

Art-Therapy - Cognitive-Behavioral Approach

Art-Therapy Method of Working with Children with T.S.A.

Neaga Susanu¹

Abstract: Behavioral therapy is a short, symptom-focused therapy and generally aims to change the interactions between the person and his or her environment. Behavioral therapy is an approach designed to treat unwanted behaviors directly observable, which psychodynamic therapy calls “symptoms”, only as behaviorists reject the notion that problem behavior is a symptom of underlying conflicts, maintained by processes of unconscious dynamics. The treatment model is first to evaluate the behavior and then to modify it through the procedures that modify the old behavior or that learn new behaviors (eg conditioning techniques, systematic desensitization, modeling, etc.). For children and adults with autism spectrum notes, the world can experience sensory overload every day. In many countries, art therapy has been seen for some time as a complementary or helpful therapy within the therapies of children with autism alongside music therapy, play therapy, etc.

Keywords: art therapy; behavioral approach; therapies; autism; cognitive restructuring; emotion; children; techniques

The behavioral approach of art-therapy involves the application of techniques to modify the behavior (operant conditioning and modeling procedures) of art-therapy practice (with children emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded).

At first, the idea of a behavioral approach to art therapy might seem antithetical. However, behavioral techniques are used by all art therapists. For example, encouraging a blocked or inhibited patient to do a trick to involve him or her in using

¹ Senior Lecturer, PhD, Faculty of Communication and International Relations, Specialization Psychology, Danubius University of Galați, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., Galati 800654, Romania, Tel.: +40372361102, Fax: +40372361290, Corresponding author: neli_susanu@univdanubius.ro.

the media, then praising the individual for participation, is a behavioral coping approach.

Another approach of art therapy of special utility for mentally retarded children with emotional disorders is “modeling reality” (P. Roth, 1978), combining traditional techniques of art therapy with the principles of behavior modification; involves education during the therapeutic process. Modeling reality starts by identifying a concept that is too little revealed in a child's artistic productions. This concept is then developed in a representational form by first building the therapist and then the child - into increasingly complex two- or three-dimensional models.

The term Behavioral Cognitive Therapy (CBT) is an umbrella concept for an area of therapeutic interventions. Mahoney and Arnkoff (1978) identified three major forms of CBT:

1. *cognitive structuring therapies;*
2. *therapies focused on adaptive capacities;*
3. *problem solving therapies.*

Psychotherapy of cognitive restructuring was first developed by A. Ellis (1962). Although cognitive approaches to therapy are now decades old, they have not been widely accepted in the field of art therapy. In 1979, two art therapists began to problematize the relationship of art therapy with cognitive theories of behavior using the work of George Kelly (1955) as a point of reference. It focused on the importance of perception in the way that people choose to behave, defining perception as an active cognitive process. Each individual develops a unique set of perceptions of their own world through active interaction with the environment. Kelly labeled an individual's conglomerate of perceptions as the “personal construction system.”

In 1979 Carnes noted that since imagery, visual thinking and creativity were aspects of cognition, “personal constructs” could be both non-verbal and non-verbal. Thus, the accomplishment of the artistic work provides an opportunity to express nonverbal ideas that could represent the core of a system of personal constructions of an individual. By having the subjects draw a set of “mental states” of their personal constructs, it may help them to gain a greater understanding of their selves and their belief systems.

It is not surprising that most of the literature on art-therapy and CBT refers to activity with children and adolescents, since behavioral management is often necessary for young people with disorders. Sobol (1985) was one of the first to note that certain behavioral interventions may be necessary in the child's art therapy, especially if antisocial or problem behaviors were manifested.

V. Packard (1977) found that art facilitates the acquisition of new ideas and learning. For children with learning difficulties, new information is often lost or entangled in disorganized mental "paths". The "cognitive maps" are recovered and can be reproduced visually in the art workshop. In Packard's approach, visual images can be essentially repaired and cleaned. Newly reconfigured schemes lead to an increased ability to make connections between blocks of information and additional learning. She linked the act of creating the artistic work with the promotion of "mental matching".

Children can also discover inner speech. These mental messages can be illustrated and discussed. If an inner message is considered harmful, the child is encouraged to change the visual message.

Art therapy is particularly appropriate for CBT because performing the artistic work is an inherent cognitive process. When creating a work of art, the artist must be involved in revealing mental images and messages, accessing memories by making decisions and generating solutions. Whether drawing or sculpting, creating art involves instant feedback systems and uninterrupted reinforcement of satisfying behaviors.

Cognition cannot be separated from creativity. Visual thinking is a crucial and central part of the creative process, according to the claims of creative scientists. Michael Faraday visualized electric and magnetic force wools; Einstein reported that it relies more on mental imagery than language; Kekule discovered the benzene ring through a vision of a series of atoms bound in a chain and biting its tail like a snake. "However, it is true that 1,000 words can hardly exhaust the richness of a single image" (Bruner, 1966).

Art-therapy method of working with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders

The paternity of art-therapy is attributed to the English painter Adrian Hill, who experienced it in 1940. Suffering from tuberculosis and being admitted to a sanatorium, during his convalescence, he also makes drawings and tapestries which, to the great astonishment of the doctors, improve his condition. of health. “If satisfied, the creative spirit helps to heal the sick,” writes Hill. Margaret Naumburg, an educator and therapist who first used art-therapy as a distinct form of psychotherapy, said that expression through art is a way of manifesting the images existing in the unconscious.

The generic expression “art-therapy” includes all forms of art: dansterapy, melotherapy, drama, plastic arts, some forms of ergo-therapy. In both acceptances, the art therapy is carried out within a therapeutic framework, taking place either between two persons or within a group. Currently, there are many groups or clubs based on art-therapeutic techniques, especially because of their extremely tender nature.

In a narrow sense, taking into account only the plastic arts, art therapy was born due to the development of a set of techniques used initially in psychiatric hospitals, some doctors paid special attention to the products of patients' creativity. At-therapy has a wide applicability, from young children to the elderly, being used mainly for the rehabilitation, stimulation and development of children and adults with disabilities (physical and mental), including children with autism spectrum disorders, but also for development. personal and in education, respectively in prevention.

In many countries, art therapy has been seen for some time as a complementary or helpful therapy within the therapies of children with autism alongside music therapy, play therapy, etc. Autism spectrum disorder (TSA) is a developmental disorder that occurs in the first two years of life. Thus, language, play, cognition, social development and adaptation skills are affected. Studies conducted by specialists in behavioral analysis have shown that early and intensive intervention can significantly help the recovery of children with autism spectrum disorders. One of the most used behavioral modeling strategies that has results is ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis). But in ABA, often the emotional, emotional side is left behind because the methods of measuring them are considered subjective.

For children and adults with autism spectrum notes, the world can experience sensory overload every day. Starting from the hearing and very pronounced odor to

feeling overwhelmed in crowded spaces, combining with difficulties of expression and understanding of social interactions, all of these make it difficult to experience the environment.

It is often considered that as long as children with ASD have impaired communication skills, they cannot participate in psychotherapy. I was asked how art therapy can be used in these children as long as they are taught to define emotions through ABA techniques. Given that they think a lot about images, they can open and build lines of communication with silent or non-verbal clients using the various materials used in art therapy. For this reason, art therapy offers a way to access the psychotherapeutic process.

A main and often used theme with which children in the autism spectrum work is the image of their own body. For this subject, a sheet of paper with the image of the human body is needed, a box with various materials such as twine, beads, glitter, shells, coins, leaf twigs etc; art materials (pencils, watercolors, tempera, chalk, etc.) and a box in which various images cut from magazines are placed. If the child's motility allows it, we can offer the possibility to choose and cut the favorite images alone.

Art therapy sessions are structured so that they have a beginning, a part where the child works and an end and the rules and limits are quite clearly defined. These help the child to build the routine he needs to feel safe. In this creative process, children experience the sensory aspect of the process through the texture of the materials. Collage helps them relieve anxiety by being able to actively participate and by having the freedom to choose their favorite material so that they can express themselves.

Art therapy has a wide applicability, from young children to the elderly, being used mainly for the rehabilitation, stimulation and development of children and adults with disabilities (physical and mental), including children with autism spectrum disorders, but also for development. personal and in education, respectively in prevention.

Bibliography

Alavinezhad, R., Mousavi, M. & Sohrabi, N. (2014). Effects of Art Therapy on Anger and Self-Esteem in Aggressive Children. *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 113, 117.

Anzieu, D. (2004). *Psychoanalysis of creative work*. Bucharest: Trei Publishing House.

Aron Rubin, Judith (2009). *Art- therapy. Theory and practice*. Bucharest: Trei Publishing House.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Emotional Intelligence*. Old yard. Bucharest: Publishing House.

<http://expresive.ro/art-terapia-in-tterburarile-de-spectru-autist>.

<http://www.psychologies.ro/cunoaste-te-2/development-personal-cunoaste-te-2/art-terapia-285232>.

Kandinsky (1994). *Spiritual in art*. Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing House.

Kelly, G.A. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs*. New York.

Mahoney & Arnkoff (1978). *Cognitive and self-control therapies*. New York: Wiley.

Naumburg, Margaret (1974). *An Introduction to Art Therapy*. New York: Teachers' Publisher, College Press.

Susanu, Neaga (2018). *Course notes- Psychotherapies*. Galati: Danubius University in Galați.