4. Psychotherapy
(part 2)*

* Part 1: see 1st year syllabus
Prerequisites of psychotherapy

- professional and emotional competence of the therapist;
- therapeutic contract / therapeutic alliance: it involves obligations for both therapist and client (to be active, motivated);
- regularity of meetings;
- catharsis;
- *insight* (introspection, illumination);
- objective: problem solving, but also the client’s autonomy.
1. Transactional analysis
2. Group psychotherapy
3. Family therapy
4. Art-therapy
5. Solution-focused brief therapy
6. Narrative therapy
1. Transactional analysis

- grounded by Eric Berne;
- it is a personality and social action theory, but also a clinical method based on the analysis of transactions between people, in relation with their Ego states.

Useful terms:

*Ego states*: personality constitutive elements = sum of feelings, cognitions and behaviors (Parent, Adult, Child);

*Life position*: the way the child is referring to self and others from the beginning;

*Life script*: life story modeled in childhood which is constantly and unconsciously followed in adulthood;

*Transaction*: message (communication) between people;

*Stroke*: a particular type of message exchanged during the transaction.
Ego states
- structural analysis -

**Parent**
Behaviors, cognitions, feelings copied from parental figures

**Adult**
Behaviors, cognitions, feelings in reaction to „here and now“

**Child**
Behaviors, cognitions, feelings replayed from childhood

**Learning domain**

**Cognition domain**

**Feelings domain**
Ego states
- functional analysis-

**Positive:** assertive, determined, strong, honest

**Negative:** dominating, judgemental, suspicious

Controlling Parent (CP)

Nurturing Parent (NP)

Positive: trustful, helpful, encouraging, sympathetic

Negative: too permissive, unrealistic, self-neglecting

Efficient, logical, reflexive gets the necessary information for solving the problems, estimates the possibilities of action adequate to the situation

Adult

**Positive:** conformist, obedient, dutiful

**Negative:** shy, anxious, manipulative, impulsive, stubborn

Adapted Child (AC)

Natural Child (NC)

Positive: curious, spontaneous, creative

Negative: impulsive, uncensored, selfish, aggressive
Life position

1. „I am OK, you are OK“

2. „I am OK, you are not OK“

3. „I am not OK; you are OK“

4. „I am not OK, you are not OK“

Life script

→ Normal scenario: empathetic, open-minded;

→ Paranoid scenario: at war with everybody, aggressive, critical;

→ Depressive scenario: losing, anxious, guilty, using victimization;

→ Hopeless scenario: useless, (self-) destructing.
Counter-injunctions

- source in the Parent state of the parent;
- e.g., „You are not allowed to....!”; „Be perfect!”; „Be strong!”; „Work hard!”

Injunctions

- source in the Child state of the parent;
- noxious, more traumatising because they are implicit;
- e.g., „Don't grow up!”; „Don't be happy!”
Types of transactions

- direct (complementary) – with the same direction;
- crossed – message on one direction, the answer on another;
- hidden – real Ego states are not disclosed.

Transactions in doctor-patient relationship:
- can be hidden, frequently with manipulative patients or in the case of personality disorders;
- can lead to transference / negative countertransference.

Usefulness of transactional analysis
- individual psychotherapy;
- family / couple therapy;
- organizations: e.g., to effectively build a team.
It is applicable to:

- normal individuals (facilitates personal growth);
- individuals dealing with marked psychological stress;
- incurable or chronic patients;
- substance-dependent individuals (alcoholics, smokers, drug users);
- neurotic or personality disorder patients (it facilitates resocialization, adaptation);
- patients with mental or somatic disabilities (it facilitates social reinsertion, recovery of lost abilities, optimal use of remaining capabilities).
2. Group Psychotherapy (GPT)

Benefits:

1. *Provides hope* (e.g., in chronic diseases with frequent relapses; it may increase therapeutic compliance and improve prognosis);

2. *Perception of solidarity*
   - the participant does not longer have the unrealistic belief of being the only one with a given problem;

3. *Provision of information*
   - allows the patient to develop coping strategies;
   - adds credibility to the information already provided by the therapist;
4. **Altruism**
   - the opportunity to get out of the sick role and be helpful to others;

5. **The role of substitutive family**
   - the group may provide empathy, comfort, understanding, emotional safety;

6. **Improves social skills**
   - this has the origin in the implicit effect of socialization within the group;

7. **Modeling**
   - deconditioning of undesirable behaviors;
   - learning of functional behaviors;
8. *Interpersonal learning*
   - allows to the patient to analyze a life situation from different perspectives;

9. *Group cohesion*
   - patients feel accepted, understood (especially if the disease is associated with stigmatization or sanctioning);

10. *Catharsis*
    - is much more intense in group therapy;

11. *Providing meaning*
    - necessary when group members face harsh realities of life (e.g., abrupt isolation, loss, death).
### General areas of application for GPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>Normal individuals</td>
<td>To facilitate personal and emotional growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals facing high level of stress</td>
<td>Groups for victims of rape, traffic accidents, relatives of deceased persons in accidents, terrorist attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incurable or chronic patients</td>
<td>Groups for patients with cancer or with chronic pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial or substance-dependent individuals</td>
<td>Groups for people with impulse control problems, alcoholics, smokers, drug users</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patients that are neurotic or display personality disorders</td>
<td>Groups that facilitate re-socialization, adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients with mental or somatic disabilities</td>
<td>Groups that facilitate social inclusion, recovery of lost skills, or their optimal use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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GPT applications in pathology

In somatic diseases:
- cancer;
- cardiac rehabilitation;
- chronic dermatological diseases;
- fibromyalgia;
- irritable bowel syndrome;
- diabetes;
- asthma;

In psychiatric disorders:
- schizophrenia;
- depression;
- social phobia;

In alcoholism;
In tobacco dependence.
3. Family therapy (FT)

Definition

- a distinct form of group psychotherapy, centered on improving interpersonal relationships, especially communication, within a family or couple.

Types

Transgenerational therapy

Starting point: Transgenerational model (family dysfunctions are the result of permanent patterns that are transmitted from one generation to the next);

Objective: detachment from the family emotional system and acceleration of the emotional individualization of family members, without generating tension or separation within it;
Strategic family therapy

- uses specific strategies to address family issues, where the key element is change;
- is centered on the present and on how the family can reach a desirable future;

Structural family therapy

- the family is seen as a whole, as an open and living system, exposed to the influence of the environment and in constant change;
- family structure is essential to understanding the way the intra-familial symptoms have started to manifest and then developed.
FT indications:

- the existence of open conflicts, that are generating distress within a family;
- family problems that lead to dysfunctional behavior of one / several family members;
- continuing and escalating a pre-existing intra-family conflict;
- major psychiatric disorders occurring within a family;
- manifestations of personality disorders in a family context.
4. Art-therapy

- addresses different aspects of personality, using artistic tools;
- purpose: to bring to light and capitalize one’s personal potential and facilitate the harmonious growth of the individual.

Phases:
- the creative stage (expression of patient’s feelings in a form of art);
- the stage of discussion and analysis (allows the patients to understand their own feelings and use them in a constructive manner).
Forms of art therapy

A. Therapies using images

A.1. Therapy through drawing / painting

- a way to encode the communication of inner states;

- creating an image (drawing) involves:
  
  - stimulation of temporal lobes and extraction of latent memories, emotions and sensations;

  - stimulation of both cerebral hemispheres (via corpus calosum).
Drawing in therapy

**Therapeutic drawing**
(expression of feelings and thoughts that cannot be expressed verbally)

**Drawing in diagnosis**
(e.g., the tree test, the “Draw a person” test)

**Drawing in prognosis**
(illustrates the evolution in time)
Utility

- personality disorders (schizoid, obsessive-compulsive, narcissistic);
- affective disorders (mania, depression);
- psychosis (schizophrenia);
- substance abuse;
- epilepsy;
- trauma.

I never paint dreams or nightmares.
I paint my own reality.
~Frida Kahlo
*******
A.2. Photo therapy
- therapeutic and diagnosis process using the psychological interpretation of photo images.

A.3. Collage therapy
- expression of feelings realized through sticking / attaching various materials on a cloth or paper.

A.4. Sandplay therapy
- non-verbal therapy consisting in using sand to produce inspirational images from the patient's life.
**B. Therapies using sound**

**B.1. Music therapy**

- the use of music or musical elements with a client or a group of clients;
- goal: to increase the person's potential and / or to restore individual functions, so that the subject benefits from better intra- and interpersonal integration.

**Variants:**

- expressive
- receptive
Effects of music therapy

- mental relaxation (emotional catharsis, via endorphins secretion);
- mental stimulation (it increases cognitive efficiency, thinking, memory, self-confidence, will and initiative);
- facilitation of verbal expressiveness (positive role in alexythimia);
- evoking positive and / or suggestive experiences (facilitates the identification of the listener in a particular emotional content);
- an stimulating effect on immunity (via endorphins secretion).
Music therapy in Medicine

- surgical specialties: relieves pain, reduces anxiety, keeps ventricular and blood pressure as close to basal level as possible, facilitates muscle relaxation;

- Oncology: diminishes anxiety and depression, contributes to pain control, improves therapeutic compliance;

- Anesthesiology: decreases the demand of medication;

- Psychiatry: decreases anxiety, realizes a better control of depression;

- Neurology: helps post-stroke recovery, reduces the intensity, frequency and duration of migraines, reduces the frequency of epileptic seizures.
B.2. Dance therapy

- the therapeutic process through which movement and dance are used to improve emotional, cognitive, social and physical impairments;
- represents an expressive therapy based on the direct relationship between an individual's emotions and movements.

Applications in:
- autism;
- mental retardation;
- deafness;
- Parkinson disease;
- nutritional diseases.
C. Play therapies

C.1. Psychodrama

Therapeutic process through which theatrical tools are used for:
- exploring problems and individual aspirations;
- improving interpersonal relationships and communication;
- performing scenes that involve the subjects as actors and that symbolize a real conflict situation;

Goal: to help the subjects improve their interaction with other individuals in similar circumstances.
C.2. Play therapy (in the restricted sense)

- playing used as a therapeutic and diagnosis element, for achieving a better social adaptability of the patient;
- applicability: Children with adjustment problems or with physical or mental disabilities.
5. Solution-focused brief therapy (goal focused therapy)

It is a collaborative approach between the therapist and the client, in order to obtain a solution to a problem.

It is time-limited.

The therapist's goal: To be effective in achieving goals over a short period of time, rather than achieving a profound change in client’s personality.

**Theoretical background**
- Watzlawick, 1967: there may be more than one "truth" (people may observe the same thing, but see / understand it differently).
- although the causes of a person's problems can be complex, the solution can be very simple (Schazer & Berg, 1997);
- emphasis is placed on encouraging the client to perceive him/herself as the “best expert in solving the problems".
Method

Formulation of the therapeutic objective:

(a) in terms of positive thinking:
   - if the patient is representing the goal in negative terms, then attention
     will be focused on the negative aspect;
(b) in procedural terms, not as a static image;
(c) in current terms, "here and now";
(d) in the most concrete terms;
(e) related to an action which should be initiated and maintained by the patient;
(f) in the terms of the patient (not in the terms that the therapist assumes the patient should desire).
Focus on positive aspects, on solution, on the future

- emphasis on constructive aspects (“what can be done”), and not on ruminating the issues generating the problem;

The solution to problems is often found in an "exception" from the perspective of the patient's usual behavior, which occurs in those moments when the person is not confronting the problem or not doing anything special to solve it:

- these exceptions can be a "foundation" on which the solution can be built;
- these exceptions need to be highlighted and even created by the psychotherapist.
The therapist will formulate:

- questions about useful exceptions;
- questions about coping mechanisms;

Identifying how the family managed to cope with problems allows its members to discover their past and present successes and better approach the problem and the achievement of goals.

- compliments, encouragement, positive feedback:
  - highlighting positive aspects in patient behavior;
  - highlighting progress in psychotherapy.

The patient will not be judged and will be effectively supported to overcome the fear of change.
Indications of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT)

- behavioral problems (children and adolescents);
- depression;
- anxiety;
- problems related to the restoration of adequate coping (e.g., patients with alcohol or nicotine addiction, eating disorders, Crohn's disease, mental retardation);
- in schizophrenia (goals: improving adherence, coping with symptoms, interrelations with family).
6. Narrative therapy

- therapeutic approach developed by White & Epston (1990);
- is based on understanding the stories people use to describe their lives;
- considers clients’ problems as not a reason for their labeling;
- helps them recognize a range of abilities:
  - what they already have and have successfully used;
  - what they can use in dealing with problems in their life;
- focuses on identifying strengths.
Strategies and therapeutic techniques

- understanding life through one’s story.

- externalizing conversations: **naming the problem**
  - naming the problem and separation of the problem from the person;
  - investigating the history of the problem;
  - assessing the effects of the problem;

- situation of the problem in a life context: **deconstructing**
  - changing the reference frame;
  - separation from the dominant idea.

- discovery of the uniqueness of stories
  - discovery and exploration of stories in a unique way that can lead to developments of new and different stories;

- conversations aiming the **reallocation of the member status**
  - people join significant persons in their life, regarding their values, preferences, contributing to the construction of alternative stories;
  - reconsidering the member status → exclusion of persons from the personal life club.
Indications

- psychiatric disorders: - post-traumatic stress disorder;
  - depressive symptoms;
  - anorexia;
  - social phobia;
  - ADHD.

- systemic familial problems: couple problems, grief;

- particular professional context: burnout syndrome;

- situations that affect a community: geographic relocation, cultural mix, discrimination from the majority group.