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**ANGER AND COMPASSION IN COPING WITH GENETICALLY
TRANSMITTED TRAUMA IN PBSP PROCESS**

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Abstract

The objective of the present study is to describe and analyse uncovering and awareness of emotions in client in the context of intergenerational trauma. Furthermore, it aims at pointing out both the potential of the PBSP movies technique as a partial solution of the issue, and the possibilities and competencies of social pedagogues regarding the use of elements and techniques of the Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP) method. It was discovered that in PBSP, clients are capable of identifying emotions and understanding their quality in the context of intergenerational trauma. This is made possible by movies which uncover the replication of family patterns. Clients gradually shift their focus away from their significant others to themselves, and become interested in and attend to their own needs, thus growing more autonomous. The social pedagogue is able to participate in the changes, primarily in terms of education, working with concrete symbols, bringing emotions to consciousness in the context, and using genogram as a “cognitive” alternative to the movies technique.

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1. Introduction

The present study is concerned with intergenerational transmission realised, according to Tóthová (2011), by emotional family dynamics. The conception of family is therefore based on Trapková and Chvála (2009) who consider it a space of replication of language and meanings, in which generational replication is realised and intergenerational transmissions occur. Following Tóthová (2011), this study holds the transmission is caused among other aspects by the quality of emotional bond, emotional severance, unhealed emotions, family communication dynamics, family violence, and family tabooisation. Concerning intergenerational transmission and generational conflict, Faimbergová (2001) points out an individual is formed by both conscious and unconscious interventions of previous generations. Certain aspects of generational conflict match the concepts of shared trauma and collapse of time proposed by Volkan, Ast and Greer (2002), in which traumatised individuals unconsciously strive for their offspring to solve the unfinished developmental goals of the generation directly affected by the trauma; thus, the trauma is shared between two generations. This has been confirmed by psychotherapeutical practice, and the present study therefore accepts the aforementioned authors' view that each generation "decides" whether parents pass their own inherited wound or deficiency on to their children.

The theoretical concept of trauma draws on Praško et al. (2003), and Vizinová and Preiss (1999), who consider trauma a short- or long-term event so dangerous and catastrophic as to impact significantly the integrity of most individuals' personality. In the context of the researcher's PBSP practice, trauma is also considered a dangerous stimulus that is outside an individual's capabilities and triggers physical and emotional responses as well as undesirable consequences irresolvable by one's coping strategies. According to van der Kolk (1998), victims of trauma experience these feelings without understanding the connection to their causes. In the context of dangerous stimuli, this study is concerned in particular with physical and psychological traumatisation by significant others.

Intergenerational trauma is approached from the PBSP angle as this method allows for a symbolic processing of trauma not only in clients, but in the context of their symbolic experiences also in previous generations. This claim is primarily based on findings in practice; however, it is also supported by research. Horáček et al. (2005) performed tests using functional magnetic resonance imaging that confirmed the effect of PBSP in traumatised clients, specifically the existence of neurobiological changes of brain activity precipitated by PBSP. While acknowledging the limitations of qualitative research, these results are understood as an impulse to contribute by findings collected in monitored psychotherapeutic process pertaining to a small number of clients in whom traumas occur repeatedly over several generations and constitute a part of personal and family history.

PBSP originated in the USA; the method's founders Albert Pesso and Diane Boyden-Pesso previously worked as dancers and dance pedagogues. (Perquin, 1997; Pesso, 1984; Pesso, Boyden-Pesso, & Vrtbovská, 2009) Concerning the issue of genetically transmitted trauma, the PBSP concept of basic developmental needs of place, protection, nurturance, support and limits is the key. These should be adequately provided for children by their parents. PBSP suggests that over every individual's life, a so-called map emerges, which provides a set of behavioural patterns available throughout one's lifetime (Pesso, Boyden-Pesso, & Vrtbovská, 2009). In the context of intergenerational trauma, this map is

transmitted between generations. Pessó, Boyden-Pessó and Vrtbovská (2009) claim that if this “old” map is formed by negative experiences, especially in childhood, in therapy it is possible to create, using a symbolic ideal parent, an alternative “new” map which fulfils the abovementioned needs in time, quality, degree and manner required by a particular client. The symbolic experience of ideal history provided in therapeutic sessions/structures by ideal parent figures offers a model required in order to avoid traumatic experiences in the future.

In the context of traumatic experience, emotions of various intensity and quality appear. A client frequently oscillates between anger at an individual who is the source of trauma, and compassion for that person (especially if the person in question is a parent). In therapy, clients relate stories of physical and psychological violence committed by parents: on one hand, they were angry with the parents; on the other they felt fondness and compassion for them. Frequently, their narratives run along the lines: “He beat me on every occasion, and I hated him at that time, but he had a difficult childhood as well... They didn’t have any time for him and his father would also hit him frequently.” While the events were accompanied by hatred and anger, the memory of parent’s complicated life brings up compassion and pity together with tears.

PBSP uses the so-called movies to work with historically conditioned and recurring issues. Movies provide client with a transparent rendition of intergenerational behavioural patterns and grant relief. Over the course of a therapeutic session, the client perceives and experiences need fulfilment of close (traumatising) persons by symbolic ideal parents. Thus, the client’s receptivity for interaction with symbolic ideal parents is unblocked, resulting in the saturation of the client’s needs in a manner that is fulfilling, not traumatising.

2. Problem Statement

Given the abovementioned possibility, the processing of intergenerational trauma using movie technique of Pessó Boyden Psychomotor System represents the research problem of the present study.

3. Research Questions

Which emotions are present in relation to traumatising individuals? What is the effect of movie technique in this context?

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective of the present study is to describe and analyse uncovering and awareness of emotions towards particular individuals in client in the context of intergenerational trauma. Furthermore, it aims at pointing out both the potential of the PBSP movies technique as a partial solution of the issue and the possibilities and competencies of social pedagogues regarding the use of elements and techniques of PBSP (in the context of intergenerational transmission of trauma).

5. Research Methods

Data processing is based on interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which allows to describe and interpret the way in which the subject of researched experience ascribes meaning to it (Larkin, Watts & Clifton (2006). The purpose was to understand client’s lived experience, and IPA allowed for creative approach and freedom of research process. (Willig, 2001) In the context of traumatic experience recurrence, unique experiences of the respondents of specific people in specific situations and times were of interest. Following Smith (2004), the primary concern was how respondents understand their experience of phenomenon in question and this view was formed. Casuistic method was more important and ideographic approach was employed as described in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009).

Transcripts of therapeutic sessions and audio recordings yielded data that were repeatedly analysed and annotated. The emerged topics were further studied in order to capture the fundamental quality of individual respondents’ experience. Subsequently, the materials were searched for connections between topics; this procedure was repeated in other cases. In order to find connections between respondents’ experiences, patterns recurring across cases were analysed.

The studied group consisted of three women and three men in young adulthood, i.e. PBSP clients 20–35 years old (age range delimitation according to Vágnerová, 2000).

6. Findings

As the scope of the present study does not allow for a full-scale analysis, fragments of findings from the first case in question are examined here; that is, the documentation of client Jan’s psychotherapy and his story. Since the aim was to understand the quality of client’s experience, the present study attempts to mimic his own perspective. As an illustration, there is an excerpt which allows identifying emotions associated with traumatisation as well as effects of the movies technique. Client’s endeavours in therapy to “look after” the traumatising person in the first place, as opposed to himself, may appear strange; the practice however shows this is a very appropriate behaviour naturally leading to unblocking of client’s receptivity for acceptance of symbolic ideal figures.

The table below documents the annotations (left column) of client’s lived experience (middle column) and the examples of so-called emerging topics (right column).

Table 01. Annotations of client’s lived experiences and so-called emerging topics

Annotations	Client’s lived experience	So-called emerging topics
Boss = full of himself	And my boss I’m supposed to tell their suggestion is bullshit that won’t help the company looks so full of himself. Like a general...	Relationship with the boss
Worry = tightening	In that moment, everything tightens in me and I’m just scared to tell him anything. And the worst this gets is when I have to say something at a meeting. My throat tightens and	Emotional and physical block
Meeting = worst		Significance of meetings

	I can't say a single word. Recently I have rather taken leave of meetings.	Tendency to avoid this
Ball = nausea People = staring	When we're supposed to go to a ball I start to feel sick in my stomach and eventually stay at home. I guess I don't want people to stare at me...	Context of somatisation Benefits of avoidance Significance of audience
Father = strict, physical punishments Son = punk = deserves punishment Beating in front of siblings Hatred towards father Anger at father	My dad was strict, and when I did something wrong he would beat me up. I guess I deserved this, because I was a real punk, but he shouldn't have belted me in front of my brother and my sister. At that moment I hated him. And now as I'm speaking about this I'm angry at him as well.	Meaning of father's behaviour Deserved punishment Significance of audience during punishment Emotions associated with father – hatred transformed into anger
Absence of kind father Adult son feels pity for his father Farm = hard work Little time for children = beating Father = a general	But his dad was also not very kind. Now in hindsight I actually feel pity for him. They had a farm and he had to work hard. His dad didn't have much time so if something happened, he threw a few punches at my dad and they carried on working. I guess he was brought up in a military way of sorts.	Significance of replication of fathers' behaviour Relating to father in the present Understanding context Military upbringing
Father needed a participating father Present father for father = interest of father in son	My father probably needed a father who would spend more time with him, be more interested in him and who wouldn't just beat him like a madman. I guess our relationship would be different then.	Father's support – support for son

The analysis examined connections between these and other topics emerging in the initial stage. This study gives principal themes across all cases. The clients Jan, Martin, Tomáš, Ella, Alice, and Marie manifested the following: presence of ambivalent emotions towards traumatising person; view of staged events as a source of relief; movies as a source of credibility and release of receptivity for ideal figures and saturation of client's needs.

The topics presented below explain Jan's experience of emotions associated with traumatising and the effect of movie technique in the PBSP process.

6.1. Presence of Ambivalent Emotions towards Traumatizing Person

This topic is also present in the other ones, and continuously appears in psychotherapeutical process; it can therefore be labelled as pervasive. As a child, Jan clearly felt hatred and defiance towards his father as well as anger at his actions and the absence of support. Even now, after many years, anger and rage reappear when he speaks about it. In hindsight, the client feels misunderstood, disparaged and humiliated by his father. He perceives belting as inadequate given his age at that time (up to 15 years of age), its intensity and the fact it happened in front of his siblings. The significance of this experience also lies in the fact that *"... it was in fact only beating, without a single word."* At the same time, there is an understanding of father's intention to set limits for his son who is related to his self-evaluation as a "punk"; however, the degree would have to be acceptable for the client: *"... but I understand him, sometimes I was so wild I needed a spanking. But not as brutal that it would sweep me off my feet."* The client assigns crucial importance to the fact he had to go to his father, who was prepared and waited, in order to receive the belting. This experience is connected to emotions of fear, hatred, anger and helplessness. The present realisation of helplessness is followed by the client's expression of compassion towards the traumatizing father and pointing out his father also lived through "something". Among client's paternal relatives, a similar manner of father's behaviour towards son is "inherited". The client refers to it as "general-like": *"... if you won't behave and carry out orders, you'll be punished so that you'll think better of it the next time."*

In the present, Jan relates to his father knowing he is an old and ill man who needs help. The client is looking at things in retrospect, is aware of finiteness of life and does not want to spoil his real-life communication with his father by returning to the past: *"It's a long time ago; I don't want to speak badly of him now that he's ill and needs me. Paradoxically he asks me for everything, not my sister and my brother whom they never hit... But they were nice."* Again, an understanding appears; the present study interprets it as a part of Jan's wish to find the meaning of his father's actions, and in fact justify it.

6.2. View of Staged Events as a Source of Relief

A possibility was offered to the client to view, using the movie technique, the replication of the behaviour repeated over three generations in males in his family line. The essential quality of this experience gave Jan an understanding of certain inevitability and a syndrome of helplessness because of which his male ancestors were only able to behave in a traumatizing way. This cognitive clarification and transparent rendition of the historical network of relations brought about a great relief on one hand, because causes of intrusion were understood. On the other hand, however, pity was experienced because his father, grandfather and great-grandfather only had traumatizing experiences in childhood, which they later invested in their sons.

6.3. Movies as a Source of Credibility and Release of Receptivity for Ideal Figures and Saturation of Client's Needs

Movies became a source not only of relief associated with the possibility provided by symbolic ideal history of ending the repetition of traumatizing behaviour. The hierarchy of memory creation in symbolic interaction with ideal parent since the first generation of male line gave the client hope this

trauma will not be in a part of life in the next generation. This motivated Jan to imagine how his male ancestors would hypothetically have led their lives as children, partners and parents, and a hope of bright future emerged, especially in the context of parenthood and fathers' approach to sons. The client spontaneously reflected on needs of men in his family line that could have been provided by their fathers (behaviour, interest, support, safe place, protection, positive limits) and desired to fulfil these symbolically within the movie technique framework by realising a scenic-symbolic space of a structure. This experience enabled the client to believe that he could also have a relationship with an ideal symbolic father, which would provide safe place, interest, support, protection, nurturance, and loving, flexible and firm limits. At that point, Jan was receptive to an interaction with the ideal father, which became a significant essence of the experience gained during psychotherapy.

An identical procedure was employed in case of abovementioned clients, whose unique stories and family histories will be presented here in short. In Tomas's family line, traumatising males are present over several generations. The traumatisation experienced by sons in the family was less physical and manifested rather as psychological pressure described by Tomáš as incessant. In Martin's family history, replication of traumatic experiences in male family line was also identified. In this case, traumatising males left the family when their sons were roughly 14 years old. Nowadays, Jan, Martin and Tomáš are married to women whose behaviour could be interpreted as the exact opposite of that of traumatising fathers. Ella underwent the therapy because of a traumatising father who frequently beat her during childhood, and later criticised and disparaged her. Alice and Marie had a traumatising mother; they were also beaten and later exposed to forceful and critical behaviour of their mothers. Women in the examined group lived with partners who manifested aspects of traumatising behaviour.

Ambivalent feelings occurred in all cases; the same applies for a desire to provide an ideal history to a traumatising parent, which is connected to a belief that if the parent's needs are saturated, the client's needs will also be fulfilled. This explains why at the beginning of therapy, client's receptivity for acceptance of symbolical ideal parents is blocked, which may be interpreted as respect for hierarchy and proper timing. In this context, movies provide therapy with a possibility of fulfilling this demand and, on a symbolic level, match every need (a shape) to an ideal need fulfilment (a perfect counter shape). This results in clients experiencing counter shape (an ideal experience) an alternative to their actual experience which is stored as a synthetic record in long-term memory.

One of the aims of the present study was to present possible use of certain PBSP elements, principles and techniques by social pedagogues who did not undergo PBSP training. Given social pedagogy job market, the present author argues that they can employ the PBSP theory for education – saturation of cognitive sphere in direct contact with the client, use micro tracking in order to bring emotions to consciousness and understand the context, employ local placeholders to grasp client's experience of other people and use e.g. genogram instead of movies in order to clarify the network of family relations and replication of behaviour patterns. They can therefore engage in this activity and emphasise cognitive aspects of client's personality.

7. Conclusion

Over the course of scenic-symbolic employment of PBSP, repetitions of hidden family lines are identified. While working with movies, clients gain an understanding of the way they are formed by conscious and unconscious interventions of previous generations. Gradually, they become able to identify emotions and discern their quality in the context of intergenerational trauma. This is made possible by movies manifesting the replication of family patterns. As a result, clients feel significant emotional relief. They gradually shift their focus away from their significant others to themselves, and become interested in and attend to their own needs, thus growing more autonomous. The social pedagogue is able to participate in the changes, primarily in terms of education and use of genogram as a “cognitive” alternative to the movies technique. |

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