



PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES OF CHILDREN'S LIBRARY WORK WITH PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES

ÇOCUK KÜTÜPHANESİNİN PSİKOLOJİK TEKNİKLERİ KİŞİSEL ZORLUKLARI YÖNETİYOR

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Abstract

Contemporary libraries have to provide more and more service to exist as a useful institutions. Among them are special methods which growing up with psychology or pedagogy. All of them have common denominators: psychological support with the personal difficulties. Bibliotherapy is the use of books selected on the basis of content in a planned reading program designed to facilitate the recovery of patients suffering from mental illness or emotional disturbance. Poetry therapy is another form of expressive arts therapy, involves the therapeutic use of poems, narratives, and other spoken or written media to promote well-being and healing. Also we can consider using other psychological form of help children. One of them is coaching. The ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Also counselling is focus on those two groups of clients in the library. Different from all mentioned techniques is mindfulness. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. This speech examines short description of the most practical psychological techniques of children's librarians.

Keywords: *Psychological techniques; Libraries; Psychotherapy; Counselling; Meditation; Behaviours; Mental disorder*

Öz

Modern kütüphaneler, faydalı bir kurum olarak var olmak için giderek daha fazla hizmet sunmak zorundadır. Bunların arasında psikoloji veya pedagoji ile gelişen özel yöntemler vardır. Hepsinin ortak paydaları vardır: Kişisel zorluklara karşı psikolojik destek. Bibliyoterapi, zihinsel hastalık veya duygusal rahatsızlığı olan hastaların iyileşmesini kolaylaştırmak için tasarlanmış planlı bir okuma programında içerik temelinde seçilen kitapların kullanılmasıdır. Şiir terapisi, dışavurumsal sanat terapisinin bir başka biçimidir; şiirlerin, anlatıların ve iyileşmeyi teşvik etmek için diğer sözlü veya yazılı medyanın terapötik kullanımını içermektedir. Ayrıca, diğer psikolojik biçimleri çocuklara yardım amaçlı kullanmayı düşünebiliriz. Bunlardan biri mentörlüktür. ICF, mentörlüğü, danışanlarıyla kişisel ve profesyonel potansiyellerini en üst düzeye çıkarmak için ilham verici, düşündürücü ve yaratıcı bir süreç olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ayrıca danışmanlık, kütüphanedeki iki kullanıcı grubuna odaklanmaktadır. Bahsedilen tüm tekniklerden farklı olan bir teknik de farkındalıktır. Farkındalık tamamen mevcut olma, bulunduğumuz yerin, ne yaptığımızın farkında olma ve etrafımızda meydana gelen olaylara karşı aşırı tepkili veya kafası karışmış olmama yönündeki temel insan becerisidir. Bu anlatım, çocuk kütüphanecilerinin kullandığı en pratik psikolojik tekniklerin kısa açıklamasını incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Psikolojik teknikler; Kütüphaneler; Psikoterapi; Rehberlik; Meditasyon; Davranışlar; Ruhsal Bozukluklar*

Introduction

Contemporary libraries must provide more and more services to exist as a social useful institutions. Among them are special methods and techniques which growing up with psychology or pedagogy, such as: bibliotherapy, poetry therapy, and other arts therapies, coaching, counselling, mindfulness etc. All of them can use books and alternative reading materials as a tools during individual or group work. Mentioned techniques have also common denominators: psychological support with the personal problems like: mood disorders (e.g. depressive episodes), phobias or other anxiety disorders, reactions to severe stress, adjustment disorders, eating disorders, nonorganic disorders of the sleep-wake schedule. This speech examines short description of the most practical psychological techniques of children's librarians during they everyday routine work.

Bibliotherapy

Arts therapies are the basic forms of expressive therapy that uses the creative process of making different arts to improve a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Some scientists and practitioners state that among different forms of arts therapy existed bibliotherapy (also called reading therapy). What are the roots of bibliotherapy? On the one hand, bibliotherapy has developed from the idea that literature has therapeutic properties. On the other hand, bibliotherapy is the harnessing of the power of literature into a specific therapeutics' activity (Kruszewski, 2007; Kruszewski, 2006). Bibliotherapy is the use of books selected on the basis of content in a planned reading program designed to facilitate the recovery of patients suffering from mental illness or emotional disturbance. In the 1970s, librarian Rhea J. Rubin classified bibliotherapy into two categories: developmental (for educational settings) and therapeutic (for mental health settings). Thus we can meet three types of bibliotherapy: institutional bibliotherapy, clinical bibliotherapy, and educational (known sometimes as humanistic or developmental) bibliotherapy (Howie, 1988).

What is institutional bibliotherapy? It is a therapeutic activity provided only in a close centers (mainly in hospital), by doctors and medical staff usually in cooperation with hospital librarians. They inform sick people about their illness, distempers or similar problems. For example, if you have a cancer usually will be easier to understand you situation when you read some popular book then hear a professional speech of a doctor (Barker, 1987; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Next model of work is clinical bibliotherapy. This is an interventional activity (form of psychotherapy), provided in hospitals, therapeutic or disaccustoming centers, mainly by psychiatrists, psychotherapeutics, or clinical psychologists. It means that librarians can be only co-therapist. We cannot work without agreements of psychiatrists and without their guides. Last classical type of our technique is educational bibliotherapy often names as developmental or humanistic bibliotherapy. It involves the use of selected books, or other alternative forms like audiovisual materials, for healthy or sick people in open environments. We try to achieve some personal usually emotional or psychosocial growth. One of the most popular purposes are exercises of our assertiveness and other interpersonal skills.

To receive some benefits of bibliotherapy and a lot of the techniques which I will describe later you must pass through five stages. First is identification. Here the child during reading identifies with a book character and events in the story, either real or fictitious (she or he

thinks: „Hero is like me!“). Second stage is projection. In this time the user thinks: „I feel the same as this hero feels“. Next step is catharsis. Word “catharsis” comes from Greek and means "purification" or "cleansing". Catharsis in psychoanalytic approach, refers to the therapeutic discharge of all affects connected with grief, loss, or traumatic event. It returns these events back into one's consciousness, while allowing the release of strong yet long pent-up emotions which may have been previously repressed (What is CATHARSIS?...). Here the youngster becomes emotionally involved in the story and is able to release pent-up emotions under safe conditions (sometimes through group discussion moderated by librarian or another professional - she or he thinks: „Uff, I am not alone“). Fourth step is insight. During the insight youngster becomes aware that his/her problems might also be addressed or solved (she or he thinks: „I can do the same“). Possible solutions to the book character's and one's own personal problems are identified. Finally is application (or universalization). During this stage the client tries to use new knowledge in every day routine. Apart the knowledge he or she get new skills (new behaviours, other emotions etc.)

Fairy Tale Therapy

A few words should be given to one of the forms of bibliotherapy for the youngest, namely fairy tale therapy. Therapeutic fairy tales, depending on the assumed direction of psychology, help children mainly aged from 4 to 9 years old, get rid of fears, reduce emotional problems, calm themselves down. The practitioners recognize many advantages of such therapy. They include:

- recovery of the immune system and thus the activation of self-healing,
- intensification of the joys of life,
- creating some distance from one's own problems,
- assistance in discarding the fear and anxiety,
- mobilizing the courage and activity,
- promoting inner peace and balance,
- strengthening self-confidence.

Introducing the successive terms for the same technique misses the goal, and apparently there is no methodological differences between the bibliotherapy and fairy tale therapy. However a fresh look within fairy tale therapy allows for the development of methodology and techniques of using text. On the other hand some practitioners try to describe specific types of fairy tale therapy (Pasca, 2015). We can find: relaxing- , psychoeducational- , and psychotherapeutic fairy tales. Main purpose of relaxing fairy tale is to calm down and relax the child. Mental image during listen to the story is a basic activity of our client. During psychoeducational fairy tale we try to extend child's knowledge about solving various emotionally difficult situations, by learning the problem which the hero of the fairy tale is struggling. It also serves to reduce negative emotional states by illustrating how to deal with the problem and change its interpretation. Another purpose is helping to change interpretation of the non-comfortable situation. The task of the psychotherapeutic fairy tale is to reduce anxiety, enhance values, build comfortable emotions, convey appropriate knowledge about the anxiety situation and indicate ways to deal with it.

Poetry therapy and other expressive writing

Poetry therapy is another form of expressive arts therapy, involves the therapeutic use of poems, narratives, and other spoken or written media to promote well-being and healing. Poetry therapy is more expressive technique than bibliotherapy or fairy tale therapy because our patient is more active in his or her practice. There is no important style of written language, poetic rules of the literature, or other writing techniques of the author – our client. The most important are emotional expression, honest in showing own thoughts, and experience feelings which growing up from the writing poetry of stories (Kruszewski, 2006).

All expressive therapies may be enriched by stimulation of the clients own literary works, both through the initiation of school newspapers, literary circles in which work on one's own poetry or other topic could be provided. However, unlike the classical literary circles, we will not be interested in aesthetics of our creations, but the level of commitment, the degree of emotions transferred to paper, accumulated under the influence of the emotions of the introductory text. One's own work does not need to focus on independent and ambitious samples as writing. They may take a simpler form – letters to the hero. In these classes, clients could give the solutions to the problem which they believe would the best respond to a fictional character's behavior, etc. An alternative to writing includes drawing and other artistic techniques. They are particularly effective for children under 10 years of age, but also seniors. Here, poetry therapy uses methodology which was taken from art therapy or occupational therapy, which means that all the methods and techniques using non-specific material in a non-specific rehabilitation may be used together, and their selection depends on the ingenuity of the professional.

Coaching

Apart from arts therapies we can consider using in children's libraries other psychological form of help children in their growth or to solve emotional and mental problems. One of them is coaching. The International Coach Federation defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (IFC...). A helping relationship formed between a client (including a child) and a coach who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals, to improve their obligatory performance and personal satisfaction, and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. Due to this methodology coaching is more appropriate for older children and the youth.

Counselling

Also counselling is focus on those two groups of clients in the library because professional counselling is a safe and confidential collaboration between professional and client to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhance self-understanding, and resolve identified concerns. Clients are active participants in the counselling process at every stage. Thus counselling is more appropriate for youth than children but also you can use it among adolescents who come to public libraries. When we think about counselling we think about work with healthy person who need some advice. There is main differences between this technique and therapies which are focused on some disease or disorder. In the other side some practitioners demand that counselling is a type of talking therapy. Counselling is useful

in family and couple problems (attachment, separation, loss), school problems (both relationship and learning difficulties), as well as early steps of problems with mood, fears, anxiety etc. “Counselling gives the child the opportunity to talk about how to feel without the fear of judgement. Speaking to a counsellor, away from his or her home and school life, can take away some of the pressure. Counselling offers a safe environment for the clients to express their feelings and understand what may have caused them to feel this way” (Counselling Directory...).

Another phenomenon is bibliocounselling which is some kind of the bridge between bibliotherapy and promotion of readership (Kruszewski, 2006). There is a quite well known technique of the librarians work, so I will omit its description in this speech.

Mindfulness

Different from all mentioned techniques is mindfulness which grew up with west-world psychotherapy and Far East Buddhism. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. Therefore mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one’s attention to the internal and external experiences occurring in the present moment, which can be developed through the practice of meditation and other training (van den Brink & Kosterwith & Norton, 2018).

From one hand mindfulness is using as a psychological technique during therapeutic work, mainly in cognitive behavioural therapy conducted among adult patient suffering from depression, anxiety and panic, stress and trauma etc. On the other hand mindfulness becomes a part of educational program in many school systems – both in west world and in Far East. Recent years have shown that this type of meditation is helpful and attractive to children. Mindful awareness exercises help children develop concentration and self-awareness. Main purpose of teaching mindfulness to children is “to give them skills to develop their awareness of their inner and outer experiences, to recognize their thoughts as “just thoughts,” to understand how emotions manifest in their bodies, to recognize when their attention has wandered, and to provide tools for impulse control” (Beach, 2018).

There are also another difference between all techniques mentioned before and mindfulness. This disparity is target of therapeutic work. Here in mindfulness new knowledge or skills are not important as much as a strength. We can define strength as a “pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energizing to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development and performance” (Linley, 2008). Thus one of the crucial predictor of mindfulness technique is experiencing self-compassion. According to Kristin Neff, compassion “can be extended towards the self when suffering occurs through no fault of one’s own – when the external circumstances of life are simply hard to bear” (Neff, 2011). Because mindfulness is very popular the librarians easy can find in internet many practical information about this method and diversify tools to work with children - For example: Positive Psychology Program, 25 Fun Mindfulness Activities and Exercises for Children and Teens <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities> (van den Brink & Kosterwith & Norton, 2018).

Discuss

All of the techniques can use books and alternative reading materials as a tool during individual or group work. The main target of such work always is enhance client's resources. His or her attitudes, thoughts, emotions depend on the available and practice skills (Kruszewski, 2007 (b)). All of the techniques used in sessions depend on the child's age, situation and their development. There are a plenty of methods that you can use to encourage children to express their feelings better, such as through play and art. "Reading stories and talking about the feelings of a specific character can help them understand the emotion and, in turn, encourage them to discuss their own feelings, while drawing, painting or drama can help the child express themselves better" (Counselling Directory...). But necessary is chosen and using such techniques which are appropriate to professional skills of the librarian. He or she can work only within the well-known and checked methods. When we are focus on giving some aid the most important is tenet: *primum non nocere*.

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