

Proceedings



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21st International Conference of the Association of Psychology and Psychiatry for Adults and Children

APPAC 2016

(17-20 May 2016, Athens, Greece)

Editors

Prof. J. Kouros, Prof. T. Sidiropoulou, Dr. P. Moutevelis

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INDEX

Foreword	5
<i>Maslow Self-Actualization Position</i> KARKANIS Anastasia, KOUROS John, KOUROS Leandros	6
<i>Nature Deficit Disorder – Parental Attitudes</i> MOUSENA Eleni, SIDIROPOULOU Trifeni	11
<i>Modern Hysteria? Somatization as the Discourse of Conflicts</i> BECKER Proença Joana	19
<i>The Influence Of 5 Traits Of Personality, Loneliness And Self-Esteem In The Creation Of Avatar</i> BOUGONIKOLOU Eleftheria	26
<i>Views on Bullying Among Pre-schoolers</i> DIMITRIADI Sophia, Kiamou Panayiota, Mossialou Vasiliki	34
<i>Drawing from Principles of Schema Therapy to Address Internal Working Models and Attachment Issues Through Cognitive Work and Art Psychotherapy with Individuals and Couples</i> LAY A. Genziana	42
<i>The (Neglected) Role of the Father in the Mental Health of Children</i> PAPALEONTIOU Eleonora - Louca, PhD	68
<i>The Approach of D. Perkins in Search of Critical and Reflective Thinking: An Example with Preschoolers</i> VAGI-SPYROU E., TSAOULA N.	78

Foreword

Introduction to the Conference Proceedings

During the last years, the International Congresses of the A.P.P.A.C. became established annual meeting points, where participants have the opportunity to get in touch with the latest knowledge and exchange ideas with worldwide distinguished experts from different scientific areas, in a true multidisciplinary approach. The 21st International Conference, has tried to work further towards this direction, bringing participants closer to the progress on scientific research concerning clinical psychiatry, psychopathology, psychology, new diagnostic and treatment methods, genetics, and neurosciences. In our Conference, we once more emphasized the human dimension, linking science with society. To this end, there were some sessions with the participation of social workers, nurses, social anthropologists, educators etc.

A prime motivation for this year's Conference was to inspire a dialogue considering the Neuropsychiatric and Psychological updates exploring their profound implications for all efforts to achieve social change.

The conference topics were mainly coming from the field of Psychiatric, Educational Psychology, Applied Psychology, Psychological Counselling, New Approaches in Psychology, Learning Theories, Effective Policies and Teaching Practices, Challenges in contemporary education, School Counselling and Educational Psychology et al.

We thank the presenters for their willingness to participate and to share their ideas through inspiring talks. These Proceedings provide the permanent record of what was presented. They indicate the state of development at the time of writing of different aspects of this important topic and we believe that will be valuable to all Professionals and students in the above field. A common theme in the conference was that the basic structure and dynamics of society is now changing and we must provide ourselves the appropriate tools and abilities in order to respond to drastic transitions. The speakers presented applied theories, research and approaches, describing a variety of ways in which the above would be pursued.

We are very much aware that responding to change is a collective enterprise. The central role of self-agency in science will be acknowledged. The deeper levels of social structure will be rediscovered and reinterpreted in the light of a more profound understanding of humanity. We always see our conference as an opportunity to responding and preparing for this challenge.

Prof. T. Sidiropoulou

Maslow Self-Actualization Position

KARKANIS Anastasia, KOUROS John, KOUROS Leandros

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Biographical sketch

Abraham Maslow was born in Brooklyn New York in 1908. His parents were Jews from Russia. Maslow had six more young brothers. At the age of 18 entered the City College of New York to study law in order to satisfy his father, but he gave it up during the second semester of the first year. He was acquainted with scientific psychology of Wundt-Titchener structuralism at the University of Wisconsin. Structuralists advocate that “mental life” could be studied as chemistry. Maslow found this theory boring and turned his interest towards behaviorism and Watson. During his studies in Wisconsin he worked with Harry Harlow who experimented on monkeys behavior. Maslow experimented on other animals too, and concluded that drives towards knowledge, power and insight exist also in human beings.

He received his Ph.D diploma in 1934 from Wisconsin and worked in Columbia University with Thorndike for 18 months and ended up by publishing his ideas about the existence of hierarchy of needs in human beings in 1943. He left from Columbia University and started teaching in Brooklyn College. There he was exposed to the ideas of Marx Weztheimer, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, Erick Frommance, Ruth Benedict. This exposure made him to live oversimplified S-R view of human behavior and change his point of view of personality functioning.

Two of his most famous works are “Motivation and Personality” (1954) and “Toward a Psychology of Being” (1962). In 1967 was elected President of the American Psychological Association. He died at the age of 62 in 1970.

Humanistic biology and self-actualization

Maslow’s theory of *self-actualization* was based on the assumptions that each of us has an intrinsic nature that is good or at the very least neutral. Moreover, if inner nature is good or neutral it encourages development and healthy development can occur only in good society.

This is the theory of *humanistic biology*. The objective of Maslow’s theorizing about human nature was to establish a “scientific ethics, a natural value system, a court of ultimate appeal for the determination of good and bad, of right and wrong” (Maslow 1962, p.4).

Concepts and Principles

Maslow claims, that human beings have two basic sets of needs, that derive from biology. These are the deficiency needs or basic needs and the growth of meta needs.

Basic needs are more urgent than growth needs and are arranged in a hierarchical order with some exceptions: for instance some people are creative and this counts for them more than anything else. The meta needs are not in a specific order, are equally powerful and can be replaced. In order to move to self-actualization we should have fulfill our basic needs, so we can proceed to fulfill meta needs.

The basic needs

Individuals in order to satisfy basic needs (physiological drives, safety needs, belongingness and esteem needs) should have freedom to speak, to do what one wishes as long as he does not harm others, freedom to express oneself, freedom to investigate etc. Without these freedoms satisfaction of basic needs is impossible.

Maslow mentions the *physiological needs* such as hunger, thirst and sex. When a person is deprived from a physiological need it would focus on that need more and would neglect others. However, when a person's physiological needs are fulfilled a set of *safety needs* emerges. This set includes needs for security, protection, structure, law order limits and freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos. For Maslow need for security emerges in children when are destined and adults as well.

The need for belongingness and love emerges only when the physiological and safety needs are stable. He adds also that everybody needs to feel well accepted by others. Maslow believes that urbanization alienates traditional family as well as increased mobility. Maslow's concept of love is completely different from that of Fromm's, who perceives love as concern for the welfare of others. Maslow believes that love is a selfish concern to seek from others.

He defines it as D-love or deficiency love. When D-love is satisfied we can achieve love as Fromm proposes it. This type was called B-love or being love or mature love.

Dietch research about mature love found that college men and women, who scored higher on a test of self-actualization, were likely to have been truly loved than students scored lower.

Esteem needs are the last, which emerge and are divided in two parts: esteem based on respect for our competence, independence and accomplishments and esteem based on the evaluation from others. He believed also that individuals became sick when these needs are thwarted and the fact that we rely on ourselves and not on others in making decisions is questionable.

The meta needs

Once the basic needs are satisfied the needs for self-actualization and cognitive understanding become emerged. People try to discover themselves when they discover their abilities. Maslow claims that it gives happiness but also creates feelings of responsibilities and duties, this is the *Jonah complex*.

Women mostly fear the best side of themselves, they don't utilize their mental abilities as much as they can because of fear of social rejection. So, women have problem to move towards self-actualization.

Poor socialization practices also contribute to the acquisition of *desacralizing attitude* among young people that hinders movement towards self-actualization. This occurs because most adolescents have parents who are confused about their own values. Hence, "good" environmental conditions are essential for self actualization.

B-Cognition and Actualization

If conditions are good and individuals willing to risk, then we have positive growth which means that people are found in B-cognition state. D-cognition on the other hand involves judging, condemning, approving and disapproving of ourselves and others, whereas B-experiences are non-judgmental, self validating and temporary. Such states are called *peak states* and during them individuals transcend their own selfishness.

Maslow believes that self-actualization demands D-cognition or the arousal of safety needs as well as B-cognition which means that self-actualization process is hard and painful. There is also the possibility that B-cognition leads sometimes to a indiscriminate acceptance of others or even misunderstanding.

Characteristics of Shelf-Actualizing People

Maslow selected and gathered valuable characteristics of his friends, acquaintances and famous persons: Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein and others. According to him, none of these persons showed signs of maladaptive behavior (neurosis, psychopathic personality etc.) although these data could not be scientifically reliable. he examined thoroughly their life and claimed that actualizers have a more efficient perception than nonactualizers.

Non-actualizers care more about themselves and have feelings of inferiority. They are also more likely to discriminate other people, rather than being democratic as actualizers.

Personality Development

According to Maslow personality development is based primarily on the satisfaction of lower needs before the satisfaction of the higher. Environment also plays an important role since it affects the satisfaction of basic needs. In addition environment's role is crucial in the first stages since the individual is struggling to gratify basic needs.

Assessment techniques

Maslow used several impressive techniques. At the very beginning he used a selection technique called interaction, in order to distinguish actualizers from nonactualizers college students. Furthermore, he used Rorschach test, Murray's Thematic Apperception Test, free association and in depth interviews to find whether individuals had the characteristics of actualizers. He also used historical methods (investigating famous figures' lives) because he could get secure and sufficient information from their autobiographical sketch than from live people.

The Personal Orientation Inventory

Although most assessment techniques used by Maslow could not have empirical validity measure of self-actualization called the *Personal Orientation Inventory*. P.O.I. is a self report questionnaire of 150 two-choice items. The choice of the individual reflects the values and behavior of self-actualizing person. The score of this test can be pointed out by using two scales: one is *time competence* and the other is *inner direction*.

Higher scores on time competence show that respondents live fully in present whereas high scores on inner direction indicate that the source of their behavior is essentially inner-directed. Finally, although P.O.I. seems to be rather satisfactory concerning reliability and validity there have been attempts to improve it by creating a new testing instrument: *Personal Orientation Dimensions*.

Theory Application to Treatment of psychopathology

Maslow believed that neurotics are individuals that have been prevented from gratification of the basic needs which means that they have problem to reach self-actualization. So the therapist should gratify the client's basic needs. The therapeutic relations should be a kind of friendly relationship and therapist's role is to encourage the client to give affection and love.

This therapeutic technique can't have any effect on chronic neurosis. At these cases the classic Freudian technique could work.

Critical Comments

Comprehensiveness: Maslow's theory is rather comprehensive since it follows the Freudian model, but technically speaking its focus is primarily and explicitly on the later than on the former. Moreover, it is limited concerning several phenomena and is the explanatory system.

Precision and testability: Maslow's theory is not very precise, hence it can't be tested properly.

Parsimony: Maslow's theory cannot be successful in meeting the parsimony criterion.

Empirical Validity: Tests and Measurements in Maslow's theory are not enough in order to be empirically validated.

Heuristic Value: Maslow's theory encouraged theorists and researchers to examine the healthy part of human nature.

Applied Value: Maslow's theory can be applied on pastoral and educational counseling programs and on various management programs.

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Nature Deficit Disorder – Parental Attitudes

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Abstract

The alienation of human beings and particularly children from nature has reached alarming levels in modern societies. Rather than denoting a distinct developmental disorder, Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) describes this separation from nature and the multiple developmental problems it can cause, such as impaired vision and motor skills, obesity, and reluctance to take initiatives or risks.

This paper analyses Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) with respect to its causes and consequences and explores relevant views and attitudes of preschool students' parents in the area of Athens, Greece. The questionnaires completed by parents were analyzed with the SPSS statistical package. The research showed that despite the fact that the natural environment and climate of Greece are ideal for escapes to nature and outdoor activities, these are not actively encouraged by parents, resulting in significant repercussions on the overall development of children.

Keywords: Nature Deficit Disorder, outdoor activities, early childhood, parents

Introduction

The alienation of human beings and particularly children from their natural environment has reached alarming levels in modern societies. The term Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD), coined by Richard Louv (2005), does not denote a distinct developmental disorder as those entered in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), but refers to this separation from nature, which, nonetheless, can cause serious developmental problems for children such as, vision impairment, impaired physical mobility, obesity, reluctance to undertake initiatives or take risks.

In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, Louv describes the heavy cost of alienation from nature, which manifests itself in attention disorders, a limited use of the senses and a higher occurrence of physical and emotional conditions. As Louv notes, nature increasingly becomes an entity that people watch, consume, wear, and ignore, while for the younger generation nature is "more abstraction than reality". Louv also addresses the issue of virtual reality noting that this new digital era combined with urban development limits the amount of play in nature and that today's wired culture confines children indoors (Louv, 2005).

The primary concern of this research is to investigate the causes and consequences of Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) and to explore the views and attitudes taken by parents in the

Greek capital, Athens. In particular, the research attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

- Which activities do children do outside the school context?
- How do parents view children's activities in open space and in relation to weather conditions?
- How do parents view potential problems that may arise from the limited exposure of children to the natural environment?

Given that the weather conditions in Greece are ideal for escapes to nature, it is important to see to what extent these conditions are exploited by parents. The survey on which this research was based is subject to restrictions inasmuch as a) it was conducted in the area of Athens alone, rather than nationwide, and b) it solely addressed parents of preschool children.

Admittedly, further research into the attitudes of parents of older children would allow us a better insight into the extent to which the residents of this country benefit from its natural environment.

Literature review

Child development and play

The alienation of human beings and particularly children from nature is caused by certain socio-economic and technological factors. Urbanization, with its development of large cities and its limited space for play, is one of them. Moreover, the modern way of life means that mothers must work and that, as a general rule, both parents have limited free time.

A third factor is that today's parents are less willing to let their children play in open spaces unattended than they were in older, more traditional societies. Finally, technological advancement and the proliferation of digital media have produced new forms of play, i.e. screen-based digital games, which are so appealing that even children themselves are becoming less eager to play in open spaces. Exposing children to nature offers substantial benefits for their overall development, as it does for each of its distinct dimensions: physical development, cognitive development, emotional development and mental health, and social development.

According to Eric Ericson's biosocial model of development, the preschool child stands at the stages of 'Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt (2 yrs)' and 'Initiative vs Guilt (3-6 yrs)'.

Having acquired coordinated motion, physical development and a higher level of cognitive function, the two-year-old needs and seeks to become autonomous. When parents are overprotective or overplay the child's failures, he/she starts to question his/her abilities.

In contrast, child autonomy is promoted when parents encourage the child's innate propensity for independence.

At the ages 3-6, with the development of cognitive skills, the child displays intentional behaviour and begins to undertake initiatives. At this stage, the child wishes to know the world and engages in exploratory and experimental activities. However, when this attempt is undermined by adults, the child fails to develop a sense of individual responsibility and feels guilty for the initiatives he/she undertakes (Erikson, 1963). Through unstructured physical play in nature children:

- Have opportunities for repetition
- Learn through trial and error
- Bridge the gap between their inner and outer reality
- Become aware of materials and exploit them to achieve goals

- Develop better memory (than that developed under controlled conditions)
- through active involvement and intrinsic motivation
- Practise communication skills
- Have opportunities for reflection
- Explore their experiences and discover the world
- Learn how to lose, accept defeat and retry

Furthermore, free physical play in nature offers parents the opportunity to observe their children and gain an insight into their interests and needs.

Outdoor activities and play enable children to undertake initiatives and take risks. The difficulties that emerge during play in open spaces offer children valuable experiences and allow them to perceive problems and learn how to resolve them, progressively conquering autonomy. In contrast, limited exposure to nature and its 'hidden dangers' can result in Risk Deficit Disorder, a collateral disorder occurring when adults attempt to remove the element of risk from children's lives. Risk Deficit Disorder can be counteracted by the development of risk evaluation and management by children in accordance with their age (Eager and Little, 2010).

Nature Deficit Disorder and Risk Deficit Disorder

Multiple researches concur that contact with nature has substantial benefits for children. Kellert (2005) maintains that contact with nature plays a key role in overall child development -physical, emotional, social and mental- and that it fosters creative and problem-solving skills.

In their schoolyard research, Bell and Dymont (2006) found that children are engaged in more creative forms of play when in green spaces. Wells (2000) notes that children's involvement with nature enhances their cognitive skills, while research in the USA has established that schools that use outdoor classrooms and other forms of experiential learning based on nature display significant benefits for students in science, art, language, social studies and mathematics.

According to the American Institutes for Research (2005) "students who attended outdoor schools significantly raised their science scores by 27%".

Other important findings establish that contact with nature can significantly reduce the symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder in children, particularly for ages 0-5 (Kuo and Taylor, 2004) and that the natural environment and indeed the mere view of green spaces contributes to lower anxiety and stress levels in children (Wells and Evans, 2003). In addition, children who grow their own food are more likely to consume fruit and vegetables (Bell and Dymont, 2008) and to be more knowledgeable about nutrition (Waliczec and Zajicek, 2006). They are also more likely to continue healthy eating habits throughout their lives (Morris and Zidenberg-Cherr, 2002). Research in the USA also found a correlation between a lower number of visits to the National Park and an increase in the use of electronic media by children (Rideout et al, 2003). Finally, research has established a correlation between longer periods spent in outdoor settings and reduced rates of nearsightedness, especially in children and adolescents (American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2011).

Regarding Risk Deficit Disorder, research has shown that risky play comprises a set of motivated behaviours which provide the child with a sense of thrill and challenge, and facilitate exposure to stimuli the child may have previously feared (Kennair, 2007; Sandseter, 2011).

It generally presents a risk of physical injury. According to Little and Eager (2010), risky

play commonly occurs in outdoor environments as the outdoors provides children with a sense of freedom to explore and experiment with. Thus, outdoor and risky play may be considered to be intertwined.

Parental attitudes

Parents' habits may be the most crucial factor for children's involvement with nature.

Researchers note that increasingly, parental safety concerns have yielded restrictions on children's play (Little and Eager, 2010). Gleave (2008) identifies the role of the media in this disjunction between children's actual safety and societal concerns regarding risk-taking behaviour. Little (2008) contends that the media emphasize what could go wrong, with little regard to the likelihood of such outcomes occurring. Besides this fear of the unknown, their expectations about academic outcomes give parents a further reason to restrict their children's contact with nature. Increasingly, parents focus on the acquisition of academic knowledge, disregarding the benefits that come with free play and exploring nature. As Walter et al. (2010) note, given this 'schoolification' approach to the early years, parents may perceive that play is dispensable to early learning. A research entitled *Education for Sustainable Development – The Role of Parents* and conducted in Greece examined preschool parents' views on the cultivation of environmentally friendly attitudes. According to this research:

- Parents see environmental protection as a precondition for improving quality of life.
- Parents acknowledge the importance of environmental awareness for character-building.
- Parents acknowledge the contribution of environmental education in early childhood centres and believe that their own actions can encourage children to develop environmentally-friendly attitudes.
- Finally, despite parents' claims that both they and pedagogues should be more active in promoting children's environmental awareness, there is hardly any cooperation on issues of environmental education (Mousena E., Zerva M, 2010).

Methodology

A questionnaire survey was used to address the research objectives. Based on the principal aim, the specific objectives and the individual questions, a questionnaire was compiled consisting of thirteen (13) questions and twenty nine (29) variables. The questions were designed around three thematic axes corresponding to the research objectives: children's activities outside the school context; parental attitudes to children's activities in open spaces and in relation to weather conditions; parental attitudes to problems that can emerge from the limited exposure of children to the natural environment. The questionnaire was initially tested on 10% of the sample and necessary modifications were made.

The sample was randomly selected from the total survey population, that is, parents of children of 4-6 yrs. who attend state and private preschool institutions in the area of Athens.

Questionnaire distribution was carried out in collaboration with the institutions' educators, who were informed of the research objectives. The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter to parents informing them of the research objectives and guaranteeing anonymity. The survey was conducted in the spring of 2016 and 396 parents participated. The statistical data analysis was carried by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Results

396 parents participated in the survey. 84.1% of them were mothers and 15.9% were fathers.

Regarding age, the majority (62.1%) were 31-40 years old, 33.5% were 41-50, a mere 2.59% were over 51 and only 1.77% were below 30. Regarding their level of education, 32.83% were University graduates, 10.35% were Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) graduates, while a significant 15.15% held a postgraduate or doctorate degree.

The respondents' children attend state schools (56.8%) or private schools (43.2%).

According to parents, children are involved in various beyond-the-school activities.

As shown in **Table 1**, which presents the results of the multiple response analysis, there is a high percentage of physical activities in closed spaces: swimming 16.2%, dance 10.2% and Tae Kwon Do 5.8%. Other activities include learning foreign languages (6.9%), music (3.5%) and painting (1.5%). The statistical data analysis found no significant difference in extracurricular activities between state school and private school students.

Table 1. Extracurricular activities

Frequency of Activities

		Responses		Percentage of Cases
		N	Percentage	
\$Activities ^a	Parent's gender	333	38,8%	87,2%
	Painting	13	1,5%	3,4%
	Music	30	3,5%	7,9%
	Foreign Language	59	6,9%	15,4%
	Dance	88	10,2%	23,0%
	Athletics	20	2,3%	5,2%
	Swimming	139	16,2%	36,4%
	Tae Kwon Do	50	5,8%	13,1%
Total	Other	127	14,8%	33,2%
		859	100,0%	224,9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Parents were asked which play spaces their children go to. As shown in **Table 2**, 23.0% of children often go to playgrounds. Interestingly, 51.5% of children rarely go to the mountain and 20.2% never do so. In addition, 37.6% of children rarely visit the countryside.

Table 2. Frequency of visits to play spaces

	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Regularly		Very often		Total	
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Open playground	5	1,8	68	17,2	198	50,0	91	23,0	31	7,8	396	100,0

Countryside	15	3,8	149	37,6	144	36,4	68	17,2	19	4,8	396	100,0
Indoor play facility	54	13,6	236	59,7	85	21,5	14	3,5	6	1,5	396	100,0
Park	11	2,8	113	28,5	163	41,3	89	22,5	19	4,8	396	100,0
Mountain	80	20,2	204	51,5	83	21,0	18	4,5	10	2,5	396	100,0

Parents were asked whether children’s outdoor activities are affected by weather conditions.

The majority of respondents (54.7%) disagree with the idea of cancelling activities due to cold weather. Nonetheless, a significant 10.1% agree with the idea and 2.0% totally agree.

The crosstabs analysis of this variable and the variable for parents’ gender showed that a higher percentage of mothers (as opposed to fathers) agree with cancelling outdoor activities due to cold weather. Parents were also asked whether students should not spend breaks in the schoolyard in cold weather. Although 53.3% of parents disagree with this option, a significant 8.3% agree. It is noteworthy that a significant percentage of pedagogues who are parents shared this view.

Parents were also asked about problems that can occur due to the separation of children from nature. Respondents said that separation from nature is very likely to cause socialization problems (32.0%), weight gain (27.9%) and impaired motor skills (25.0%), while only 21.6% thought that it can cause vision impairment to a small extent and 27.7% said that it cannot impair vision at all (**Table 3**). Furthermore, the bivariate correlation of the variables for problems caused by separation from nature and parents’ level of education showed that University graduates are more aware that eyesight problems may occur.

Table 3. Problems caused by separation from nature

	Not at all		Little		Moderately		A lot		Very much		Total	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Vision	109	27,7	85	21,6	102	26,0	58	14,8	39	9,9	396	100,0
Motor skills	70	17,8	26	6,6	92	23,4	107	27,2	99	25,0	396	100,0
Weight gain	66	16,8	24	6,1	76	19,3	118	29,8	110	27,9	396	100,0
Socialization	58	14,7	23	5,8	81	20,6	106	26,9	126	32,0	396	100,0

Discussion

By analysing the survey results in demographic terms, we found that the vast majority of respondents were mothers. This shows that mothers assume the greatest responsibility for school - and education - related issues. We also found that the majority of respondents were young, which was expected as the survey addressed parents of preschool students. Finally, it was found that the majority of respondents held a tertiary education degree. Regarding the first survey question, i.e. “Which activities do children do outside the school context?”, it was

found that parents mainly opt for indoor physical activities. It was also established that when it comes to outdoor play parents choose organized playgrounds, whereas the vast majority rarely visit natural settings such as the countryside or mountains. This shows that parents do not make the most of the country's natural environment despite its friendly topography and climate.

With reference to parental attitudes to weather conditions, it was found that the vast majority disagree with the notion that children's outdoor activities should be cancelled due to bad weather conditions, while mothers appear more cautious in this respect. The majority also disagree with the idea that children should not spend breaks in the school ground when it is cold. Nonetheless, there is a significant percentage of parents who share this view and many of them happen to be educators. This means that not all pedagogues promote engagement with nature. In other words, the culture of life in nature is often hindered both by parents and educators, a finding which has been verified by relevant research (Mousena and Zerva, 2010).

Regarding the third question, the research found that parents are not sufficiently aware of the potential harm that can be caused by lack of exposure to nature; indeed, only few realize that their children's eyesight can be affected. Nevertheless, parents with a higher level of education are more likely to understand these consequences.

Conclusions

The present research has led to three major conclusions. Firstly, parents demonstrate a preference for organized play facilities for their children rather than unstructured natural settings. Secondly, the majority of parents believe that their children's outdoor activities should not be postponed or cancelled due to weather conditions, while 10.0% believe that spending breaks in the school ground should be dependent on the weather. The responses of parents who are also professional educators were revealing in this regard. Finally, parents are not sufficiently aware of the fact that restricted contact with nature can cause children several problems and were rather surprised to hear that impaired eyesight can be one of them.

On the whole, although both the natural environment and the climate in Greece are ideal for escapes to nature and outdoor activities, parents of preschool children adopt a restrictive approach which has serious consequences on the overall development of children. The authors of this paper maintain that parents of preschool students can derive substantial benefit from environmental awareness and health education programmes so as to learn how to 'use' nature in ways that will both promote their own and their children's well-being and safeguard the quality of the natural environment.

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Modern Hysteria? Somatization as the Discourse of Conflicts

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Abstract

Considering the relevance that the studies of hysteria represent in the histories of psychoanalysis and psychiatry, this study is interested to discover where this concept can be found nowadays. It starts with the description of hysterical phenomena of Breuer and Freud, which point out the psychological trauma the precipitating. Hysteria is expression of the emotional conflicts through symptoms, similar to those we call today somatization disorder.

The somatization disorder indicates the presence of physical symptoms and/or unexplained complaints, suggesting the relationship with psychological, psychiatric or social aspects.

The trauma, specifically its representation, disturbs the normal psychological function, and somatization disorder appears as an attempt to resolve the conflict. In the face with the studies about hysteria and somatization disorder, I allow myself to relate these concepts and to approximate theoreticians separated by the time and their research approaches. This article intend to encourage the reflection about psychosomatic pathologies and to question the constant updates of the diagnostic manuals.

Keywords: Hysteria, somatization disorder, psychoanalysis, trauma

Introduction

Hysteria occupies an important place in the history of medicine, besides being considered responsible for making Psychoanalysis a science [many disagree with such scientificity].

The Psychoanalytic technique, such as free association, and its arguments, derive from the theoretical study and treatment of patients. Seen as the public expression of symptoms, hysteria was, from the beginning, associated with traumatic experiences, even though some of them were later revealed as fantasies. The relationship between psyche and soma, much discussed in psychoanalysis, is transported to what we now call somatization.

Recognizing the historicity and the profile associated with the word hysteria, this study begins by presenting the main definitions and characteristics of hysterical phenomena, with a focus on the symptom as the relief of excessive excitement. It then highlights the concept of somatization which, in spite of permeating medicine and psychiatry, reveals the proximity to the psychoanalytic description of hysteria, leading us to question the abandonment of the former as a possible change of nomenclature.

When discussing the position of Breuer and Freud [1] regarding hysteria and the findings on somatisation, I allow myself to relate such concepts and put together theorists separated

by time and by their approaches of research. The health professionals, in their majority, have abandoned the term hysteria, but we cannot deny its presence, although today we have other names nowadays.

Hysteria: “The abnormal expression of emotions”

Considered before as a cultural syndrome resulting from sexual repression, hysteria was justified in the 20th century as the expression of emotional conflicts through physical symptoms. This mind and body relationship, much discussed by psychoanalysis [Charcot, Freud and Breuer] is proven today by psychosomatic medicine [2].

The interest of Freud in hysteria prospered after his association with Charcot in Paris, when he accompanied the investigations and found the veracity of the hysterical phenomena, and the existence of these in men. Back in Vienna, Freud joined Breuer, who was dealing with of a case of hysteria, which lead to the writing of the work *Studies on Hysteria*, started in 1893.

About the book, Freud [3] points out:

This theory is modest, it goes far beyond the immediate expression of observations. It is not intended to examine in depth the nature of hysteria, only illuminate the genesis of its symptoms.

It gives emphasis to the significance of the affective life, the importance of distinguishing between aware or unaware psychic acts (or better, capable of consciousness), introduces a dynamic factor, assuming that a symptom originates from the impoundment of an affection, and an economic, when considering the same symptom the result from the processing of a quantity of energy which is normally used in another way (the so-called conversion). (p. 82)

In the study, Breuer and Freud [1] address the psychic mechanism of hysteric phenomena. Despite some disagreements that came to distance them years later, they present the occurrence of traumatic event as a triggering factor. According to the authors, what causes symptoms in the “traumatic” hysteria is the accident [external event], which may be a symptom resulting from a childhood event or a symbolic relationship between the cause and the pathology [not just the physical damage, but the affection produced]. In this sense, we have that the method of hysterical defence is the conversion of excitation in somatic innervation.

The differences of opinion between Breuer and Freud arise when they question the period in which a psychic process becomes pathogenic. While Breuer maintains his focus on physiology, Freud assumes “the existence of a set of forces”. Over the course of his studies, Freud notes that “It was not any type emotional excitations that acted behind the phenomena of neurosis, but usually the ones of a sexual nature: actual sexual conflicts or repercussions of past sexual experiences”. From this observation he started to dedicate himself to sexuality and its relationship with mental disorders [3] (83-84).

Although the sexual issue is not the aim of this study, I cannot fail to mention it. We have, in most studies on hysteria [Freud, 1893, 1931; Easser and Lesser, 1965; Zetzel, 1968; and Costa, 2015], the mention of conflicts in the father-daughter relationship, with a focus on the presence of stimulation and seduction in the first years of life. Despite this supposed oedipal game, the main psychic conflict occurs when sexual gratification is suppressed.

To better understand the fixation on the Oedipus complex, we have resorted to the case of Dora, considered a “milestone in psychoanalytic history”.

The case of Dora: a brief report on hysteria

One of the most famous cases presented by Freud [4] concerns the treatment of Ida Bauer [he called her Dora], a young hysterical 18-year-old girl. In his writings, the psychoanalyst shows how the interpretation of dreams is part of the analysis and highlights the importance of understanding the circumstances of the family members of the patients, not only to question heredity, but also its bonds.

It is worth mentioning that, firstly, Freud met the father of his future patient, a dominant figure, but who had faced several diseases since Dora was six years old. The girl was extremely attached to her father, and such affection may have been reinforced by his condition.

When starting the treatment with Freud, Dora reported having suffered with coughs [nervous cough], that lasted for months. She also had a history of dyspnea, migraine, depression and the inability to socialize - symptoms that began when she was still a child, at eight years of age.

In his investigations, Freud discovered a conflicting relationship between Dora and a couple of friends of her parents [which he called Mr. and Mrs. K], which resulted in a family argument over an alleged assault of the man on Dora. However, with the passage of time, the reports of Dora raised suspicions about the relationship of her father with Mrs. K, this being the main reason for the desire of the patient to fend off the couple, just like she did with a housekeeper, when suspecting her father's possible affection for her.

According to Freud [4], the illness of hysterical patients may be due to a particular person and, if this is the case, the symptoms tend to disappear with distance. Dora's nervous cough is explained by the psychoanalyst as a result of a thought connected to sexual satisfaction.

He points out that a supposed belief that the father was impotent led Dora to question how the lovers would get sexual satisfaction and the repulse from those thoughts gave way to the symptoms.

The sexual issue has emphasis in the case of Dora, her hysteria being a result of love by the father mixed with the hatred of his possible insincere conduct. The symptoms suggest a love sickness, a need for fatherly care and Dora's interpretation of the sexual satisfaction of an impotent man. It can also be [the symptoms] understood as a result of the repression employed by anguish - the incestuous nature of her desires are in conflict with moral ideas [inability to deal with the excitement] [5].

The Dora case was, and perhaps still is, the target of criticism and reviews by different professionals [Psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, sociologists, historians, literary critics and novelists]. Freud himself questioned his conclusions, despite not properly resuming his studies on this. In *About female sexuality* [6], the psychoanalyst mentions an important connection of the girl with the mother, raising the hypothesis of homosexual feelings. Other authors [Marmor, 1953; Reich, 1974] emphasize that the desire of the hysterical is to be loved and to be taken as a child, not as a woman. Concerning this, Costa [5] (p. 59) comments:

The clinical experience also leads to add that some hysterical patients, as a result of poor maternal identification, apparently aim to elect the father as an object of desire - which will serve as a stimulus to a seductive attitude with men - but they fail because, before that, they are not able to perform the necessary separation from the mother.

Zetzel [7], in a study with a focus on analysability, points out hysteria as a result of failures in domestic resource mobilization during the important stages of development. For him, the "so-called good hysterical" are characterized by a symptom profile whose pathology is

attributed to a failure in the development of the basic functions of the ego. According to Easser and Lesser [8], the hysterical mechanism is a defensive psychic mode used by all personalities, from the normal to the most pathologic. In the same sense, Breuer and Freud [1] state that this defensive measure [at the disposal of the ego], which rejects the excitations, causing hysteria, may be the most convenient output in certain circumstances.

What we can we learn from the above, in addition to the sexual nature of the hysterical phenomena, is the mind and body dualism emphasized by psychoanalysts.

The Dora case served to illustrate the relationship of physical symptoms [nervous cough, dyspnea and migraine] with the psychic aspects [desires and anxieties]. Before that, I present the first writings of Breuer and Freud [1] about hysteria, which offer trauma as the trigger of Somatic Manifestations.

These findings encourage us to think about the contemporary psychopathology, particularly on the concept and characterization of somatization, and on its entry in the diagnostic criteria of numerous pathologies.

Somatization: the output of the “strangled affection”

The concept of somatization resulted from a growing interest of psychosomatic medicine by the subjective experience and public expression of symptoms [9] (p. 115).

In his work *Psychiatry, Somatization and Culture*, Quartilho [10], when discussing somatization, points to the presence of physical symptoms and/or unexplained complaints, the insistent demand for medical support and the fact that such symptoms are related, apparently, with sub adjacent psychological, psychiatric or social aspects. Somatization, a term that permeates the areas of medicine and psychiatry, leads us also to psychoanalysis by its relationship with the definition of hysteria, already made explicit.

We have as a concept of alexithymia, which comes from research on psychosomatic disorders, an explanation of the process of somatization. As the name suggests, it concerns the inability to appoint affective states or describe the emotional life [11].

Quartilho [9] (p. 07) talks about the process of somatization as “a modern version of the prohibited unconscious impulses”, stating that it would be “the physical symptoms protagonizing a defensive psychological function”.

In the same sense, when discussing hysteria, Breuer [1] presents as a discharge of a surplus of excitation, whereas in most cases it is the affective representations converging in somatic phenomena. The psychic trauma, according to Breuer and Freud [1], acts as a foreign body that, when it cannot be represented and connected to the affection, forms part of the body.

The most varied symptoms, which are ostensibly spontaneous and, as you might say, idiopathic products of hysteria, are so closely connected with the trauma trigger [1] (p. 40).

Corroborating with this statement, Quartilho [9], when addressing the controversy and consensus about the concept of fibromyalgia¹, presents studies that show a relationship between victimization and somatization. However, it should be noted that we should not override the concept of somatization to that of fibromyalgia, it points to the existence of previous traumatic experience or emotional negligence in both.

What interests us here is the causal relationship between psychotraumatism and the hysterical phenomenon or somatization. The psychic trauma, particularly its representation, disrupts the normal operation and requires a resolution [1]. As Marty highlights [11] (p. 160):

The somatization facing the affective overloads and the traumatic events is within the reach of all of us, being present, many times, as one among many other attempts of self-conflict resolution used by the subject.

When transposing the concept of somatization to what we know of hysteria, we may sometimes become confused. Would it be just a change of nomenclature? Did both have the influence of sexual conflicts? Or perhaps none of them need this role? Questions about the etiology of hysteria and somatization seem to blend.

The abandonment of hysteria: a change in nomenclature?

In a *Study of hysteria*, Breuer and Freud [1] noted that in traumatic neurosis², the cause of symptoms [disease] is not physical damage, but the psychic trauma. Freud [12] (p. 125-126) calls traumatic neurosis² the psychological state that follows after violent events, whose characteristic feature is the “surprise factor of terror, a position confirmed by Allan Young [13], who features psycho-traumatism as the sum of intense fear with the element of surprise.

Still on this trauma-symptom relationship, Breuer and Freud [1] claim that, if not for the majority, in many hysterical symptoms the triggering causes can be described as psychological trauma, which comes to meet the theory of the French school of psychosomatics.

The *Institut Psychosomatique de Paris - [IPSO³]* points trauma as the provoking agent of psychosomatic illnesses, comprising more the amount of mental disorganization than how impressive the traumatic event is [11]. In the same way, hysteria may result from a single trauma or from the occurrence of an accumulation of traumatic experiences.

¹ Disease that is characterized, mainly by continuous fatigue, generalized pains, sleep alterations and cognitive disturbances. Priberam da Língua Portuguesa Dictionary [online], 2008-2013, <http://www.priberam.pt/dlpo/fibromialgia> [consulted 08-07-2015]. See more in: Quartilho, M. J. (2004), Fibromialgia: consenso e controvérsia, *Official Organ of the Portuguese Society of Rheumatology - Acta rénum. Port.*, 29, 111-129. Electronic version consulted on 08.07.2015, at actareumatologica.com/article_download.php?id=267

² Freud speaks of traumatic neurosis in several works. In *Beyond the Principle of Pleasure* (1920) he deeply analyzes the concept and calls the traumatic neurosis the peace neurosis, because it occurs after serious events. He also considers it as the most refractory.

³ School of psychoanalytic thought that developed from the mid-1950s around M. Marty, M. Fain, M. de M'Uzan and C. David.

According to Allan Young [13] (p. 28)⁴, the traumatic memory is a type of pathogenic secret. “These memories are ‘pathogenic’ by the reputation of causing psychiatric disorders - hysteria at the end of the 19th century, posttraumatic stress disorder in the late 20th century - and ‘secret’ because they are acts of concealment”. When the author speaks about acts of concealment, he refers to attempts by the subject to hide their suffering from others, but also from himself. We recognize that dealing with traumatic memories and with the overflow of feelings is a challenge, although this confrontation is necessary to provide “a more controlled relation with the memory of the traumatic experience and its symptomatic effects” [14] (p. 70).

In the same way, the studies of Breuer and Freud [1] identify the need to service the affection of the event and translate it into words as treatment of hysterical symptoms. Costa and Alvarez [5], when addressing the psychosomatic phenomena, reinforce this idea, stating that we need a change of the psychoactive status to put an end to the symptom.

Despite having different approaches, we find similarities between the reflections on somatization by Quartilho [9], the psychic mechanism of the hysterical phenomena of Breuer and Freud [1], the theory of psychosomatic disorders of Pierre Marty [11] and the work on the clinic of contemporary psychopathologies of Costa [5]. The difficulty of the subject is evident in dealing with and qualifying his affections and condition and the border between mind and body.

Final Considerations

More than presenting somatization as a possible current hysteria, this study encourages reflection on the pathologies which are said to be psychosomatic and leads us to question the reasons for the constant updates of diagnosing manuals on mental illness. Changes in the nomenclature, divisions and classifications are means of resolving diagnostic conflicts and avoiding questions about the validity of therapy. Easser and Lesser [8] and Zetzel [7] had already presented studies on the need to subdivide hysteria, which today we see in numerous pathologies.

Nowadays, due to their comprehensiveness, the hysterical symptoms are included in the diagnostic criteria of various diseases. The so-called somatizations integrate numerous pathologies, especially in clinical pictures in which there is uncertainty, diagnostic doubt, multiplication of symptoms, persistent complaints and interpersonal conflicts. The change of terminology has emerged as the need for a more rigorous framework, in order to differentiate the psychiatric diagnoses of the organics [2].

However, regardless of the term chosen, we must consider what the patient communicates with us to help him find the most appropriate treatment. As Quartilho, [15] points out:

The task of the doctor is thus to identify the source of complaints when this is possible, to reach an agreement on their importance, indicate the range of treatments available, and help the patient to deal with what has no cure.

⁴ Such memories are “pathogenic” because they are reputed to cause psychiatric disorders - hysteria in the late nineteenth century, post-traumatic stress disorder in the late twentieth century - and “secret” because they are acts of concealment

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The Influence Of 5 Traits Of Personality, Loneliness And Self-Esteem In The Creation Of Avatar

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Abstract

Nowadays, online gaming is the most famous gaming among teenagers, while players have the chance to create their own unique character which is called avatar. Games offering the possibility to create an avatar are on the increase after 1985, giving the chance to the user to have more choices so as to create the avatar he/she wants. But what happens actually when a child select his/her own avatar? A quantitative questionnaire survey was conducted to examine if the avatar represents the child's personality and if loneliness and self-esteem plays an important role of this selection. 302 Greek students participants were took part in this study, 161 boys and 141 girls with mean age 15.04 and (S.D. = 76). The participants answered in TPQue5, CLQ, Rosenberg self-esteem scale questionnaire and in an offhand-avatar selection questionnaire. The data analyzed with t-test and Anova test. The results demonstrate that personality, self-esteem and loneliness affect avatar selection. These findings are important so as to make users think their personality when they create this digital human. Further studies could be done examining other factors that play an important role of the selection of avatar.

Keywords: avatar, personality, loneliness, self-esteem, TPQue5, CLQ, Rosenberg self-esteem scale

Introduction

More than 25 years ago, Sherry Turkle [1] published the book “the second self: computers and human spirit”, in which, she noted that computers were an exploration of oneself. Some years later on, in her second book “life on the screen: identify in the age of the internet”, she made some alterations in her theory, concerning the avatar selection and the circumstances in which players are obliged to create a different identity through their avatars [1].

Nowadays, online gaming is the most well-known gaming among teenagers, while players have the chance to create their own unique character which is called avatar. In a form of graphical designs, these characters take more and more realistic form through their players by customizing them and spending time to use them for online interaction. As the technology is being improved, the graphical designs are becoming more and more realistic and consequently, each and every one player has the opportunity to customize their own avatar. Avatars signify the digital representation of a human or in other words, the character that human creates [2].

A striking example could be the virtual game “the Sims”. The Sims is a life simulation video game in which users must design one avatar and guide it in order to live in a community, make family, built new relationships, find a job e.t.c. [3] The most extortionary in this game is that user could add to his/her avatar not only a lot of genetic characteristics, such as skin tone, hair colour, body structure e.t.c. but also personality traits such as selfish, loved e.t.c.

Avatars-self-personality

The term “self” and the definition of this particular word derive from Rogers and his theory about personality. The self (or real self) consists of ideas, attitudes and values that characterize the “I” [4]. It also includes the awareness of what I am and what I can do. This self-perception affects significantly the individual’s perception of the world as well as for his own behavior [5].

Also, researchers added that each one has one ideal self, the kind of person that he would like to be. The closer the ideal self is to the real self, the more satisfied and happier is the individual. However, a long distance between the ideal and the real self, results in an unhappy and unsatisfied person [6]. Internet is regarded as a unique opportunity for self-expression.

Somebody who is using the internet, usually expresses himself or herself through it [1].

Internet and the reflection of self in an avatar or in a profile are able to express some elements of personality. This occurs because in the internet, the person’s identity is not revealed to others [7] while in traditional interactions, the person is more vulnerable to reveal drawbacks or taboo aspects of himself, even to close friends and family [8].

Self-esteem

Public and scientific communities started to have many concerns about the popularity of digital games and their relationship to gamers’ well-being. Inclusion in gaming activities has been seen as a remuneration for real-life inefficiencies such as poor relationships, lack of social skills, loneliness and low self-esteem [9]. Self-esteem is habitually mentioned when examining internet behavior, avatar selection, on-line gaming and especially pathological internet use. Users have low self-esteem, and in general they lack self-confidence, and they haven’t a lot of confidence that their stance on controversial issues is valid. As a result, they are less motivated to communicate because they expect to fail. Young people are marked by a growing sense of self-identity. Teenagers’ self-view of their capacities could be relied upon to encroach on movement decisions. Perceptions and expectations have been conceptualized as the self-concept, a construct which has been regarded by psychological theorists as a major motivating factor in the control and direction of human behavior [10]. Fulfillment with one’s present exercises, appearance, and companionships adds to a positive self-idea, while shortages in such zones bring down the self-idea [11]. Negative self-idea has been utilized to clarify a wide exhibit of degenerate practices and has turned into an imperative component in numerous clarifications of wrongdoing [12].

Loneliness

Previous researches support that self-esteem correlates with loneliness dimension.

Loneliness may be described as “a negative affect state and reflects an individual’s subjective perception of deficiencies in his or her network of social relationships” [13].

Both loneliness and low self-esteem have been found to be related to the psychological states of depression and hopelessness [14]. Perhaps not surprisingly, previous research has shown that loneliness and self-esteem are related [15]. Most studies have examined correlations between loneliness and a wide variety of social, emotional, and basic variables. Lonely people have been found to express negative perspectives [15] and to be low in constructive influence [16].

Lonely individuals will probably be modest and less fulfilled by life than different people [17].

Aim

This study aims at examining the creation of an avatar and observing how the creation of an avatar is influenced by some personality traits, their loneliness and their self-esteem.

Based on prior research there have been observed vital differences between boys and girls regarding the influence of self-esteem, loneliness and personality on the avatar selection, it was decided to investigate the relationship among the constructs for each gender separately.

More specifically, research has indicated that females will choose more extraverted, neuroticism and agreeableness avatars as well as to openness to experience avatars [20].

Also, it is expected that girls will choose girls avatars and boys will choose boys avatars.

Methodology

Participants

The sample consisted of 302 Greek students, all attending classes from high school.

The range in age was 13 to 17 and the mean age was 15.04 (S.D.=.76). In the present study 141 girls and 161 boys take part in this study in which most of them were going to 3rd year of junior high school. At this point it must be stressed that 85.7% for that students play at least one per year electronic games with 32% preference in action games.

Instruments

Traits Personality Questionnaire 5 (TPQue5; Tsaousis & Kerpelis, 2004). This questionnaire is a short version (101 items) of the TPQue (Tsaousis, 1999) comprising scales of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness as well as a lie and a social desirability scale. Cronbach's alpha for every variable was from .74 through .84.

Children loneliness questioner (CLQ) (Asher; Tsibidaki & Paxou, 2000). The CLQ is a 24-item questionnaire which was developed to assess feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction among children under 8 years old. Cronbach's alpha of 16-item questionnaire was $\alpha=.90$.

Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg; Tsakaragis, Kafetsios & Stalikas, 1989). The purpose of the 10 item RSE scale is to measure self-esteem. According to Greek sample the cronbach's alpha was $\alpha=.85$.

Avatar selection. Avatar selection questionnaire was an offhand questionnaire in which the participants had to choose one of the ten avatars which represent him in order to play a specific video game. Every avatar presents one personality trait according to OCEAN questionnaire

both of female and male representation. The plot of this video game is to ravage the enemies, so all avatars have some special strength according to their personality traits.

Procedure

Informing the participants through the announcement in their school, a quantitative research took place in a class of high school. In the beginning, to perform the experiment and to ensure the participants' participation, they were given a briefing form which for ethical reasons informed them about the process of the experiment, the ability to withdraw from the study whenever they wished and thanked them and asked their parents for a signed consent.

Then, a booklet of questionnaires was given to each participant. Participants could complete the questionnaires as long as they wanted. In the end of the experiment, they were given a debriefing form that revealed the real purpose of the experiment, enabling participants to withdraw their participation and their data from the survey for a 5 day period.

Results

Figure 1

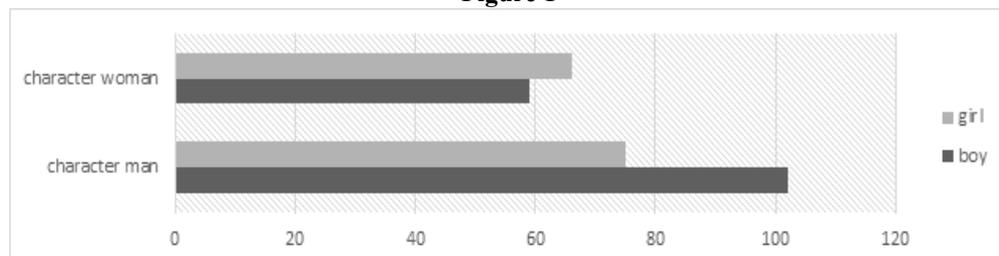


Figure 1 shows frequencies between avatar selection by gender

As figure 1 shows boys tend to choose men avatars (out of 161 boys, 102 choose men avatars and 59 choose women avatars) and so did girls (out of 141 girls, 75 choose men avatars and 66 choose women avatars).

Table 1: Loneliness and self-esteem means for males and females

	Gender		t	Df	Playing video games		t	Df
	males	females			Yes	No		
loneliness	58.15 (3.42)	59.21 (3.44)	2.69**	300	58.45 (3.30)	59.79 (4.22)	-2.36*	298
Self-esteem	25.93 (2.17)	25.83 (1.60)	.65	300	25.92 (1.97)	2.67 (1.63)	.77	298

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001, standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare sex and players and non players, according to loneliness and self-esteem variables. There was a significant difference only

between loneliness according females ($M=59.21$, $SD=3.44$) and males ($M=58.15$, $SD=3.42$), $t(300)=2.69$, $p=0.008$ and also a significant difference only between loneliness and players ($M=58.45$, $SD=3.30$) and non players ($M=59.79$, $SD=4.22$), $t(298)=2.36$, $p=0.019$.

Table 2: Factor analysis of characters as personality traits and dependent variables

	Dependent variables						
	Extraver- sion	Openess to experience	C o n - scious- ness	Agreeable- ness	Neuroti- cism	Loneli- ness	S e l f - esteem
F	11.20***	7.39***	4.40*	3.28*	.68	1.22	.98
η^2	.13	.09	.06	.04	.01	.02	.01

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$, standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Table 2 revealed that there was a significant main effect of extraversion and characters, $F(9,292)=11.20$, $MSE= 51.98$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.13$. It must be stressed that the highest mean was in extraversion trait ($M=55.94$, $S.D.=6.79$). Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni test indicated that there were significant differences between agreeableness and openness to experience ($M=5.35$, $SD=1.60$), between consciousness and agreeableness ($M=-5.08$, $SD=1.23$), between agreeableness and neuroticism ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.16$), between consciousness and extraversion ($M=-6.76$, $SD=1.32$), between extraversion and openness to experience ($M=-6.31$, $SD=1.66$) and finally between neuroticism and extraversion ($M=-5.19$, $SD=1.25$). There was a significant main effect of openness to experience and characters, $F(9,292)=7.39$, $MSE= 78.40$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.09$. Also, the highest mean was in neuroticism trait ($M=45.86$, $S.D.=6.18$). Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni test indicated that there were significant differences between extraversion and agreeableness ($M=4.14$, $SD=1.30$) and between extraversion and openness to experience ($M=6.19$, $SD=1.79$) and finally between neuroticism and extraversion ($M=-4.37$, $SD=1.35$). There was a significant main effect of consciousness and characters, $F(9,292)=4.40$, $MSE= 59.93$, $p=.002$, $\eta^2=.06$. In addition, the highest mean was in openness to experience trait ($M=50.19$, $S.D.=4.47$). Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni test indicated and there were no significant differences among variables. There was a significant main effect of agreeableness and characters, $F(9,292)=3.28$, $MSE= 383.25$, $p=.012$, $\eta^2=.04$. It must be stressed that the highest mean was in agreeableness trait ($M=50.75$, $S.D.=7.18$). Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni test indicated that there were significant differences between extraversion and agreeableness ($M=3.48$, $SD=1.04$). There was not a significant main effect of neuroticism and characters, $F(9,292)=.68$, $MSE= 37.27$, $p=.608$, $\eta^2=.01$ with highest mean in openness trait ($M=50.04$, $S.D.=10.72$), of loneliness and characters, $F(9,292)=1.22$, $MSE= 11.95$, $p=.304$, $\eta^2=.02$ with highest mean in openness trait ($M=60.00$, $S.D.=3.22$) and between self-esteem and characters, $F(9,292)=.98$, $MSE= 3.69$, $p=.418$, $\eta^2=.01$ with highest mean in neuroticism trait ($M=28.89$, $S.D.=1.87$).

Discussion

According to hypothesis and the results of the present study, it was estimated that males select more male avatars and women select more female avatars. These findings agree with

the research of Yee in 2014 [18] that found that men users play as women, only 7 percent of women change their gender in the selection of avatar [18]. According to loneliness and self-esteem results showed that loneliness affected by gender, but self-esteem had no affection with males and females participants. As far as for social networks, loneliness and personality [1], found that both social network variables and individual differences measures, predict loneliness.

The present results didn't agree with Stokes research because none of the personality trait seems to correlate with loneliness variable. On the other hand, according to self-esteem, as it mentioned before, self-esteem is correlated with internet behavior and avatar selection. Present findings showed that self-esteem has main effect on the creation of avatar as man or woman and also found a correlation between self-esteem and neuroticism trait. These findings agree with the hypothesis because self-esteem influence MMORPGs players and their selection of avatar.

These findings also support researchers [17] who have reported that self-esteem correlates with personality traits and particular have a strong positive correlation with neuroticism trait.

The results also showed that was an important difference between loneliness and players of video games. In more details, loneliness variable is lower in players. According to self-esteem variable participants who played video games seemed to have lower self-esteem than non players, but these findings were not statistically significant.

Research concerning the relation between the user, his personality and the avatar he created, real or ideal, varies and their interrelationship is of great interest. Taking a broad view at the present study results, there was main effect between the 5 personality traits and the representation of avatar. These findings support Bargh's, McKenna's & Fitzsimon's [18] research with the university undergraduates, who expressed the qualities of their true selves when they interacted with their partners through internet [18]. More specifically, these findings agree with the hypothesis because there was main effect between each trait of personality and creation of the avatar, but the extraversion trait and the openness experience trait tends to be more statistically important leading to researchers view.

Limitations

The study has offered an evaluative perspective on avatar selection according to users personality traits, loneliness and self-esteem. As a direct consequence of this methodology, the study encountered limitations, which need to be considered. It is worth mentioning that the avatar selection was in an offhand questionnaire and it could not represent with accuracy the characters' personality trait.

Implications

The particular study may lead to the creation of a personality test with the use of an avatar with certain characteristics which may reveal some aspects of the avatar's creator. Also, it could be a very useful tool to see student's loneliness and self-esteem. Therefore, the present study is a stimulus to further research so as to discuss what urges and attracts users to an increasing creation of games with avatars and virtual worlds.

Conclusion

The present study is a report about the selection of an avatar and its connection with the personality, loneliness and self-esteem of the user. Although the results showed a difference between the selection and gender, women tend to select women avatars and men tend to select men avatars. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the results of the present study showed that gender affects loneliness. Also, it must be stressed that personality traits correlates with loneliness. Selection of an avatar seemed to influenced by the personality traits, loneliness and self-esteem variable. Finally, it must be mentioned that it was an interesting study for both young and older people and scientists too, providing a stimulus for further study about the selection of an avatar.

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Views on Bullying Among Pre-schoolers

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Abstract

Bullying is when one child or a group of children harms another child repeatedly and on purpose. Bullying should not be confused with occasional fighting or one-off arguments. Bullies usually act in secrecy and prefer to target children who look different than the rest, seem weak, vulnerable and fragile and usually, are on their own. There has been an alarming spread of bullying incidents during the last decades in schools and quite recently, research as well as observant early years educators have indicated that bullying can be emerging in early childhood settings too. Our study is a qualitative research in which we try to identify whether bullying exists in early years centres in Greece, by means of interviewing 15 pre-school teachers and early years educators of working experience varying from 8 to 32 years.

The research findings provide a very interesting and useful - for further actions - feedback, by highlighting the fact that bullying can and does emerge in early years, between the ages of 3-5 years, both among boys and girls and usually through verbal and physical attacks.

Keywords: Bullying, education, pre-school, early childhood, young children, early years teachers, Greek

Introduction

Bullying among children at school is, unfortunately, not a new phenomenon. It attracted international interest in the '80s but more systematic work was done in the early 90's [1].

In Greece, bullying starts becoming an issue of interest and research early during the first decade of 2000 [2].

Efforts to study bullying systematically began in Scandinavia in the early '70s and for many years were confined there. Dan Olweus' work and research has set a milestone to understanding the forms of bullying and working towards a bullying-free school environment since then. Later on, bullying attracted researchers' attention in the UK, and Japan, whereas today most of the European countries as well as the USA, Canada, Australia, N. Zealand and gradually in other parts of the world, researchers were called to study and deal with this increasing, societal problem [2].

Bullying at school is when one child or group of children hurts another child intentionally and constantly [3]. It is an expression of aggression that comes in the form of physical or emotional abuse [4]. It is important to distinguish bullying from one-off arguments or fights

with someone as well as from teasing or saying something unkind to one. Therefore one should pay attention to the presence or not of the three defining characteristics of bullying which are: **deliberate**, **repeated** and **power imbalanced** expression of aggression towards one child [3],[4],[5]. By power imbalanced it is meant that the bully perceives the attacked child as weaker and vulnerable (e.g. younger at age, smaller in size, less popular at school, belonging to a social, ethnical, religious, economical or other minority/majority group, look different from the rest of the group, speak another language, etc.).

Bullies prefer secrecy as it is easier for them to act when no one is around [3]. There are different types of bullying the main of which are: *a) physical* (e.g. pinching, pushing, punching, kicking, biting, hitting), *b) verbal* (e.g. shouting, yelling, name-calling, teasing, threatening, laughing at someone, making fun of other children and their families) or **written** - for older children - (e.g. graffiti), *c) relational* (e.g. exclusion from play and getting other children to do the same, social isolation of the targeted child, spreading rumors in order to harm the reputation of the targeted child or his/her family), *d) damage of property* (e.g. taking, hiding, stealing or destroying targeted child's property) and *e) cyber-bullying* (e.g. using the Internet, mobile phones or other digital media to spread hurtful texts and images), which clearly though, does not apply to pre-school children [2],[3],[4].

In bullying there is the **bully**, the **target** and the **bystanders** (passive witnesses of the incidents that do not do anything to stop the situation). The term 'target' is preferred to the term 'victim' as the first highlights the deliberate choice of specific person by the bully, whereas the second implies that the person is weak, helpless and not able to react.

Having outlined a few main concepts on bullying it becomes evident that pre-school settings provide a vast of opportunities to tackle such issues and work effectively towards prevention of aggressive and violent behaviors in the classroom and/or immediate intervention when needed. Early years and pre-school teachers can help young children develop social skills so that they can create healthy relationships and communicate with others by using positive behaviors. Teachers can also take the opportunity to help children develop resistance to aggressive behaviors and, at the same time, establish an atmosphere where healthy and cooperative interactions are encouraged.

Following, our research project will be presented including the methodology, results, conclusions and suggestions for further action.

Methodology

The present work is a small-scale research that was carried out within a departmental student research project. Therefore, limitations on time availability and sampling are fully acknowledged. However, every possible effort was made in order to include as representative sample as possible [6].

The aim of our research was to investigate pre-school teachers' views and working experiences on whether bullying exists among pre-school children and, in case it does, the ways in which it is expressed.

Our sample consisted of 15 early years and pre-school teachers who work in public and private pre-school settings and of a working experience varying from 8 to 32 years.

The sample was self-selected [7],[8] meaning that people from our sampling frame [7] volunteered themselves to take part in the research.

The research method used was the interview in order to acquire qualitative data.

More specifically, the type of interview used was a semi-structured interview.

This kind of interview is a combination of formal and informal interview [7]. A number of questions to be asked is set whereas the interviewer can probe for more information and/or follow up points made by the research participant. In this way, the focus moves away from the interviewer towards the interviewee. The interviewer acts as a ‘facilitator’ and ‘enabler’ who encourages the interviewees to elaborate on aspects and points of their own view that they feel are important [9]. For this particular reason it is that we chose this type of interview.

The interviews were private with each individual participant. They took place in each teacher’s classroom and after the children had left for home, in order for the teachers to be fully concentrated on their answers.

Each interview lasted 20-25 minutes and all interviews were carried out during a one-month period. The responses were documented by means of a voice recorder and after the participants’ consent.

The data selected after transcribing the recordings and hand written notes were later sorted to three (3) categories. First category is ‘Exploration of terminology awareness regarding bullying’, second is ‘Causes of bullying and ways it is expressed’ and third is ‘School and parent role on bullying incidents’.

Following, the results of our research will be presented.

Results

Exploration of Terminology Awareness Regarding Bullying

This category includes the definitions that the respondent pre-school and early years teachers gave on bullying as well as the main characteristics of the bully and the ‘target’. These definitions are what the respondents think bullying is and includes.

In general, our respondents perceive bullying as a kind of ‘terrorism’, a verbal, psychological and physical violence towards the targeted person that is deliberate and repeated, so that the victim feels uncomfortable, frightened, helpless and isolated.

Some of the answers are presented below.

How would you describe bullying?

“I make the other think I am stronger and I can do whatever I want. I deliberately isolate the other so that nobody can help him/her”.

Pre-school teacher, 32 years of working experience

“When someone is not allowed to feel at ease. When one is not allowed to express his/her opinion or become part of a team. In general, when one is constantly made feel at a hostile environment”.

Pre-school teacher, 29 years of working experience

“Bullying means creating emotions of fear to the other, anxiety and stress for his/her everyday activities...”

Pre-school teacher, 22 years of working experience

Describe the characteristics of a bullying target in a few words

“Shy, timid, sometimes puny and in other cases different, with some special features”.

Pre-school teacher, 32 years of working experience

“Passive, lacking social experiences with others”.

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

“Children who feel insecure and have low self-esteem. Sometimes they are physically weaker or just shorter”.

Pre-school teacher, 15 years of working experience

Describe the characteristics of a bully in a few words

“Popular, quick-witted, physically strong”.

Pre-school teacher, 28 years of working experience

“Strong, but with a lot of personal and family problems. Very insecure...”.

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

“Usually impulsive children that tend to dominate others and are quite popular”.

Pre-school teacher, 15 years of working experience

Causes of Bullying and Ways it is Expressed

This category includes the forms of bullying that the pre-school and early years teachers have witnessed in their classroom, bullying as it emerges in boys and girls and, finally, the causes of bullying as teachers perceive them.

Teachers have reported more incidents of verbal aggression (shouting, threatening, name-calling) and incidents of physical aggression (kicking, hair-pulling, pinching). Moreover, they remarked that they have witnessed a lot of repeated indirect aggression such as hiding personal objects of the targeted child, destroying personal work (drawings, artwork etc.), excluding the child from play and play areas. In some cases there have also been reported incidents of spreading false information about the victim.

According to the respondents, bullying can be equally witnessed in boys and girls.

Boys tend to use their physical strength and girls tend to use verbal and indirect aggression.

The teachers of our sample trace the causes of bullying expression mostly to family environment. Moreover, they believe that other causes may be found in the following: feelings of low self-esteem of the bully, poor self-confidence, immaturity and behavioral issues etc.

Forms of expressed bullying

“You don’t wear nice clothes”.

“If you don’t give me the doll, I will tell everybody not to play with you because you’re bad”

“If you don’t give me your jacket, I will not invite you to my party”

“I don’t want to sit next to you because your parents are foreigners”

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

“You will do as I say”.

“You can’t play here, otherwise I will hit you”

“If you don’t give me the truck, I will tell Ms H. that you hit me”

Early years teacher, 20 years of working experience

Bullying in boys and girls

“During the past years, both girls and boys bully”.

Pre-school teacher, 26 years of working experience

“Boys usually use their physical strength. Girls are a bit cunning and prefer name-calling and hurtful remarks”.

Early years teacher, 8 years of working experience

Causes of bullying

“Bad and unstable family environment”.

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

“Lack of family bonding between its members”.

Early years teacher, 8 years of working experience

“Lack of interests and stimuli for exploration in accordance with the child’s needs. The family and the school should work on this more effectively”.

Pre-school teacher, 22 years of working experience

“Bullies are probably victims of bullying themselves. They may need to attract attention for some reason, attract acceptance of others or become popular. In any case, bullies have serious emotional needs”.

Early years teacher, 10 years of working experience

“Causes may be the need to control and dominate others. Lack of role models might be another explanation. It could be that the child who bullies feels insecure and helpless at home so he/she wants to be dominant at school setting”.

Pre-school teacher, 29 years of working experience

School and Parent Role on Bullying Incidents

This category includes intervention of school and staff on incidents of bullying and the role that parents have on such incidents.

Intervention of school and staff

“We generally try to establish a class environment that promotes acts of love, care, respect and trust between one another. We set clear rules. We take action immediately after an incident of bullying has occurred and we have been aware of it. We deal with the victim first and then with the bully”.

Early years teacher, 10 years of working experience

“I believe that the teacher has to talk to both the victim and the bully together and then with each one of them, separately. In my opinion the most important thing is to cultivate empathy. It is also important to sensitize parents on bullying issues and ways to prevent them from occurring or intervene when they do occur”.

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

“I would try to identify the problem and then talk to the child that has been bullied, in order to reassure him/her that I am there to protect him/her. I would make clear to all children that bullying is not an acceptable behavior. I would then talk to the parents and let them know on the incident”.

Pre-school teacher, 12 years of working experience

Parents’ role on bullying incidents

Our respondents suggest that parents should be informed on bullying matters and be engaged in bullying preventing initiatives.

“Parents should be supportive and caring with their children. They should spend more time on listening to their children and they should also encourage their children to be able to confide in them”.

Pre-school teacher, 15 years of working experience

“It is important that the parents listen to and help the teacher when they are informed that bullying has happened by having a sincere conversation with their child at home and tracing the causes of their child’s bullying behavior”.

Pre-school teacher, 28 years of working experience

“Parent role is the most important one and it starts from the birth of the child. I believe parents have to teach their children social skills such as respecting diversity and respecting one another in general. Most importantly, parents should never lose contact with their children”.

Pre-school teacher, 30 years of working experience

“Parents should simply be observant, supportive and close to their children. They should also be positive role models to them”.

Early years teacher, 15 years of working experience

Conclusions

The sample of our research project, although very limited, gives us valuable information on how teachers of young children perceive and understand bullying and its expressions.

Our teachers seem to have a quite good idea and understanding of what bullying is within

the context of their early years setting environment. However, it seems that it is not always clear to them whether incidents they witness have to do with pure bullying or simply with the typical, for that age of children, experimentation of different ways of behaving. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that bullying is a deliberate, repeated and usually power imbalanced action of aggression.

From the interviews it becomes evident that bullying emerges even at an early age and teachers had quite a few examples to share. Therefore, it is imperative that bullying behavior is identified and tackled the very first moment it appears. Children of the very young age tend to easily adjust their behavior according to the responses of their peers and adults in their environment. So, we understand that direct response in any forms of aggression can prevent from the escalating and spreading of this behavior.

Because bullying does not appear overnight, in early childhood settings teachers get to see a lot of pre-bullying behaviors. This means that certain children may kick, punch, bite, push or even threat and make hurtful remarks about certain other children. Early childhood educators should be able to immediately identify this pre-bullying phase, take action and intervene before this kind of behavior becomes repeated and established.

According to our respondents, both boys and girls are engaged in bullying related behaviors.

However, they notice that boys use more of their physical strength whereas girls use mostly verbal and indirect forms of aggression. It is good though that early childhood settings can provide opportunities for teachers to build social skills and foster positive social interactions between children and adults as well, thus intervening early and preventing bullying and other forms of aggression to emerge [4].

Our respondent teachers give also a lot of weight to the parents' role in the prevention of and/or intervention in bullying behaviors in young children. Teachers of our sample believe that parents play a much important role in the forming of aggressive behavior and they express intention of collaborating with parents for handling bullying when it emerges. However, teachers do not express intention of working with parents for bullying prevention, e.g. by communicating and implementing simple social skills activities.

It is obvious that parents can strongly build on the development of social skills of their children. They can provide a balanced environment in which they listen to their children and they understand their children's needs. They could seek help from the educators in order to understand aggression in children and they could collaborate with them when incidents of bullying do occur.

Early childhood teachers on the other hand, can turn to advantage the fact that young children learn fast and adjust to responses of their environment. This means that a lot of work could be done before bullying incidents emerge; at the phase of pre-bullying and even before.

Teachers can build on a bullying-free environment by clearly understanding what bullying is. Then, they could invest on developing social skills in children and consequently form healthy and stable relationships and friendships. Emotional education should also become a big part of the curriculum. Social skills could be cultivated through story-telling (e.g. by use of Persona Dolls [3],[10]), role-playing, drama, puppetry, discussions, P.S.E. (Personal, Social and Emotional) activities etc.

Young children's teachers could also set clear rules in the classroom and discuss with children which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. It is important that consequences are discussed too and to encourage children contribute to this establishment. These rules should always be followed so that all children can feel safe, included and supported. At the same time, teachers should be available for all children and be able to coach equally effectively

children with challenging behavior too. Involving parents is a key issue and therefore teachers could host, from time to time, parent workshops on child development and socio-emotional skill development. It would not be a good idea that a parent hears for the first time the word bullying and it refers to his/her child [4].

To conclude our work, it goes without saying that early years teachers and educators of all levels of education need to have a clear understanding of bullying in young children and consequently deal with it effectively if and when it emerges. To do so, it is advisable that they get training on bullying issues and prepare themselves to work on it before it appears.

Prevention could start by designing a clear school and classroom strategy, while preparing an intervention plan could be the next decisive step towards bullying-free schools.

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Drawing from Principles of Schema Therapy to Address Internal Working Models and Attachment Issues Through Cognitive Work and Art Psychotherapy with Individuals and Couples

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Abstract

The features of early attachment have predictive meaning with regard to a person's expectations, beliefs, identity, interpretations, needs, triggers, and relational patterns. Internal Working Models (IWMs) affect one's sense of self and blueprint of "other"; these internal representations are often at the basis of maladaptive cognition, coping strategies, and relational dynamics. Inner schemas or pervasive themes (e.g. abandonment, enmeshment, punishment, rigidity etc.) are linked to modes (e.g., "vulnerable child", "demanding parent") which, when activated, are expressed through dysfunctional or self-defeating emotional, cognitive and relational dynamics. Primary attachment often moves from the caretaker-child dyad into a pair-bond affiliation in adulthood; research indicates that the quality of bonding is affected not only by the features of the relationship itself but also by the person's inner relational representations that anticipate, guide and interpret all dynamics. This study discusses a therapeutic approach focused on assessing the client's internal working models and schemas and utilizing both cognitively based and art-therapy based interventions to improve his/her sense of self, emotional regulation and quality of pair-bond attachment. The assessment phase includes clinical interviewing, administering an adapted Schema Inventory, and completing a focused genogram (e.g., attachment genogram). Interventions focus on utilizing schema work, cognitive restructuring, imagery and art therapy techniques to help both the individual and the couple develop adaptive coping strategies, repair self-destructive internal representations of self and other, and express emotion and memory. This paper features a theoretical presentation of this comprehensive treatment approach and is illustrated through a recent case study example.

Keywords: attachment, schemas, modes, art therapy, cognitive therapy, imagery, internal working models, individual therapy, couples therapy, coping

Introduction

The features and patterning of early care create expectations about "self" and "other" as well as the world and have many implications with regard to a person's sense of efficacy/mastery, position on the dependence-avoidance continuum, emotional regulation and relationship with intimacy. One's early experiences, especially as relates to attachment, are undoubtedly crucially important; however, what is even more powerfully significant is one's personal *translation* of them into internal representations that create a blueprint or framework

of reference that includes patterns of belief, interpretation, emotion, relational dynamics, cognition, and more. It is therefore clear that accessing and adjusting this transcription is at the basis of effective processes of change. Furthermore, neuroscience teaches us that inner constructs and mechanisms, including those that allow us to “pre-experience” (picturing, imagining, anticipating) and “re-experience” (memory, some felt-sense symptoms), activate the same neurobiological pathways as does behavioral experience (Panksepp & Biven, 2012). Investigating and adjusting the intrapsychic framework that underpins and informs both physical and mental experience is therefore crucial in order to foster change at both the individual and pair-bond level.

In a pair-bond dynamic like a couple, the inner worlds of two people come to intersect and interact in such a way that a dual-track relationship is experienced: one at the conscious, experiential level; another, based on unconscious language, attachment-based patterns, and automatic beliefs, responses and perspectives. A comprehensive therapeutic approach therefore benefits from individual attention to internal representations, including schemas, modes, faulty cognitions, images as well as focus on how each partner’s inner world interacts with the significant other’s. In order to break problematic patterns, dissatisfaction based on emotional distanced, faulty communication and maladaptive conflict it is important the each partner gain understanding and mastery over personal processes that create a distorted lens through which he/she sees aspects of the self and other.

Furthermore, the therapeutic intervention with the couple includes working towards deeper authenticity, facilitating new avenues of communication, fostering emotional intelligence, absorbing new emotional problem-solving skills and developing an arsenal of healthy coping mechanisms.

Attachment

Attachment is a broad term used to characterize emotionally charged psychological connectedness between individuals that is lasting, specific (not interchangeable), and characterized by desire for proximity and distress when faced with involuntary separation.

The attachment bond and its various patterns were first explored in terms of the infant-caregiver dyad. Bowlby’s and Ainsworth’s famous work first brought to light this blueprint for understanding the importance and consequences of the quality of early caregiving and bonding and established that these lay the foundation for *attachment styles* which can be classified as secure or insecure. Insecure attachment is broken down into ambivalent, disorganized and avoidant types depending on the relational dynamic that has developed between child and caregiver.

Secure attachment develops when a caregiver is both available and consistently responsive to the child’s needs in an appropriate manner. In this case, the child is likely to experience the caregiver as a “secure base” from which to explore the world; he/she will feel distressed upon separation and soothed upon reunion. The caregiver is able to “see” the child as an individual, soothe and protect him/her, but also practice and teach emotional regulation. The child experiences the caregiver as empathic, responsive, trustworthy and consistent and accordingly develops a solid sense of self and social competence.

In the case of *insecure ambivalent attachment* (also known as insecure anxious-resistant attachment), the caregiver is inconsistent in her/his response to the child, not attuned to his/her needs, and unpredictable in terms of level of care and emotional expression. He/she may alternate between being nurturing/attuned and insensitive, unavailable or intrusive or become

suddenly overindulgent to “repair” previous negative behavior. The child learns fails to develop feelings of security and, accordingly, often exhibits difficulty moving away from the attachment figure to explore new surroundings. He/she may become distrustful and confused while at the same time act desperate, clingy or overly dependent. The child may have trouble recognizing his/her emotional states and “reading” cues in others and, over time, experience others as not dependable or trustworthy. The child may typically experience separation distress but is likely to not be soothed by the attachment figure’s return, instead exhibiting rejecting behavior.

Insecure avoidant attachment develops when a caregiver is physically and emotionally unresponsive the child’s needs. This is typically seen in relationship dyads marked by neglect.

The child learns that he/she has no power to influence the external world or to engage others and that expressing his/her needs is a pointless, frustrating exercise. These children may become passive, depressed and even developmentally delayed. They learn that acknowledging or displaying distress may lead to punishment, rejection or disappointment and become accustomed to self-soothing/self-nurturing behaviors which can sometimes translate into proneness to maladaptive or addiction-based behaviors. These children may exhibit a world view of “pseudo independence” wherein they consciously believe they are self-reliant but are in fact deeply preoccupied with unmet needs and a sense of lack of control.

Disorganized attachment arises when the caregiver is confusing, unpredictable and frightening to the child. The child instinctively strives to find comfort in the caregiver when hurt or afraid or in need, but is also influenced by the fight-flight response when danger is perceived.

Therefore, the experience of chronically interacting with and seeking out an attachment figure who hurts them or is chaotic and scary puts the child in a lose-lose predicament he/she cannot make sense of, constantly torn between longing and fear. This type of attachment often develops when there is physical, sexual or emotional abuse in the home or when the caregiver is traumatized, grieving, or struggling with mental health issues that render her/him volatile, erratic or downright scary to the child. Children with disorganized attachment may become emotionally numb/prone to dissociation or aggressive and without adequate coping skills and social intelligence. They generally view the world as unsafe and have a fragile, fragmented or otherwise negative sense of self.

Early attachment relationships affect later development in a variety of ways. First, they have been shown to influence the developing brain at a lasting neuronal level (Shore, A. (1994). *Affect regulation and the origin of the self: the neurobiology of emotional development*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.) Second, they create the basis for self-regulation strategies, which includes controlling and modulating emotional response, coping with stress and arousal and maintaining a homeostatic affective state which is stimulating enough to engender motivation but not sufficiently overwhelming to become debilitating (Third, they impact behavioral regulation and synchrony with others, influencing one’s capacity to construct reciprocal personal and social exchanges (Wienfield et al in Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). Finally, they are the first blueprint for one’s internal working models- inner representations of self, other and the world that condition expectations, interpretations and reactions.

Internal working models

A child’s early experiences are not as important as the *translation* of these interaction patterns into internal representations he/she experiences as a largely unconscious template for making sense of others, self, and the world around. Bowlby termed these encoded

representations “internal working models” and argued they are the compass by which an individual anticipates, interprets and guides interactions with emotions, events and other people. Internal working models deeply affect subsequent attachment experiences with other individuals throughout life (Leahy, 2015). Crucially, Bowlby also observed that as the infant develops into a child and later into an adult, he/she begins to mentally interact with the IWMs (*internal working models*) by means of internal stimulation such as memory recall, mental rehearsal of expectations, or affective experiencing of visualized content (Bretherton & Munholland in Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). It is therefore important to understand that one’s *internal working models* are not exclusively unconsciously activated during interactions with others or in response to emotional stimuli, but they can rather also be shaped, maintained, reinforced or potentially corrected through mentalization. Bowlby argued that early differences in attachment do not directly cause later differences in functioning but rather “initiate pathways that are probabilistically related with later outcomes” (Bretherton & Munholland in Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). In therapeutic intervention with individuals and couples it is therefore essential to access and decode these pathways and provide the client with tools for repairing or adapting them.

When Bowlby argued that attachment behavior plays a vital role throughout life cycle, he was not merely referring to the lasting influences early caregiver-child dyad dynamics have on development. He was also highlighting that the fulfillment and mental health of a person is closely tied to the quality of relationships with others from the cradle to the grave. (Bowlby, 1979) Whether it be marked by power differentials (parent-child dyad) or partnership (couples/pair-bonding), any emotionally significant, non-transient psycho-relational bond between two people operates within the complex dynamic created by the two partners’ attachment experiences and *internal working models*.

The early child-caregiver bond has crucial significance for development and initially involves four defining features: proximity maintenance, separation distress, safe haven and secure base. Much of the dynamic is expressed through themes of availability, safety, distance, security and autonomy (Zeifman & Hazan in Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). However, this dynamic balance between attachment and exploration is extraordinarily important throughout the lifespan and profoundly shapes the quality of close relationships at all ages. A growing child will begin to experience attachment relationships with peers rather than parents alone, and, particularly in adolescence, these bonds may be explosively emotionally charged. Eventually, he or she will typically experience pair-bond affiliation with a romantic partner who may then become an attachment figure. While not all couples are necessarily experiencing attachment, many significant relationships are formed through and regulated by the same patterns of bonding and internal working model formation as the parent-child dyad. Understanding relationships in terms of each partner’s attachment style and IWMs provides a wealth of information regarding its dynamics.

Schemas, modes and scripts: our encoded blueprints

The human mind stores a collection of images and stories that are they key to how one understands the world. According to script theory, repetitive social interaction creates blueprints for navigating a given situation (Schank & Abelson, 1977). A child absorbs such *scripts* through imitation/ overt guidance but also through significant observation of “unwritten” rules and expectations in a given interpersonal system (such as a family) and cultural context.

This knowledge is encoded in memory as a series of actions centered around a particular goal- when a stimulus calls us to understand, negotiate, respond to or perform in a social

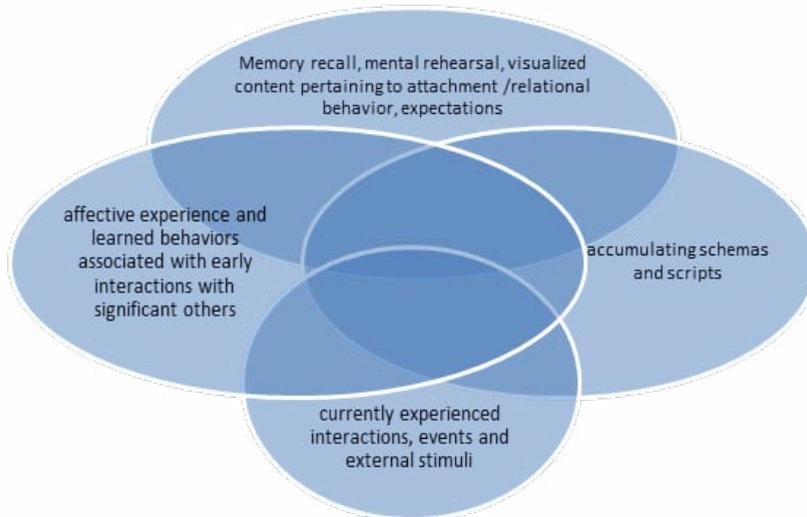
interaction that is either logically or unconsciously linked to the internalized blueprint, a *script* is likely activated. Scripts have been categorized as either “weak” (flexible in sequence and content) or “strong” (rigid in sequence and content) and divided into three types: event, physical and role scripts (Abelson, 1981). Event scripts concern how one is expected to act in a particular situation (e.g. at a family dinner), physical scripts dictate expectations about behavior in a specific setting (e.g. a classroom), and role scripts guide action when a particular role is taken on (e.g., mother, husband, etc.).

The concept of scripts was defined by cognitivists, psychologists and artificial intelligence researchers seeking to understand the complex overlap of memory and cognition as it influences behavior. While the implication of emotion is already implicit in this construct, a more nuanced analytical lens is needed to observe how unconsciously encoded material coalesces into thematic clusters and activates cognitive, emotional and behavioral expectations, perceptions and response. A useful perspective is provided by Schema therapy (ST), an integrative approach that has overlap with several models such as cognitive and psychodynamic psychotherapy, object relations theory and Gestalt therapy. Its fundamental precept is that during development humans internalize organized patterns of information, representations, expectations and interpretations that govern one’s sense of self, other and the world. Much like *scripts*, these can sometimes be adaptive and help us cope with the complexity of emotional and interpersonal dynamics as well as give us behavioral cues and interpretative tools in our day to day lives. However, when a child’s healthy developmental needs (safety, nurturance, acceptance, autonomy, identity, play, limit-setting) are not met, maladaptive *schemas* are formed. Schemas are psychological constructs largely outside of conscious awareness that underlie our beliefs, identity and emotional lenses. They are formed in childhood and adolescence and are repeatedly activated throughout the lifetime in a variety of relational and intrapsychic settings (including memories and anticipatory thinking). Maladaptive schemas can also be seen as self-defeating affective, behavioral and relational patterns sparked by deep-seated psychological wounds (Young et. al., 2006).

Farrell et al (2014) outlined how schemas can be conceptually organized under several thematic umbrellas such as:

SCHEMA CLUSTER	MAJOR THEMES
Disconnection and rejection	these include issues around mistrust/abuse, emotional deprivation, defectiveness/shame, social isolation/alienation, emotional inhibition, etc.
Autonomy and performance	include issues surrounding dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment/underdevelopment, subjugation, failure, mastery, exploration, etc.
Impaired limits	include issues related to entitlement, self-control, regulation, risk-taking, etc.
Expectations	include issues such as self-sacrifice, self-censorship, unrelenting standards, exaggerated expectations, punitive responses, etc.

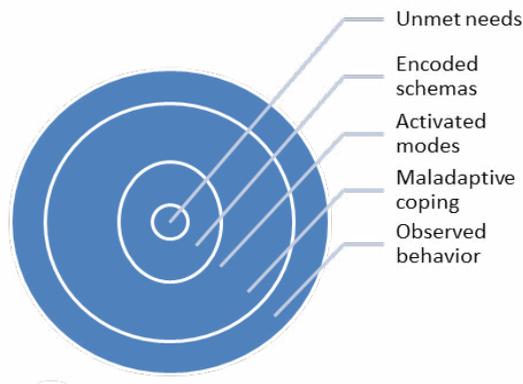
Our perception of and reaction to a given situation is influenced by overlapping dimensions:



When maladaptive schemas are activated, a person experiences an intense emotional, cognitive and behavioral response known as a *mode* (Farrett et al, 2014). *Modes* are specific clusters of cognitions, feelings and behaviors characterized by intense emotional arousal that are activated by internal stimuli (memories, anticipatory thinking) or external stimuli (interpersonal interactions, observed reality) and filtered through one's encoded schemas.

Maladaptive coping modes are survival responses to trauma or unmet needs, including flight, fight and freeze responses. They activate in connection with the person's schemas and incorporate his/her defenses. For example, a person may become detached or cold (Avoidant maladaptive coping) in an effort to protect the Vulnerable Child from fear or longing.

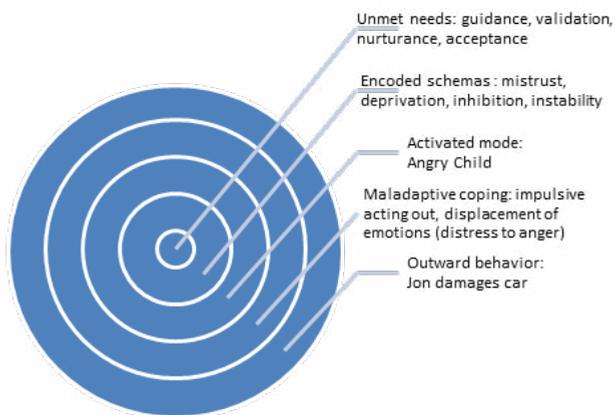
As the figure below illustrates, at the core level we hold early experiences of unmet childhood needs. Schemas are encoded around these; modes are activated expressions of both; maladaptive coping mechanisms are unhealthy reparatory actions taken against all of the above. Finally, outward behavior is what is often visible at the surface - the tip of the iceberg in a profoundly complex intrapsychic process.



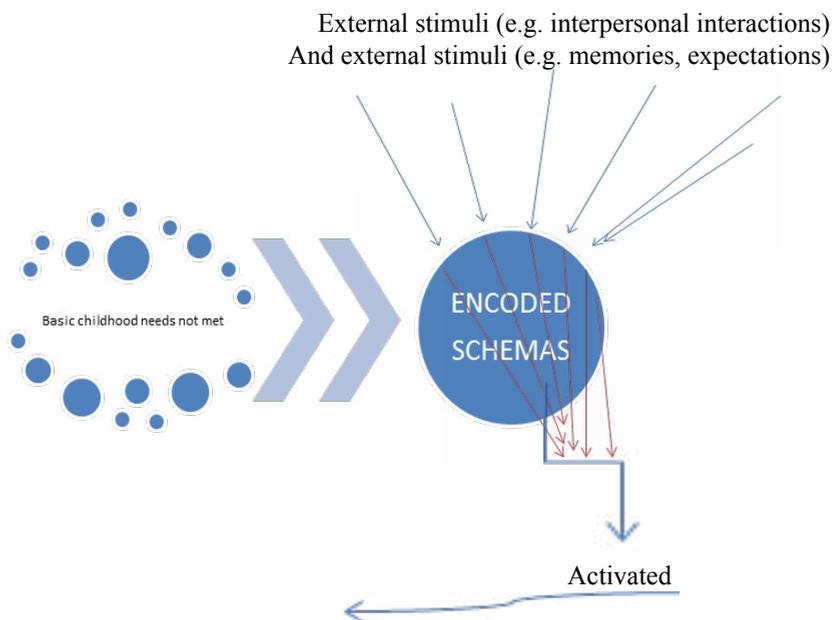
Let us apply a practical example to this construct. Jon, age 30, has just flown into a rage and damaged his girlfriend's car when after he was unable to contact her by phone for a few

hours. While trying her cell phone for two hours, he has pictured her being unfaithful (having sex with other men) or uncaring (shopping with girlfriends and ignoring his calls purposely).

Jon was raised by a mother who often berated and belittled him, was self-absorbed, judgmental, controlling and unpredictable in affect.



Because of his early deprivation (unmet needs) in terms of guidance, acceptance, nurturance, validation and positive modeling he has strong schemas surrounding themes of mistrust, deprivation, inhibition and instability. In this case, the external stimulus (girlfriend cannot be reached for hours) and internal stimulus (rumination about her possible whereabouts) are filtered through Jon's encoded schemas and activate one of his *modes*, in this case the Angry Child. The Angry Child is uncontrolled, certain someone has done him wrong, convinced of the ill intentions of others, and deeply mistrusting. Jon damages his girlfriend's car.



Modes

People can experience the formation and activation of various types of modes. *Innate child*

modes develop when basic needs in childhood (including safety, nurturance and autonomy) are unmet; an example of this mode is the Vulnerable Child. *Dysfunctional parent modes* are selectively internalized negative features of early caregivers/significant relationships, such as the Punitive Parent. *Healthy modes*, most notably the Happy Child and Healthy adult, are usually damaged or underdeveloped when early needs were unmet and important relationships were dysfunctional or traumatic. Farrett et. al. (2014).

MODE TYPE	MODE	ROOT	KEY ASSOCIATED FEELINGS/FEATURES
Innate child	Vulnerable Child	Unmet attachment needs (incl. safety, secure base, nurturance, attention, protection, acceptance, empathy, love)	Sadness, loneliness, anxiety, overwhelming pain and fear. Can spill into maladaptive coping modes
Innate child	Angry/Impulsive Child	Unmet needs for guidance, validation of feelings and needs, freedom to express self and feelings	Venting, anger, explosive behavior, “tantrum” like acting out
Innate child	Impulsive Child	Unmet needs for limit-setting, modeled self-control, validation and guidance	Impulsive acting out based on immediate gratification, disregard of limits, lack of awareness of needs of self and others
Healthy Mode	Happy Child-underdeveloped	Unmet needs for play, spontaneity, attention, acceptance, encouragement to explore, lack of secure base	When developed, feels loved, connected, contented, satisfied, “seen” and validated and is attached yet autonomous
Dysfunctional Parent	Punitive Parent	Rejection of the child’s needs, abuse	Resistance, criticism, punishment of self and others. Harsh and rejecting responses, self-centered processing, black and white thinking
Dysfunctional Parent	Demanding Parent	Unrealistic demands and standards, disregard for child’s individual wishes and needs, projection	Sets exceedingly high expectations for self and others, pressures self and others, has a harsh, negative or judgmental stance, dissatisfied

Dysfunctional Parent	Avoidant Protector	Caregiver has authority but is emotionally unavailable, distant or unreasonable	Pushes others away, lacks spontaneity, breaks connections, withdraws, isolates and avoids
Dysfunctional Parent	Compliant Surrenderer	Caregiver is ineffective, damaged, weak, or traumatized	Surrenders to all schemas, acting as if true. E.g.: if schema is self-sacrificing, gives up own needs. If it is defectiveness/shame, accepts self as failure and does not try
Healthy Mode	Healthy Adult (underdeveloped)	Lack of acknowledgement, support of autonomy, competence, sense of identity	Meets needs in a healthy manner, maintains responsibility and planning, enjoys pleasure, forms and maintains healthy attachments

*Adapted from Farrell et. al (2014)

Schema Therapy involves an accurate assessment of a person’s schemas, modes and coping strategies. The client brings this information into conscious awareness. The intensity of maladaptive schemas that trigger either stunted (avoidant, unempathic, etc.) or exaggerated (angry, histrionic, etc.) emotional responses and modes is reduced and adaptive coping skills replace maladaptive reactions (Farrell et al, 2014).

Attachment issues and internal representations: implications for couples

As we have seen, early attachment dynamics and patterned internal representations of experience (scripts, schemas, internal working models) create a complex intrapsychic dynamic that profoundly affects our understanding of ourselves, others and the world. When two individuals bound by a significant psychological tie interact, the inner constellations of such material each partner contains are bound to also interact.

Partner selection

Such interaction is evident even before relational dynamics between two people are consolidated. There is evidence that people may tend to select partners that elicit one’s schemas and stimulate mode activation. This may be due to the fact that we tend to select environments that confirm our beliefs about self and other (Bowlby, 1969). For example, a victim of childhood sexual abuse may hold a schema wherein self-worth is tied up with shame, fear and ambivalence. She may later unconsciously seek a romantic partner who fans the maladaptive fire of this blueprint with his behavior. Another mechanism behind partner selection can be traced to information processing biases that lead one to selectively pay more attention to social events that support existing mental models. One may unconsciously pick

up on a potential partner’s cues and become alert and interested when such signals are in tune with one’s internal representations, even if they are extremely maladaptive. For example, someone who inadvertently gives cues that suggest he is out of control, unpredictable, flighty or unattainable may spark the interest of a partner who has issues around being “seen and heard” and consistent, unconditional nurturance. Finally, internal working models and schemas are often self-perpetuating. For example, a schema regarding trust wherein no one is seen as trustworthy or well-intentioned may lead one to approach a partner defensively, thereby eliciting rejection or hostility, which in turn re-confirms the schema (Bowlby, 1979).

Analytic perspectives may interpret this as repetition compulsion; clearly, there is a tendency to gravitate towards people and situations that stimulate our inner world- even our maladaptive patterns.

Relationship between partners

Just as attachment issues, schemas and IWMs inform an individual’s sense of self, other and the world, so they deeply affect the interpersonal dynamics within a couple. Much has been written about conceptualizing romantic love as an attachment process and understanding relational dynamics in terms of each partner’s attachment-related history and behavior. Hazan and Shaver (1987) identified four attachment styles in this regard:

ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLE	COUNTERPART IN TRADITIONAL ATTACHMENT THEORY
Secure	Secure
Anxious-preoccupied	Insecure-Ambivalent
Dismissive-avoidant	Insecure-Avoidant
Fearful-avoidant	Disorganized

In this view, securely attached adults in a relationship tend to have a positive view of themselves, their partner and their bond. They seem to be at ease with both intimacy and independence, and to some degree view their partner as a “secure base”.

An anxious-preoccupied partner seeks high levels of closeness, approval and responsiveness from the other partner and is generally depended on him/her. They may have significant trust issues and have a less positive view of themselves and their relationship than securely attached counterparts. Dismissive-avoidant adults seek out a high degree of independence and tend to avoid attachment behavior. Their self-view is often centered around independence and self-containment and may appear devoid of emotional needs. In fact, they tend to suppress the majority of their feelings and enact a number of strategies to maintain emotional distance from their partner, of whom they often have a poor opinion. Fearful-avoidant adults have conflicted feelings about intimacy as they both desire and fear it. They tend to have a self-view of being unworthy and may see their partners as untrustworthy and may tend to suppress or displace their feelings (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

At a basic level, Bartholomew (1990) observed that, in spite of the many individual permutations of these dimensions, sense of self and sense of other can be largely dichotomized as “positive” or “negative”. Furthermore, he found that sense of self was closely related to one’s sense of dependence and sense of other positive sense of self and other was linked with avoidance themes. Thus, secure individuals tend to have a positive sense of self, a positive

outlook on other, low avoidance and low dependence needs; they are comfortable with both intimacy and autonomy. Those with a positive sense of self but a negative view of others tend to be Dismissing. Just as suggested by Hazan and Shaver, Dismissing adults have discomfort with closeness and may deny attachment feelings and suppress emotions: their self-worth appears to be maintained at the expense of intimacy. Individuals with a negative sense of self and a positive view of other tend to have high levels of dependence and low levels of avoidance and are generally preoccupied, ambivalent and overly dependent on their partners.

Finally, people with a negative sense of self and other tend to have both high dependence and high avoidance behaviors. They display fearful-avoidant patterns; they are torn between a desire for intimacy, connection and reassurance and a deep distrust of others exacerbated by fear of rejection and poor self-worth.

MODEL OF SELF (dependence)

		Positive (low)	Negative (high)	
<p><u>MODEL</u> Positive OF <u>OTHER</u> Negative (Avoidance)</p>		SECURE - comfortable with and desires intimacy and autonomy	Preoccupied, ambivalent, overly dependent	(low)
		Dismissing- denial of attachment discomfort with closeness, self-worth at the expense of intimacy	Fearful- avoidant- socially avoidant-desire intimacy but distrust others, fear rejection	(high)

(Adapted from Bartholomew, 1990)

These broad categories can indeed be helpful in the assessment process when working with couples.

In addition to themes pertaining to self-view, view of other, worldview, dependence vs. autonomy and avoidance vs. intimacy, other key areas to consider when working with couples are emotional response patterns, interpersonal history, coping modes, conflict triggers/style and locus of control.

Plasticity

Early attachment patterns are certainly a good predictor of adult ones; learning about them early on can help inform conceptualization. However, it must be considered that significant attachment experiences in adulthood can diverge from early ones in nature and indeed even have an impact on one's ingrained attachment style. For example, a securely attached individual may become involved in a highly abusive romantic relationship and become insecurely attached to the partner. Therefore, it is important to consider both early attachment patterns and the current dynamics within the couple and observe if they overlap; when they appear to be divergent, it becomes necessary to also consider how the early pattern interacts with the current relational one. There is some degree of plasticity in attachment patterns. Just as at times a previously securely attached individual may experience a chaotic, dysfunctional

relationship that modifies his/her sense of self, other and the world, so a significant relationship can be reparative depending on significance, duration and quality. Similarly, internal working models can begin to change and adjust through reparative relational experiences. From a therapeutic standpoint, it is of course crucially important to realize that psychotherapy can help an individual identify, question and alter schemas, attachment patterns and IWMs. Coming to a new understanding of their existence, genesis and triggers provides a sense of mastery and allows for conscious and unconscious change to occur.

Assessment

In this proposed model, in many ways the assessment process is already part of the therapeutic intervention as it facilitates understanding of intrapsychic dynamics and opens clients to a new way of conceptualizing their emotions, relational patterns and coping mechanisms.

The partners are assessed both individually and together.

1. An intake session is conducted with both partners together. The main purpose of this is for the psychotherapist to observe first-hand the verbal and non-verbal communication dynamics and to take stock of what - and how - each partner focuses upon as a presenting problem.

The secondary purpose of this first meeting is psychoeducational, in the sense that the therapist helps the clients prepare for the rest of the assessment and treatment process.

Depending on the situation, this may involve providing basic concepts and rationales for subsequent activities or, if appropriate, help clients understand the basic concepts of attachment, schemas and internal working models.

2. An adapted attachment interview* is conducted with each partner separately. Some of the questions the therapist asks in this phase include:

- *can you tell me a bit about your family of origin? For example, who you lived with or saw a lot of, and where you grew up. (client names significant figures in childhood). Can you tell me more about what x or y person (mom, dad, grandparent, sibling, etc.) were like and what your relationship was like, as far back as you can recall?*

- *can you give me a few adjectives or phrases to describe your relationship with your mom/dad? (probe all significant figures identified earlier. Write down the answers). Now can I read back the words you gave me? You can try to tell me what made you choose that particular word or expression for each? If there's a specific memory, however trivial it may seem, that comes to mind, would you share it with me?*

- *When you were upset as a child, what did you do, and what would happen? Could you share some specific incidents where you recall being upset emotionally or physically hurt?*

- *Do you remember what it was like to separate from your parents (or other attachment figure)? Does an early memory come to mind (like starting kindergarten) or a later one (like moving out)? What was it like for you? For them, as far as you know?*

- *Do you recall if as a child you enjoyed trying new things and exploring your surroundings or do your recall being more timid and in need of your parents' reassurance, presence or participation?*

- *If you think back to when you were growing up, would you say knew the people around you very well? Do you feel like their behavior and personalities stayed pretty consistent through the years? Did you feel like you could guess how they would react to something you said or did or were things a bit unpredictable?*

- *Do you remember feeling rejected by certain people or in certain situations as a child? Can you share any memories or incidents that come to mind?*

- Do you ever remember feeling threatened as a child? Can you share any memories or incidents that come to mind?

- Did you ever experience the loss of someone important to you as you were growing up, for example the death of a loved one?

- Did anyone important to you while you were growing up leave or drastically change your relationship with him or her? Can you tell me a bit about what that was like for you? What ideas do you have about his/her motivation at the time?

- Do you feel like the change in the sort of relationship you have with your parents as a child vs. now has been subtle or drastic? How so? What things do you feel are the same? Different?

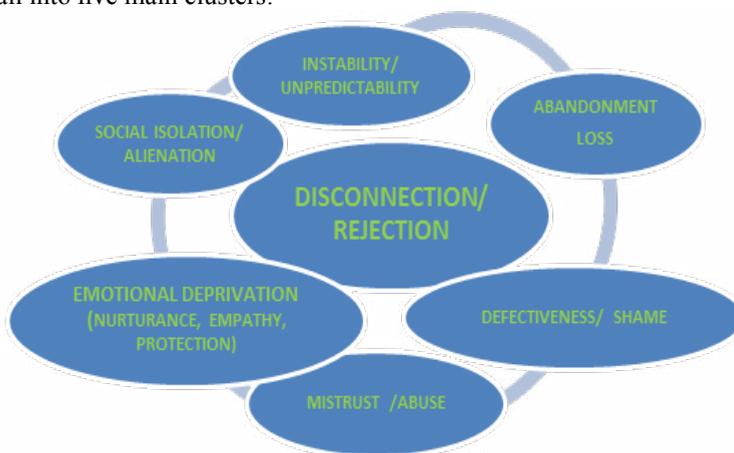
*Partially adapted from Brisch (2014)

4. Complete the first individual assessment interview with each partner separately. In this interview, the therapist will specifically be focusing on evaluating each partner's sense of self, current feelings towards partner, and presenting issues.

3. Complete an assessment of IWMs and schemas through (a) an adapted schema inventory and (b) a semi-structured interview with each partner separately. Emotional deprivation abandonment mistrust social isolation/alienation, defectiveness/shame, failure, incompetence/dependence, vulnerability to harm or illness, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement/superiority, insufficient self-control/self-discipline, admiration/recognition seeking, pessimism/worry

Schemas are assessed by administering some variation of a schema Inventory and through direct assessment through clinical interviewing and a semi-structured schema-focused interview. Depending on the case, it is also possible to utilize Art Therapy and writing techniques to access unconscious material. This may include providing prompts that direct the client to express a particular emotion abstractly or through art, music or tactile activities or to allow thematic patterns to emerge by following writing prompts to finish incomplete stories or recounting scene interpretations using tools such as the TAT (Thematic Apperception Test).

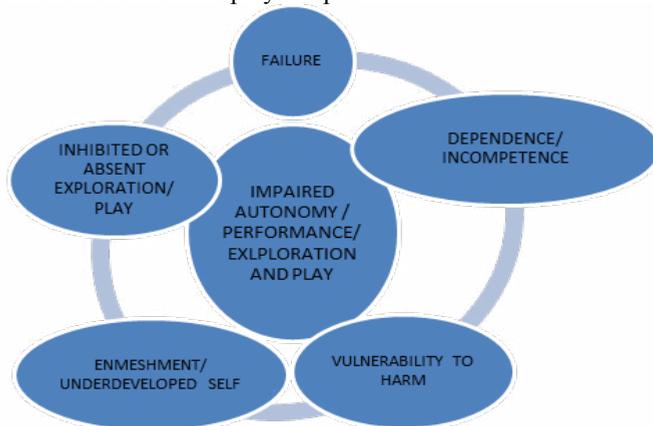
Drawing from the schemas identified by Young (2003), the main dimensions that should be explored fall into five main clusters:



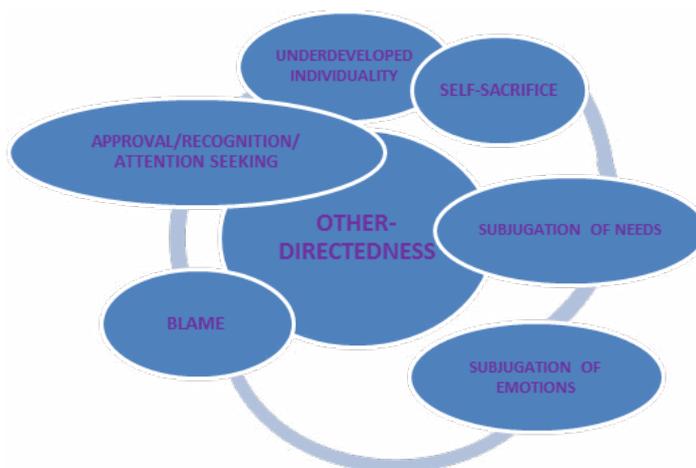
The thematic cluster of Disconnection/Rejection includes several schemas that are worthwhile to assess. Emotional deprivation can be understood in a broad sense as insufficient nurturance, empathy, protection, validation, attention, and so forth. A mistrust/abuse schema entails the expectation that others will hurt, humiliate, deceive, manipulate or use you, often

intentionally. Defectiveness/shame schemas may include a sense of being bad, defective, unlovable or damaged; they may manifest as hypersensitivity to criticism or rejection, self-consciousness and poor self-worth.

The Impaired autonomy/performance/exploration/play dimension includes several aspects that are particularly relevant to sense of self, deeply held views about the world at large, and autonomous vs. dependent behavior. For example, the Dependence/Incompetence schema tells the person that he/she is not good, resourceful, or capable enough to handle things on his/her own or engage in independent problem-solving. When one has a Vulnerability to Harm schema, there is a sense that the world is a dangerous place and there may be an exaggerated anxiety with regard to danger and/or illness of self and other. The Enmeshed/Underdeveloped self-schema arises from excessive psychological entanglement with another at the expense of healthy psychosocial development. The person may believe that it is impossible to feel fulfilled and secure without the other's constant involvement or to feel confident and "allowed" to have interests or habits of his/her own; there may also be (often unconscious) inner conflict wherein on one hand the idea of disentangling from the other is extremely anxiety-provoking, and on the other there is a sense of being smothered, held back and made to feel guilty for normative wishes for individuation. The Inhibited or Absent Exploration and Play is seen in people who either have great difficulty exploring new things, are enslaved by rigid routine and habit, and lack an open expression of creative or playful spirit.



The Impaired Limits cluster includes aspects related to impulsivity and control as well as inflated sense of self and distorted view of one's rights and responsibilities. For example, the Entitlement Schema is associated with a sense of being superior to others or having special rights or privileges, most often combined with a need for power achievement (vs. a primary need for achievement) and low empathy for others. Similarly, the Grandiosity schema involves an inflated sense of self, but it is more expressed in a narcissistic/selfish vein rather than one focusing on special privilege and control. The Self Control and Impulsivity schemas are two sides of the same coin: in the first, the person is deeply invested in maintaining self-control and goes to great lengths to repress or control emotions and behavior; in the second, there is a lack of impulse control leading to rash decision-making, excessive risk-taking, and a belief that any temporary, emotionally-driven reaction ought to be accepted by others. In both cases there may be an associated desire to avoid accountability, responsibility, challenges and so forth.



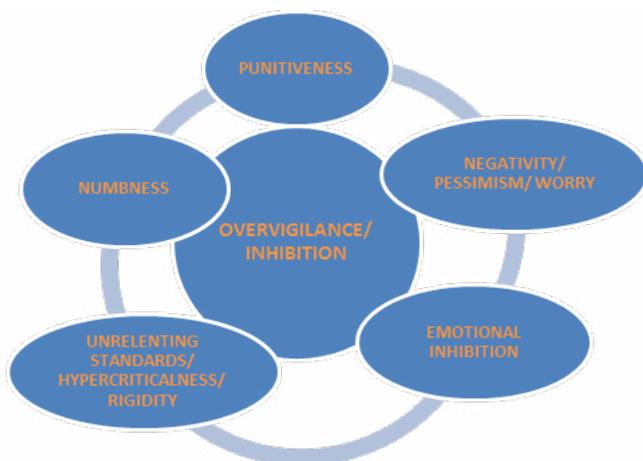
In the Other-Directedness cluster, we find schemas that speak to us of senses of self that are more invested “outside” of the self than directed within. In different ways, these schemas all entail a distorted, stunted or partially obscured sense of identity that is deeply entangled with outside preoccupations. For example, the person with a Self-Sacrifice schema focuses on meeting the needs of everyone else at the explicit expense of his/her own.

There may be pleasure, co-dependent addiction and pride associated with this priority but also deep-seated dissatisfaction and unawareness of the genuine self. The Underdeveloped Individuality schema is active in those whose sense of self is more closely affiliated with a group (cultural, familial, religious, subcultural or otherwise) than with their perception of their individual qualities, needs and thoughts. There may be a lack of critical thinking and deep disconnection from personal needs, wishes and beliefs outside of the group affiliation.

The Subjugation schemas entail a surrender of control to others and a sense of being coerced into passive acceptance in order to avoid pain, abandonment, humiliation, anger, or other negative consequences.

The Subjugation of Needs schema is focused on suppression one’s personal desires, decisions, likes/dislikes, aspirations or opinions, while the Subjugation of Emotions schema pertains more to suppression of emotional expression and a basic belief that one’s feelings are not as valid or important as others. It is often associated with built-up unconscious resentment that may be expressed maladaptively (e.g. passive-aggressive behavior, psychosomatic symptoms, addictions, rage outbursts, etc.). In the Approval/Recognition/Attention seeking schema there is excessive focus upon gaining approval, recognition or attention of others-needs which appear to be more motivating and consuming than more internally focused ones.

Unlike the Entitlement Schema seen earlier, the emphasis here is not on a need for control and superiority, but rather approval, admiration or even just attention. It is associated with making inauthentic, non-satisfying important life decisions based on the opinions of others.



In the Overvigilance/Inhibition cluster, we find various stances of under or over expression. The Emotional Inhibition schema presents as intense inhibition of both negative (aggression, anger) and positive (joy, pleasure-seeking, play) emotions and a preoccupied focus with rationality at the expense of feelings. The Unrelenting Standards/Hypercriticalness/Rigidity schema involves the deep-seated belief one must obsessively meet unrealistically high internalized standards of both behavior and performance and avoid criticism or internal/external perception of laziness or laxness; it is often associated with perfectionistic behavior.

The schema is sometimes expressed as hypercriticalness (holding others to the same impossible standards and drawing pleasure from comparing oneself with those who are not able to meet them as well) or rigidity (an obsessive, pervasive presence of “shoulds”, for example seen in certain ethical, cultural or religious precepts at the expense of free thought).

In the Negativity/Pessimism/Worry schema, there is a long-standing, pervasive emphasis on the negative or dangerous nature of life- inflating what could go wrong and underplaying any hopeful or positive aspects. This may include preoccupation with disappointment, guilt, resentment, potential for harm, pain, loss or death; a basic sense of the world and other as hostile or hazardous; and a fear that whatever may seem to be going right will inevitably fall apart.

This may also be expressed as a sense of not being able to be happy, feeling trapped, being indecisive, overvigilant or argumentative/invalidating or even aggressive in the face of more constructive/optimistic perspectives. The Punitiveness schema can be self-directed, other-directed, or both. The underlying belief is that things can be rigidly (often dichotomously) defined, that people ought to be harshly punished for making mistakes, and that one has a right to be abusive, intolerant or impatient without empathizing when faced with mistakes.

4. Administer an inventory to assess each partner’s personal Coping Style and Coping Modes especially as related to emotional distress and interpersonal conflict. For example, the ERSQ (Emotional regulation strategies questionnaire) assesses different Responses to emotions (Leahy, 2015). The Maladaptive Coping modes are often “emergency reactions”, largely automatic in nature, and often learned in childhood through reaction-opposition to painful surroundings or by affiliation-modeling. Broadly speaking, they can be investigated in terms of three major modalities: avoidance (roughly equivalent to a “flight” response), Overcompensation/Retaliation (roughly equivalent to “fight” response), and Surrender (roughly equivalent to the “freeze” response). (Farrell et. al, 2014)

MALADAPTIVE COPING MODE	TYPE	EXAMPLES
Avoidance	Flight	Running away, denying, self-soothing, withdrawing, dissociating, addictive behavior, displacement of emotions
Overcompensation/Retaliation	Fight	Unfriendliness, coldness, hostility, “pushing away”, punishing, acting out, reacting to pain with anger, cynicism, dark humor, grandiosity
Surrender	Freeze	Giving up, accepting self as defective or weak, external locus of control, sacrificing self to avoid conflict or discomfort

partially adapted from Farrell et. al. (2014)

5. Have each partner complete one or more Focused Genograms and devote at least one session to processing the material with him/her.

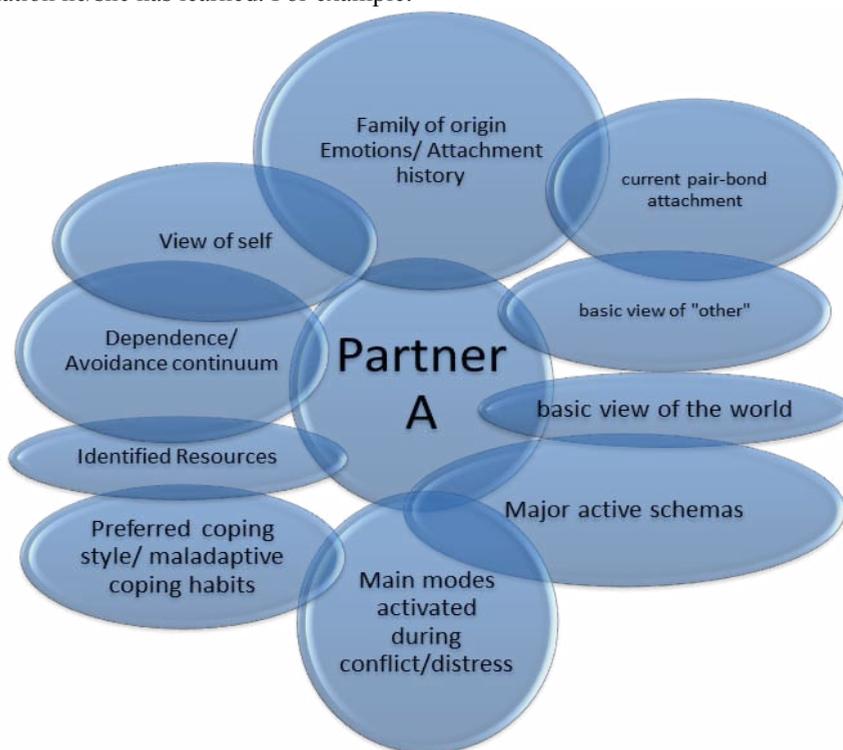
Genograms are a useful assessment tool and can shed light on the dynamics within a couple or family system. Focused genograms are a more precise instrument that direct focus towards specific aspects of intrapsychic and relational dynamics. For example, the Attachment Genogram links family of origin experience, pair-bonding, and interaction patterns within the system, honing in on the affective and emotional quality of interpersonal relationships and their impact on the client. The focused genogram helps the therapist and the client define what some practitioners have named an Internal Models Map. It outlines the complexity of attachment patterns and differences in relational style within the system, providing a valuable prospective on the client’s internal working models with regard to significant relationships (De Maria, Weeks & Hoff 1999). It is worthwhile to note that research suggests there is some degree of intergenerational transmission of maladaptive attachment patterns (Main et. al., 1985). Drawing attention to relational patterns in such a way that encompasses the client’s broader “story” and includes multiple generations can be very eye-opening for him/her.

The Emotions Genogram is another valuable tool. It hones in on patterns of expression, repression and displacement of emotions within the family and among the generations if possible. This includes the “emotional tone of family process, structure and dynamics...”, the dominant feelings for each member of the family, which feelings were most expressed, which were most unspoken or taboo, what the consequences of breaking these unspoken rules were, and so forth (De Maria, Weeks & Hoff 1999). This helps the client become more aware of patterns of emotional experience and expression as well as the internal working models and schemas these gave rise to.

5. Conceptualize the case by considering (a) each partner’s attachment history, the nature of their current pair-bond attachment, and each partner’s basic schemas/internal working models and coping style (b) the presenting problem (from each partner’s perspective) as it relates to point a, and (c) how all these points intersect in the relational dynamic. The therapist should also factor in whatever possible resources he/she has identified within each partner that could be helpful over the course of therapy (such as intelligence, creativity, capacity for empathy, motivation to change, etc.). It is helpful to conceptualize each partner individually and then place the two side-by-side or superimpose them to further inform treatment goals and methods that are tailored to the particular dyad.

At the end of the assessment phase, the therapist should be able to visually represent the

information he/she has learned. For example:



Intervention

It is often worthwhile to begin the therapeutic process with each partner separately in order to facilitate awareness and understanding of what constructs like schemas, IWMs, modes and cognitive distortions are and which are relevant for them as an individual and as a partner.

In this sense, the assessment process is already part of the therapeutic journey because by its end, each client has absorbed new concepts and perspectives and a novel way of understanding his/her history, sense of self and source of pair-bond conflict. The course of psychotherapy will vary from case to case and draws upon cognitive therapy, schema therapy, object relations, art therapy, Gestalt concepts, and more. There is significant overlap in both conceptualization and treatment across several angles. The combination of techniques and approaches used in each case is fluid and adaptable. It is important to understand that in practice these are used to potentiate and maximize the effect of each. For example, imagery work may shed light on schemas, art therapy exercises may help clients become acquainted with their modes, and cognitive restructuring may modify internal working models.

Several sessions are conducted individually with the partners and the remainder are devoted to couples work. Some of the main therapeutic avenues are:

Schema therapy

As we have seen, Schema Therapy involves an accurate assessment of a person's schemas, modes and coping strategies which has the added function of bringing the material into a client's conscious awareness. By gaining an understanding of the genesis of one's schema and

the links between internal working models, coping and relational patterns the client gains a new sense of empowerment and clarity. In a fundamental sense, during the course of therapy the client deepens, nuances and builds upon the material that began to emerge during assessment.

Each partner will do separate work on honing in on specific theme clusters, triggered modes, and coping strategies and develop a “relationship” with internal working models that is increasingly marked by empowerment to adjust and repair as opposed to unconscious reaction.

A great deal of work focuses on maladaptive schemas that trigger either stunted (avoidant, repressed, escapist) or exaggerated (rageful, unreasonable) emotional responses. When the partners come together for joint (couples) sessions, in addition to learning to share what each has come to understand about themselves, the therapist facilitates understanding of how each partner’s dynamics and triggers interact, especially in the domains of autonomy/dependence continuum, emotional regulation issues, “permitted” vs. “taboo” behaviors and emotions, and coping styles/basic needs.

To some degree, ST involves *limited reparenting*, wherein the therapist models a relationship in which needs are met while boundaries are respected. The psychotherapist establishes and active, collaborative, supportive and genuine relationship with the client and, especially in the initial phase, provides a reparative experience of safety and guidance. This may include caring for the Vulnerable Child mode and stimulating Healthy Adult competences as well as correcting and replacing Maladaptive Coping modes (Farrett et al, 2014). The client learns to identify, understand and intervene upon his/her schemas and modes, gaining a sense of clarity and mastery. It is useful to help the clients understand that schemas that may initially be adaptive in childhood (for example they may be instinctive strategies to deal with a dangerous or unreliable environment) by adulthood are usually inaccurate, dysfunctional and limiting (Farrett et al, 2014). One perspective that is often effective is helping the client understand the nature of a *invalidating environment* - which, though there are common denominators, may vary individually (Leahy, 2015). In this model, the client learns to understand what about his/her early environment did not allow needs to be met and how this led to the emergence of problematic beliefs and patterns. It is often eye-opening in couples sessions for the partners to realize just how much overlap (sometimes literally, sometimes metaphorically) can be noted between early invalidating environment and the “environment” within the relationship, especially in its most problematic aspects.

When the couple is motivated to change (this usually can simply begin with a desire to “fix” the crisis or dissatisfaction in the relationship), it is worthwhile to reframe such desire as also a desire to gain more *personal, individual* fulfillment and serenity.

Cognitive restructuring

If schema work sheds light on a bird’s eye view or broader perspective on a person’s intrapsychic and relational life, cognitive therapy zeroes in on the “here and now” expressions of faulty thinking, dysfunctional emotional reactions, and unwelcome behavior. First, the client learns the significance of automatic thoughts and self-talk and gains mastery in identifying them. Second, he/she becomes aware of the basic links between automatic thoughts, feelings and actions. Third, he/she gains skills in actively interrupting maladaptive patterns, modifying unhealthy beliefs, and applying new strategies. In essence, the client learns to alter his/her thought process and correct maladaptive ways of thinking and reacting to internal and external stimuli. With the therapist’s guidance, the individual partners can gain a better understanding on the relationship between their internal working models and distorted thinking. Gaining cognitive skills in this regard amounts to an invaluable tool for each client to actively modify old patterns of reaction when something emotionally rousing is triggered as well as to prevent emotional escalation by questioning maladaptive thoughts and beliefs. Cognitive work also

benefits from homework and experimentation on the client's part in between sessions as he/she applies skills and insights gained in therapy.

Some of the most commonly observed examples of distorted thinking that people may utilize include:

Overgeneralization: coming to a general conclusion based on a single piece of evidence.
Polarized thinking: things are dichotomized: either good or bad, black or white, success or failure.
Personalization: thinking that what someone does/says is a personal reaction to you.
Catastrophizing: starting with one piece of information cascading into a domino effect towards imagined catastrophe (worst possible outcome or explanation).
Emotional reasoning: believing that if you feel something, it proves it to be true.
Global labeling: extrapolate isolated evidence to form sweeping conclusions or judgments.
Fallacy of change: expecting others to change to suit your wishes if pressured enough.
Mind-reading: being certain you know what others are feeling/thinking especially as it concerns you.
Double-bind: believing that if you do something well it was due to luck, but if you do the same thing badly you should attribute it to your shortcomings.

The client can learn to identify and initially even write down the distorted cognition.

The therapist can illustrate how to examine the evidence, model “shades of grey” thinking (vs dichotomous and rigid), engage in re-attribution, cost-benefit analysis, and various perspective-taking and assumption-questioning exercises.

Imagery work

Mental rehearsal, anticipatory thinking, memories and many other features of our minds entail the presence of mental imagery. Neuroscientific research indicates that mental images—including pre-experiencing (imagining/picturing a situation) and re-experiencing (memory) activate the same brain mechanisms as does physical experience (Imagery can be used to recall, transform, visualize, re-route, re-assess and more. Engaging with imagery can lead to insight, memory and perception that is not accessible through verbal routes alone. An added benefit is that the client is encouraged to become open to imagination, flexibility, expression and mentalization. This can even be modeled through language, by asking questions like “how do you picture that?”, “where would you say you feel that in your body?”, “if that were some sort of creature or alien, what would it look like? (referred to emotion or other abstraction).

Of course, some clients are already struggling with or overloaded with often unwanted imagery. For instance, this is the case with PTSD (flashbacks and intrusive images, for example) or social anxiety (over-rehearsed images of being publicly embarrassed). It can be very powerful to aid a client in confronting and, when appropriate, transforming troubling imagery. By teaching the client how to remain grounded in the present while venturing into mental imagery related to painful schema or troubling memories, the therapist can guide him/her to challenge maladaptive beliefs that arose from certain experiences and re-contextualize old sensations within the present.

Similarly, the emotional bridge technique involves helping the client become aware of a given sensation/emotion/image in the present and tying it back to a moment in the past reminiscent of the same feeling; this can yield great insight for the client and often reveals a metaphorical significance of current complaints with regard to past experiences. Compassionate

mind training (CMT) is especially useful with clients who have a negative sense of self. Based on the assumption that certain people did not receive the nurturance to develop self-compassion and thus developed internalized hostility marked by a sense of being bad or worthless, CMT involves modeling perspective taking, support, kindness, fair judgment and facilitating the construction of images that counteract maladaptive habits.

Many people have simply never consciously focused on the rich tapestry of their mental imagery and how it punctuates memory, belief, expectation, emotion and more; with the appropriate tools, they can learn to use it as a coping skill, insight-builder, and avenue to more adaptive beliefs and reactions.

Art/writing therapy

Art therapy techniques, including writing-based exercises, can facilitate the emergence, expression and transformation of intrapsychic material. The creative process encompasses forms of nonverbal communication and expression and allows access to both psychological and neurobiological processes (Malchiodi, 2012). As noted earlier, mental imagery and symbolism can be as powerful as experiences and, when guided on how to reframe emotional and behavioral reactions to said images, a person transform deep-seated maladaptive material.

Art making in a therapeutic context allows for the translation of mental images and emotions into tangible output that the client, in addition to expressing, can actively “try out” and experiment with. This may include rehearsing a desired change, gaining multiple perspectives, “breaking down” overwhelming memory and affect into elements that are easier to see and transform, and allowing different parts of one’s inner world to interact, be compared and evaluated in a different light rehearse.

The therapist can encourage the client to hone in on and represent (through visual art, movement, music, and more) specific IWMs, schemas, modes, and distorted cognitions.

Techniques can also be used with the couple to facilitate communication at a different level and through novel avenues that often circumvent patterns and “stuck points” they have become accustomed to the point of automatism. The ability to represent the mental states of self and others is a reciprocal process of reflection and learning as well as a component of self-regulation. (Leahy 2015). The expression of emotional memory can also be transformative when supported by insight and repaired cognition.

General goals

Each client’s therapeutic process involves identifying and repairing self-destructive internal representations of self, other and the world, emotional recognition and regulation, and developing adaptive new coping strategies. The couple - in addition to gaining valuable insight into one another’s intrapsychic world and history - will become more emotionally literate.

The quality of pair-bond attachment will improve by becoming more secure, learning/testing new communication and problem-solving strategies, and working towards deeper authenticity.

Case Example: Tessa and Marty

Presenting situation

Tessa and Marty, ages 46 and 49, come to therapy to “save their marriage”. At intake, they report that they feel like they lead “parallel lives”. Marty has recently had a brief affair with a

co-worker and informed Tessa of this in a spiteful tone during a fight. Marty is a police officer and Tessa is a homemaker; they tried to have children but after two miscarriages they gave up on the plan. Marty appears matter-of-fact, irritated and in need of structure and planning.

He monopolizes a large portion of intake inquiring about the details of therapy, my qualifications, the time needed to “solve the problem”, and so forth. Tessa sits quietly and becomes tearful at several points. When Marty states “I think it’s ridiculous to let an affair that was just about sex ruin a marriage. People don’t have the balls to fight for things anymore, they’re lazy and like it easy. You can’t just fall apart at the first sign of trouble”, Tessa says in a low voice “It’s not just the affair, honey”, and Marty goes on to say the problem may also be that Tessa “is just too sensitive, she has trouble being by herself after the kids didn’t come she should have found other things to do but her shyness holds her back”. Tessa points out that she does like to paint and has even sold a few pieces to a family friend who owns a gallery but her husband ‘didn’t notice’. Marty then begins to talk about how Tessa is ‘clingy’ and needs to ‘stop acting like a child’. He adds ‘if you don’t learn how to be an adult in this world, holding your own, and your whole world will always be narrow’. Tessa, on the other hand, laments that Marty is “distant” and “prefers doing just about anything than spending time with me”.

Assessment

After the intake, the assessment process is undertaken as outlined in this paper.

A look at individual history

Tessa grew up in a rural area on a farm with her mother and maternal grandfather.

Her mother worked on nearby farms and frequently left her in the care of her grandfather, who she characterized as a “quiet and angry man” that had never gotten over his wife leaving him for another man at a time and within a cultural context that made his experience this event as shameful. Tessa had never met her grandmother, as she left the family when Tessa’s own mother was twelve years old. Tessa’s grandfather, Gavin, often spoke to her about how people cannot be trusted even when you believe you know them. Tessa recalled summer days in which mornings were characterized by her contentedly helping her grandpa on the farm and evenings in which the mood turned sour as Gavin began drinking excessively, ruminating about his past, and engaging her in conversations she found confusing and frightening.

On several occasions, her grandfather “lost control” and became physically abusive. There was also one incident which occurred at age eleven in which her very drunk grandfather got into her bed, removed his pants, and incoherently mumbled something to the effect of “let me show you how a woman should feel”. Tessa had run out of the house and sought refuge in the barn, terrified and confused. The incident was never acknowledged or spoken about again.

Because nothing like it occurred again, Tessa felt “it was best to tell myself it never did happen at all”. Tessa’s relationship with her mother, in spite of her frequent absence from the home, was characterized by “extreme closeness. I idolized my mother and believed she was working to take us away from the farm and into the city, where I dreamed we’d live glamorously. My mother wanted to know everything I thought and did. I was very careful to say the right things because I didn’t want to disappoint her or seem like a little girl”. Because Tessa’s mother idolized her own father and excused all of his shortcomings by blaming her mother for leaving them, Tessa felt she could not share what her days in his care were truly like, instead focusing only on telling her mom the positive things. “I felt like there must be something wrong with me because deep down I wished he would disappear, especially after

that time in my bed. I knew my mom would hate me for thinking that. I knew that when he screamed at me or hit me I had done something to provoke it, but it's like I picked fights with him after a while. "Tessa disclosed that her mother's behavior was also erratic. "I never knew which version of her would come through the door. Sometimes she was sweet and loving, sitting in the yard with me, brushing my hair, telling me wonderful stories about the cities I dreamed of. At other times, she was irritable and distant. I tried desperately to get her attention, but she seemed to be in her own world. If I insisted too much, she would shout and say hurtful things. I found it especially terrible when she told me that I'd never really have the life in the city, that I was stupid, nagging or childish. It's like the fairy-tale she took me into when she was being loving and daydreaming with me was shattered over and over again. I remember thinking- well - laughing at myself- 'how ridiculous, you thought a girl like you could have that kind of life! I wouldn't know what to do. I couldn't handle it". Tessa became very invested in trying to anticipate what her mom and grandfather wanted. "I tried to learn what they needed what would please them and keep them in their 'nice' versions. I tried so hard to learn everything grandpa taught me, to show him I could be like him. He was pleased but it never changed the way he was when he got upset. With mom it was a guessing game. I was tired".

At age 19, she met Marty in the nearby village at a festival, and she married at age 21.

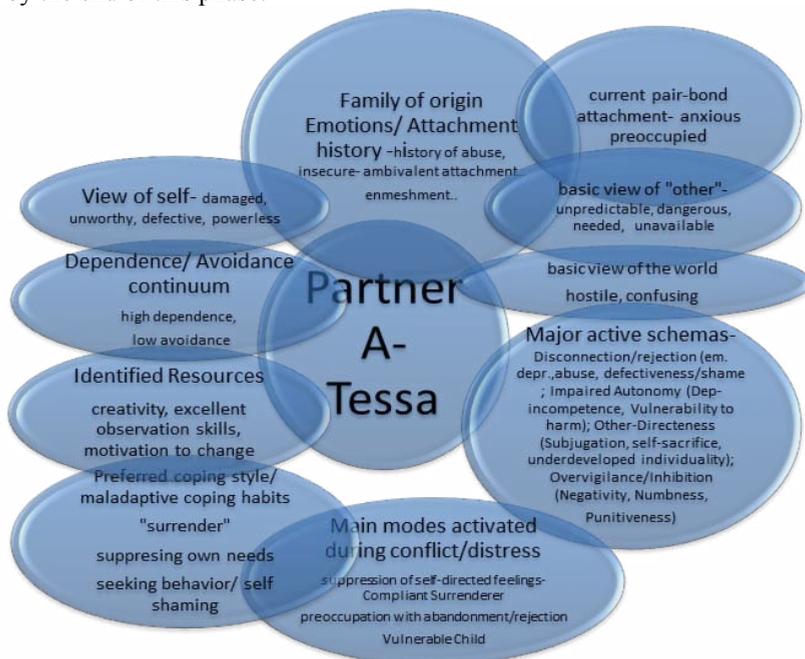
Marty grew up with both parents and a younger brother until his mother's death at age 12.

He described his mother as "a good mother, tireless and strong. I never even knew she was sick until the end. She never had anything handed to her and she didn't deserve to go like that". Marty's father, Joseph, remarried one year after his first wife's death. Marty described his father as "a busy man who expected a lot out of us kids. He was very clear that we had to earn our place in the world like he did. He expected us to get good grades and show discipline, maybe due to his military background". Marty's father did not openly grieve his wife and was disturbed by his sons' sadness. "My dad was telling us to 'pull it together' at the funeral, pointing out that people were going to think we were 'falling apart'. He was always talking about how you can't give people an excuse to attack you you know, that you have to be prepared for that. I can remember him slapping my brother and calling him 'a sissy' when he became upset at a birthday party. I was very driven in school, I tried to stick to talking about that to my dad. My brother was different, I don't know, a weaker personality. He got himself into trouble with his big mouth. He didn't know when it was time to be serious. My dad would always say he'd end up homeless or something because he would not 'grow up'.

My stepmother acted like we were barely there- she worked a lot and when she was home she acknowledged us only in practical matters. I don't think she was very smart, but she loved parading us around in public, like she had done some sort of charity act by marrying a man with kids. At home she did her own thing most of the time." As a teenager, Marty began to work after school in order to get experience and money of his own "I didn't want to ask my dad. Whenever I approached him there was always this 'what is it now' eye-rolling face even if I hadn't talked to him in days.

He had his mind on more important things I guess, I didn't know how hard his job was until I did it myself later." Marty moved out of his home to attend university. He met Tessa at a village festival he was attending during a visit to his cousin. They married two years later and moved to the outskirts of the city to be closer to Marty's job.

In addition to gathering history, an assessment of each partner is completed with special attention to internal representations. Below is a visual representation of all the information gathered by the end of this phase:



Intervention

At the individual level, both Marty and Tessa were able to recognize their internalized views of self, other and the world and how their early experiences affected them in this regard.

The fundamental relational pattern between them was characterized by Marty being deeply invested in a sense of independence and emotional coldness that defended against his history of loss and lack of emotional nurturance especially as it pertained to expression of emotion and empathy, and Tessa being other-directed, dependent and used to suppressing and molding her own needs to seek the approval and nurturance of others. Her sense of self as damaged or defective also informed her feelings of powerlessness, as did her deeply held view of the world as dangerous and unpredictable. Their chosen coping methods created discord between them.

Marty tended to be dismissive and avoidant, which fed into Tessa’s anxieties, which in turn stimulated further distance from her husband, who was deeply invested in keeping his and her emotional needs at bay. The affair was not experienced “emotionally” but as “something that happened”. In practice, however, it was the ‘practical’ catalyst that led them to seek treatment, even though the dysfunctional dynamic within the couple long preceded the infidelity.

Through schema work, both partners were able to identify how their internalized views had affected their priorities and communication within the relationship. Imagery work was especially powerful for Marty and opened a channel to long-suppressed emotional material regarding suppression of empathy, loss, grief, disconnection, and emotional deprivation.

He was also able to process this through art therapy activities, which had the added benefit of helping him access the previously denied Happy Child mode and experiment with a more flexible, less goal-oriented and more exploratory/joyful part of himself. Marty became skilled in identifying how his emotions were often automatically re-routed into anger and coldness

as well as achievement-focused behavior. Tessa was able to shed light upon and question her view of herself as defective and powerless. Cognitive restructuring was extremely effective in helping her correct basic errors in interpretation that led her to feel ineffective, dependent and ashamed. Schema and imagery work were instrumental in transforming key internal representations in such a way that her other-directedness and subjugation shifted towards self-awareness and self-efficacy. An especially powerful exercise allowed them to evoke and enact their “modes” in session whilst reframing their source and effects. By ‘breaking down’ internal representations and seeing them ‘in action’ and ‘in interaction’ within a protected environment and with therapeutic guidance was deeply transformative. They both were able to represent this experience through art therapy (Tessa) and writing (Marty). As a couple, they grew tremendously in terms of emotional literacy and communication. They began to “re-write” the unspoken rules of their relationship. By the end of treatment, the stance of both partners seemed to have changed significantly. Marty appeared more open, communicative and even playful at times. Tessa projected much more confidence and less dependent and seeking behavior.

Conclusion

Early attachment and relational experiences have predictive meaning with regard to expectations, beliefs, identity, interpretations, needs, coping methods, triggers and relational dynamics. Internal representations are a translation of significant experience into a pervasive blueprint or framework which informs sense of self, other and the world. Inner constructs and mechanisms, including those that mediate “pre-experiencing” (picturing, imagining, anticipating) and “re-experiencing” (memory, some felt-sense symptoms), activate the same neurobiological pathways as does behavioral experience (Panksepp & Biven, 2012). Investigating and adjusting the intrapsychic framework that underpins and informs both physical and mental experience is therefore crucial in order to foster change at both the individual and pair-bond level. A comprehensive therapeutic approach therefore benefits from individual attention to internal representations, including schemas, modes, faulty cognitions, images as well as focus on how each partner’s inner world interacts with the significant other’s as well as a focus on how the partners’ inner worlds come to intersect.

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The (Neglected) Role of the Father in the Mental Health of Children

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Abstract

Nowadays, much has been said about the importance of the mother in a child's development, but much less attention has been given to the role of the father. So far all the weight of the survey and the full range of relevant studies, running the functional role of mother and father often had secondary role in the development of the child.

Instead, the last 20-30 years academics and professionals are increasingly turning their attention to studying the role of father.

The aim

Therefore, of this literature review is to study the importance of fatherhood, which is quite limited internationally.

The key-questions that will be analyzed, therefore, in this paper are the following:

What has changed in the way we deal with father's role nowadays and why?

How is fatherhood different from motherhood?

Why is father's involvement unique and indispensable for the healthy development of the child?

Which factors influence the effectiveness of the role of the father?

What does research show about the impact of father's role on the children, their academic performance and their smooth and all round development?

How does the father–mother relationship affect their parental duties?

What are the characteristics of a “good” father?

Keyword: Father, Role, effectiveness, impact on the behavior/performance, Father Types

The Neglected Role of the Father

So far, studies in developmental Psychology, as well as research and discussions have given special emphasis exclusively on *mother's* role in children's life and development. Both in literature and in research, the father “appears” hesitantly after the first three years in a child's life, and even then is viewed as a secondary figure in terms of emotional expression towards the children and their daily care. This has been considered to be an almost exclusive privilege

and duty of the mother.

'Father', therefore, seems to function more like a figure, a concept, or sometimes as the "Punisher" who would restore order where the mother was unable to do so. He does not seem to participate actively on a daily basis in the children's activities and concerns. His contribution was financial, rather than substantial.

Indeed, many known psychologists and psychiatrists, of whom one was Bowlby, saw the role of the father as indirect, offering support to the mother and making her feel well so she can offer the best to her child.

Thus, for a long time psychology theorists have ignored the role of the father in the family and more specifically in the development of the child.

Perhaps because they believed that his influence is of smaller importance than that of the mother.

This picture, of course, is changing as years go by. This emphasis on the indirect role of father (which partly holds, although that is not his only role ...), helped to overlook his contribution and involvement in the children's upbringing and development of their mental health! (and not only that).

Increasing Recognition of the Role of the Father

The science of psychology now recognizes that father's contribution in the development of the child's personality (in the emotional and psychosocial development) is unique and indispensable (Pedaraki and Tsachtsiri, 2008).

In this way, the last 20-30 years researchers in academia and professions increasingly turn their attention to the study of the role of the father. This is due, partly, to the increasing involvement of the father in contemporary family, but also to numerous studies and qualitative research, which show that when fathers are actively involved in the upbringing of children, this has a positive impact not only on the children themselves (Sarkadi, A, Kristiansson, R., Oberklaid, F., Bremberg, S., 2008 and Allen P., Daly, K. (2007) but also on the families, and fathers themselves (Allen & Daly, 2007).

The Psychological Significance of the Father

The sciences of psychology and psychiatry strongly recommend the development of the bond between child and father, from infancy (or even prenatal age)

The father is considered to be important for the development of the child's autonomy, the shaping of gender identity and the development of the moral system of the child.

Usually he is the one who establishes the feeling of security in child's mind.

He is considered to be the protector and defender of the family (Soulandrou Julia, Psychologist).

Freud's position is that the father is the symbol of security, power and authority for the child.

The Father-Child Relationship is culturally less strong

The father-child relationship is culturally less strong in contrast with the mother-child relationship and requires more support from both inside the family itself and the wider environment.

If undermined by the mother or the social environment, the result may be the avoidance of responsibility by many fathers, unless their personal commitment is very strong.

In other words, external influence and pressure may affect the father-child relationship more than the mother-child one (Hoffman 2011).

Differences Between Motherhood and Fatherhood

Fathers are introduced into the paternal role with less psychological, social and emotional preparation than mothers are. Thinking and planning for child-bearing begin at a much younger age in girls than in boys (Doucet, 2007).

Women have more networks of support for the upbringing of their children.

Fathers are introduced to parenting without the biological and experiential head start that mothers have owing to pregnancy, breastfeeding, maternity leave, etc., moreover they come into fatherhood with less practical experience and knowledge concerning children, than most women do (Hoffman 2011).

Men often realize that they are not equipped with the necessary skills, experience, support, time and recognition needed for a successful fatherhood (Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Fathers have to make a much more conscious choice than mothers about getting actively involved in raising their children (Goodman, 2005). Although mothers often realize that the responsibilities and demands of parenting are more difficult than expected, few new mothers would think or decide not to engage actively in the upbringing of their children.

Results from a large scale study showed that fathers feel less support as parents compared to mothers. Other research findings show that men mainly depend on their partners for support, while mothers were more likely to draw support from several sources.

A study, in which the researchers observed how parents interact with their one-year-old babies, both in teaching and in free play, found that children had shown more positive feelings and fewer negative ones when playing with their fathers rather than with their mothers.

Children had expressed negative feelings more often during the physical game with their mothers (Ball, 2009).

Children Need Both Their Parents

It is very important that children grow up in an environment where both parents actively participate in raising and educating them. That's because the relationship that a child develops with father differs from that with the mother, drawing different but essential benefits (Abelin, 1971; Herzog, 1980; Lamb, 1977). For instance, fathers often push their children for achievements, promote their independence as well as the exploration of the outside world, while mothers give emphasis on education, all of which are equally important areas for the development of the child (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006).

Mothers tend to use more parenting techniques that focus on gentleness and safety, while fathers may favour independence and building of trust. These approaches help children understand the world in different ways – balancing each other (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2004) and widening.

Complementarity of roles

Additionally, mothers and fathers may have very different style in their play: It seems that

fathers use a lot more physical play with their children, while mothers prefer language games. For instance, a father can hold his child's attention with intense modes of play including stimuli and challenges. These interactions help children learn how to regulate their emotions and behaviour. The 'wild game' with dad, for example, can teach children how to handle their aggressive impulses and physical contact, without losing control of their emotions (Parke & Slaby, 1983; Goldman, et al, 2003).

On the other hand, the mother tends to play more language games and to use more objects and books in her interaction with her child (Parke & Tinsley, 1987).

Furthermore, according to the well-known German developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, "Dads emphasize justice issues and rule-based tasks, while mothers emphasize understanding, care and assistance (based on human relations)".

Fathers tend to monitor and enforce rules systematically and firmly, teaching children the consequences of right and wrong. <http://www.imommy.gr/pateras/eimai-mpampas/article/1339/mpampas-kai-gios-mia-sxesh-zwhs/#sthash.UmAnuMkg.dpuf>

Of course, both the paternal and the maternal role succeed better not in absentia of each other, but when harmoniously complementing each other.

The Traditional Role of the Father

The role of the father as a procreator.

The role of the father as a provider.

The role of the father as a protector.

The role of the father as an educator.

The role of the father as a person with whom you can identify.

The role of the father as the companion of the child during free time.

(Korosis, 1990)

Four Dimensions of Fatherhood

Paternal function can be distinguished into four dimensions:

First is the biological fatherhood that includes the concept of the procreator and the purely biological part of the role.

Second is the psychological dimension of fatherhood that refers to the relationship between father and child and refers to the child's upbringing and development.

Third is the symbolic, social dimension of fatherhood. It concerns the role of the father in society and the recognition of his role in the social environment.

Finally, the legal dimension of fatherhood defines the rights and obligations of a father according to law (Mc Cluskey, 1984)

Factors Affecting the Paternal Role

Research findings show that the quality of the relationship between fathers and their children and their confidence in their parental role are associated with the father's professional success, real or imaginary (Este & Tachble, 2008; Doherty, Kouneski & Erickson, 1998).

On the other hand, a longitudinal study with 40 couples showed that stress associated with work, and stress due to financial difficulties have a negative impact on the way fathers interact with their children (Fox, 2009).

An additional research finding that deserves more attention is the effect of the marital relationship on the development of an infant. Howes and Markman (1989) through their studies over time concluded that the quality of the relationship between the parents before marriage and after childbirth is associated with good functioning of the child. Other researchers (Belsky, Crnic & Gable (1995) and McHale, Crouter, McGuire & Updegraff (1995) also found a positive correlation between the characteristics of the marital relationship and the way parents treat their children (Lamb, 2002;).

Types of Fathers

Professional - Father (Career)
Mentor - Father
Conciliatory Father
Financially Responsible Father
Tired Father
“Absent” Father
Devoted/Involved Father
(Koronaïou, 2007)

Types of Inadequate Fatherhood (Based on Canitz)

The absent father: The father who has left the raising of the children exclusively to the mother.

The strict father: The father who asks of his children to always come first and rarely rewards them.

The bossy (authoritarian) father: The inflexible father who wants to impose himself and does not listen to what his children want.

The hostile father: The father who expresses himself only in extreme ways and behaves cruelly.

The lenient father: The father who is afraid of imposing limits of behaviour and is unable to educate his children.

Results of Poor Fatherhood

The results of bad and immature behaviour in the practice of paternal duties, and the excessive use of paternal authority have almost the same result:

Rebellious, delinquent and violent reaction on the child's part or total submission, both devastating for the development of their personality (Soulandrou I).

Guilt - Benefits

Children not only need material goods, but mainly the presence of the father. Fathers, many times, in their effort to make up for their long absence become either more lenient (believing that by giving in and granting whatever their children ask for they would ensure their love), or more strict (in an effort to protect their children from various dangers) <http://www.paidorama.com/o-rolos-tou-patera/sinennoisi-gonewn-stin-anatrofi.html>

Benefits from the Paternal Involvement

Although there is no specific form of father involvement in a child's life that has been shown to give better results than others, it generally seems that the active and regular involvement is associated with a number of positive effects such as:

- Better self-esteem
- More sociability
- Greater empathy
- Reinforcement of cognitive development
- Better school performance
- Lower frequency of behavioral problems in boys
- Lower incidence of psychological problems in young girls
- Less juvenile delinquency
- Fewer financial difficulties in families with low socioeconomic status.

Other Benefits of Paternal Involvement

The timely involvement of fathers in early care of their child is a source of emotional security for the child (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

The affectionate handling of infants by their fathers helps in the creation of high secure attachment (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006).

When fathers understand the emotional reactions of their children and help them to deal with them with a 'problems solving' approach, they contribute to the children's getting a higher score on emotional intelligence tests (Civitas, 2001).

The quality father-child time increases self-esteem, trust, social skills and life skills (Amato, 1994).

Children who have a close relationship with their father, have greater self-esteem and are less likely to become depressed (Dubowitz et al., 2001).

Even from birth, children with involved fathers are more likely to be emotionally secure, secure in exploring their environment, and as they grow, they have better social relationships with peers. It is also less probable for them to engage in quarrels at home, at school or in the neighborhood (Yeung, Duncan, & Hill, 2000).

Moreover, infants who enjoy high levels of affection from their fathers (who quickly respond to their crying, play with them, etc.) have more secure attachment.

Finally, a number of studies show that these children are more social and popular throughout infancy (Pruett, 2000).

Furthermore, the active involvement of a father from the very beginning of his child's life and especially in the sensitive first six years of life, contributes greatly to the formation of social relationships of the child with other adults, to the child and the father having experiences important for them; the mother does not have exclusive childcare, is calmer and therefore more 'efficient' in her relationship with the child (Kefalidou, M.).

Good Role Model

Fathers who communicate with the mothers of their children with respect and handle conflicts in a mature way are more likely to have boys who understand how to treat women properly and are less likely to act in an aggressive manner towards women.

Also, girls with fathers who participate in their upbringing, who show respect, know how to expect men to behave towards them and are less likely to engage in violent or dysfunctional relationships. Instead, research has shown that spouses who exhibit anger and show contempt towards their wives, are more likely to have children who are restless, anxious, more withdrawn or antisocial (Gable, Crnic, Belsky, 1994).

Fewer Psychological and Behavioral Problems

The participation of fathers in the lives of their children before the age of 7 can protect them from adjustment difficulties during the years of adolescence (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002).

A study with schoolchildren found that those children who had a better relationship with their fathers were less likely to experience depression, disruptive behavior or lie, and were more likely to exhibit pro-social behavior.

The same study found that boys with fathers who are involved in their lives had fewer behavior problems at school and girls had better self-esteem (Mosley & Thompson, 1995).

Better Educational Achievements

Research increasingly supports that fathers play an important role in promoting cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional development and development of motivation in their children.

It also shows that fathers reinforce the development of their children, especially when these fathers take on an active role early and frequently in the lives of their children, even before they are born. (Scott and Hunt at: http://www.parentsasteachers.org/images/stories/documents/Fatherhood_Resources/ImportantRoleofFathers.pdf)

A number of studies show that involved fathers who participate in the daily lives of their children, educate and play with their infants, raise children with more developed IQ, better language and cognitive development and higher academic readiness levels at the start of schooling (Rowe, cocker, & Pan, 2004, Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2006).

These children tend to be more patient and can handle school pressures and frustrations more easily than children with less involved fathers (Pruett, 2000; Sternberg, 1997).

Paternal Involvement and School Performance

There is a lot of research, particularly in America and Europe, connecting school performance with paternal involvement and supporting that school performance of children is greatly influenced by father's involvement (Flouri, 2005).

The active participation of the father has as an effect that children not only perform better at school, but also do better in their social relationships (Kefalidou, M.). (<https://www.medlook.net/%CE%88%CF%86%CE%B7%CE%B2%CE%BF%CE%B9/691htm>)

Other studies (Katz & Gottman, 1996) showed that when a father devotes time to his child, it is very probable that the child, especially the boy, has confidence during adult life.

Furthermore, parental involvement affects positively the child's attitude towards school (Flouri, Buchannan, & Bream, 2002).

At school age, children with involved fathers have more probability to excel in courses of language and mathematics (Bing, 1963; Goldstein, 1982; Radin, 1982). They have higher average grades and very good performance in academic tests (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Feldman & Wentzel, 1990; National Center of Education Statistics,

1997; Shinn, 1978; Snarey, 1993; Feldman & Wentzel, 1993). Children of involved fathers are more likely to live in an environment with more cognitive stimuli (William, 1997).

The impact of paternal involvement in school performance extends into adolescence and adulthood. Numerous studies show that active participation and participatory style of fatherhood is associated with better language skills, intellectual abilities and academic performance (Goldstine, 1982).

Marriage as a frame of family more favorable for the upbringing of children

There are fathers who care and are involved in their child's life outside marriage as well. It is more probable, however, that they be found within the framework of marriage.

There are many reasons for this, one of which is the legal and social norms related to marriage and linking father and family community, creating a more secure framework for development.

This may also explain, partly why research consistently shows that family that is formed by the mother and father's marriage provides a better environment for bringing up children than the simple partnership/cohabitation of parents (Palkovitz, 2002).

Characteristics of a 'Good' Father

Cultivates a positive relationship with the mother of the children

Spends time with children

Fosters/provides an all-round education to his children

Applies relevant principles/techniques in addressing negative behaviour

Functions as a guide to the outside world

Protects the children

Acts as a positive role model

(Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006)

When the Father is Absent

When the father is absent, his model is left empty and the child is left to discover blindly the male identity. As a result the boys are often vulnerable to imitate stereotypical male behaviours, as reflected by the mentality of society (hard, aggressive and violent behaviour), which often hinder their relationship with others.

In extreme cases through their desperate need for a male identity, boys adopt behaviours that reach delinquency (Soulandrou I.).

An international study of more than 100,000 children, concluded that the cold or distant relationship with a father, can have devastating consequences on a child's life, even decades later (Rohner, 1998).

In the unfortunate case that the father is absent, it is good for the child to have another male figure to act as a model and mentor to them.

The mother can be encouraged to bring the child into closer contact with one of the men of the proximal or the wider environment, which will act as a substitute father.

Absent fathers can also be encouraged to continue to participate in their children's lives, even if they are not able to be physically present. For example, a father could be taped himself

reading books to his child.

In Conclusion

We could say that fathers have a very substantial and positive contribution to the overall development and mental health of their children.

If his role is recognized and fully made use of, the father can become what potentially he is already: a valuable ally in the optimal development of children.

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The Approach of D. Perkins in Search of Critical and Reflective Thinking: An Example with Preschoolers

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is the presentation and eventual implementation of the reflective approach to works of art according to the “model” of David Perkins as a key part of the instructional planning for preschool children.

The aim is to foster in pupils a culture of reflection on seeing a visual stimulus which is rich in cultural, symbolic and interpretive references like works of art as well as a culture of thinking that is more creative and critical.

As a methodological tool for the systematic analysis-observation of artworks the Perkins «model» is used. The analysis of a work of art according to the Perkins “model” is by itself a complete instructional approach intergrading interdisciplinary correlations.

Conclusion: Creating a reflective atmosphere with the motive of a piece of art enlivens the learning process, especially when the atmosphere is built gradually and steadily in which all pupils express informed views and are interested in the comments and views of their classmates.

Keywords: the “model” of David Perkins, reflective approach to works of art, preschool education

Introduction

The employment of art as a teaching tool is the new standpoint in the educational process. According to the theorists (Dewey, 1934, Gardner, 1990) art has a dynamic contribution to process of learning aiming at the overall child development (cognitively, emotionally, aesthetically, and reflectively) and can serve as a learning tool. This holistic development suggests a deeper insight and understanding not only of ourselves but also of the reality surrounds us. This way the pupil has chances to later play effectively the role of an active a conscious citizen. (Perkins 1994, Olson 2000, Ritchhart et al.2006, ΠΙΑΖΕ, ΖΑΝ. 2009, Μέγα, 2011). Children’s contact with works of art and artists fosters critical and creative thinking, imagination, communication of ideas, understanding diversity, reflection and self-awareness.

They gain not only a deeper understanding of themselves but also of the reality surrounding them.

According to Perkins (1994), Olson (2000), Efland (2002) the observation of a work of art is an important process because it bestows cognitive flexibility, it is an intellectual adventure and finally, it involves truths and limitless possibilities of interpretations. Moreover, observing works of art activates reflective thinking.

The teacher should take into account basic criteria concerning the selection of works of art, such that broaden the thinking of pupils, as dealing with issues related to children, contain powerful symbolism and messages, themes that inspire the teacher, are related to the learning objectives and have aesthetic value (Oslo, 2000, Κόκκος, 2011).

The purpose of this paper is the presentation of the reflective approach to works of art according to the “model” of David Perkins as a key part of the instructional planning for preschool children.

The aim is to foster in pupils a culture of reflection on seeing a visual stimulus which is rich in cultural, symbolic and interpretive references like works of art as well as a culture of thinking that is more creative and critical.

The questions this presentation is called to answer are:

With which techniques can the teacher with his/her pupils observe works of art?

Which conditions favour the development of the pupils’ thinking?

Methodology

Perkins’ “model” was the methodological tool used for the systematic analysis-observation of artworks. The analysis of a work of art according to the Perkins “model” is by itself a complete instructional approach intergrading interdisciplinary correlations and aims at cultivating pupil **reflective/thinking** mentality.

According to this, observation of an artwork in its various forms (visual, cinematic, musical, photography, poetry, literature) goes through four successive phases, which are dependent on each other and should be approached successively for a more integrated approach to the artwork (Μέγα, 2011). Each phase activates differently the critical and reflective thinking of pupils through questions, the variety of which depends on several factors (e.g. age of the children, cognitive / cultural background, group conditions etc.).

Phase A: time and observation

The observer dedicates as much time needed to contemplate the artwork as best as he/she can. The “key” for this phase is “time credit”.

Therefore, in an early childhood education school, for the observation of N. Lytras’ painting “The carol singers” or “The drummer” the questions would be as follows:



What do you see?

Are there any questions?

What impresses you in the painting?

Now, let yourselves remember some of your own thoughts, ideas concerning this particular painting.

Additionally, a few details on the artwork, the artist and his time are given.

Phase B: open and adventurous observation (creative thinking)

This phase is open/free observation which activates the viewer's creative outlook. It is thinking taking nothing for granted but reconstitutes the information through a creative point of view.

If the painting told us a story, what could this story be?

Are there surprises in the artwork?

How do you feel while looking at it?

What do you think it symbolizes?

Look at the technical details of the artwork (time and location context, movement, colour, figures)

Phase C: Clear, analytical and profound observation (critical thinking)

The nursery school teacher asks the children to try to find answers, solutions to their initial questions and surprises based on the information they had gathered so far.

Go back and think of what impressed you mostly or surprised you.

Why did the artist create this surprise?

What else are you impressed with? Why?

Which aspects give the work of art intensity and strength? Why?

Which figure do you think occupies the biggest part of the art work? Why is this happening?

Compare this work with other pieces either by the same artist or others.

Based on your observations: what are your conclusions about the work? What is its meaning? What does it want to "tell" us?

Phase D: Holistic observation (holistic thinking)

Reflect on the artwork/Think about comprehensively.

Conclusion

The analysis of a work of art according to the Perkins "model" is by itself a complete instructional approach intergrading interdisciplinary correlations.

In general, the reflective approach of D. Perkins gives value to the methodical observation of a work of art by the pupils before they, themselves, proceed in expressing their own views.

The teacher at every opportunity should create a contemplative/reflective atmosphere to mark the artwork, stimulating the learning process and urging his pupils to discover the meanings of a work of art.

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