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NEGLECTED SIDE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Mihaela Minulescu (a)*
*Corresponding author

(a) National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Psychology, mihaelaminulescu@yahoo.com

Abstract

Problem statement: Education is a concept meant to parallel instruction, having in view the psychological development of aspects of human personality not included in the regular courses in high school or university level. Adolescent and young people need a strong support in stabilizing their place in the world, as autonomous beings, not dependent on parents or external pressures. There are studies in which their young energies are stimulated by social and cultural controversial issues in the present time to be unbalanced and social insecure. *Purpose of the study:* The purpose of this study is to further clarify the possibilities of using the psychotherapy / counselling in schools and universities. *Methods:* We have used critical analysis and group/individual analytical psychotherapy with adolescents and young people to highlight the consequences and the need for remedial actions. *Findings and results:* The remedial actions put forward include changes in the quality of education construct, opening it toward psychological support with students, to fully develop their potentialities. *Conclusion:* All the cases from practice and from personal involvement in counseling young students were meant to liberate them from complexes and outside parasite pressures, and to establish a natural flow of energy that can be directed towards their natural resources and interests. There is an urgent need for change in the way we treat the young generation, to analyze the impact of institutionalized psychological support, and to create models for estimating the impact of transforming the psychic energies of young individuals and societies into creative involvements.

Keywords: Counselling, psychotherapy, high-schools, university.

1. Introduction

Prior the starting point of this intervention-action research, we started in 2015-2016 an ample study concerning the tendencies of young students to develop psychopathological conditions. The results of this research are the object of another paper.

We used several questionnaires concerning the frequency and amplitude of some psychic condition using the key symptoms in DSM V for depressive disorders, bipolar disorders and cyclothymic, anxiety disorders (panic, social anxiety, separation anxiety), obsessive- disorders (especially obsessive-compulsion and body dysmorphic), tendency of substance abuse (alcohol use and tobacco use, tendency to use drugs), attention deficit and trauma, and stress disorders.

We used some supplementary questions concerning dependency on virtual space and technologies, family relationships and tensions.

Using a convenient sample of participants from psychology, mathematics, and art studies of about 250 participants (between 20-26 years old, mean 22), we found a disturbing percentage of people with unstable psychic conditions, with disruptive behavior and family relationships, people using mostly internet means to communicate.

Consequently, we developed a free of tax group analytical therapy or individual analytical therapy, once per week, with some of them who voluntarily engaged in this inner quest. This paper presents the results we summarize.

We worked for a period of approx. seven months, with more than 50 students, some of them embarked also in an individual therapy which is going on.

2. Problem Statement

Jung (2013), dealt extensively with the subject of psychic energy in many of his works, importantly in Symbols of Transformation (Jung, 2016), and the theoretical essay "On Psychic Energy". No doubt, tracking the directions and symbolic expressions of psychic energy is a key feature of Jungian psychotherapy. Phenomena like depression, manic defense and states of inflation, psychic infection and difficulties in communication and social relations are but a few instances where a reflection on energy (emotions and complexes) becomes critically important in order to sustain the developmental tasks of transforming from a child/adolescent into a young adult condition.

Adolescents plagued with self-doubts, typically worry about real and imaginary shortcomings, and dwelling on them can paralyze a young person, preventing him/her from getting on with life. Blaming other (parents, professors etc.) for their problems can marshal their uncertain reserves of self-confidence. See also, Hays (2017).

3. Research Questions

Under the frame of Jungian psychodynamic conceptions, we asked ourselves:

3.1. How to channel their energy toward enabling self-esteem, autonomy and social responsibility?

3.2. Is it possible to sustain the process of sane self-identity in a self-confrontation process?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to further clarify the impact of analytical counselling/ psychotherapy may have on young students to confront psychological issues of adaptation to social and cultural demands and tasks.

5. Research Methods

We conceived the group therapy on the frame of a supportive discussions concerning self-esteem, psychological difficulties in their relational sphere of life, solitude, and anxiety and depressive mood, life resources and personal resources/gifts. In verbal communication we started to work on supporting them toward developing internal resources, enlarge their conceptions of the world, disentangle them from parental dependencies characteristic for a child but not for adult autonomy, and to use those psychic energies liberated from inner complexes to be captured by symbolic meanings connected with their resources, curiosity and creative endeavors (Minulescu, 2015).

During this period of analytical work, we used also sessions of art therapy: sand-play, drawing, movement therapy, and mud modeling with the aim of liberalization of some bodily tensions, let them to get in touch with their body and their inner drama and emotions without using only verbal communication.

Movement addressing self-representation, a better awareness of the body with first exercising the relaxation and stretching, and then more complex self-identification movements. Participants involved in this work are male (23, age 20-26, mean age 24) and female (27, age 20-24, mean age 23), students in psychology, and art specialties (61%, respective 39%), organized in 4 groups of therapy; 8 participants started an individual analysis based on their choices.

A Group therapy session is 2 hours long, an individual session is 45 minutes. We worked about 7 months from January 2017 – July 2017. We started the program using an evaluation session and ended by using the same tests to check de possible improvements: clinic interview, psychological counseling questionnaire concerning depression and anxiety, body image, self-esteem, family and pear relations: Body Image avoidance questionnaire, Brief Screen for Depression, Clinical Anxiety Scale, Dysfunctional attitude Scale, Emotional/Social Loneliness Inventory, Social Interaction Self Statement Test, Family Functioning Scale (Fischer & Corcoran, 1994).

6. Findings

6.1. Is it possible to channel their energy toward enabling self-esteem, autonomy and social responsibility?

Critical analysis of the findings

The psychological results in such research studies are vast and the actual approach in almost individual. We shall present some of the general results, based on the answers in 8 standard questionnaires and clinical interviews before and at the end of the 40 sessions of group therapy. In emotional terms energy we can assess three types of fears mediating self-image and relationships with family and peers: fear to communicate and of being invaded, fear to recognize their emotional condition (ambivalence, aggressivity, emotions are constantly neglected/ denied even if they are part of their disruptive acts/ or are projected on other people around; mainly adults as family or professors, or social/ political figures), fear of their inner

emotional life (their imaginary, phantasmatic life is not acknowledged, as they experience them as too absorbing) in all 50 individuals.

None of them is not fighting with self - image and self-esteem and 52 out of 58 are involved in family of origin tensions. They all have family relations that cannot help them to discover who they are, instead of fighting between the parental pressure towards obedience and the inner impulses. Most of them have been contaminated with their own parent's anxieties and fears of life, of self-assertiveness and some of them have not been able to follow whatever they consider adequate to follow. They must follow the parental image inflicted upon them, and where not permitted to be wrong, to make mistakes, to learn from their own experience, to open to life. They must behave, to be "good students" with good grades, and constantly they have been compared with a norm, be it some other student's performance, or occasionally the social level of their parent's performance. None of them used the friend image to characterize the relation with mother of father.

Even if they do no not systematically use drugs, they occasionally take or are tempted about the releasing of inner tensions by drug means. Again, depressive concerns about life, or depressive cognitions present in their self-evaluation. Evidence based data were collected out of scores at the specific factors of the 7 questionnaires, comparatively at the first session, and at the ending session (out of 28 sessions).

The Body Image avoidance factor, concerning the avoidance of physical intimacy, social outings, registered initially a general average score of 72 (0 to 92), and at the final session, the average lowered at 45, meaning from a high indicator of avoidance to a medium level.

Brief Screen for Depression, meant to distinguish clinical depression, started with an average score of 24 (where 21 is the cutting point), and ended with an average of 13, that is from clinical intensity to l2 (low intensity).Clinical Anxiety Scale, measuring the amount, degree or severity of clinical anxiety, had an initial average score of 82 (range 25 10 125), and at the end the lowering was close to a medium 52 score.

Dysfunctional attitude Scale, designed to identify cognitive distortions, had an average of 169 (range, 40 to 280) moderate high, and at the end the average of the group was 87. Analysing the responses to specific items, clinical work had the aim of correcting the distortions underlying the depression, to restrain perfectionistic and omnipotence images and needs, and promote autonomy.

Emotional/Social Loneliness Inventory is designed to measure both loneliness and isolation from social and emotional points of view. The initial average score was high 38 (rage 0 - 45) for loneliness, and moderate high 29 for social loneliness. After the psychotherapy both scores had lowered, the emotional indicator was moderate low, 23, and the social one was.

Social Interaction Self Statement Test is an instrument designed to measure cognitions/ self-statements associated with anxiety about social interaction; self-statements in specific stressful social situations are related to anxiety and competence, and people (man and women) who tend to have low self-confidence, inappropriate fears, worry over negative expectations tends and concern about physical appearance. The score on positive/ facilitative self-statements moved from average 45 (range 15 to 75) to average 64, the score on negative/ inhibitory self-statements moved from average 57 (range 15 to 75) to average 39.

All these movements from a higher indicator of pathology to mild even low scores, shows a consistent and quite rapid transformation effect of the analytical psychotherapy on the self-image and self-

identity, a transformative impact on emotional life towards positive feelings, and on a more realistic cognition related to social life.

Family Functioning Scale is an instrument used to assess aspects as positive/negative family affect, family communication, family conflicts, family worries and supports. The five factors can be used to establish a family profile, and an intervention designed meant to normalise the impact of collective upon the individual.

We used the responses to specific questions to establish several debate discussions with the group participants to obtain a group and individual awareness of the impact of the family attitudes and cognitive frame upon the members' abilities to develop personal beliefs out of personal experiences. So, the scores were not important per se.

6.2. Is it possible to sustain the process of sane self-identity in a self-confrontation process?

In qualitative terms, this was an action research process which is evident in the flow of the group therapy sessions.

The sessions started with the general review of these results and starting to work on each topic step by step with personal experiences and without self-criticism or other evaluations. Occasionally some dreams revealing the inner world are discussed as they are entering in the analytical field.

Eventually, after several group sessions (20), a new topic pumped up: their inner life as a valuable resource and an inner reality which can be known and transformed into an optimistic and creative life. New hopes, dreams and hopes with a more realistic approach of the external – internal reality.

This was the main aim of the project in the frame of Educational Psychology: to create an internal space of stability so that the psychic energies, emotions and motivations to flow toward integrating in adult life, profession and non-prejudiced social relations, based on self-esteem and inner trust.

To the end the end of the group sessions, they started to understand their propensity toward the actual/ intended profession (some of them disentangled from parental options), a larger image of their future including their student's life (understanding different professors/ adults without projecting on them internal parental complexes, and to face openly complexities related with exams and knowledge).

7.   Conclusion

At the the center of this discussion is the issue of harmonizing the emotional imbalance in young students concerning self-esteem and de developmental task of becoming autonomous, and toward further clarify the possibilities of using the psychotherapy / counselling in schools and universities to sustain the process.

In the view of our research data, there is an urgent need for change in the way we treat the young generation, to offer them a stable base to develop a sane psychological transformation of self-identity, self-assurance and image, toward detachment of cognitions and emotions contaminated by family of origin mental set up's: Fears and inadequate cognitive biases concerning social realities.

It is is the time for people responsible in educational aria to develop possibilities for students a most needed institutionalized psychological support, and to create models for interventions estimating the impact of transforming the psychic energies of young individuals and societies into creative involvements.

I think it's the right time to give back to our society something we, as mature educators, learned. It can be done not only by formal and classical psychotherapy and counselling sessions, but by class in which they can receive answers to their doubts, confront fears and prejudicial concepts coming from the background subcultures organized by the counselors and psychologists.

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