, differentiated instruction, flipped model, etc. in the lesson teaching process.

According to the findings obtained according to school administrators, the most influential and important factor after the family factor is friends, peers and the social environment. School administrators think that situations such as choosing the wrong friends, role model behaviors, and proving oneself are effective in terms of school dropout and absenteeism, and state that the negativities and bad examples in the individual's environment affect the individual. Some administrators think that the influence of friends and peers is less, especially at the primary school level.

In this context, it is necessary to make the school policing practice more functional, to monitor the social environment and friends with negative tendencies and predisposition to substance use in schools, and to warn and educate families about this issue. Almost all school administrators think that the most important factor in school dropout and absenteeism is the family. Family fragmentation, poverty culture, too much tolerance, indifference, low educational and socio-economic status, and expectation of academic achievement above the student's potential trigger absenteeism and dropout.

The Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the institutions and organizations affiliated with these ministries should organize trainings and visit families as much as possible. Since families find it difficult to attend trainings, it

is very important that trainers go directly to the families and visit them in village and neighborhood coffee houses.

School administrators think that academic anxiety has no effect on absenteeism and school dropout. Administrators are of the opinion that students with academic inadequacy and lack of interest in school and lessons are more likely to be absent. The student's interest in attending a course that he/ she does not like and does not want to attend is quite low. In this context, students with low interest in school and academic courses should be directed to vocational education centers immediately.

Strategies used by school administrators to reduce absenteeism and dropout rates include home and parent visits, SMS system, positive approach to students, guidance, creating a positive climate at school, home and parent visits, prioritizing sports activities and prioritizing dialogue with parents.
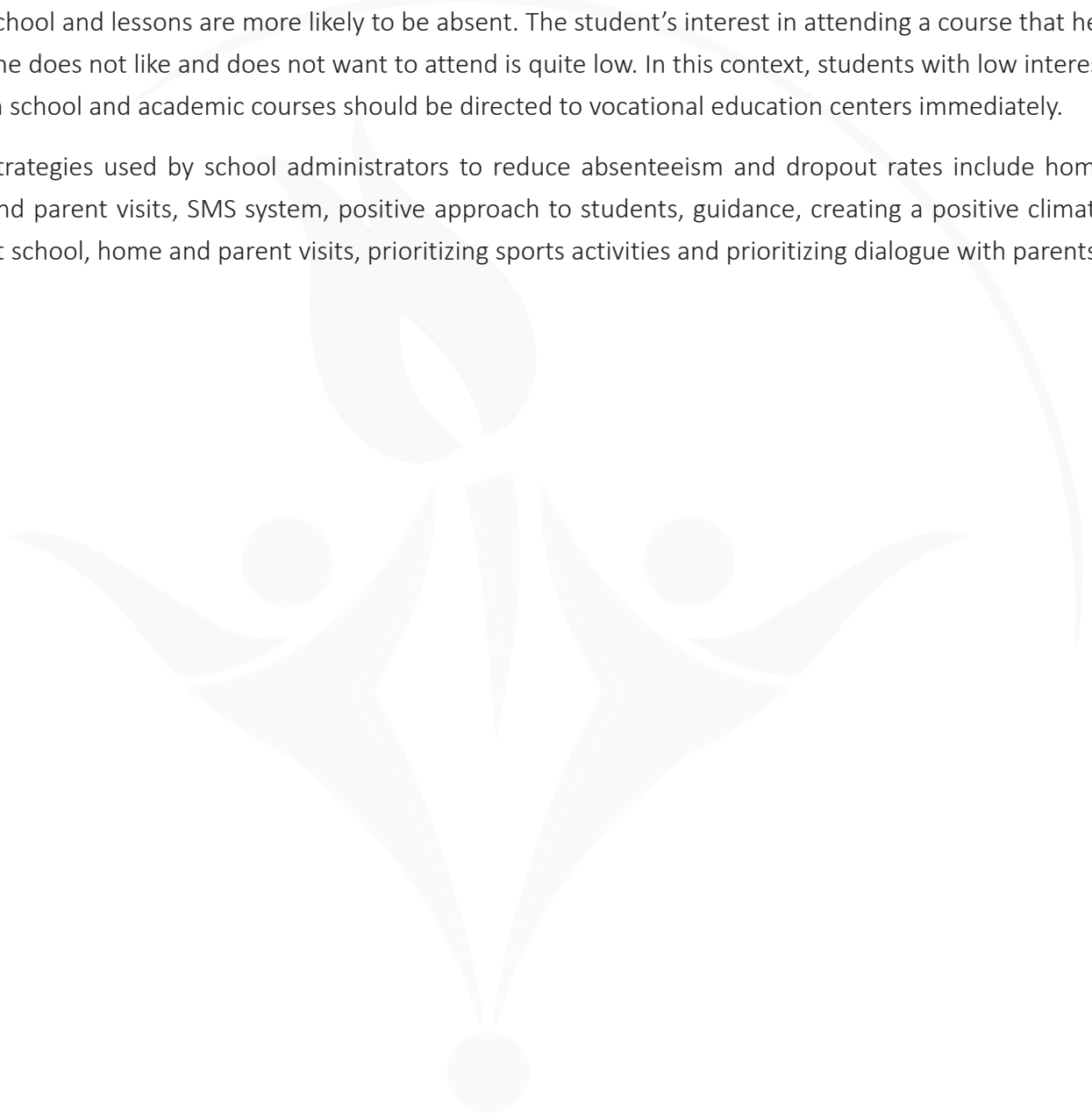
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FORENSIC INTERVIEWER IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Çocuk Cinsel İstismarında Adli Görüşmeci

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ABSTRACT

Children today are frequently subjected to abuse. Among these, sexual abuse is the type of abuse that affects children most negatively. Since sexual abuse usually takes place out of sight and in an environment where no one is around, there are no eyewitnesses other than the child victim and the perpetrator of the incident. This situation increases the importance of children's statements in the investigation of abuse. Research conducted in Turkey in recent years shows that cases of sexual abuse have increased. The traumatic events that children are exposed to show that they need to be protected more carefully. In addition, supporting and monitoring children who are victims of sexual abuse inside and outside the courthouse is another important requirement. Having experienced, well educated professionals to carry out these tasks will facilitate this process. In Turkey, especially as of 2010, important steps have been taken regarding forensic interviews with child victims of sexual abuse. Child Monitoring Centers opened within the Ministry of Health as of 2012 and Forensic Interview Rooms opened within the Ministry of Justice as of 2017 attract attention as very important centers for forensic interviews with child victims. Children who are victims of sexual abuse are often reluctant to tell about the abuse they have experienced to someone they have not met before. In this regard, persuading children to be interviewed and obtaining detailed and valid information from the child depends on the knowledge level and skills of forensic interviewers. Forensic interviewers play very important roles in protecting children within the judicial system and catching perpetrators.

Keywords: Forensic interviewer, forensic social work, information, sexual abuse, perpetrator, center

ÖZET

Çocuklar günümüzde sıklıkla fena muameleye maruz kalmaktadır. Bunların içinde özellikle cinsel istismar çocukları en fazla olumsuz etkileyen istismar tipi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Cinsel istismar genelde gözden uzak ve kimsenin olmadığı bir ortamda gerçekleştiğinden mağdur çocuk ve olayın faili dışında başka bir görgü tanığı bulunmamaktadır. Bu durum istismar olayının soruşturulmasında çocukların ifadelerinin önemini arttırmaktadır.

Türkiye'de son yıllarda yapılan araştırmalar cinsel istismar vakalarının arttığını göstermektedir. Çocukların maruz kaldığı travmatik olaylar onların çok daha dikkatli şekilde korunması gerektiğini gösterir niteliktedir. Bunun yanı sıra cinsel istismar mağduru çocukların adliye içinde ve dışında desteklenmesi ve takibinin yapılması da bir diğer önemli gerekliliktir. Bunların gerçekleştirilmesinde deneyimli, iyi eğitimli meslek elemanlarının olması bu süreci kolaylaştıracaktır.

Türkiye'de özellikle 2010 yılı itibariyle cinsel istismar mağduru çocukla adli görüşme konusunda önemli adımlar atılmak-

tadır. 2012 yılı itibariyle Sağlık Bakanlığı bünyesinde açılan Çocuk İzlem Merkezleri ve 2017 yılı itibariyle Adalet Bakanlığı bünyesinde açılan Adli Görüşme Odaları mağdur çocukla adli görüşme konusunda oldukça önemli merkezler olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Mağdur çocuklar çoğunlukla yaşadıkları istismarı daha önce tanımadıkları birine anlatmak konusunda isteksiz davranmaktadır. Bu konuda çocukların görüşme için ikna edilmesi ve çocuktan detaylı ve geçerli bilgi alınması adli görüşmecilerin bilgi düzeyine ve yeteneklerine bağlı olmaktadır. Adli görüşmeciler çocukların adli sistem içinde korunması ve faillerin yakalanması hususunda oldukça önemli roller üstlenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Adli görüşmeci, adli sosyal hizmet, bilgi, cinsel istismar, fail, merkez.

INTRODUCTION

Today, child sexual abuse emerges as a global public health problem affecting millions of children around the World (Burrows & Powell, 2014). The problem of child sexual abuse includes problems of neglect, mistreatment, psychological, emotional and physical abuse. Children are the victims most affected by this abuse (Benuto & Garrick, 2016). For instance in the UK according to a report (NSPCC and Tower Hamlets, ACPC, 1996) one million children are abused each year (Alridge & Wood, 1998). It is estimated that the rate of children who are victims of sexual abuse in developed countries is between 20% and 36% (Price-Robertson et al., 2010; as cited in Burrows & Powell, 2014).

There has been an increase in the number of children applying to the police and gendarmerie as victims in Turkey in recent years. According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute, while the number of children who were exposed to sexual abuse in 2021 was 24,400, this number reached 31,890 in 2022 (TÜİK, 2023). This information suggests that more intensive measures should be taken to protect children against sexual abuse. Social workers fulfill many roles such as advocacy, consultancy and expertise for individuals at risk (Çalış, 2022).

Since there is not enough physical evidence in most cases of sexual abuse, the statements of the victim, suspects and witnesses play a very important role in revealing the truth (Güllü & Erden, 2022). Research shows that, contrary to popular belief, there is not enough medical evidence in cases where children are subjected to sexual abuse. The rate of cases with medical evidence such as genital abnormalities, bruises, etc.as a result of sexual abuse among the total incident was announced as 4% (Heger, Tiscon, Velasquez & Bernier, 2002 as cited in Cirlugea & O'Donohue, 2016). In cases of child sexual abuse, there are generally no other eyewitnesses other than the child victim of abuse and the perpetrator. This situation increases the importance of child's testimony (Bussey, 2009). There are two purposes in forensic interviews, the first one is to know what happened? And if something happend, who did it? (Milne & Powell, 2010).

When we look at the literature, we see that the effects of sexual abuse on children, forensic examination etc. are mostly discussed. Differently, this study will focus on the place of the forensic interviewer in the forensic interview with the child victim of sexual abuse. Also multiple forensic interviews with children, forensic interview protocols and forensic interview centers will be discussed.

SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

Today, child sexual abuse occurs almost everywhere, regardless of ethnicity and socio economic class. In Turkey, migration from villages to cities, the necessity of spouses to work due to economic difficulties and the prevalence of smartphone use among children make children more vulnerable (Batman & Gökçearslan, 2022). A report about a child who has been subjected to sexual abuse can occur at any time. Because the child can express sexual abuse at any time (Krueger, 2016).

There are number of factors that play a role in a child's exposure to sexual abuse. Among these; the child needs care and assistance due to his age, developmental characteristics and physical disabilities. Family related factors are; the parents' past history of abuse, marriage at a young age, alcohol and substance use, low education level, psychological problems in the family, broken family, having many children, and inadequate relationships with the child (İbiloğlu, Atlı, Oto & Özkan, 2018 as cited in Bacıoğlu & Kaya, 2020).

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

Forensic interviews are an extremely important tool in investigating cases of child abuse. In many cases, the forensic interview is the first communication established with the child victim in the judicial environment and serves as a guide in the investigation of the abuse incident (Children's Bureau, 2023). Forensic interview is the process of listening to, recording and preparing a report for the child who is included in the judicial system as a victim or witness (Atılgan, Yağcıoğlu & Çavdar, 2014). The main purpose of conducting a forensic interview regarding the alleged sexual abuse of a child is to obtain definitive information about whether the abuse occurred (Yemişçigil, 2019). Sexual abuse generally creates a sense of shame in the individual, and for this reason many children keep the incident secret (Tyler & Cauce, 2002). For this reason, it is believed that research should be conducted on why children keep their abuse secret, what obstacles exist, and ensuring that the incident is explained (Cronch, Viljoen & Hansen, 2006). While conducting a forensic interview with the child; It would be appropriate to take into account the emotional state of the child and wait until the child feels safe without keeping him/her under time pressure (Ackerman, 2010 as cited in Güllü & Erden, 2022). The emergence of a sexual abuse case causes the beginning of a damaging process for both the child and her family. They generally avoid talking about this issue and seek mental health support (Hinds & Giardino; as cited in Büken, Kapoğlu, Dinçer & Öbek, 2023). It is thought that this situation reveals the necessity for the forensic interviewer to evaluate the case from a holistic perspective in terms of the child and her family in case of child sexual abuse.

Children must have certain skills in order to express the abuse they experience in a forensic interview. For example, children should be able to communicate with the other person, distinguish truth from lies, and know the importance of telling the truth. Research shows that even 4 years old children can

distinguish lies from reality (Arrigo & Shipley, 2003). Children generally tend to keep the events secret due to threats and punishments. Perpetrators of abuse can buy gifts for children they victimized, thus ensuring that they keep what happened to them secret.

For this reason, everything the child tells about sexual abuse should be taken seriously (Akço et al., 2003).

The place where the forensic interview with the child will be held should be private, child-friendly and not distracting. The phenomenon of confidentiality is very necessary in terms of establishing a connection with the child and making the child safe (APSAC, 2002; Saywitz, Lyon & Goodman, 2011). Another important element is that the forensic interview location is physically safe (Russell, 2004). It is also beneficial to have a suitable seating area ready for the child (Saywitz & Camparo, 1998 as cited in Rohrabaugh, London & Hall, 2016). Except those; it is necessary to video record the interview, provide a supportive interview environment, and use evidence-based memory and communication strategies (Saywitz & Camparo, 2009).

Forensic interviews with child victims of sexual abuse are carried out by an impartial professional who uses research and application techniques as part of a comprehensive investigation process and completed certified forensic interview training (Newlin et al., 2015 as cited in Güllü & Erden, 2022).

FORENSIC INTERVIEWER

Obtaining information from a child victim of sexual abuse is generally associated with the skills and training of forensic interviewer who conducts the interview. For example, a study conducted in England revealed that a quality forensic interview with a qualified forensic interviewer (London, 2008). Training of forensic interviewers is important in this context (Block, Foster, Pierce, Berkoff & Runyan, 2013).

Forensic interviewers have important duties in the judicial interview process (Güllü, 2020). During interviews with child victims of sexual abuse, forensic interviewers have important duties in protecting children and distinguishing between innocents and suspects (Malloy, La Rooy & Lamb, 2002). Interviewing is described as a complex skill. This is a communication exchange in which the interviewee and the interviewer play a role together (Dando & Milne, 2009). In a forensic interview environment, what kind of questions are asked, the frequency of asking questions, and the scope of the interview play an important role at the time of the interview (Eisen, Goodman, Davis & Qin, 1999).

While a forensic interviewer is conducting a forensic interview with a child victim of sexual abuse; the interview which includes how the abuse occurred, the identity and characteristics of the abuser and the details of the incident, is carried out in a language appropriate to the child's age, using anatomical pictures and, if necessary, accompanied by games and toys. The aim here is to get the necessary information using language suitable for the child. During the interview, the difference between good

touch and bad touch is explained in accordance with the child's age and developmental characteristics, and the interview ends with a small education reminding that the child's body is special (Bağ & Alşen, 2016).

During the forensic interview, the child is expected to tell the story as it happened without being interrupted. Thank you for what you explained from time throughout the interview. The event is detailed with open-ended questions without asking judgmental, biased questions. If the child tells irrelevant things during the interview, his speech is waited for him to finish and then the relevant question is asked (Bayrak, Gürhan & Karakaş, 2021).

People remember events in different ways, not in chronological order. For this reason, the forensic interviewer should allow the child to describe the event he/she experienced in order he/she wishes whenever he/she wants without interrupting (Milne et al., 2007). The forensic interviewer must also allocate sufficient time to get to know and understand the child. This gives the specialist detailed information about the child's life and the child's development level (Dokgöz & Kar, 2017).

Children may be reluctant to tell their experiences to a forensic interviewer who does not have sufficient knowledge about a traumatic event such as sexual abuse (Orbach & Shiolach, 2007). Therefore, the forensic interviewer must be familiar with current valid interview techniques and supporting literature (Stewart et al., 2011).

In order for the forensic interview to be useful, the forensic interviewer must have a calm and accepting attitude towards the child's explanations. In addition, during the interview with the child, the child should not be made to feel personal feelings such as surprise, anger, or sadness in the face of the child's statements, and an impartial and non-judgmental attitude should be displayed. The forensic interviewer should avoid coercive attitudes during the interview. Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is preventing the child from blaming himself and getting into a defensive situation (Güler, Yıldırım, Kütük & Toros, 2016). It should not be forgotten that the social distance between the forensic interviewer and the child should be reduced in order to prevent the child from being influenced during an effective interview (Towl et al., 2008).

It is claimed that the gender of the forensic interviewer is important in terms of forensic interviews. It is thought that children give more information about their experiences to female forensic interviewers during forensic interviews (Kaplan et al., 1991; Kunkel & Burleson, 1999).

In the explanations regarding this issue, it is stated that female forensic interviewers have more pronounced interpersonal skills, they approach the victim in a more supportive and understanding manner, they make more eye contact, and they persuade the individual to testify more easily (Fishman, 1978 as cited in Lamb & Garretson, 2003). It is thought that not only the gender of the forensic interviewer is important in this regard but also whether he or she has sufficient training on the subject. A professional who interviews a child that reports sexual abuse should be trained in the proper method

of conducting a forensic interview before attempting to interview a child victim, or any victim, of sexual abuse (Krueger, 2016).

During the interview with the child victim of sexual abuse, it is very valuable for the child to spontaneously tell what happened. Therefore, the funnel technique should be used in the interview. In the funnel technique, the forensic interviewer does not make suggestions to the child. In this technique, questions such as "What happened that day? And What do you remember about this issue? Are asked at the beginning of the interview (Ziyalar, 2006). Forensic interviewers need to be alert to children's emotions, the importance of the trauma they experience, children's individual characteristics, as well as their developmental and socio-cultural characteristics (Korkman et al., 2008; Güllü, 2020).

MULTIPLE FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

When children see an event or become a victim of it, they have to tell this situation to different people many times (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). Some authorities reveal that they are interviewed an average of 12 times during the investigation of a criminal case regarding a child (Whitcombe, 1992 as cited in Ceci, Bruck & Battin, 2000). Traditionally, multiple forensic interviews have been viewed as painful and stressful for children. Because multiple interviews with them cause them to recall the painful memories they experienced over and over again. This situation causes children to give unrealistic information under the influence (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Orbach, & Esplin, 2008; La Rooy, Katz, Malloy, & Lamb, 2010 as cited in Myklebust & Oxburgh, 2011). Ceci and Bruck (1995) argue that multiple forensic interviews conducted with children will lead to information contamination (Santtila, Korkman & Sandnabba, 2004).

Laboratory studies reveal that multiple forensic interviews with the child cause the child to receive the message that the answer you gave before was wrong, therefore children tend to change the answers they gave in previous interviews in multiple interviews (Holliday et al., 2012). Especially in multiple forensic interviews with the child, if the time between the previous interview is long, this causes the child's memory to weaken (Holliday et al., 2012).

It is thought that this situation may cause the child to forget or not be able to fully remember the details of the abuse he/she has previously experienced. For these reasons, it is necessary to take the statements of children who are victims of sexual abuse all at once and in full in order to prevent the child from facing secondary traumatization (Batman & Gökçearslan, 2022).

FORENSIC INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

There are some protocols used for forensic interviews with child victims of sexual abuse. The most commonly used forensic interview protocols in the world will be presented below.

NICHD Protocol

The National Institute of Child Health and Human development Protocol (NICHD) provides a step–by-step framework for how the forensic interview process should be and facilitates recalling information from memory and communication (Benia, Hauck-Filho & Dillenburg & Stein, 2015 as cited in Çağlar & Türk-Kurtça, 2020). In this protocol, the interview begins with an open-ended question (tell me everything what happened at your birthday/school/shopping center a few days/weeks ago?) and complementary questions are asked in the process. Again, in this protocol, statements are tried to be taken through free association without directing the child (Lamb et al., 2007). The NICHD protocol was developed to include issues such as child development problems, linguistic competencies, forensic interviewer behaviour and the effects of stress and trauma (Baugerud & Johnson, 2018).

RATAC Protocol

The Corner House Forensic Interview (RATAC) Protocol is a semi-structured forensic interview protocol and consists of five parts. These; Rapport; Anatomy Identification, Touch Inquiry; Abuse Scenario; and Closure (Anderson et al., 2007 as cited in Cirlugea & O'Donohue, 2016). In this protocol, free association is allowed with the question "Tell me everything about what happened. If necessary, yes/no questions can also be asked, and it is preferred to ask the open-ended question after it, which is asked approximately 3 times (Güllü & Erden, 2022). In the Rapport stage, the child's communication level and competence are seen by the forensic interviewer. In the second stage. Anatomy Identification, anatomical pictures are used depending on the age of the child, thus providing clues for memory. In the Touch Inquiry stage, the child's ability to understand good touch and bad touch is evaluated (Anderson et al., 2007 as cited in Cirlugea & O'Donohue, 2016). If the child makes a confession at this stage, the interview is conducted based on a sexual abuse scenario. During the Abuse Scenario stage, information is collected about who the attacker is and how many times the abuse occurred. At this stage, interview aids (teddy bears, anatomical drawings) are used (Cirlugea & O'Donohue, 2016).

ABE Protocol

In the United Kingdom (England and Wales) the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) protocol has also been used by police officers and social workers since 2001 for all vulnerable bystanders, including children and older people with learning disabilities (Holliday et al., 2012).

The purpose of the Achieving Best Evidence Protocol (ABE) is to assist those responsible for conducting video-recorded interviews with exploitable, intimidated eyewitnesses during the judicial process (Great Britain. Home Office, 2011). While in the United Kingdom the Memorandum of Good Practice was designed only for child witnesses, the ABE protocol was developed for all victims, including older individuals and individuals with learning disabilities (Holliday et al., 2012). The Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) protocol includes for stages. These; rapport, free narrative, questioning and closure (Towl et al., 2008).

There is currently no officially used judicial interview protocol in Turkey. It is known that the Ministry of Justice is in preparation of a forensic interview protocol, and it is thought that the implementation of the protocol will bring a standard to the forensic interview practice and increase the quality of forensic interviews.

FORENSIC INTERVIEW CENTERS IN TURKEY

It is seen that there have been some initiatives in Turkey since the 1980s to conduct forensic interviews with child victims in separate centers. Currently, the centers where forensic interviews are held with child victims are discussed under three headings.

Child Protection Units

The increasing awareness of child abuse and neglect in our country since the 1980s and the realization of the necessity of multi-disciplinary work in this field have paved the way for the establishment of child protection units. The first Child Protection Unit in Turkey was established in 1998 by İzmir Dr. Behçet Uz Children Hospital.

Since the 2000s, the work of an increasing number of child protection units, mostly in university hospitals, has attracted attention (Bağ & Alşen, 2016). The commission in the Child Protection Units also includes physicians such as forensic medicine specialists, child mental health specialists, public health specialists, pediatricians, pediatric surgeons, and Professional staff such as social workers, psychologists and nurses (Cantürk, 2016). Child protection Units, unlike Child Monitoring Centers, are places affiliated with hospitals that carry out the necessary examination and reporting not only on children who are victims of sexual abuse but also on children who have been exposed to other types of abuse (Humanistic Bureau, 2014). The need to ensure cooperation with other state institutions such as the judiciary, police and social services and the obligation to provide services through a national network have led to the initiation of studies on the opening of child monitoring centers (Bağ & Alşen, 2016).

Child Monitoring Centers

Child Monitoring Centers, equipped with appropriate child interview rooms, were established in 2012 within the Ministry of Health. Professional staff who will work in these centers received interview training in 2010 from Prof. Dr. Betül Ulukol and Prof. Dr. Resmiye Oral (Bayün & Dinçer, 2013). Child Monitoring Centers were established in large hospitals to conduct forensic interviews with children who are victims of sexual abuse. Child Monitoring Centers facilitate the referral of victimized children to units such as psychiatry, forensic examination, etc. (Trabzon Bar Association, 2015). In Child Monitoring Centers, forensic interviews are conducted only with children who are alleged to be victims of sexual abuse, and the interviews are evaluated. Child Monitoring Centers provide services throughout Türkiye on a 7/24 basis. For this reason, a forensic interviewer is on duty every day (Bağ & Alşen,

2016). According to the January 2024 statistics of the Ministry of Health in Türkiye there are 70 Child Monitoring Centers in 67 provinces (Sağlık Bakanlığı, 2024).

Professional staff working in Child Monitoring Centers (ÇİM) participate in the Child Forensic Interviewer Certified Training Program in order to conduct forensic interviews with children who are victims of sexual abuse. 216 hours of this program are theoretical. Professionals who pass the theoretical exam are given 40 hours of practical training anda re then asked to take the practical exam. Those who score 70 out of 100 in this exam are entitled to receive a forensic interviewer certificate (Batman & Gökçearslan, 2022).

Opening Child Monitoring Centers (ÇİM) in a location away from police stations and noisy courthouse corridors is an important reform for Turkey. Because in the past, children's statements took place at police stations in an inappropriate environment and in an environment where there was a possibility of encountering the suspect (Trabzon Bar Association Report, 2015).

All forensic interviews held in Child Monitoring Centers are observed by the public prosecutor and the child's lawyer. Questions are asked to the child by a social worker or psychologist. In addition, the public prosecutor can ask questions through a forensic interviewer from the mirrored room. All interviews are recorded with a camera and presented to the judge. With this system, children are protected from the risk of being re-traumatized and confronting the attacker by being included in multiple interviews (Bayün & Dinçer, 2013).

Forensic Interview Rooms

Forensic interview rooms have been established within the framework of child-friendly judicial procedures to protect the best interests of children. In this model, a suitable forensic interview environment is provided to the victimized individual and the victim is protected against secondary traumatization that may arise from the hearings (Aydın, 2017). Children who are asked to testify in cases of child sexual abuse may experience intense stress and anxiety during hearings in the courthouse environment (Goodman et al., 1992 as cited in Landstrom & Granhag, 2008).

With the support provided by UNICEF, 90 Forensic Interview Rooms were established in 86 courthouses in 70 provinces in Turkey between 2017 and 2018., and more than 500 judges, prosecutors and professionals were given a week-long training by academics on Forensic Interviewing with Children (Batman & Gökçearslan, 2022).

In Child-Friendly Forensic Interview Rooms; there are meeting, waiting and observation rooms close to each other (Adalet Bakanlığı, 2024). It has been stated that these rooms should have ideal heat, insulation and ventilation and should be prepared to serve different age groups (Batman & Gökçearslan, 2022). There are two cameras in the rooms where the forensic interview takes place, one of which shows the entire room, and the second camera focuses on the victim's face. There is also a microphone in the room that will enable communication between the forensic interviewer and the judge

and allow the child's response to be heard. All communication is being followed by National Judicial System (UYAP) and Voice and Scene Information System (SEGBIS). In forensic interview rooms, forensic interviewers sometimes use interview aids such as anatomical toys, paper, pencils etc. to facilitate forensic interviews with child (Türk, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The increase in the number of children who are victims of sexual abuse in Turkey in recent years requires further research on how to prevent this problem. In addition, it is thought that the protection of children who are victims of sexual abuse within the judicial system will be possible with the employment of sufficient and well educated professional staff such as social workers, psychologists, etc. It should be kept in mind that, social workers can play an important role in monitoring, supporting and organizing the social environment of the child victim of sexual abuse. It is thought that child must feel the necessary support not only in the courthouse but also in his/her daily life.

It can be seen that intensive studies have been carried out on forensic interviews with child victims in Turkey, especially since the 2010s. It is considered a reform that forensic interview centers have been opened within both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice in order to conduct forensic interviews with children who are victims of sexual abuse in an appropriate environment. Considering that children's statements were previously taken at police stations in environments where they were face to face with the perpetrator, the magnitude and meaning of the reforms can be better understood.

Forensic interviewers who conduct forensic interviews with child victims of sexual abuse undertake an extremely important task in this process. It is possible with the great efforts of forensic interviewers to calm the child victim after the traumatic event he-she experienced, to establish a bond with him/her, to prepare him for the interview, and to obtain detailed and valid information about the abuse he experienced in a limited time. The success of a forensic interview with a child really depends largely on the knowledge and skill level of the forensic interviewer. The forensic interviewer's high communication skills, asking questions appropriate to the child's age and development level, and creating a safe environment for the child are important factors in the success of the forensic interview with the child.

Interviews conducted with the outstanding efforts of forensic interviewers are also important in preventing the need for multiple forensic interviews with children. Otherwise, the child will have to tell what he/she experienced over and over again, and this will cause the child to remember the painful events he/she experienced and experience secondary traumatization.

In addition, the child's memory is negatively affected and he is exposed to accusations from the suspect's lawyer because he gives different answers than the answers he gave before. Forensic interviewers play a critical role in protecting the rights of children who are victims of sexual abuse within the judicial system and making their voices heard more strongly.

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ASSESSMENT OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN TERMS OF SYSTEMIC FAMILY COUNSELING

Kuşaklararası İlişkilerin Sistemik Aile Danışmanlığı Açısından Değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT

With the demographic change, the aging of the population and the increase in average life expectancy, the spread of multi-generational family structure in societies has increased the importance of intergenerational relationships. Intergenerational relations in the families appear as solidarity and conflict and need to be managed. Since one of the problems encountered in family life arises in the field of management of intergenerational relations, intergenerational relations in the family have become an important issue in terms of family counseling. Families deal with the care burden of elderly parents, receiving support from elderly parents in caring for children. There may be conflicts on these issues and families may need counseling services. Thus, this study aims to examine intergenerational relations in the families from the systemic perspective of family counseling theories. In today's society, the number of families with three or even four generations is increasing day by day. It has been concluded that the importance of assessment of intergenerational relationships in the field of family counseling is undeniable and it is necessary to produce policies that reduce intergenerational conflicts and provide solutions to both the physical, social and psychological needs of these families. Professionals working in this field should consider intergenerational solidarity, which is included in the concept of intergenerational relations, in all its dimensions and assess it in the field of family counseling, and efforts to transform intergenerational conflict into solidarity should be increased throughout society.

Keywords: Intergenerational relationships, intergenerational solidarity, intergenerational conflict, family counseling, systemic perspective

ÖZET

Demografik değişimle birlikte nüfusun yaşlanması ve ortalama yaşam süresinin artmasıyla çok kuşaklı aile yapısının toplumlarda yaygınlaşması kuşaklararası ilişkilerin önemini arttırmıştır. Ailedeki kuşaklararası ilişkiler dayanışma ve çatışma olarak karşımıza çıkmakta ve yönetilmesi gerekmektedir. Aile yaşantısında karşılaşılan sorunlardan biri de kuşaklararası ilişkilerin yönetimi alanında ortaya çıktığından ailedeki kuşaklararası ilişkiler, aile danışmanlığı açısından da önemli bir konu haline gelmiştir. Aileler yaşlı ebeveynlerin bakım yükü, çocukların bakımı konusunda yaşlı ebeveynlerden destek alma vb. konularda çatışmalar yaşayabilmekte ve aileler danışmanlık hizmetine ihtiyaç duyabilmektedir. Böylelikle bu çalışmada, ailedeki kuşaklararası ilişkilerin sistemik bakış açısını temel edinen aile danışmanlığı ekolleri açısından incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Günümüz toplumunda üç hatta dört kuşaklı ailelerin sayısının gün geçtikçe artması; aile danışmanlığı alanında kuşaklararası ilişkilerin değerlendirilmesinin öneminin yadsınamaz olduğu sonucunu ortaya çıkartmıştır. En az üç ve daha fazla kuşağın bir arada yaşadığı bir topluma dönüştüğümüz düşünüldüğünde; kuşaklararası çatışmaların azaltılmasını sağlayan ve bu ailelerin hem fiziksel, hem de sosyal ve psikolojik ihtiyaçlarına çözüm olacak politikalar üretilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu alanda çalışan profesyonellerin, kuşaklararası ilişki kavramı içerisinde yer alan kuşaklararası dayanışmayı tüm boyutlarıyla ele alıp danışmanlık alanında değerlendirmeleri, toplum genelinde kuşaklar arası çatışmanın dayanışmaya dönüştürülmesine yönelik çalışmalar artmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuşaklararası ilişkiler, kuşaklararası dayanışma, kuşaklararası çatışma, aile danışmanlığı, sistemik bakış açısı

INTRODUCTION

Today, the increase in the elderly population along with demographic change has become the focus of attention of many politicians and academicians. For this reason, it is necessary to talk about the reasons for the increase in the elderly population both in our country and in the world. There are basically two reasons for the aging of the world population. The first is the significant increase in life expectancy. Globally, increases in life expectancy have led to both reductions in deaths from infectious diseases and a general shift to healthier lifestyles. Second, there is an equally significant decline in fertility rates as a result of increased educational attainment and more effective birth control. The combined effect of falling birth rates and falling death rates results in an increasing proportion of older people within a given population.

With the increase in the elderly population, families all over the world began to witness a significant change starting from the second half of the 19th century. During this period, the population increased significantly and aging began to emerge as a population problem. With the impact of social changes and demographic aging, structural changes have begun to occur within the family. While these changes are interconnected with economic, social, intellectual and demographic factors, developments in average life expectancy have changed the structure of multi-generational families. Shared survival across generations has led to intergenerational shifts in support, particularly caregiving for elderly parents, resulting in lifelong emotional bonds. However, as fertility rates decrease, divorce rates increase, second marriages and restructured family formation rates increase, intergenerational relationships in aging families have become less predictable. Along with demographic aging, social change and change in family structure have increased the importance of intergenerational relationships. The increase in the life expectancy of societies has not only resulted in an increase in the life

span spent by two generations (parents and their children) but also in the increasing presence of three- and even four-generation families in society. Over several generations, family relations have diversified in structure and function, making them increasingly important in society. Multigenerational family relations are said to be more important in the 21st century for three reasons. The first is population aging, where family demographic changes result in "more years of shared lives" between generations; second, the increasing importance of grandparents and other relatives in the performance of family functions; and finally, the strength and durability of intergenerational solidarity over time.

Since one of the problems encountered in family life today arises in the field of management of intergenerational relations, intergenerational relations in the family have become an important issue in terms of family counseling. Families deal with the care burden of elderly parents, receiving support from elderly parents in caring for children, etc. There may be conflicts on these issues and families may need counseling services. In this respect, one of the aims of family counseling should be to prevent intergenerational role conflicts within the family and to support intergenerational solidarity by increasing the functionality of intergenerational relationships.

When the family counseling literature in our country is examined, it is seen that there are very few studies examining intergenerational relationships. In addition, it will be functional for family counselors in the field to evaluate the family with its intergenerational ties and relationships while providing family counseling services. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine intergenerational relationships in the family from the perspective of family counseling theories that are based on the systemic perspective that looks at the family as a whole of systems. It is hoped that the ideas put forward for this purpose will be useful for family counselors working in the field.

INTERGENERATION RELATIONSHIPS

Although family life is changing and transforming with the change in world demographics, people still consider both family and social relationships important for their general health and well-being. Intergenerational relationships within family and kinship have become an important topic today in scientific research as well as in public discourse. The main reasons for this situation, as we mentioned above, are increasing life expectancy and decreasing fertility rates along with demographic change.

Intergenerational relationships, based mainly on social exchange theory, are the form of interaction that arises as a result of any resource exchange between generations. In other words, it refers to social relations between different generations. Early research on intergenerational relationships focused on intrafamilial relationships in the context of demographic changes, relationships between elderly parents and their adult children, the potential for family-based care generally in later life stages, and intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson and Martin, 2001).

Relationships established between individuals from different generations serve as an important tool for learning and development throughout life. These relationships devise space for mutual, deep, impactful and meaningful experiences for both youth and adults.

These experiences increase well-being by supporting social and emotional development for both generations (Watts, 2017; Hank et al, 2018).

Characteristics of intergenerational relationships remain important throughout the lifespan and affect the well-being of generations. These relationship characteristics, such as support exchange and caregiving, vary according to developmental stages and are associated with well-being differently according to these stages throughout life (Merz et al, 2007).

It is seen that intergenerational relations are shaped in two different theoretical frameworks. The first of these is the concept of intergenerational conflict. Conflict theory focuses on cultural differences and disagreements between generations. In today's society, the difference between parents and children regarding intergenerational differences and life patterns is considered a conflict. Additionally, conflict and difficulties arise between aging parents and their adult children due to caring for aging parents and, in fact, conflict is an inevitable part of intergenerational relationships (Papi and Cheraghi, 2021).

The second concept affecting intergenerational relations is the solidarity theory that develops against the conflict theory. The concept of intergenerational solidarity refers to positive relationships between generations. Relationships between child-parent and elderly parents are very valuable in understanding the solidarity relationship, and it has positive results such as increased self-esteem, increased quality of communication, quality of life and well-being, especially for elderly parents (Bengston and Robert, 1991; Birditt et al, 2012). Depending on family dynamics and circumstances, intergenerational relationships in the family may, on the one hand, show high solidarity and conflict; On the other hand, it may show low levels of solidarity and conflict (Bengtson and Martin, 2001).

Studies researching intergenerational relationships in families in our country can be considered relatively new. It has been observed that studies on intergenerational conflict and solidarity generally focus on parent-adolescent child, grandparent-adolescent child, elderly parent and adult child relationships (Görgün Baran et al, 2005; Hazer,2011). At the same time, there are studies in the literature examining the dimensions of intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational solidarity (Hazer et al, 2015; Hazer and Öztürk, 2017; Özmete,2017).

Sarıçiçek (2018) listed the topics that cause intergenerational conflict as technological innovations, value changes, changes in family structure due to social change and educational life. Additionally, generation conflict can be caused individually by; age, education, personality traits, socially; He stated that while family structure, religion, culture and traditions are the reasons, the conflict between the older generation and the younger generation is mainly caused by the conflict of values. Müftüler (2019) explains the reason for this as different generations can adopt different values, unlike each generation adopting the same values, just as the younger generation devises and adopts its own value system, unlike the older generation.

In addition to intergenerational value differences, increasing life expectancy, inadequacy of resources between young and old generations, and the lack of social policies such as retirement, health and long-term care systems emerge as potential causes of intergenerational tension and/or conflict (Dumas and Turner, 2009).

Turkish literature on intergenerational relations does not have a long history. Intergenerational conflict manifests itself through cultural and behavioral differences between generations (Özdemir-Ocaklı, 2017). In Turkey, there is a conflict between young and old generations in terms of resources, goals and values at the macro level (Cangöz, 2018). There are also studies linking intergenerational conflict in Turkey with changing attitudes between generations. The literature suggests that care support, as a sub-dimension of intergenerational functional solidarity, does not always facilitate positive relationships, but rather causes tension and conflict between adult children and their grandparents. (Yılmaz and Özkan, 2010; Göçer and Ceyhan, 2012; Adıbelli et al, 2013).

SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE IN FAMILY COUNSELING

The concept of family counseling has been defined in different ways by many different researchers in the literatüre. It is generally defined as "a treatment method that focuses on the analysis and solution of the problems that arise between family members, with the participation of the relevant family members and with the help of a professional family counselor, and aims to improve the communication within the family, the roles of the family members and the problem-solving skills." (Duyan and Adıgüzel, 2016).

In the 5th family council, it was stated that counseling has the functions of providing insight and awareness, restructuring and development. It is defined as *"family counselling; It is a psychological assistance service provided to all family members to devise a healthy communication environment. It is a set of services that require expertise to solve the problems related to psychosocial functioning faced by the family in intra-family and environmental relations in terms of structural, functional and developmental characteristics."* (ASAGEM, 2008).

As seen in the definitions above, the main purpose of family counseling is to ensure functional harmony of family members within and around the family (Özgüven, 2001). The sub-objectives that feed this main purpose can be listed as follows:

"• To be able to repair the worry and anxiety underlying individual relationships within the family,

• To increase the culture of tolerance and understanding among family members and to devise an emotional bond between family members,

• Increasing support and cooperation between family members in extraordinary crisis situations within or outside the family, and strengthening the resilience of the family,

• To prevent intergenerational role conflicts within the family and to increase communication skills by providing appropriate behavioral models among family members,

• To ensure a balanced awareness of responsibility and social values in the family" (Duman, 2001).

The system approach developed by Bertalanffy is an interdisciplinary approach and is an approach that is frequently used in family studies in the field of social sciences and has effective results. According to General Systems Theory, the parts within each system are interrelated and dependent on each other to maintain their functions. Since the parts in the system are very strongly connected to each other, a change in any part causes changes in other parts. Based on this, the family systems theory argues that all members of the family are interconnected and that the relationship between them is reciprocal and continuous. It is said that there is a hierarchical system that is an interactive whole among family members (Gökler,2008; Akün,2013).

It has been suggested that four basic assumptions of general systems theory may be valid for the family. These; holism, hierarchical structure, homeostasis (balance) and adaptability.

The concept of holism is one of the most important assumptions for understanding the family system. The most important emphasis here is that the family should be looked at as a whole. Accordingly, the family is a complex and interactive whole whose members are mutually dependent on each other (Akün,2013). In terms of family systems, client problems concern the family as a whole rather than a single individual. According to this perspective, the family is seen as a rule-based system in which members behave among themselves in organized and repetitive ways. The pattern within the family often changes over time as the family faces both internal and external demands. For example, as children grow older, they begin to have a much greater say in family decisions. If both mother and father work in the family, the family organizes itself to fulfill the duties of a mother.

The concept of hierarchy consists of variables such as generation or gender in a family, for example, parents, husband and wife, siblings, etc. It describes the interactions of different sub-systems with each other. The characteristics and duties of the people in the subsystem differentiate that subsystem from other subsystems (Gladding, 2012).

Homeostasis biologically means that the body maintains its own balance, and over time it began to be used in the psychology literature. In this respect, homeostasis defines the family's search for balance. These are the behavioral patterns that the family performs to maintain its internal balance and maintain its functionality. When the balance is disrupted, the family may need to rearrange its dynamics according to the new conditions in order to establish a new balance (İlerisoy,2012).

Adaptability refers to the family's capacity to regulate itself. The family system has the ability to change its dynamics in order to adapt to internal and external demands. Thanks to this skill, changes can occur in the existing patterns in the family system. A change in any subsystem of the family system will affect other subsystems and a multifaceted change will occur in the family (Gladding, 2012).

Although the family systems approach can be a useful starting point for tackling many issues, it is not the "answer to everything" like any other method. The power of family systems counseling lies in its ability to provide treatment for aging issues in the context in which they arise and to use older adults' families' existing support systems to find solutions to the problems (Florsheim and Herr, 1990).

Family Climate

It is thought that it is important for this study to talk about the concept of family climate before moving on to family counseling models that adopt a system perspective. The concept of family climate is based on the family systems approach and is defined as the psychological atmosphere in which a family exists. The concept of family climate examines the family in the context of the extended family and the generations that make it up (Gönül, Baş and Acar, 2018). Family climate components; It is discussed in 6 dimensions: These are compatibility, cognitive harmony, emotional harmony, open communication, intergenerational interest, and intergenerational authority (Björnberg and

Nicholson, 2007). In the Turkish sample, when evaluating family climate, it is seen that it is handled in three dimensions, focusing on intergenerational relations, family harmony and family processes (Gönül, Baş and Acar, 2018).

Although the structure of ties between family members changes over time, there is continuity between generations. Additionally, the family system includes other adults in the extended family. For this reason, the family climate is also affected by the ties of adults from different generations. Family harmony also acts as a "glue" for the family, ensuring that it stays together in times of difficulty and crisis. Family processes are also thought to be complementary to the concepts of intergenerational relations and harmony (Björnberg and Nicholson, 2007). When considered from the perspective of family counseling, understanding the family climate will provide a comprehensive perspective on the counseling process.

FAMILY COUNSELING MODELS ADOPTING A SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Family counseling theories that see the family as a system and as a whole; Bowen's intergenerational family counseling, the foundations of which were laid by Bowen, structural family counseling developed by Minuchin, strategic family counseling based on the studies of Milton Erikson, and systemic family counseling developed by Satir, are described below.

Intergenerational Family Counseling

Murray Bowen's family systems theory was one of the first comprehensive theories and has been abbreviated as "Bowen theory" since 1974 There is a widespread view among many proponents of Bowen's work that his theory should be experienced rather than taught. Bowen emphasized focusing

on triangles and intergenerational models in the family of origin rather than individual psychotherapy. Bowen believes that the best way to understand the family is to examine it across three generations, because the relationship patterns within the family connect family members to each other across generations. Bowen argued that the way to reduce anxiety in the family is to focus on the patterns that develop in families. The perception that there is either too much closeness or too much distance in a relationship is one of the underlying factors of anxiety in families. Additionally, Bowen believed that the degree of anxiety in the family was passed down through generations. The main goal of Bowen therapy is to facilitate awareness of how the emotional system works and to increase levels of differentiation in which the person focuses on making changes in herself/ himself rather than trying to change others (Bowen, 1975; Bowen, 1978).

Structural Family Counseling

Structural family counseling was developed during Minuchin's work with delinquent children and their families in New York in the 1960s. Minuchin emphasized the necessity of looking at the inter-action patterns between family members to understand the family structure. The basis of structural family counseling is based on the system approach. According to this approach, people's behavior and psychological health cannot be separated from the family's interactions with each other, from birth until now (Aponte and Vandeusen, 1981).

Structural family counseling basically defines families with the concepts of systems, subsystems, rules, boundaries, roles, power and hierarchy. In a functional family; It is the family that has clear boundaries between individuals and subsystems, facilitates individual growth, prevents interference, supports intergenerational hierarchies, and provides flexible rules and roles that can be adapted to the internal and external changes of a developing family (Figley and Nelson, 1990).

In the Minuchin structural family therapy model, the primary goal is to clearly identify the subsystems in the family and then to establish a hierarchically integrated structure by helping the family change its structure. In order to determine the structure of the family, it is very important to examine how the entire system affects the family (Nichols, 2013).

Strategic Family Counseling

The basis of strategic family counseling is based on the studies of Milton Erikson. Erikson aims to pioneer change in treatment and innovation in family relationships. He emphasizes that in strategic family counseling, it is important to devise a new strategy for each problem within the family. The concept of the positive feedback loop forms the basis of strategic family therapy theory. A positive feedback loop occurs when other family members react to a family member's problematic behavior in a way that increases the existing problem. Here, a difficulty becoming a problem depends on the reactions of family members to the difficulty (Nichols, 2013).

Strategic family therapists have used some concepts to explain the family structure/system; for instance, family rules are explicit or implicit rules that families use to manage their family members. Family balance is the family's tendency to continue the same pattern of life unless directed to do something different. Exchange-based interaction is the tendency for a family member to respond in certain ways when treated in a certain way. The principle of recurrence is that reciprocal relationships within the family occur over and over again within a certain interval. Personal emphasis is the tendency of family members to think that what they say is caused by what the other party says when communicating. Symmetrical relationships and mutually complementary relationships are relationships between family members that are both equal and unequal. Circular causality is the hypothesis that one event occurring within the family does not cause another, on the contrary, interrelated conditions play a role in the emergence of events (Gladding,2012).

Experiential Family Counseling

One of the early pioneers of family therapy, the work of Virginia Satir has left an indelible mark on family therapy in terms of the history and current practice and development of family systems therapy. Satir's Transformational Systemic Therapy aims to focus on the emotions, thoughts, behaviors and perceptions of family members and improve communication within the family, taking into account the family dynamics. The model Satir uses includes humanistic, systemic and experiential methods. The reason why Satir's model is humanist is that Satir believes that people strive to grow. Additionally, in her model, the therapist uses herself as a tool to develop harmonious behavior and communication. The reason why the model is systemic is; It comes from the belief that the problem that occurs in the family is not the responsibility of a family member. She sees that the problem stems from a complex structure of the family system. The experiential nature of the model derives from the basic assumption about change (Eker, 2017).

Contemporary application of the Satir model aims to promote positive growth-promoting beliefs as well as increased self-esteem and individual and systemic self-actualization through healthy communication and living. Banmen (2002) summarized the views that Satir believed and implemented in her model as follows:

• Satir believes that change is always possible and change can only occur within oneself. These changes may also include emotions, perceptions, and expectations.

• The problem that exists is not a "problem"; The real problem is dealing with the problem. Therefore, therapy focuses on improving a person's coping skills rather than simply solving someone's problem.

• Emotions are unique to each individual and we can learn to change our emotions. It is up to us to manage and enjoy our emotions.

- Therapy is systematic. Because it involves both an intrapsychic and interactive process.

- People have the resources they need to cope and thrive. Therapy is one tool that helps people change (Satir et al., 1991).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, where intergenerational relationships in the family were examined in terms of systemic family counseling, it was observed that intergenerational relationships in the family were divided into two groups: solidarity and conflict (Bengtson and Martin, 2001; Watts, 2017; Hank et al, 2018; Merz et al, 2007; Papi and Cheraghi, 2021; Lee et al, 2001; Müftüler, 2019). However, when talking about family counseling models and practices, it can be said that family balance is disrupted and family counseling services are needed as intergenerational conflict in the family or negative interactions and transfers in intergenerational relationships come to the fore rather than intergenerational solidarity. The common view of family counseling models that adopt a systemic perspective in order to restore this disturbed balance is that the family's anxiety, thought system, lifestyle, values, etc. Many transitions are the result of intergenerational transmission (Acar and Voltan Acar, 2013; Pak and Öztürk, 2019; Emecem and Yıldız, 2020). Additionally, as Murray (2006) stated in his study, the family system is essentially interconnected; Therefore, experiences affect all other parts within this system. Rather than labeling behaviors within the family as good or bad, the systems perspective is interested in defining how behavior operates within the family. When providing family counseling services, accepting that conflict is actually a part of the family system can be a challenging task for the client and the counselor.

When intergenerational relationships were examined in terms of systemic family counseling, it was seen that studies in the literature assess therapy models adopting the system approach were often film or TV series analyses. Many movies and TV series have been analyzed especially in terms of structural family counseling and intergenerational family counseling theories. Attention has also been drawn to many movie scenes that confirm the hypotheses in the theories.

Analyzed using structural family counseling theory, "Prince of the Waves" explains the intergenerational relationships in the movie through the root family of Tom, the main character of the movie. For a functional parenting system that Münuchin mentions in his structural family counseling theory, he states that healthy intergenerational boundaries and a healthy authority are not between Tom and his root family (Nadir, 2013).

In the analysis of the movie "My Father and My Son", which was assessed in terms of the basic concepts of intergenerational family therapy, it was stated that many concepts related to Intergenerational Family Therapy and patterns that can be shown as examples were included in the movie. It has been stated that there are concerns in terms of intergenerational relations, including several generations in the family system (Acar and Voltan Acar, 2013).

While assessing intergenerational relationships in the movie "The Bride", which was analyzed using structural family counseling theory, the family was defined in a patriarchal structure. The grandfather, the elder of the family, passed on his lifestyle, thought system, and financial ambitions to both his sons and grandchildren. It has been observed that the second and third generations also accept the transferred values as a way of life (Yıldız, 2017).

In the TV series "İstanbul Bride", which was examined in terms of structural family counseling theory, the concept of intergenerational relationship was assessed in terms of the transfer of intergenerational power. Ms. Esma, in the roles of Mother and Mother-in-Law, transfers power between generations by establishing dominance over family members, both in doing the housework, in providing for the family, and in regulating the relationships between family members (Pak and Öztürk, 2019).

It was stated that there were two intergenerational transfer scenes in the movie "Marriage Story", which was analyzed according to Bowen and structural family counseling theory. The first is that the leading female character, Nichole, her sister and their mother are divorced. Secondly, Nichole and her husband Charlie, who is in the process of divorcing, have an argument at home and accuse each other of being too similar to their own parents (Katmer et al, 2021).

In these models, which are commonly influenced by family systems theory, intergenerational relationships are also assessed in different ways. In the structural family counseling model, intergenerational relationships are conveyed with the concept of hierarchy. In this hierarchy, it is emphasized that the boundaries between generations must be clear and healthy in order to form a healthy family system. It is stated that in strategic family counseling, not focusing on the transitions in the family life cycle causes problems and this affects intergenerational relationships. In systemic family counseling, intergenerational transmission is directly taken into account. As a concept, the generational transition process was mentioned. In other words, it is important that emotions, thoughts and behaviors are transferred from one generation to another and that this transfer is revealed and corrected in order to achieve the purpose of counseling.

In a study conducted with 527 high school students and their middle generation parents and grandparents, the research results were assessed within the framework of Bowen's intergenerational family therapy theory. Accordingly, the acceptance of family and close circle as basic institutions ranks first for all three generations, and this rate increases with age. They state that this result overlaps with the concepts of family reflection process and intergenerational transfer process of intergenerational family therapy (Emecem and Yıldız, 2020).

In general, multi-generational perspectives on the family are based on the assumptions of root family dynamics, family life cycle and family development; As another assumption, based on family systems theory, it has been observed that the importance of the individual's interaction with his/her family of origin and whether it continues or not is emphasized (Pak and Öztürk,2019; Emecem and Yıldız,

2020; Nadir, 2013; Yıldız, 2017; Katmer et al, 2021). As a result, it is pointed out that the relationship patterns that include interaction and harmony from the root families are transferred from generation to generation. The transmission of dysfunctional relationship patterns from generation to generation and the emergence of intergenerational conflict with changing values in modern society have revealed systemic family counseling as a solution proposal. In this context, it is thought to be important to assess intergenerational relationships within the family counseling practice, in addition to many themes that shape the family today.

CONCLUSION

In the study, which was carried out with the main purpose of examining the intergenerational relationships in the family in terms of family counseling theories based on the systemic perspective that looks at the family as a whole of systems, in the light of all the information compiled as a result of the literature review, it is seen that the multi-generational family structure has become widespread in societies with the aging of the population and the increase in average life expectancy with the demographic change experienced today.

It has been concluded that it increases the importance of intergenerational relationships. However, it has also been observed that solidarity and conflict coexist in intergenerational relationships in the family. In addition, the conflict between the older, middle and younger generations emerges as an issue that needs to be addressed in family counseling.

Although family counseling theories that adopt a systemic perspective attach importance to intergenerational relationships and transmission processes in the family, as mentioned throughout the study, the number of families with three or even four generations in today's society is increasing day by day; It has revealed that the importance of assessing intergenerational relationships and family climate in the field of family counseling is undeniable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Various recommendations are presented below according to the results of the study.

• Considering that we have transformed into a society where at least three or more generations live together; Policies should be produced that reduce intergenerational conflicts and provide solutions to both the physical, social and psychological needs of these families.

• In order to transform conflicts in families where different generations live together into intergenerational solidarity, it is recommended that educational programs supporting intergenerational solidarity should be increased and academicians, policy makers and non-governmental organizations working in this field should carry out activities supporting intergenerational solidarity.

- It is up to family counselors to provide solutions to family problems that arise as a result of inter-generational conflict. It is recommended that professionals working in this field should consider intergenerational solidarity, which is included in the concept of intergenerational relationship, in every aspect and assess it in consultancy, and increase the studies on the transformation of intergenerational conflict into solidarity in society in general, in terms of the development of the individual, family and society.

- It is recommended that studies be carried out to disseminate the family counseling service offered free of charge by the Ministry of Family and Social Services and to increase its awareness in the society.

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SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY: RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL WORK AND APPLICATION EXAMPLE

Çözüm Odaklı Kısa Süreli Terapi: Sosyal Hizmet ile İlişkisi ve Uygulama Örneği

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ABSTRACT

Social work is a discipline and profession that intervenes with individuals who have experienced loss of functionality due to adverse life events. It aims to eliminate negative thought and behavior patterns, restore their previous functionality, empower individuals by raising awareness of their strengths and effective role in their lives, and promote overall well-being. Upon reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes evident that the foundational philosophy and assumptions of solution-focused brief therapy, which has been proven to yield effective results quickly in social work interventions, align with the core values of the social work discipline. Social workers often prefer this approach due to its methodological advantages. From this perspective, this article aims to present solution-focused brief therapy comprehensively. It will discuss its historical development, fundamental philosophy, objectives, and underlying assumptions, evaluate its integration within social work, and provide an illustrative application example using solution-focused techniques in a fictional case of exam anxiety. This study aims to enlighten professionals interested in utilizing solution-focused brief therapy and contribute to the existing literature on this topic.

Keywords: solution-focused brief therapy, solution-focused approach, social work, social worker, exam anxiety

ÖZET

Sosyal hizmet, hayatında meydana gelen olumsuz olaylar dahilinde işlevselliğini kaybetmiş bireylerin olumsuz düşünce ve davranış kalıplarından sıyrılarak eski işlevselliğini yeniden kazandıran, bireyin kendisinin güçlü yönlerini ve yaşamındaki etkin rolünün farkına varmasını sağlayarak güçlendiren, bireyin tam bir iyilik hali için çabalayarak müdahalelerde bulunan bir disiplin ve meslek dalıdır. İlgili literatür incelendiğinde, kısa sürede etkili sonuçlar elde edilmesine katkı sağladığı kanıtlanan kısa süreli çözüm odaklı yaklaşımın temel felsefesi ve varsayımlarının, sosyal hizmet disiplininin temel değerleri ile örtüştüğü; yöntem ve teknikleriyle sağladığı birtakım avantajlar bağlamında sosyal hizmet uzmanlarınca tercih edildiği anlaşılmaktadır. Buradan hareketle bu makalede kısa süreli çözüm odaklı yaklaşımın tarihsel süreci, temel felsefesi, amacı ve temel varsayımlarını açıklayarak kısa süreli çözüm odaklı terapinin bütüncül bir çerçevede sunmak, sosyal hizmet ile ilişkisini değerlendirmek ve sınav kaygısı konulu kurgusal bir vaka üzerinden çözüm odaklı yaklaşımın teknikleri kullanılarak bir uygulama örneği sunmak amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın çözüm odaklı kısa süreli yaklaşımı kullanarak müdahaleler gerçekleştirmek isteyen meslek elemanlarına ışık tutacağı ve ilgili literatüre katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kısa süreli çözüm odaklı terapi, çözüm odaklı yaklaşım, sosyal hizmet, sosyal hizmet uzmanı, sınav kaygısı

INTRODUCTION

Solution-focused brief therapy is a concrete outcome of the evaluations of Shazer and colleagues' therapeutic sessions. The solution-focused therapeutic approach, first used in the Mental Research Center, is based on an analysis of how to overcome the points that make the problem chronic at the point where the problem worsens by focusing on the interactions of individuals and families (Rohrbaugh & Shoham, 2015).

Unlike traditional psychotherapy approaches that focus on the past, the solution-focused approach, which attaches great importance to the present and the development here, helps to support and strengthen the individual's ability to cope with their problems and to act with hope and confidence that the future can be designed in the desired way (Kaya & Başer, 2022). In the solution-focused approach, within the framework of the belief that clients have the power to cope with most obstacles in the processes of finding and building solutions, it is necessary to evaluate the strengths and resources necessary for the solution by acting in the context of the client's situation.

Rather than focusing the individual on the problematic area and working to stop these problematic behavior patterns, it is important to help the individual to question and assimilate the idea that events do not always turn into a problematic situation (Teater, 2015). In the solution-focused approach, where it is believed that life can be reshaped, it is ensured that the client is motivated to solve their problems with the assumption that the client has the power to overcome the problem without being stuck on the problem. In this way, clients are made to realize their impact on their own lives, an environment that can reveal their potential is developed and it is facilitated to build solutions.

The main purpose of solution-focused brief therapy is to enable the therapist to produce and implement solutions with his/her own will by preparing an environment for the client's creative thinking without interfering in the solution process with his/her own thoughts and opinions. In solution-focused brief therapy, unlike traditional psychotherapy approaches that emphasize the difficulty of change, the belief that change is inevitable, that it can occur continuously and that the future can be rebuilt in the desired way is adopted (Murdock, 2013; Yağcı & Duyan, 2020; Zengin, 2021).

When the relevant literature is examined, it is possible to say that although there are many studies examining the effect of solution-focused approach on various problems such as anxiety disorders, anger problems, eating and behavioral disorders, adjustment problems, tendency to violence, substance use (Franklin et al., 2008; Newsome & Gladding, 2014), it is possible to say that the number of studies conducted on the basis of solution-focused approach for exam anxiety in our country is limited. In addition, it is seen that most of the existing studies are group studies using an experimental model (Demirci & Erden, 2016; Gençtürk, 2019; Karaburç & Tunç, 2017; Özbay, 2017; Özdağ, 2021; Sarıçam, 2014), and studies conducted for individuals in the form of psychological counseling are limited (Altıntaş & Üzbe Atalay, 2022; Kavakçı et al., 2010; Terzi & Koçak, 2023). When group studies conducted

in Turkey and abroad are examined, it is understood that the solution-focused approach is effective in reducing test anxiety (Bannick, 2007; Franklin et al., 2008; Işık et al. 2021; İşlek, 2006; 2017; Özdağ, 2021; Bulut, 2010; Sarıçam, 2014).

Considering the positive effects of solution-focused therapy on many problems thanks to its multidimensional advantages and the fact that it is an up-to-date therapy model, it is thought that the study will guide solution-focused practitioners and contribute to the relevant literature. It is known that exam anxiety is one of the most common anxieties experienced in adolescence and the effect of solution-focused approach on reducing exam anxiety has been proven in many studies. From this point of view, this study includes a fictional case in which a solution-focused method was used to intervene in exam anxiety.

SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH, HISTORICAL PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

The solution-focused brief approach, which originated in the 1980s, was built and developed at the Center for Short-Term Family Therapies in the United States based on the idea of focusing on the solution of problems rather than the problems themselves, and on times when problems are not yet defined or are perceived as unimportant (De Shazer et al., 2021). Solution-focused brief therapy has common points with Ericson's hypnotherapy approach in terms of the importance of the client's ability to produce solutions and helping the client to be self-aware for future solutions, as well as adopting the idea that the individual should be evaluated within the system that belongs to the system theory. In addition, it is possible to say that solution-focused brief therapy includes the empowerment approach, as it is based on the acquisition of problem-solving skills by individuals (Gülbüz, 2023).

Solution-focused brief therapy, one of the contemporary psychotherapy approaches in which the strengths and flexibility of the clients are emphasized, is a psychotherapy theory that aims to reveal the points that the clients are good at doing, to help the client not to perceive the current situation as a problem and to help the client think about the preferred future (Kondrat, 2010). In this therapy, where the inductive rather than deductive method is adopted, the past is ignored in order to reach the preferred future, the focus is on the present situation and future planning and it stands out from traditional psychotherapies that focus on the deficiencies in the individual (Doğasal & Karakartal, 2021). Another important feature of solution-focused brief therapy, which adopts the view that the client has the ability to solve problems, is that the client sees the existing resources of the client as the key to the solution. This therapy assumes a role in helping clients to realize and develop the resources and possibilities they have and to use them to solve problems. Today, although the areas of use of solution-focused brief therapy vary, it is preferred by different professional groups and can be carried out individually or group-focused.

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH

Solution-focused therapists argue that dealing with clients' problems will not be beneficial in solving the problem. Miller (1997:13), while interpreting problem-focused paradigms, states that focusing on negativity worsens the worries in the client's life, and that problem-focused therapists take on the role of self-fulfilling prophecy by causing clients to see their own lives full of problems. Since focusing on the client's mistakes or problems may cause iatrogenic (side effect) effects, solution-focused therapists use a thoughtful, constructive and solution-based language in cooperation with the clients and look for the way to realize the solution in the existing resources of the client himself/herself (De Shazer, 1997).

De Shazer et al. (2021) explain solution-focused brief therapy within the framework of some general rules. These rules are listed as follows.

If it is not broken, don't fix it: If the client does not have a problem or complaint, there is no need for intervention. Even if there is a situation seen problematic by the counselor, the issue is not put on the agenda. Doğan (1999) stated that the areas where the client is functional should not be intervened. However, if the client is faced with a difficulty, he/she should produce solutions to get rid of the difficult situation he/she is in.

If it works, keep doing it: It is important to insist on using methods that have been proven to work on the way to a solution. Only by using functional methods more often can success be achieved in solving problems. Counselors focus on the strengths of the clients to discover exceptional moments. The client is encouraged to apply more to the skills or behavior patterns that work for the solution. In this way, the client is brought closer to the solution.

If it doesn't work, don't repeat it, do something different: Different solutions should be tried, not resorting to solutions that have proven to be unhelpful. Attempts at non-functional solutions should be eliminated. Retrying a non-functional method is not helpful. The important point here is that if a solution has proven to be unworkable, a different set of solutions should be put in place.

PURPOSE OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH

Unlike traditional therapies, the main purpose of solution-focused brief therapy is to enable clients to recognize and analyze the problems in their lives, to direct the client to use a solution-focused language instead of a problem-focused language and to enable the client to concentrate on solutions as quickly as possible for the desired future. This can only be achieved by connecting with the person, not the problem. De Jong and Berg (2008) state that the creation of well-structured goals and the development of solutions by detailing exceptional situations are two actions that play a key role in the emergence of a solution. In addition, negotiating the goals with the client and utilizing the client's strengths and resources to achieve these goals are presented as another aspect of the solution-focused process.

Sklare (2010) classifies well-structured goals into 4 categories. These 4 goals are listed as follows.

Positive Goal: It is characterized by observable and measurable behaviors. When the client expresses desires to achieve something, using positive statements such as *"I want to be able to deal with difficult people"* or *"I want to improve my grades"* signifies a positive goal. The details of the client's stated positive goals are examined. Additionally, the measurability of positive goals allows the counselor to assess the client's progress. By asking a question like *"What can you do to improve your grades?"* to a client who says *"I want to improve my grades"*, the counselor can help the client focus on the positive goal.

Negative Goal: This type of goal, which clients resort to more than other goals, includes statements about the lack of something. Negative goals usually emerges in two different ways. The first is the desire to avoid something, and the second is the desire to quit something (Doğan, 1999). It can be seen as *"I don't want to get low grades"* or *"I don't want my family to interfere with me about my boyfriend"*. The solution-focused brief approach believes that the negativity mentioned by the client should be replaced by something else in order to prevent it from happening again. At this point, the counselor asks the client to become aware of the skills and behavioral patterns that can replace what the client wants to give up and plays a role in turning the goal into a positive one. For example, with a question such as *"What would you be doing if you didn't get low grades?"*, the counselor can help the client to produce positive goals by revising the negative statements and guiding the client in a positive way.

Harmful Goal: Although not very common, from time to time clients may develop harmful goals such as dropping out of school, running away from home, harming someone or property when they tend to violate the law, harm others or themselves. In a solution-focused brief approach, the counselor should be aware that such harmful goals are a reflection of the need to fill the gaps in the client's life that they cannot fill. The counselor should not support such destructive goals in therapy when the client develops a self-destructive goal.

Unknown Goal: Clients are often referred to therapy by the people around them. Clients who cannot understand why they are sent to therapy are reluctant. Therefore, when the counselor asks *"What brings you here?"* the client usually answers *"I don't know"*. Faced with such situations, the counselor asks the hypothetical *"If..."* question, which helps the client to develop a goal while ensuring the continuation of the therapeutic process (Doğan, 1999).

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH

According to Walter and Peller (1992), when the counselor moves away from the usual questions, the assumptions of solution-focused practice guide the counselor. These assumptions provide a complete picture by presenting the most accurate form of solution-focusedness (Teater, 2015: 193).

Focusing on the positive, the solution and the future: Always seeing the positive, focusing on the solution and the future accelerates the change in the desired direction. Therefore, in solution-fo-

cused therapy, solution-focused discourse is essential instead of problem-focused discourse (Walter & Peller, 1992: 10). Focusing on the client's problems, mistakes and deficiencies will perpetuate the problems in the client's life. Therefore, the counselor should avoid a language that feeds from the problem. One of the most critical components of a solution-focused approach is to focus on the desired future based on what the client has already done well by underlining his/her existing resources rather than his/her inadequacies.

Focusing on exceptional situations where the problem does not arise: In the solution-focused approach, there is a belief that no matter how full of problems the client's life is, there are always moments when problems do not occur (Walter & Peller, 1992: 11). The solution-focused counselor acts in cooperation with the client to help the client gain awareness and encourage exceptions to occur more frequently by uncovering the moments when the problem is absent or perceived as insignificant, when the miracle happens. Since the exceptional moments are often hidden behind the client's veiled expressions, the counselor should carefully analyze these moments from different dimensions.

Change is continuous: Nothing stays the same in the client's life. Everything is in a constant change. Although the client sees his/her past experiences as the same when he/she looks at them from where he/she is, they are different (Teater, 2015: 194). The solution-focused approach, which acts with the idea that every moment, every minute adds new experiences to the client's life, believes that every client has a capacity for change. At this point, the counselor plays a supporting role in the emergence of this capacity by examining the existing power of change, investigating the exceptional situations where there is no problem, and helping the client to produce solutions based on these functional times.

Small changes are harbingers of big changes: Big changes are hidden in the realization of small changes (Walter & Peller, 1992: 18). Most of the time, it is long and arduous for the client to achieve the goals he/she has produced in the process of building the desired future. Even the smallest intervention that will enable the client to take small steps that will enable him/her to see the goals that he/she finds difficult to achieve as more reasonable is very important. No matter how difficult the problem is to bear, it is solved step by step. Whether the steps are big or small, the smallest effort towards change on the way to a solution is critical on the way to big changes.

The client is the expert rather than the counselor: In solution-focused brief therapy, the client determines the subject to be worked on, the goals and what to do in line with these goals. The direction of the therapy is determined by the client, because the solution-focused approach adopts the belief that clients have the responsibility to bring about change in their lives, and the expert in this therapy is not in a directive, interventionist, dominant role. It is in a guiding position for the client to develop positive goals in the process of building a solution. Because the client is more aware of everything about himself/herself than the expert, he/she knows best what to do for what purpose (Doğan, 1999).

The client's available resources contain everything for the solution: The solution-focused approach, which has traces of the empowerment approach, has the idea that clients already have everything

they need to solve their problems (Walter & Peller, 1992: 28). The counselor assumes an auxiliary role in helping the client, who is thought to have all the necessary resources in the process of building a solution, to realize his/her potential and to build a solution by making use of his/her strengths.

SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH TECHNIQUES

Clients often tend to talk about their problems, mistakes and shortcomings during the sessions. A number of specific methods and techniques have been developed in solution-focused brief therapy in order to help clients who insist on talking about the problems in their lives and the situations that have gone wrong to adopt a solution-focused language instead of a language that feeds on the problem.

Exceptions: The main thing is to make the client aware of his/her own resources by uncovering the times when the client did not have problems. On the way to the solution, the counselor uses exception finding questions to identify and discover the moments when the client exhibited desired behaviors and was successful in the past and now. It is enabled to produce solutions based on the client's strengths (Şahin, 2001).

In solution-focused brief therapy, the idea that there is always a moment when a child who resorts to lying tells the truth is advocated (Doğan, 1999). The seeds of the client's own solution are the moments of exceptions that always exist no matter how serious the problems are (Iveson, 2002). When focusing on possible solutions by drawing strength from exceptional moments when the problem is not experienced, counselors make use of exception-finding questions such as *"Are there times when you do not experience this problem?"* or *"What happens differently at such times?"*. In order for such exceptions to occur more often and to reach a solution as soon as possible, the counselor explores what can be done to make them more frequent with complementary questions such as *"What can make this happen more often?"*. In this way, by showing the client that the client's life is not only full of problems and that problems will not always exist, it helps the client to find hope and increase the desire and motivation to change in the name of solution (Uysal, 2014).

Technique for reading the future: The technique of reading the future is used to make the client think about what his/her life will be like in a future where his/her problems are solved, so that the client has an idea about what life will be like in a future where the problem is eliminated (Doğan, 1999). For this purpose, the session is focused on positive situations by asking questions such as *"If you were able to cope with your problems, how would the situation be for you and those around you?"*.

Nightmare Question: In solution-focused brief therapy one way to reach a solution can be achieved by talking about the problem. With the nightmare question, the client is helped to construct a solution by revealing the situations in which the client is ineffective and dysfunctional (Doğan, 1999). When the counselor wants to use the nightmare question, *"Imagine that you had a nightmare when you went to sleep tonight. This nightmare caused your problem to get worse. When you woke up in the*

morning, how would you know that the nightmare had happened?" However, the nightmare question technique is not preferred because it is contrary to the principle of solution-focused brief therapy *"Solution-focused talking instead of talking about the problem"*.

Complimenting: In solution-focused brief therapy, the client's strengths that he/she does well and is successful are emphasized in order to provide in-depth examination, to motivate the client and to confirm his/her strengths. Indirect or direct compliments can be offered to the client, such as *"How did you manage to stay calm in the chaos"* or *"You must be very smart to think of that"*. Counselors should be realistic in their praise. In addition, frequent emphasis on praise during the therapy process strengthens counselor-client relationships and accelerates progress. Praises can be used at different times to support the client's coping strategies, progress and good points that the client has developed for the solution, following the rating questions or when needed and deemed appropriate in the therapy process (Ağca & Avşaroğlu, 2020: 1027).

Rating: Rating questions help to concretize goals that the client sees as complex, difficult and distant, to make the goals more reasonable by enabling small steps to be taken, to create a situation map for both the counselor and the client to evaluate their progress in the process, to be a source of motivation by showing the progress made by the client, and to facilitate the involvement of clients in the therapy process. Generally, the state in which the problem disappears and the miracle occurs is determined as 10, and the worst state of the problem is determined as 0. Through these forms, the client is asked where he/she sees himself/herself on this scale and how he/she reached the point where he/she defines himself/herself is discussed. The counselor ensures that the solution to the problem is focused on and steps are taken with questions such as *"What can you do to move one point further from where you are on the scale?"*. Thus, with measurement questions, the client is provided with the opportunity to gain self-confidence in solving problems in the solution process designed for the desired future, and to evaluate himself/herself in the solution process and to take high-level responsibility (Gülbüz, 2023; Murdock, 2013; Yağcı & Duyan, 2020; Zengin, 2021).

Miracle Question: Miracle questions are used to assist in the creation of well-formulated goals. These questions related to the goal setting of the clients enable the client to develop small and manageable goals and are a rehearsal of the desired future (Trepper et al., 2010). The miracle question technique, which is based on the client's description of a problem-free life, is *"Imagine that you have a magic wand. When you sleep at night, a miracle happened. What changes happen in your life when you wake up in the morning?"* can be directed to the clients. An appropriate time should be observed for the use of miracle questions in the solution process (Miller & Berg, 1996). If there is a hurry in using the miracle question, the problem may not serve its purpose and may cause the client to show resistance. On the other hand, the main purpose of using the miracle question is not to learn what the miracle is, but to help the client to focus on how to imagine a problem-free life that will occur after the miracle and to help clarify the goals that will serve the solution (Miller & Berg, 1996; Walter & Peller, 1992).

Homework: Homework in solution-focused brief therapy is characterized by logical and reasonable tasks that will encourage the client to apply more often the solution path that has proven to work in the process of building the solution. Homework is used to draw attention to the client's good points and to encourage solution-focused thinking and to encourage change by raising awareness of how to use the resources available to the client (Corey, 2008). Two types of homework techniques can be applied, such as applying more often to solutions that work or trying a different method instead of solutions that have proven not to work. In addition to being a task that the client can perform, homework should have a meaning for the client (Doğan, 1999).

Message (Feedback): The feedback technique in solution-focused brief therapy is the presentation of the sessions with the client in the form of a summary feedback to the client when the therapy is nearing its end. After the counselor tells the client that he/she needs 5-10 minutes to formulate a feedback during the therapy, the counselor pauses the therapy with a question such as *"Is there anything you want to ask, know or add before leaving to prepare a feedback after the evaluation of the session?"*. Feedbacks can be designed by the counselor in the form of giving compliments, building bridges and giving observation-based assignments (Corey, 2008). Feedbacks are an important technique for bridging the gap between the two sessions and for the continuation of the next session.

SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK

Clinical social workers of recent years have tended to use the solution-focused approach frequently in their professional practice (Al-Ma'seb, 2020). The solution-focused brief approach is a compatible approach that overlaps with the social work discipline at many points and is frequently used in social work practices. The solution-focused brief approach is an approach that respects cultural differences and values and offers a way to all practices for the protection of human dignity by directly overlapping with the principles of social work, especially the principles of observing human dignity and respect for differences (Lee, 2003).

The discipline of social work adopts the idea that the client can make their own decisions about their own life, be an active participant in the solution process, create a life of their own choices, know what they need regarding the solution process and development and what to do in the healing process. In the social work profession, which underlines the uniqueness of the client with the importance it attaches to the individual and to being an individual, professional practices are carried out based on the principle of producing solutions with the client, not producing solutions for the client, starting from where the client is located.

Based on the guiding principles of the social work profession, such as the right to self-determination, the uniqueness of the client, the ability to build the future with the client instead of for the client and in the present the belief that the solution-focused brief approach focuses on the existing resources of the client and contains the necessary resources for the solution, the idea that it is necessary to draw

attention to the strengths of the client and help in goal setting based on these aspects and to act in cooperation with the client in professional sessions, as well as the argument that the client is the competent person in all stages of the solution process, who directs the professional intervention from evaluating the problems to determining the goals, supports that the solution-focused brief approach overlaps with the social work discipline in many aspects when evaluated in the context of the value foundations of social work.

It is understood that the importance given to the reality and cooperation of the dialogues between the counselor and the client, especially in the solution-focused approach, means accepting the client with his/her differences, seeing these differences as a richness and valuing their existence (Şahin, 2001). At this point, the understanding and approval of the client with his/her differences in solution-focused therapy is directly related to the principle of respect for awareness of the social work profession. In the light of this principle, social workers accept and respect clients unconditionally. The differences of the clients are evaluated as their strengths and seen as richness. Revealing and supporting the client's strengths and building solutions based on these strengths constitute the essence of the social work profession.

Finding out how clients can cope with many difficulties in their lives, what their resources and methods are in this process and how they use them, and transferring all these powers of the client to the solution process is critical in reaching an effective solution in a short time and increasing the client's coping motivation and functionality. In fact, the understanding at the birth of techniques such as coping, miracle, exception, etc. used in solution-focused therapy reflects the basic values of social work, and the high-level importance given to human beings reveals the compatibility of solution-focused therapy with the social work profession, which places human beings at its focus (Şahin, 2001).

In addition to the traditional problem solving approach of social work, the solution-focused brief approach offers a path towards resilience that will develop solution strategies towards the desired future based on the experiences of the clients (De Jong & Berg, 2008). In the problem-focused approach of social work, the current problems in the clients life are examined in detail, the cause, why and how of the problem are examined. In the solution-focused brief approach it is discussed with the client that talking about the problem will not be beneficial in solving the problemand how to move forward in the solution by focusing on the solution. For example, asking a couple to tell about previous fights in their marriage will not bring a solution to existing or new fights. It is not important to know the traumas in order to resolve them. From another perspective, in traditional practice, professional social workers are often seen as social workers at all stages of the solution process. However, this hierarchical situation is not valid for the solution-focused approach. The solution-focused brief approach advocates the idea that it is the client who determines the direction of the therapy and that the responsibility for change in his/her own life lies entirely with the client.

CASE EXAMPLE: APPLICATION OF THE SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF APPROACH

As an example of how the solution-focused brief approach can be used in social work practices, a fictional case example focused on exam anxiety will be given below.

Ayça is a 19-year-old university preparatory student who has finished high school. She prepared for the YKS (Higher Education Institutions Examination) exam for a year in a private tutoring center and decided to prepare for the YKS exam again for a year in the same private tutoring center as a result of not getting the result she wanted even though she ranked in the top 1000 in the exam. Ayça is the only child of the house. Her mother is a specialist doctor in general surgery and her father is a specialist doctor in thoracic surgery. Her parents, who want Ayça to become a doctor like them, put a lot of pressure on her to get a degree and study medicine at a good school. Ayça generally has a healthy relationship with her parents. Ayça's relationship with her parents deteriorated when her academic success declined. Ayça is afraid of failing, gets overly excited during the mock exams she takes in the classroom, suffers from hand and foot tremors and forgetting what she knows. In addition, she experiences somatic reactions such as nausea and insomnia.

Recently, she has been having difficulty eating and getting out of bed, her communication with her friends and teachers has weakened, she frequently misses classes, she loses hope that she will succeed as a result of low results in mock exams, and she gradually loses faith in her dream of becoming a doctor. In response to these problems, the family consulted a social worker who works as a family counselor in a private family counseling center, and the specialist decided to meet with Ayça regularly to solve the problem. In the first interview, Ayça was observed to be quiet, bored, reluctant, stressed but open to cooperation.

As a result of the social worker's evaluations and analysis of many studies in the literature that have proven that therapies using a solution-focused approach to test anxiety are effective in reducing anxiety, he decided to continue the intervention process using a solution-focused approach and conducted three interviews with Ayça. These interviews were scheduled to take place in the family counseling office of the specialist on Sundays every week and lasted approximately one hour. The expert helped Ayça to develop individual goals and functional methods based on her existing resources and strengths in order to reduce her test anxiety and increase her motivation, and worked on achieving her desired future as soon as possible.

The following is an example of the program flow of the three interviews conducted with Ayça, explaining how the process was carried out under the techniques of the solution-focused approach and what the preferred techniques served.

1. Interview

- Meeting, establishing the therapeutic relationship

- Informing about the process, sharing expectations

- Recognizing and structuring anxiety

- Pre-session change emphasis technique

- Discussing the client's expectations after the session, determining positive goals and methods

- Miracle Technique and Grading Technique

- Homework (Applying weekly study and sleep plan and practicing relaxation exercises before trial exams)

- Evaluating and summarizing the session

- Planning the next week

2. Interview

- Summarizing the previous session

- Evaluation of homework

- Exception question

- Rating technique and setting new appropriate and achievable goals for the solutionFocusing on coping moments and identifying strategies

- Homework (Spending time with family and friends, sharing, making time for hobbies)

- Evaluating and summarizing the session

- Planning the next week

3. Interview

- Summarizing the whole interview process

- Evaluating the homework given in the previous session

- Evaluating individual goals and methods

- Learning feelings and thoughts about the interview process and its end

- Rating question technique

- Leader giving feedback to the member (Praise technique)

- Safe place exercise

- Conclusion

Initiating the First Meeting

This stage plays a key role in establishing a safe therapeutic relationship between the expert and Ayça. For this reason, in the first encounter, the expert prepared the appropriate environment with a sincere language and sincerity in order to make the client feel comfortable and safe, learned whether the client had any questions about the process, conveyed information about the counseling process, and started the session by obtaining the clients consent.

In order to realize the 'define the problem' stage (Teater, 2015), which is known as the first stage of De Jong and Berg's solution-focused intervention, the expert started the session with a goal-focused question such as *"What are you trying to overcome by coming here?"* Ayça told the expert that she came to the session to reduce her exam anxiety. She stated that the university exam was very important for her, that she had no choice but to pass, that she was very afraid of failing, that she had unsuccessful results in trial exams due to this anxiety, that her relations with her environment had weakened, that her hope of becoming a doctor was gradually diminishing, that she had started not attending classes and argued with her family. The expert asked Ayça what she would like to see happen in her life at the end of the session and ensured that the session continued positively by focusing on the solution rather than the problem, as required by the main criterion of the solution-focused approach (Danış & Büber, 2018).

Ayça stated that if she could control her excitement during the exams, she would get good results, she would not feel nauseous and suffer from insomnia, she would be more eager for the lessons and more hopeful for the essays as she saw that she could get good results, and her relations with her family and friends would be better. It is understood that Ayça's responses contain positive goals. One of the goals of solution-focused social workers is to transform positive goals into more specific goals (Danış & Büber, 2018). Based on this, the social worker asked Ayça the question *"What would you be doing if you controlled your excitement during the trials and did not disrupt the lessons?"* Ayça responded as follows: *"I would get good results from the trials, I would regain hope that I would succeed, I would regain my sleep pattern"*. In the session, a healthy therapeutic relationship was ensured and it was observed that Ayça had a strong desire for change and was open to cooperation.

Miracle Question

Helping the client to develop well-defined goals, appreciating their existing strengths and multiplying their successes, using positive language for solutions, recognizing the times when the problem does not exist or is perceived as insignificant, and helping the client to see their role in the formation of these exceptions are among the issues that the solution-focused social worker should work on meticulously. From this point of view, Ayça was asked the question *"If a miracle could be performed with a magic wand to make your problems disappear tonight, how would you understand this?"*. This question also serves De Jong and Berg's second stage of the solution-focused process known as *"Develop*

well-formulated goals" (Teater, 2015). In response to this question, Ayça stated that *"She was able to control her excitement that made her forget what she knew and caused her to tremble, she got better results from her essays, she went to classes eagerly, she had hope that she would succeed in the YKS exam, her relationship with her environment strengthened, her sleep became regular and she was able to manage her time".*

Homework

In the session, the main purpose of the counseling process was determined as *"Coping with exam anxiety".* The sub-objectives to serve this main purpose were determined as acquiring hobbies to help relax during exams, and implementing a weekly sleep and study program.

In this direction, Ayça was given relaxation exercises that she could apply before the exam, as well as the implementation of a sleep and study program, and homework assignments in the form of spending time with family and friends and spending time for her hobbies in the next session. In this way, it was aimed to improve family and friend relations, increase social support and reduce stress by spending time for hobbies that she thought would help reduce anxiety. In the last interview, the *"Safe place exercise",* which is more effective to support the relaxation exercise, was practiced to make her feel good and relax before the exam so that she could better control her test anxiety (Terzi & Koçak, 2023). At this point, the social worker applied the homework technique by determining sub-goals based on the principles of the solution-focused approach. With the homework technique, it is ensured that the client realizes the resources he/she has, focuses on positive moments, and focuses on the solution, not the problem (Corey, 2008).

First sign

Problems are often complex. The client may see the goal as difficult and distant. Therefore, the creation of more small steps is useful in addressing problems. Small changes are the harbingers of big changes. Every step taken for a solution is extremely important. The social worker asked Ayça *"Who do you think will be the first to notice the change after the miracle happens?"* at the end of the session in order for the clients to think about small steps on the way to their goals and to take action with follow-up and complementary questions. To this question, Ayça stated that her parents, teachers and classmates would be the first to notice the change in her, and that they would see that she had become a person who felt better, relaxed, more disciplined, continued her lessons with confidence and hope, was more successful, and had better relationships with her family and friends.

Exceptions

Investigating the times when the problem is not a problem and uncovering these exceptions will help to identify the clients existing resources, to determine strategies for the solution, to achieve the goal

and to support the formation of awareness in the client. With exception questions such as *"Can you tell us about the moments when you feel like a miracle has happened?" "What happens differently at such times?"*, the social worker invites the client to work on solutions in cooperation by making use of these exceptional situations. In this way, it is aimed to empower the client by talking directly about solutions without getting stuck on the problems. Exception questions are also a requirement of De Jong and Berg's third stage of the solution-focused process known as the *"Discover exceptions"* stage (Teater, 2015). In response to the questions asked to her, Ayça said, *"When I motivate myself and relax, when I look at the essays that I got high grades, when I remember that I was among the top 1000 students last year, when I am busy with the people I love and my hobbies, when I think about the times when I could work as disciplined as I used to, I am different from this situation."* In response, the social worker said, *"Everything seems to be fine at these times. Can you tell me how you feel in these moments? "* as a question to support the positive aspects. Ayça responded to this question as *"I feel stress-free, confident, hopeful and happy"*. It was understood that Ayça was normally a successful, determined and sociable student, and efforts were made to ensure that these exceptions were more frequent by drawing attention to her strengths on her perception towards the exam.

Rating from 0 to 10

In solution-focused practice, rating questions can be used to help the client evaluate the current situation, progress in finding a solution, and measure aspects such as motivation in the solution process (De Jong & Miller, 1995: 732). In this framework, the social worker asked Ayça the question *"On a scale where 0 represents the worst problem that brought you here and 10 represents the miracle that happened and the problem disappeared, where do you find yourself right now?"*. Ayça answered 4 to this question. Thereupon, the social worker aims to make the client think more about the solution with the question *"What did you do to get you to 4?"* and aims to increase the strengths of the client by asking another question about how she would see her life if she moves one point on this scale. In the last interview, Ayça gave a score of 8 in response to this question, stating that she was now able to control her anxiety, that her somatic symptoms had disappeared and that she was more motivated.

Message (Feedback)

In solution-focused practice, when it is desired to give some feedback towards the end of the session, the expert asks the client for 5 or 10 minutes (Corey, 2008). In this time period, the feedback to be given to the client is planned. The expert leaves the room to prepare some feedback about Ayça's process. This is the equivalent of De Jong and Berg's *"Feedback"* stage, known as the fourth stage of the solution-focused process (Teater, 2015). In this process, the expert evaluated the sessions and returned to the room with a feedback. When the expert returns, he points this out to Ayça:

"You understand the importance of the YKS exam and you pay a lot of attention to this exam. You want to achieve successful results without succumbing to your excitement, to have an effective and efficient

study organization, and to have better relationships with your family and friends. I've also heard from you in our conversations about the times when this has already happened.It is quite impressive that you are such an intelligent, determined and successful student and that you know what you do well and what you want to do. The fact that you think that family and friend relationships are important and that you realize the positive results that will occur in your life when you manage your anxiety well is also something that should be appreciated. I can see that you already have the strength to keep your excitement under control by studying regularly, showing sufficient effort and determination as you did last year. Until our next meeting, I want you to pay attention to the moments of exception you mentioned and try more thought and behavior exercises that will increase or create these moments. I also want you to think about the issues that will take you to higher levels, because you know best what and how to do in this process."

The three sessions, which were carried out based on the solution-focused brief approach, were carried out at times when needed and deemed appropriate, with discourses oriented towards a positive solution, based on the *"cheerleading effect"* (Terzi & Koçak, 2023), and the client's coping strategies that serve the purposes in the process of building solutions, their current potential and development were supported with compliments. In this way, she was encouraged to focus on realizing the positive situations in her own life and to take more functional actions in this direction.

Considering the fifth stage of De Jong and Berg's solution-focused practice, known as 'Assess the progress of the client' (Teater, 2015), actions were formulated and carried out to eliminate the problems that would require Ayça to apply for professional intervention as a result of the brief professional intervention carried out based on the solution-focused approach. A positive transformation has occurred in Ayça's thought structure and perception definitions, and it has been observed that the consciousness that can overcome the problems based on her own strengths in the face of problems has been established, the somatic symptoms that the moments when she lost control from excitement during the exam were replaced by moments when the questions were solved calmly, the desired high results were obtained from the exams, the act of attending classes and studying regularly could be realized, and her relations with her family and friends improved. It was determined that the goal of *"Coping with exam anxiety"* set in the first session was achieved and Ayça made progress in coping with her problem. Thus, the solution-focused brief therapy was successfully completed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Solution-focused brief therapy is a goal-focused, future-focused approach (Akyol & Bacanlı, 2019: 4), rooted in various theoretical orientations, the solution-focused approach is designed as a model that includes simple rules, concrete techniques, an inductive and optimistic view, assumptions about change, interaction and goal design (Waller & Peller, 1992; Iveson, 2002).

Solution-focused brief therapy, in which a counselor profile that accepts the client as the expert of his/her own life and authorizes him/her rather than an expert profile that gathers all the authority in professional interviews, is a method of designing positive goals for the desired future by taking action with a here-and-now approach, preventing the client from being stuck in past mistakes, deficiencies or problems, and focusing on how to achieve the solution. The essence of this approach, which seeks solutions by utilizing the good aspects of the client, is to identify the goals developed by the client in the solution building process and to ensure that all negative goals are shaped in a positive/affirmative direction with a number of methods and techniques.

Solution-focused therapy can be used for issues such as abandonment, lack of trust, hurt (Kiser et al., 1993: 241), alcohol addiction (De Shazer & Isebaert, 2004: 51), peer bullying (Kvarme et al., 2013: 122), exam anxiety and general anxiety, depression, post-traumatic disorder, psychological disorders (OCD, etc.) (Alguzo & Jaradat, 2021: 7), as well as trauma survivors (Kim et al., 2021: 563) and immigrants (Alguzo & Jaradat, 2021: 7) who are characterized by shock, pain, grief and denial. (Alguzo & Jaradat, 2021: 7), as well as trauma victims (Kim et al., 2021: 563), immigrants characterized by shock, pain, grief and denial (Aambo, 1997: 68), students with behavioral problems in the classroom environment (Franklin et al., 2008), individuals with communication barriers (Northcott et al., 2021: 12).

The solution-focused brief approach in the field of social work plays an important role in the individual's reaching a solution, as it focuses on the solution of the problems rather than the problems and aims to realize the goals developed by the individuals in the solution building process as soon as possible. In this respect, solution-focused brief therapy offers a fast and effective way to eliminate problems in micro-level social service practices to be carried out with individuals and families, as well as being a method that is considered functional and frequently used by social workers with its easy applicability at the point of eliminating the problems of the clients, as well as providing an effective treatment in obtaining a positive result in behavioral problems as well as psychological problems, and being a brief method that corresponds to a more affordable cost (Danış & Büber, 2018; Gingerich & Peterson, 2013).

According to the social worker who acts with a solution-focused approach, the main actor in the evaluation of problems and intervention processes is the client. The main task of solution-focused social workers is to restore the former functionality of the client who have lost their functionality due to various disruptions in their lives, and to ensure that the client is purified from all negative thoughts that will cause the client to develop negative thought and behavior patterns.

The fact that the focus in Solution-Focused Therapy is on the client's skills, achievements and strengths allows this therapy model to provide effective results in reducing anxiety (Ateş & Gençdoğan, 2017). As a matter of fact, in the case example designed within the scope of the study, reducing the exam anxiety experienced by the client and increasing his/her motivation was achieved by recognizing and transferring the client's existing resources, strengths and rare moments when he/she could cope with

the problem to the present, helping him/her to create positive applicable goals and coping strategies, supporting his/her good qualities, and increasing their frequency. With solution-focused techniques, the client is made to realize that the problem does not always exist, that anxiety is natural and manageable, and that the coping skills to manage test anxiety are hidden in their existing resources. Thus, it was possible for the client to reach the desired future as soon as possible.

As a result, the strengths of the solution-focused brief approach are that it is comprehensive with its applicability to a large number of client profiles and situations, it has been confirmed to be effective in solving problems in a short time in many professional studies, it can be applied easily and at low cost, and its methods and techniques can be combined with different methods such as motivational or crisis interventions. With all these aspects, it is thought to help social workers to realize an effective professional intervention by providing some advantages such as a systematic functioning, ease of implementation, and efficiency in a short time.

Considering the content of the study and the relevant literature, the advantages, effective and fast methods and wide scope of the solution-focused brief therapy model reveal its applicability to many client groups and situations. Taking into account the breadth of the scope of the solution-focused approach and the working areas and groups of the social work profession, the case presentation can be diversified in terms of content, target group, technique, interview duration, etc. However, it can be said that the fact that the current study includes a fictional case intervention is a limitation. Considering that it is very important to carry out and disseminate such studies in the context of clinical social work, it may be recommended to repeat the program applied in the study in individual or group studies and to increase the number of sessions in the light of the preferred subject and audience.

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EXISTENTIAL THERAPY IN SOCIAL

Sosyal Hizmette Varoluşçu Terapi

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ABSTRACT

Social work is a profession and science that aims to increase community welfare in micro, mezzo and macro dimensions, to protect and respect human rights, to ensure social justice and social development. Making people's lives better, protecting and supporting them, promoting social justice and finding solutions to social problems are among the main goals of social work. Social workers use various intervention approaches to achieve these goals. One of these approaches is existential therapy. Existential therapy is a psychotherapy approach that aims to discover the meaning, purpose and essence of life. This approach, which combines existential philosophical thought and psychotherapy, aims to question the individual's inner world, values, beliefs and experiences. Humanity has been in search of the meaning of life and existential questioning for most of its life. In some cases, this process can create new problems. However, the individual can gain functionality by finding solutions to problems and gaining meaning in life. This article, which is based on a literature review, will try to explain the historical process, leading names, basic assumptions and aims of existential therapy. It will be tried to explain how the social work approach can be in the perspective of existential therapy and its application example through a fictional case.

Keywords: Social work, social worker, social investigation report, existentialism, existential therapy

ÖZET

Sosyal hizmet, mikro, mezzo ve makro boyutta toplum refahını artırmayı, insan haklarını korumayı ve bu haklara saygı gösterilmesini, toplumsal adaletin sağlanmasını ve toplumsal gelişmeyi amaçlayan bir meslek ve bilim dalıdır. İnsanların yaşamlarını daha iyi hale getirmek, onları korumak ve desteklemek, toplumsal adaleti teşvik etmek ve toplumsal sorunlara çözüm bulmak sosyal hizmetin temel amaçlarındandır. Sosyal hizmet uzmanları, bu amaçların gerçekleştirilebilmesi için çeşitli müdahale yaklaşımları kullanırlar. Bu yaklaşımlardan biri de varoluşçu terapidir. Varoluşçu terapi, yaşamın anlamını, amacını ve özünü keşfetmeyi amaçlayan bir psikoterapi yaklaşımıdır. Varoluşsal felsefi düşünce ve psikoterapiyi birleştiren bu yaklaşımda bireyin içsel dünyasını, değerlerini, inançlarını ve deneyimlerini sorgulaması hedeflenir. İnsanlık, yaşamının büyük bir kısmında hayatın anlamının arayışı ve varoluşsal sorgulamalar içerisinde olmuştur. Bu süreç bazı durumlarda yeni sorunlar ortaya çıkarabilmektedir. Ancak sorunların çözümünün bulunması ve yaşamın anlam kazanması ile birey de işlevselliğini kazanabilmektedir. Literatür taraması yöntemiyle hazırlanan bu makalede varoluşçu terapinin tarihsel süreci, önde gelen isimleri, temel varsayımları ve amaçları anlatılmaya çalışılacaktır. Varoluşçu terapi perspektifinde sosyal hizmet yaklaşımının nasıl olabileceği ve uygulama örneği kurgu bir vaka üzerinden açıklanmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal hizmet, sosyal hizmet uzmanı, sosyal inceleme raporu, varoluşçuluk, varoluşçu terapi

INTRODUCTION

Many definitions of social work have been changed over the years. These definitions have changed according to different situations experienced and accepted. Social work, which is a systematic way for individuals and groups to adapt to society in a healthy way, is based on profession-specific knowledge, skills and fixed principles as in other professions (Truell, 2014). According to the joint definition of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the definition of social work is as follows:

> *"Social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, empowerment and liberation of people. The principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by social work theories, social sciences, humanities and local knowledge, social work brings people and structures together to address life's challenges and promote well-being. The above definition can be expanded at national and/or regional levels." (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014)".*

Human beings have been social beings helping each other even in the earliest times of history. The range and effectiveness of this assistance has changed over time. The first application examples in the history of social work were mostly based on volunteerism. Later, with increasing and changing needs, it became a profession by establishing its boundaries and principles (Danış & Büber, 2018). With the acceptance of social work as a profession, scientific acceptance stages have been passed. There are many approaches and theories used in social work practices. This article will focus on the existential approach and try to explain the history, scope, application forms and theory of the approach through a case example.

HISTORY OF THE EXISTENTIAL APPROACH

The search for existence dates back to the beginning of human history. Humanity, which has been engaged in existential research in every period of the past, has created philosophical thought currents by conducting deep research on the purposes and reasons for existence. While many people realize that existence is a special situation in itself and that they can actually live a better, more functional and more productive life by realizing the characteristics they have, they can drift into a void with the lack of this awareness (Çelik, 2017).

Existentialism historically dates from the late 19th to the mid-20th century and includes many important figures and philosophical developments.

The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard was one of the early pioneers of existentialism in the early 19th century. He worked on the concepts of individual faith, freedom and the search for meaning. Kierkegaard, considered one of the pioneering thinkers of existentialism, has been one of the influential

names in philosophy and theology. Kierkegaard emphasized the belief and freedom of the individual. In his studies, he argued that an individual's beliefs and decisions are closely related to personal experiences (Cauly, 2006).

Towards the end of the 19th century, the German philosopher Nietzsche, who laid the foundations of existentialism, contributed to the development of existentialist thought with concepts such as "The Death of God" and "Superior Morality". According to him, people are no longer bound to each other by absolute moral values or meanings. Nietzsche's ideas have had a significant impact on the reshaping of will, power and values (Corey, 2008).

Sartre is one of the most important figures of existentialist philosophy. He emphasized concepts such as freedom, choice and the importance of responsibility. His thoughts are mostly shaped around the principle of "Being precedes essence". Sartre emphasized human freedom and responsibility. According to his ideas, human beings have no essence or predetermined destiny; each individual creates their own existence and values. Sartre's most famous work "Being and Nothingness" is considered one of the fundamental texts of existentialism (Eliason, Samide, Williams, & Lepore, 2010).

Albert Camus is also one of the important representatives of existentialism. He focused on the meaninglessness of existence and how humans cope with this meaninglessness. Camus's novel "The Stranger" deals with the main themes of existentialism and, at the same time, his novel "The Plague" shows how people are in a search to cope with an existential crisis. In his works, Camus tried to explain the meaninglessness of this world and the loneliness of man in this world. French writer Camus worked on the concept of "meaninglessness" of existentialism. In his works such as "The Stranger" and "The Discourse of Sisyphus", he explored the relationship between existentialism and meaninglessness (Beyazyüz, 2020).

Martin Heidegger contributed to existential analysis by discussing the basic concepts of existentialism in his work "Being and Time". Heidegger's grounding in phenomenology contributed greatly to the development of existentialism. In his work "Being and Time", he analyzed the meaning of being and the human experience of existence. Heidegger also addressed what meaning humans contribute to the world and how this meaning entails existential responsibility (Eliason, Samide, Williams, & Lepore, 2010).

Viktor Frankl, an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, is best known for his book Man's Search for Meaning. Based on his experiences in Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust, Frankl examined the human search for meaning and the human capacity to cope with pain and hardship. Frankl, who developed the psychotherapy approach known as logotherapy, argued that the human search for meaning is a fundamental element of life (Frankl, 2020).

Rollo May was an American psychologist and a figure who made important contributions to existentialism. May wrote on existential issues such as human freedom, liberty and responsibility. He also

argued in his book "The Courage to Create" that creativity is a central element of existence. In the field of psychotherapy, he developed existential therapy (Corey, 2008).

Irvin Yalom is an American psychiatrist and author. He is especially known in the field of group therapy and existential therapy. His books such as "The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy" are recognized as one of the fundamental texts in the field of group therapy. Yalom deeply analyzed the human fear of death, the search for meaning and relationships. He also dealt with psychological and existential themes in his stories and fictional texts (Corey, 2008).

BASIC CONCEPTS AND PROPOSITIONS IN EXISTENTIAL THERAPY

In existentialist thought, it is essential for human beings to be able to make decisions with their free will, to know themselves and to make decisions on their own. The concept of freedom depends on the exercise of free will and the ability to make choices. There can be no restriction or control in the stages such as thinking, believing and deciding. Existentialism is part of man's effort to understand himself and the world more deeply. People try to add meaning to their lives by creating their own values (Küpeli & Şahin, 2018).

Existentialist philosophy is rooted in the view that "existence precedes essence", a view that Rallo May has further elaborated with the proposition that "Man does not only grow with the system established by nature. At the same time, the individual also contributes to the growth of this system". Every human being is an individual with a unique nature or a being on the way to becoming an individual. The human being is the only being in the known universe that tries to create its development on the way to becoming an individual by adding essence to its existence (İlgar & İlgar, 2019).

An existentialist perspective can sometimes be acquired and practiced without even realizing it. There are many professionals in different cultures who adopt this attitude even if they do not identify themselves as such. Existentialism in psychotherapy is not only acquired through education or theoretical knowledge. It usually does not develop before middle age and may or may not be formed in the personality of the therapist. Existential psychotherapy is therefore considered an attitude, not a method (Geçtan, 1990).

The concept of Dasein, developed by Martin Heidegger, literally means "being"/"existence". Dasein defines human existence not only in the sense of a mere being, but also as a being that tries to understand its own existence and interacts with the world with this consciousness (Duyan, 2018). The concept of existence is defined in German within the following four main dimensions: umwelt, mitwelt, eigenwelt and überwelt.

Umwelt: German for "the world around". Van Deurzen defined this world as the natural world and the physical biological dimensional place where one would probably behave instinctively. Rollo May, on the other hand, defined it as the world that is generally referred to as the environment today. It

is argued that every human being experiences several challenges or concerns within the physical world, such as nature (life and death), experiences (pleasure and pain), the personal body (health and illness), the universe (harmony and chaos) (Rozzi, 2020). Umwelt refers to the awareness of physical sensations such as pleasure, pain, and hunger; however, it is often considered a motivational component of experiences. Umwelt encompasses the biological and motivational structure or formation of an individual's lived world (Olivares, Peterson, & Hess, 2007).

Mitwelt: This concept, which we can consider as the social world, means "together with the world" in German. Human experience takes place in social, political and cultural environments. To a certain extent, private relationships and ordinary daily encounters with other people, especially in the social sphere, are also part of this world. In other words, it is the universe of human relations. Challenges or concerns that people may experience in this dimension include conflicts such as love/hate in society, superiority or subordination with other people, acceptance or rejection of the self, belonging to a culture or being excluded (Rozzi, 2020).

Eigenwelt: Describes our experiences of the personal/psychological world and means "personal world" in German. This area, also called the private world, is where there is privacy. It includes privacy and special relationships with ourselves and our loved ones. The challenges of the individual in this world include the concepts of personality, identity and freedom, individual strengths and weaknesses, self-actualization or dissociation, self-confidence or anxiety (Rozzi, 2020).

Überwelt: This area, called the spiritual world, means "upper world" in German. It is the area where the individual's connection with abstract and metaphysical aspects takes place. The challenges faced by the individual in this world are semantic conflicts between the concepts of eternity, good and evil, rightness/wrongness, meaning/voidness and right/wrong (Rozzi, 2020).

HUMAN NATURE APPROACH

Existential therapy is a form of therapy consisting of a set of methods that are distant from the evaluation of people's personalities, focusing on the current situation of individuals and their perception of life. Existential therapy, which emphasizes the importance of being alive and the dignity of the individual, supports finding the meaning of being human and exploring and revealing new aspects of the individual. Based on assumptions about human nature, it is an approach that aims to eliminate the lostness of the individual who has lost the meaning of his/her existence, who feels empty and lonely. Existential therapists focus on understanding the individual and the situation rather than setting fixed, rigid rules in the counseling process (Corey, 2008).

The individual is a being in constant communication with his/her environment. The necessity of this communication stems from the fact that it exists. No matter how much the individual tries to isolate himself from his environment, the life he exists in does not allow ruptures and this communication

remains continuous. Since the individual is in constant interaction with his environment and society, he is in different searches in different periods. Human existential searches are not something that happens all at once. Different quests and questions arise at different times and places in life (İlgar & İlgar, 2019).

According to the existentialist approach, the conditions in which the individual exists are dimensioned by six basic propositions:

-Having the Capacity for Self-Awareness

If an individual can increase their existential awareness, they can increase their capacity to make choices and free decisions. The more self-awareness increases, the more liberated the individual can be in shaping his/her own life and perception of life. By increasing our awareness in the following areas, we increase our life capacity.

- Every individual is mortal and we don't have enough time in our lives to fulfill every desire.

- We have the potential to act or not to act at all. Inaction is also a choice.

- We have a partial right to self-determination and we choose our own actions.

- The meaning of existence is not something that is tied to us in a certain way from the very beginning; it is something that we can discover through our personal search.

- Existential concerns are a fundamental part of our lives. When our self-awareness increases, so does our sense of responsibility for the consequences of the choices we make.

- The individual may experience emptiness, meaninglessness, loneliness, guilt and isolation.

Increasing individuals' self-awareness is one of the main goals of all types of therapy. By increasing self-awareness, it is ensured that the person makes peace with his/her existence, gives meaning to life and makes decisions about his/her life and accepts the responsibilities of these decisions (Corey, 2008).

-Freedom and Responsibility

Freedom and responsibility are interrelated concepts. Individuals should be aware of their responsibilities for the situations that arise as a result of their choices as well as realizing that they are free in the choice stages of their lives. We are responsible for the situations we encounter in life, our lives, our choices or our decision not to act. Avoiding this awareness or choosing not to make choices is an existential crime. Being aware that an individual has the freedom to make decisions about his/her own life and being aware of the responsibility for the consequences of the decisions they make enables them to be more self-confident in later decision-making phases. The concepts of freedom and responsibility are complementary to each other (Corey, 2008).

-Struggle to Find Identity and Relations with Others

While the individual strives for a sense of self-awareness and being unique, he/she also interacts with his/her environment and nature. Individuals who fail in their efforts to merge with the environment and nature, to interact with them and to create their existence may become isolated and alienated. In their quest to find their own identities, people can sometimes become alienated from their authentic selves by meeting other people's expectations and values instead of creating their own unique selves. The isolation of the individual is considered among the situations that should be experienced at the point of self-discovery. A person who is left to himself/herself makes a discovery by entering into questions. In this discovery, he/she discovers what his/her self is, whether he/she is dependent on others, and how he/she feels when he/she is alone with himself/herself. People who do not enjoy the time they spend with themselves may display a different identity performance when they interact with others. This can be detrimental to the individual's efforts to find an identity and lead to a life shaped by the expectations of others. Some individuals think that a life dependent on others is safer and that they will be driven into loneliness when they try to search for their own identity. This thought can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety. For this reason, people feel a sense of "doing" instead of a sense of "being" (Corey, 2008).

-Searching for the Meaning of Life

According to existentialists, life is not a place that has meaning on its own. It is the individual himself who makes life meaningful. Life becomes meaningful thanks to the results that people find as a result of their search for meaning in life. Therefore, the meaning of life is shaped within the framework of the results that individuals themselves reach. At the same time, human beings are different from other species because they are in search of meaning in life. The values in people's perceptions of life are sometimes limited to what they get from the environment rather than what they create themselves. When people develop awareness of this situation, they may enter a phase of self-alienation and may want to get out of this situation. However, it is not an easy decision to abandon and change the values they have acquired one way or another. People who only think of changing their existing values without realizing the values they think belong to them may feel fear and anxiety before this change. Fear of isolation and alienation as a result of change may prevent individuals from taking action (Corey, 2008). Individuals search for meaning when the life they live starts to feel meaningless. Frankl (2020) defined this sense of meaninglessness in life as existential emptiness. While the existence of meaning in life is associated with positive concepts such as happiness, social closeness, being healthy, and well-being, the search for meaning is associated with concepts such as anxiety and social isolation (İlgar & İlgar, 2019).

-Anxiety as a Condition of Life

Anxiety has been a part of human life in different dimensions, times and places. There are two types of anxiety: normal and neurotic anxiety. Therapists have argued that anxiety has an important potential for human development. But it is necessary to distinguish between normal anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Normal anxiety is the appropriate response to situations we are confronted with. In other words, this type of anxiety does not put pressure on the individual and can be used as a source of motivation for change. Neurotic anxiety, on the other hand, takes individuals beyond the limits of the controlled anxiety level and negatively affects functionality. Eliminating normal anxiety in the therapeutic process is not among the goals. Anxiety strengthens individuals, refreshes their sense of struggle and encourages them to confront (Corey, 2008).

-Realization of Death and Existence

In the existentialist approach, death is not a negative situation. On the contrary, they argue that it should not be forgotten that death is a part and stage of life. If the individual faces the idea that life has an end and accepts this situation, it will make his/her life more meaningful and livable. If we avoid or run away from the fact that we will die, life will become meaningless and unpleasant. Because even if people do not want to face this phenomenon, it will inevitably turn into a fear of death and will haunt the individual. The individual should be made to establish a balance here and have a healthy confrontation. Because people should accept life by living in the present without constantly thinking about death (Corey, 2008).

The main aim of existential therapy is to help individuals to search for the meaning of their lives and to construct this meaning for themselves, to support them to realize and exercise their freedom, to encourage them to take responsibility for their own choices and actions, to help them understand and cope with their existential anxieties and fears, to guide them to discover their own values and beliefs, to encourage them to live an authentic and creative life, and to help them understand how to define a "good life". This therapy helps people to face their existential issues, understand their inner conflicts and cope with them in a healthier way. The main goal of existential therapy is to enable individuals to lead a more meaningful, free and conscious life (Bakırtaş, 2018).

EXISTENTIAL APPROACH AND SOCIAL WORK

Although there is no single definition, existential philosophies can sometimes be called a way of doing philosophy and sometimes a philosophical thought. Existential therapy is based on this philosophical thought. Basically, it derives from philosophical tendencies that try to explain human and life, and differs from other approaches by focusing on the problems of modern man. In other words, it emerged as a reaction to approaches that treat the individual as an object and argues that the individual should be defined as an authentic and unique being (Çelik, 2017). Existentialism is a philosophy based on per-

sonal experience. Kierkegaard's slogan "Truth is subjectivity" and Sartre's "Being precedes essence" refer to finding the self through personal experience. Heidegger's concept of "dasein" (being in the world) is another concept that advocates the same idea. Two components are generally recognized as necessary for the process of change: rational and experiential observational change. Almost all types of psychotherapy include these components, but they vary.

Experiential components are when clients experience themselves in a new and different way. They may realize that they are being treated differently than they thought they would be by the people they care about in their lives. They may also find new feelings or symptoms emerging within themselves after some searching. The rational components are related to the process of self-understanding. It is about thinking and conceptualizing causal relationships in individuals' past, evaluating how they handle recent situations, and thinking about the meaning of this when they experience themselves in a new way (Krill, 2017).

Clinical social work is defined by the International Association of Social Workers (NASW) as "practices that include diagnostic, preventive, developmental, supportive and rehabilitative services in situations where the functionality of individuals, families and/or groups is threatened or affected by social and psychological stress or health disorders" (Wolberg, 2005).

Existential approaches to social work practice are mostly discussed in Europe and North America. These approaches have been developed to help us understand the basic "being" of human beings. In particular, they aim to understand the serious problems that clients face in their lives, such as the sense of death, acceptance of the death of their closest or beloved family members, acceptance of their own illness and disability, grief experiences, acceptance of the consequences of major disasters, and experiences of alienation, social isolation and discrimination (Tajima, 2014).

SAMPLE CASE STUDY

The case used at this stage is fictional and the case will be handled from the perspective of existential therapy.

Ayşe is a 52-year-old married mother of 2 children. Her husband is a teacher and still working. Ayşe is a retired teacher. They have two sons. As Ayşe had recently started to isolate herself from her friends and her husband, she was referred to therapy on the advice of a close friend. She had previously met with two therapists. As a result of the preliminary analysis of the counselors, it was thought that existential psychotherapy could be a useful approach for Ayşe and she was referred to a counselor specialized in this field.

At the first meeting, general information about her current life was obtained from the conversation. In addition to the above information, Ayşe's children attended university in another province. After their university education, they started working in different cities. She retired 2 years ago. She filled

this gap with her neighbors and voluntary aid activities. In the first session, Ayşe described herself as someone who does not want to communicate with others too much lately and does not want to talk about herself too much. In general, she did not complain of too much dissatisfaction in her daily life, but she stated that a voice inside her kept telling her that she needed to do something. However, she mentioned that she did not know what to do and that she could not easily identify what was troubling her.

It was observed that Ayşe felt a little distressed when she realized that with the help of the counselor, she would move on to the stages of self-discovery. Later in the session, she stated that her parents separated when she was 4 years old, her mother took care of her and her 2 siblings, her mother passed away when she was 10 years old and after that her aunts took care of them. She stated that although she lost her parents at a young age, she did not have a very unhappy childhood. The first session was completed without much prolongation and with the client's willingness to continue the sessions.

In the following sessions with Ayşe, it was observed that she was a little more willing to talk. No clear determination was made about the duration of the therapy. Ayşe stated that the fact that the first session was relaxing and non-coercive was effective in continuing the therapy. She stated that she would not have continued if there had been more insistence and questioning.

During the sessions, Ayşe was asked about the routines of her familial and environmental relationships and evaluations about these relationships. Although at first she talked about these routines without commenting, as the sessions progressed, it was observed that she started to describe them with more comment and questioning. She stated that she thought that she did most of the things she did in her life in line with the expectations and needs of others. She stated that she started to question things like "Would it have been different if I had lived differently?" or "Would I have been more successful?". Since she had always been cautious throughout her life and was not very open about her own ideas, sometimes out of fear of not being accepted and sometimes because she did not feel she had enough power, she generally kept her ideas to herself. In the following sessions, she stated that she had actually entered this mindset after the death of her mother and that she realized now that she had isolated herself from her environment.

In the following sessions, Ayşe was asked what had changed in her daily life so far and how this change made her feel. She stated that she felt that she was now able to make free and sincere decisions, even in simple daily activities, that she was at peace with the responsibilities of the decisions she made and that she felt more courageous in approaching the outcome of these responsibilities. She mentioned that this courage strengthened her self-confidence even more.

When asked whether this change was noticed around her, she stated that she received positive feedback and that even she herself was not aware that she had changed so much. She mentioned that she

was noticed more in the community where she was involved in voluntary activities and even felt as if she had become a member again and was meeting people again. She stated that her days are now more enjoyable. She stated that she started to feel as if her previous life was not her own and that she was now in control. She stated that she felt as if she was spending her life under a dim light in a house with all the light bulbs blown out, but one day she decided to go out of the house and buy new light bulbs and turned them all on and witnessed the darkness and haze in her life dissipate.

Since the sessions with Ayşe were planned to end gradually, she was asked for her general evaluation of the process. Although she generally reiterated the evaluations she had made with herself in the last interviews, she mentioned that her anxieties no longer impaired her functionality, on the contrary, they created a sense of struggle, and that she could manage and direct her anxieties rather than the anxieties managing her.

In this series of sessions, Ayşe was helped to get to the root of her existential anxieties, she was helped to realize the real reasons, she was helped to find out how to change under the supervision of the counselor, she was helped to see the effects of the change and the change was monitored. In order not to turn counseling into supervision, the sessions with Ayşe were terminated, but she was informed that she could come and consult on any subject whenever she wanted, and the interview was ended with good wishes.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

From the past to the present, various philosophical thought movements have emerged that have tried to understand human beings, nature, the universe, God, societies, in other words, everything. Since man is a thinking being, he has always been in a state of questioning, and as a result of this questioning, he has caused the formation of various currents of thought by trying to create solutions to the situations he encounters. The existentialist approach is one of these movements. It differs from many other approaches in that it puts the individual at its center and focuses on what the individual's meaning is in his/her existence and how to find this meaning.

Since the existentialist approach deals with seemingly complex situations such as the state of human existence, the meaning of existence, finding this meaning, and the creation of personal existence, and since these situations are very subjective, they can be difficult to understand and explain. For these reasons, existential therapy does not have concrete stages and definitions like other therapy approaches. The complexity and uniqueness of the issue of existence itself is one of the reasons for this. In general, existential therapy deals with issues such as supporting individuals to have the capacity for self-awareness, empowering individuals to realize their freedom and face their responsibilities, developing the individual's efforts to find an identity and increasing their sincerity and awareness in their relationships with other individuals, controlling anxiety, which is and sometimes should be a part of life, understanding and accepting these concepts rather than the corrosive or frightening effects

of death and existence. The main aim of all of these areas is to help people complete the stages of self-actualization.

In the light of this approach, social work has the same basic objectives. Social work focuses on empowering the individual to determine his/her own destiny, to make free decisions, to protect and increase the mental, physical and social health of the individual in his/her environment. Social workers, who are professional representatives of the science and profession of social work, contribute with their various roles such as counseling, advocacy and guidance in the stages of creating awareness of the individual against the processes that the individual undergoes due to existential neuroses and even in some cases pushing them to existential questioning, supporting them in these search processes and ensuring the formation of the individual's life and self-satisfaction by providing counseling services.
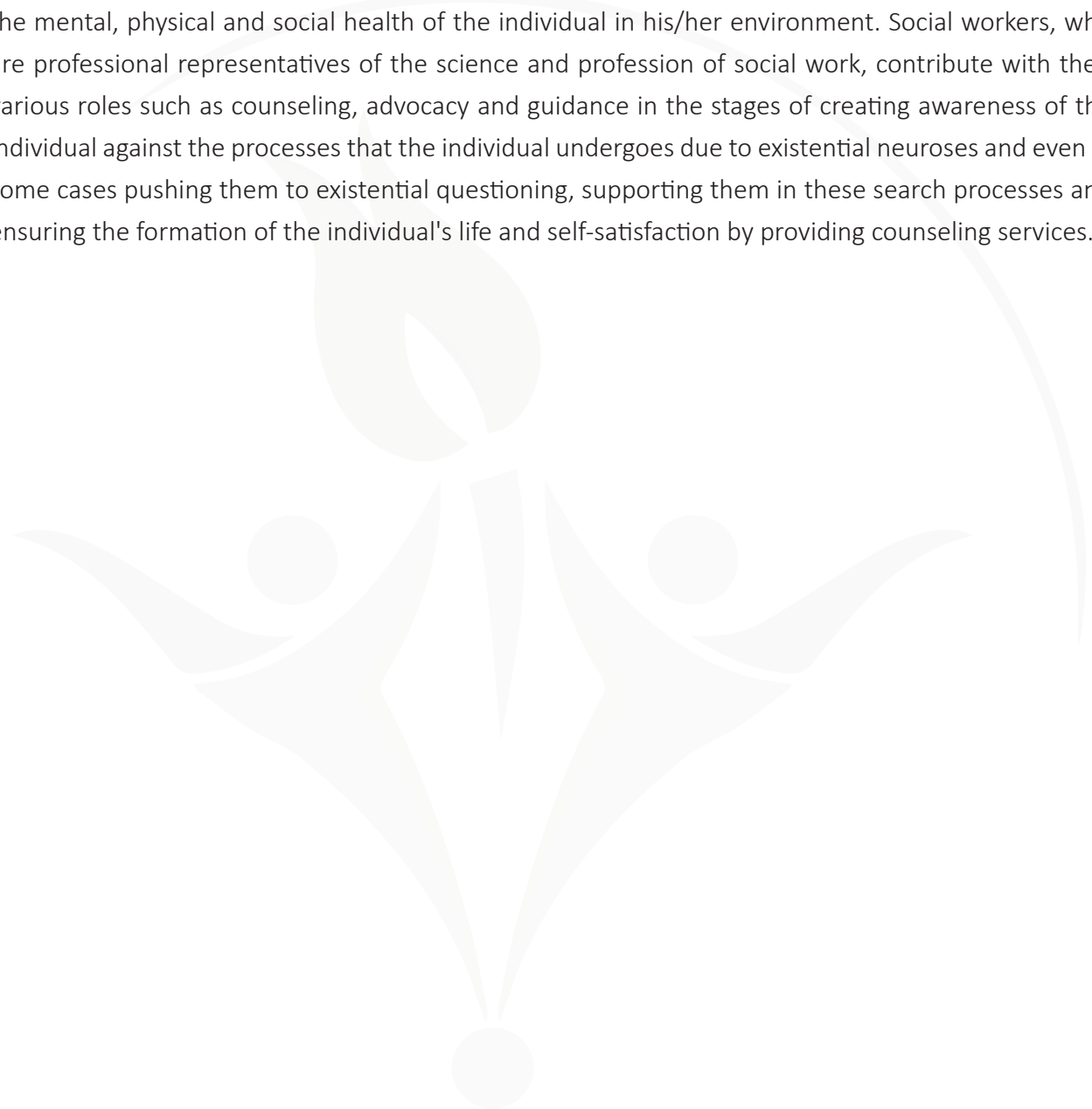
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