



Pediatrician's Innovative Approach in Everyday Work with Children and Adolescents

Olivera M Cirkovic*

BEOMED, Serbia

***Corresponding author:** Dr. Olivera M Cirkovic, MD, MA, EAGT, BEOMED, Private practice, Address: 11 000 Beograd, Vojvode Stepe 25, Serbia, Tel no: +381 64 119 4747; Email: olivera.cirkovic@map.org.rs

Received Date: June 29, 2018; **Published Date:** July 20, 2018

Abstract

As children are constantly growing and changing (psycho-physically) during the years of ageing and growing up in an adult person, searching for homeostasis, for balance, this quest for homeostasis and equilibrium can be followed by crises and problems [1]. The organism constantly searches for homeostasis, maintaining both psycho and physical health and checks that balance (adaptation through searching) with aim to satisfy all its needs. Children respond to family and community (environment) problems, trauma, crises and losses in approximately similar developmental modes (dysfunctionality). Today, we increasingly encounter children with a manifestation of a developmental impediment in effective social communication in a higher or lower degree. All I have been writing and talking about child wellbeing, illness (acute or chronic without difference), medical care and psychotherapy so far and what I was doing was just one part of this long, curvy road, full of obstacles and surprises. The other part that I was interested in, all in order to improve my work as a pediatrician and gestalt psychotherapist is what is behind the face of the therapy. What is above the therapy, standard medical treatment? That was the reason that in my everyday pediatrician's practices my team and I implemented gestalt psychotherapy as measure of support (in some cases as preventive measure). Gestalt psychotherapy represents new paths in work with kids in pediatrician's office and support to all healing methods.

Gestalt uses techniques that focuses on gaining an awareness of emotions and behaviors in the present rather than in the past, here rather than there. Due to etiology of most commonly psycho-physical disturbance in my pediatrician's practice, psychological reasons are one of commonly mentioned risk factors. This paper shows how gestalt therapy can be used in work with children with chronic same as acute illnesses that blocked emotions and interrupted contact on several levels, but also shows how gestalt therapy can be used as preventive measures and support in everyday pediatrician's practice. This paper/opinion will present a part of results I got, special awareness I got, my feelings, empathy, my interpretive understandings. I started with this research motivated to improve my work and results I got have the potential to become guideline for next step in developing best appropriate combination of medical and psychotherapeutic procedures.

Keywords: Pediatrician; Gestalt psychotherapy; Gestalt techniques; Holistic approach

Introduction

This paper (opinion) is different and important for me (personally, same as pediatrician and gestalt

psychotherapist) in many ways. It is evident that something new in our everyday pediatrician's practice should be implement, should be provide. A new technique, that will support our work, researches,

techniques and equipment and provide even better results and final outcomes in pediatrician's practice. I believe that there is no disease that occurs just like that. The facts are that the same techniques, the same medications, same protocols, the same staff, etc. do not give the same final results (outcomes) to our patients. Part of our success, for sure, depends on our small patients, but also on their parents and their relationships with the child, attitude to the illness, relationship between themselves and also with themselves personally.

That was the reason that in my everyday pediatrician's practices my team and I implemented gestalt psychotherapy as measure of support (in some cases as preventive measure). Gestalt psychotherapy represents new paths in work with kids in pediatrician's office and support to all healing methods. Gestalt psychotherapy is a therapy oriented at the present moment. It is dynamic therapy, oriented to the processes that take place in and around the person. Gestalt is holistic psychotherapy that focus has on the healthy integration of all the processes of the entire organism (body, psyche and soul) in order to achieve balance and satisfy all individual needs. For this reason, the work and attention of the psychotherapist is directed to spoken (verbal), to body language (non-verbal), to voice (color, strength, speech mode), to emotional status, to intellect, to support (same self support, as family and community support).

Discussion

I believed in gestalt therapy as a humanistic therapy with holistic approach. Gestalt uses techniques that focuses on gaining an awareness of emotions and behaviors in the present rather than in the past, here rather that there (Pearls, 1951). According to etiology of most commonly psycho-physical disturbance in my pediatrician's practice, psychological reasons are one of commonly mentioned risk factors (beside life style). This paper shows how gestalt therapy can be used in work with children that blocked emotions and interrupted contact on several levels, children from family with extremely complex problems and relationships, children with psychosomatic symptoms and disorders, but also shows how gestalt therapy can be used as preventive measures and support in everyday pediatrician's practice.

As children are constantly growing and changing (psycho-physically) during the years of ageing and growing up in an adult person, searching for homeostasis, for balance, this quest for homeostasis and equilibrium can be followed by crises and problems [1]. The organism constantly searches for homeostasis, maintaining both psycho and physical health and checks that balance

(adaptation through searching) with aim to satisfy all its needs. Children respond to family and community (environment) problems, trauma, crises and losses in approximately similar developmental modes (dysfunctionality). Today, we increasingly encounter children with a manifestation of a developmental impediment in effective social communication in a higher or lower degree [2]. Consider that about 3-5% of children have some types of developmental communication disorder.

The importance of working with children is multiple

- i. The normal psychomotor development of children is provided.
- ii. Healthy, quality contact is ensured, both with parents and the environment, as well as with children oneself.
- iii. Prevention of the manifestation of somatic illnesses during growing up would be provide.
- iv. Risk factors that affect the psychomotor development of children also alleviate, if not eliminate.
- v. Work with children and parents when a psychomotor development disorder exists in order to improve the same and to facilitate daily activities is extensive.

In accordance to achieve a complete holistic approach in pediatric practice, the goal should be to implement gestalt therapy in everyday practice and support (on that way) prevention measures that would reduce the already mentioned problems and disorders in psychosomatic development. Individual or group therapy might be performed with children. In addition to medical treatment, gestalt techniques, which depend on patients and their age, should be also applied. Individual work, through play, with children and counseling and education the parents should be the main method of implementation gestalt therapy in everyday activities of pediatrician. Beside medical treatment (I set that up as condition in my practice), gestalt therapy (regular or Brief Gestalt Therapy) should be practice both with children and parents (or caregivers).

Picture of gestalt therapy in named situations should be based on a horizontal relationship. Exactly that kind of relationship provided us a holistic approach as pediatrician and therapist. Together with children and parents we would be able to explore nuances within relationships (paying careful attention to present experience). Required gestalt techniques depend on phase of illness or disorder. That means, firstly, that we have to be acquainted with illness or disorder. Secondly, we could not use techniques as we (as gestalt psychotherapist) use to do. Different stage of illness requires different

techniques, appropriate to the psycho-physical condition of the child.

A healthy psychomotor development of children is a dynamic process, and gestalt support will ensure that they adapt creatively to these processes, build their identity, and manifest feelings. In somatic diseases, e.g. asthma, the number of acute anxiety attacks has decreased, and the strength of the same (same results I got with eczema or gastrointestinal symptoms or disorders). Working with different patients, I realized that an important (supporting) factor for children with asthma, eczema or some (very common in last a few years) gastrointestinal pain, as well as for their recovery, has the role of one of the parents (mostly mothers). Their (mother's / father's) functionality provides a safe, fast recovery. The relationship between parents and the environment is crucial when the first symptoms occur.

Conclusion

In conclusion, work with children using gestalt therapy methods is a natural process, as gestalt therapy itself is an organic process (organismic process). Continuous empowerment of children provides the potential of children to cope with everyday problems they use to come to us, asking for help. An important step in the healthy expression of emotions, and therefore a healthy psychomotor development, is the strengthening self of the children. Gestalt support is also of great importance for the development of emotions, prevention of neglect or abuse of children.

Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank to the mentors: prof. Zorica Zivkovic, pediatrician and Lidija Pecotic, PhD, gestalt psychotherapists for mentoring, for support, advices and cooperation.

References

- Oaklander V (1997) The Therapeutic Process With Children and Adolescents. *Gestalt Review* 1(4): 292-317.
- Neuman, Barbara M, Neuman, Philip R (2006) *Development through life: A psychological approach.* (9th edn), CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, Belmont.
- Webpage reference: Olivera M Cirkovic. Gestalt Therapy as Preventive Measure in Everyday Work in Paediatrician's Practice.
- Oaklander V (2001) Gestalt Play Therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy* 10(2): 45-55.
- Ventegodt S, Morad M, Vardi G, Merrick J (2004) Clinical holistic medicine: holistic treatment of children. *The Scientific World Journal* 4: 581-588.
- Hausner S (2015) *Even if it Costs my Life. Systemic Constellations and Serious Illness.* Routledge, New York.
- Bomon H (2014) *Auf die Schauen. Spirituelle Psychotherapie.* Zagreb: Intronaut, pp. 88-99.
- Finley L (2011) *Phenomenology for Therapists: Researching the Lived World.* John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, West Sussex, UK, pp. 5-27.
- Cirkovic O (2018) *Looking for a cure I am finding myself.* Belgrade, SRB: Riznica.
- Pecotic L (2015) *Awareness and Contemporaneity: Information, technology, Communication.* Proceedings of the 1st International and Interdisciplinary Congress – Contemporaneity, Ethics, Awareness, Psychotherapy. Zagreb, Hrvatska.
- Polster E (1987) *Every Person's Life is Worth a Novel.* W W Norton & Co, New York, USA.
- Yontef GM (1993) *Awareness, Dialogue and Process: Essays on Gestalt Therapy.* Gestalt Journal Press, Highland, NY.
- Vesin M (2014) *Crossroads of Guilt. Advisory Psychology and Sacrament Confession at the Crossroad between Pathological and Healthy Feelings of Guilt.* SRB: Riznica, Belgrade.
- Roubal J (2016) *Towards a Research Tradition in Gestalt Therapy.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, New caslte, UK.
- Wheeler G, Backman S (1994) *On Intimate Ground: A Gestalt Approach to Working with Couples.* Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, USA, pp. 418.
- Zinker J & Nevis S (1998) *The Aesthetics of Gestalt Couples Therapy (quoted part).* Gestalt Institute of Cleveland Press, San Francisco, USA.
- Ginger S (2009) *Gestalt therapy: The art of contact.* Penn State University Press 13(2): 201-203.
- Houston G (2003) *Brief Gestalt Therapy.* SAGE Publications Ltd, London, UK.
- Joyce P, Sills C (2014) *Skills in Gestalt, Counseling & Psychotherapy.* (3rd edn), SAGE Publications Ltd, London, UK.