



## 6th UpCare training: Counseling Skills – Basic Principles of Children's Drawing Analysis.

### ***What is counseling?***

It is a process of mutual communication in which help is usually provided to people who have psychological problems, often related to some dysfunction of the individual, in terms of interpersonal relationships, relationship with oneself, inner balance, adaptability to the social environment, how to deal with internal conflicts and objective adversities of life.

(Kosmidou & Galanoudaki 1996)

### ***Code of Conduct***

According to the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct, which applies to all applied branches of psychology such as counselling, **four dominant principles of ethics** emerge:

- Respect
- Competence
- Accountability
- Integrity

### ***Applying ‘to the best interest of the client’***

This determines any intervention or non-intervention during the therapeutic process: what to say, what to ask, what to explore, what to position, what to poke, what to touch, what to do as an experiential exercise. In the event that the therapist cannot help the person in question at least not harm them.

### ***Key questions for reflection for every therapist in their professional career***

- Do we derive satisfaction from our work?
- Do we derive joy and satisfaction from the progress, development and achievements of our clients?
- Do my personal needs and internal conflicts confront or identify with the client?



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- Do I seek personal psychological satisfaction and maintain a dependent relationship with my client?

### **Ethical values**

According to the Evaluative Model, in order to improve the individual's living conditions, moral values are required. The individual is approached biologically, psychologically, socially in the totality of his/her existence and not just as a person in treatment.

The main objective is to acquire new, more adaptive experiences. Specifically, the Evaluative Model refers to five core values that are necessary to cultivate in help-seeking individuals.

### **5 Core Values**

1. **Evaluative Autonomy:** internal liberation from oppressive emotional factors that led the individual to adopt the "wants", "desires", and "shoulds" of significant others.
2. **Evaluative Will:** an ongoing self-evaluation with the goal of continuous improvement.
3. **Evaluative Judgment:** through the acquisition and processing of as much information as possible, as unbiased a judgment as possible is achieved. It must be characterised by flexibility and adaptability to ensure continuous and ongoing improvement.
4. **Evaluative Realism:** the adaptive perception of reality with creative evaluation for long-term benefit - cost. The long-term benefit offers the possibility to take into account the possible catastrophic consequences and transform them into realistic and beneficial ones.
5. **Evaluative Assessment of Models:** 'ideal evolved models' as a benchmark for self-evaluation and personal development. The achievement of one's self-esteem comes from the continuous process of observation and self-development. It is not a given but is constantly evolving.



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### ***Personal Development and Therapy Counseling and Supervision***

- **Personal development:** self-realization concept according to C. Rogers is a process of getting to know oneself better and a way of life that will perceive one's own beliefs, values, ethics and reactions.
- **Personal (psycho)therapy:** Includes individual psychoanalysis or psychodynamic psychotherapy. In the psychoanalytic approach it is called personal or educational analysis. It requires full awareness of personal potential. Psychodynamic approaches differ in the depth of exploration of the self.
- **Cognitive-Behavioral Approach:** it was not a requirement that personal development in counselor education was limited to the learning experience. It is now recognised as an important role in the person-centred approach and a method of training called 'self-reflection' has emerged that provides a deeper understanding.
- **Research on personal therapy:** the choice of theoretical direction is more closely linked to one's personality and character than to one's attitudes and beliefs.
- **Supervision:** a well-trained and experienced professional psychologist helps the supervisee with his/her cases, evaluates how to approach the issues that arise in the sessions and allows him/her to refuel emotionally, always aiming at the effectiveness of the therapist-client relationship.

### ***Characteristics of the therapist that can effectively help the patient***

The therapist acts as the patient's advocate-defender-savior against the threat of disease or life problems.

Responses to the patient's questions are made not only in a cold medical language to manage the symptoms of the disease, but also as a counselor and teacher to reduce the negative and improve the positive attributes of the patient.

To be able to act as a healthy role model not only with words but also with actions, and most importantly, in a way that manages life's difficulties themselves.



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### ***It is very important according to the Evaluative Model...***

The therapist's personal development is essential, with self-cleansing and continuous self-improvement, as is respect for the different cultures of the counselee so that he can understand and respect each different value system.

Therefore, it is of particular importance in general the therapist's own attitude to life within the therapeutic process or practice and outside in his/her life. This is particularly evident in small-closed societies.

### ***The communication skills of the counselor***

Strategies for effective communication are primarily related to less distorted "reception" of information from others, "perception" of information that is not directly expressed, and more accurate presentation or transmission of information that the individual wishes to convey to others.

### ***Stages of communication***

- **Receiving messages through Socrates' midwifery method.** The subject elicits the meaning that the other person wants to convey.
- **Message processing:** healthy organic systems of information transfer are a prerequisite. The counselor develops, cultivates and utilizes the predictive abilities of the cerebral cortex. It also involves the most accurate possible prediction of the consequences of his/her actions and words on the perceptual and emotional 'world' of the counselee.

### ***Consultative relationship***

The basic personality traits of the counselor, such as self-awareness, acceptance of the counselee, genuineness of the counselor in their relationship with themselves and empathy as well as communication between them, play an important role in their counseling relationship.



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### ***What is communication?***

Communication can be verbal( spoken or written word) or non-verbal (facial expression, eye expression, postures and body movements, tone and volume, breathing rhythm, etc.).

Excellent transmission and reception require the development of skills related to mutual appreciation and respect between the transmitter and receiver, empathy, good perception mechanisms and creativity.

### ***Acceptance of Diversity***

The term diversity includes age, culture, ethnic, racial and social context, language, religion, level of education, economic status, sexual orientation, etc.

### ***Empathic counseling in the Intercultural and Wider Social Context***

Cultural empathy is a specific dimension of empathy that refers to the ability of counselors to accurately understand the personal experiences of people from other cultures and to communicate their accurate understanding constructively in a way that shows genuine concern.

### ***3 Key Goals of the Counsellor to successfully express cultural empathy***

To be aware of personal cultural values and beliefs. Awareness requires:

- Being sensitive to one's personal cultural heritage and the ways in which it influences one's thoughts, feelings, and behavior
- Recognizing the limits of one's abilities
- Being comfortable with different nationalities, races, cultures and beliefs
- Be aware of the worldview of the person being counseled. In addition, they need to be aware of their own negative reactions and stereotypes in relation to other groups and to try to adopt a non-critical attitude
- Using culturally appropriate techniques, this skill requires:



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1. Respect for religious and spiritual beliefs and an understanding of how they affect the expression of distress
2. Respect for the indigenous helping techniques and physical support networks of the particular cultural group

***When the counselor and client come from different cultural contexts, the counselor needs***

- Check himself or herself for cultural biases and prejudices
- Avoid stereotypes, remembering that each person is unique
- Listen actively and observe the counselee's comments
- Listen to and take into account family and cultural issues
- Monitor the impact of statements and interventions on the client

## **THE CHILDREN'S TRACING**

### ***Why do children draw?***

Children draw through memory, imagination and reality. Drawings from memory are based on what children remember. Many children find it difficult to draw something using only their imagination. They may need a drawing that requires completion or completion.

Whether and to what extent a child uses his or her imagination in drawing is also influenced by developmental factors. For example, young children are less concerned with accurate rendering and more concerned with what they imagine. Of course, children of any age (usually not pre-school children) also draw the objects around them.

- When symmetry or asymmetry is missing, according to Hammer, it is a sign of insecurity in the tracer's emotional life.
- If, on the other hand, symmetrical distribution of forms is overused, it suggests the existence of a rigid personality structure, a personality that is unable to adapt quickly to changing situational conditions
- The depiction of large arms and hands expresses power and control.



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- Larger than average figures can be an indication of personality traits such as aggression or grandiosity
- Tiny figures may indicate inadequacy, inferiority, low self-esteem, anxiety or depression
- A large human figure drawing may also be a result of feelings of inadequacy in case the drawing reflects compensatory defenses
- The "size of the tracing" indicates the self-image of the tracer. Thus in oversized figures and in strongly expressive representations of hands and teeth, social and emotional frustrations and the resulting aggressions can be diagnosed
- Very small tracings (always in relation to the size of the paper) indicate phobia, distress and shyness.

***Ways in which children use the material available to them, according to Kramer (1971):***

- Preliminary actions: scribbling, scribbling, and exploration by touch. This action is a positive and ego-congruent experience.
- Chaotic expression: emptying of colours, splashing, destructive behaviour leading to loss of control
- Painting in the service of defence: stereotypical repetition, copying, unmasking.
- Illustrations.
- Formalized expression or visual artwork: production of symbols that serve self-expression and communication.

***The stages of artistic development***

1. **Scribbling stage (2-4).** Painting at this stage is characterised by a lack of organisation, straight and circular lines. At the age of 4 the child begins to name them.



2. **Preliminary stage (4-7).** The painting is characterised by figurative symbols, especially rudimentary human figures.
3. **Schematic stage (7-9):** This stage is characterised by the development of figurative symbols, composition, colour for specific objects and specific forms for people.
4. **Emergent realism stage (9-11).** At this stage, perspective and colour are better captured in nature, and there is an increase in rigidity in visual expression.
5. **Stage of pseudo-realism (11-13).** There is an increased awareness of human forms and the environment. Refinement of the caricature.
6. **Decision period (adolescence).** There is complex expression and many children may never reach this stage.

### **Colours**

- The frequent use of the colour black usually expresses emotional stress, and research has shown that it is mainly used by demanding children.
- Excessive shading in places also demonstrates accumulated stress and nervousness.
- The use of unrealistic colors in school age, indicates difficulty in adjustment and immaturity.

### **Painting position**

- The placement of the painting in the center depicts a controlled and stable child, however, it may also hide elements of egocentricity.
- The use of the right side is associated with the father and indicates that there is balanced behaviour.
- The left side relates to the relationship with the mother.
- Very low on the paper tends to draw children with fear and insecurity while high points use children with leadership tendencies.



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### ***Marker pressure***

The pressure varies from child to child. Usually it is normal when the aim is to get a clear representation of the drawings.

However, if there is intense pressure and rapid use of the markers, it expresses the need for release.

On the other hand, very soft use of the markers and a vast imprint of the drawing is due either to sluggishness or a sense of inferiority and insecurity.

### ***So what are we looking at in a painting of the family and its members?***

- If all the members of the family are shown. More specifically, the absence of a member in the drawing indicates the child's refusal to accept that person into the family. The omission of the child's own self depicts the child's sense of non-acceptance by the family. Also, some members, quite dear to the child, may be added.
- How much time he gave to the drawing of each person. Usually the time is the same for all persons. However, too fast or too time-consuming drawing for a figure may possibly indicate dislike or excessive love, respectively, for that person.
- The order in which he made the family members. One could consider the order related to the chronological ages of the members starting from the oldest to the youngest to be correct. However, the person drawn **first** by the child is also the person **most loved - admired** by the child, perhaps even his/her role model. The depiction of himself in the first position reveals **strong self-centeredness and prudishness**, while placing him at the end, if he is not the youngest member in the family, may **reveal low self-esteem and underestimation** within the family.
- **What emotion/expression he gave the persons.** The expression that the children give to the other members plays a big role, if not a decisive one. Essentially, the smile is the most classic curve found on a figure and mostly displayed on the faces. The depiction of a sad mouth, however, involves emotional issues for the person on whom it is drawn and in the child's perception is in a difficult position.



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- Positioning and spacing of the faces on the paper. The distant and lonely placement of a person compared to other members **reflects the position that person has within the family in the eyes of the child.**
- Complete figures and dimensions of the body parts. It is important to mention, how the physical dimension that each person takes in the tracing can and does relate, to the feeling that the respective person gives to the child. **A very large drawn body reflects the dominance of this person in the house, while a fairly small one compared to the others, indicates underestimation or even emotional pressure.** And the absence of hands from a body indicates the use of violence in the home and in this way the child expresses the threat he or she feels. Large fingertips or the close drawing of a hand on the child's neck indicates the oppression and fear a child feels from that person.
- Depiction of self with different gender. It is possible for a child to show in his/her figure, characteristics that do not correspond to his/her gender. This drawing may be due to an **unsettled sexual identity** and also due to a **parent's attitude** towards them that does **not correspond to their gender.**
- **Refusal to draw.** Finally, a child who refuses to draw his family, expresses in this way his lack of companionship, his lack of integration and acceptance within the family and how he longs to be included in it.



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