

HOLISTIC HEALING IN PSYCHIATRY

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Abstract: The content of the concept of health has new definition. Health means bio-psych-socio-spiritual well-being. Spirituality doesn't mean religion, because the belief in God is only one way, but maybe one of the most important spiritual values. In our globalization-age, the positive values of spirituality may get lost, and the consequence is a moral deficit / crisis. Our task / mission is to render these values back to our patients. In the treating process of any mental disturbances, beside the proper pharmacological treatment we have to add the spiritual help, in a process we call socio-therapy. In the rehabilitation program must be used some important notions, such as: forgiveness, humility, biblical love, faith, soothing role of the family. In Hungary, in our psychiatric hospital of Pomáz, we tried socio-therapy within a small group spiritual therapy. The leaders were a psychiatrist, myself, and a young catholic priest with previous education in spirituality as psychologist and socio-therapist. The meetings were held every other week for one hour. In our discussions, we used real notions and symbols. After 6 months of working together, we asked each participant to write a report about his/her experience. From the positive results we had, I am presenting 2 cases of successful rehabilitation, showing what the patients described in their feedback, as the result of this type of therapy.

Key words: modern definition of health, spirituality, use of spirituality in socio-therapy as group therapy.

The actual definition of health as disseminated by WHO has three factors: health represents biological, psychological and social well-being. In our age, spirituality arouses people's interest, and we can see a lot of advertisements of different esoteric activities around us. It seems that the holistic approach of health suggests that without spirituality full health doesn't exist.

In the post-modern age, the positive spiritual values are lost, and the consequence is a kind of moral deficit / crisis. This empty state of mind of some people needs to be refilled, therefore they are seeking other things, e.g., resorting to alcohol and drugs.

In Hungary, the Hungarian Psychiatric Association has every year its big congress, and since 2010, at these meetings, spirituality is the part of each scientific program. REFERENCE

In our field of psycho-social rehabilitation, we talk about new released articles and attend presentations, followed by discussions, and moreover there are some congresses focused on rehabilitation and about recovery. We the professionals call this process rehabilitation, and our clients call it recovery, but until now spirituality was not mentioned, as a possible tool in the healing process of our patients.

According to Jung - *the essence of the spiritual truth is a personal experience, and not an opinion, or an ideology.* REFERENCE Considering myself the importance of spirituality, I first decided to organize some sessions, and round-table discussions, but now I seriously think that spirituality can be the third big topic of our work in healing. Our World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation, WAPR organized its 12th world congress in Seoul-South Korea last year in November, and I had a one-hour presentation, during which I proposed that spirituality should be the third most important topic of WAPR, besides rehabilitation and recovery. REFERENCE Therefore, I started to apply the spiritual type of work in our field, as group therapy, with the next first occasion. Using it as a socio-therapeutic method, we waited for some results.

Spirituality itself pertains only to humans, and it has a wide range of meaning. Traditionally it was defined as the process of personal transformation, under the consequences of religious conceptions. REFERENCE During the history, the definition of the notion had changed. The different World's religions gave different meanings according to their ideology, the biblical love plays a central role in all of these. REFERENCE

According to an assessment 80-90 % of the humanity of the globe belong to a religion among the 10.000 religions. 150 religions have more than one million members. 2/3 parts of the population

belong to the 3 largest religions. The number of atheists is about 15 %. The majority of Christians live in 120 countries. The Muslims in 45 countries, Buddhists in 9 countries. The most exact assessment is published in 1991. (Süle, Hunyady) THIS REFERENCE IS TOO OLD

People in the 19th century started to separate from religion. Today, in or post-modernist era, it is of highest importance to see that spirituality doesn't mean only religion. Thus, defining spirituality is difficult, and still today the belief in God remains as an important features of spirituality. We may never forget the bad features of believing in a Supreme God: the hate, the aggressive feelings, the envy, the despise of non-believers, the passion for money, the mammon, and so many others.

Nevertheless, our task is to deal with spirituality's good features, and to make our mission to use these in healing process of our patients, and maybe in the communities where we work and live, as well.

Our hospital has 462 beds, and in the social rehabilitation part in the SARA Home 150 beds, making altogether 612 beds. My department with 88 beds is the V. Psychiatric Rehabilitation department of the hospital. The leaders of the program are a young catholic priest who received earlier education in spirituality and psychodrama, and myself, a psychiatrist, also psychologist with Jungian orientation, and socio-therapist. We openly stated that our work will not be a lesson of religiousness!

The members of the group were chosen from several diagnostic, mostly psychotics, alcoholics, and patients with personality disorders. Some of them were expressing magic-related psychotic content. The group members have different social and educational backgrounds, and share different levels and notions about faith. Most of the patients are some kind of Christians, some are atheists, and few deal with a sort of Buddhism. Some of them had no previous religious education what-so-ever, because in Hungary we lived in atheist, communist society. However most of them were baptized as Christians, because one religious grandmother, or somebody-else from the family took the new-born baby to a secret baptism ceremony, in a faraway village.

The group therapy sessions were held every other week, for one hour. In our discussions, we used real notions and symbols.

As a proof of their desire for recovery, almost all of the members expressed the desire for spiritual healing in rehabilitation process, as well. We wanted to satisfy their latent need of spiritual values, and we tried to find a common language, for unifying their different point of view about human values.

We emphasized the importance of family, of biblical love, forgiveness, happiness, humility, the experience of death, and even ash - as a symbol of mistakes, or maybe of sins.

Ash Wednesday is a well-known Catholic celebration day. REFERENCE The ash, as an ancient symbol of passing through life, is still today part the of the Catholic ceremony. The consecrated flower's ash is used, the flower in catholic church is the willow twig blessed on Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday is the last Sunday before Easter in Christian religion. We put the ash given by the priest on the skin of the person, on their hand, fingers (in the Catholic ceremony to the forehead), and afterwards we all of us washed this ash with water. The ash symbolized what is considered dirty, the sins of our spirit, and washing the ash we get rid of our sins, remembering that we are mortal beings.

Once, the priest brought an *incense* as symbol of spiritual purity. It was used in antiquity against the devilish strength, it was burned in every church, it gave support, patronage, and spiritual purity; also it could give rise to spiritual enrichment. The Catholic Church uses the burned

incense in regular ceremonies, and during our meetings we used it as the symbol of spiritual purity. Every member of the group got a little piece of incense, and put it in fire.

And similarly to these above mentioned gestures, we made appeal to real-life things as well. For instance, emphasizing the importance of family, we laid a table with all of utensils for lunch. We spoke about the occasions in which the patients had meals together with their family. We made the patients think about what does it mean to be together with the family, chatting about problems, successes, etc., and discussed how the missing family could be replaced?

After 6 months of regular meetings, we asked the participants to give written reports about their experiences, and we had few special positive results.

I would like to present 2 cases of successful rehabilitation, mentioning what the clients confirmed in their feedback, as the result of this spiritual group therapy.

A young 29 years old schizophrenic man, had frequent conflicts with his family, especially with his father. He believed that his family is hostile to him, and once he had aggressive interaction with his father. According to the father's declaration, during that altercation, the patient (his son) almost killed him. The mental illness started 7 years ago, and he was treated several times in the psychiatric department. After the discharge from the hospital, the family admitted him to live in a pension-house, but without success. At the end, the young man was admitted to our psychiatric rehabilitation department. From the beginning he belonged to the spiritual group therapy. During the treatment – of course with antipsychotics and work therapy – his condition changed. He expressed openly that his relationship to his family completely changed under the influence of spiritual group therapy. The regular home visits became successful, and in the end he could go home, according to his and his family's request. They could find a sheltered workshop, so he has also a job. Now he enjoys a successful life with his family, and he declared that the success is due to the spiritual therapy we provided to him.

The other young man with personality disorder experienced for the first time a session of spiritual therapy since his childhood. He had no religious education, but as adult he started to be interested in Buddhism, without being deeply involved. He diligently took part in the sessions, and when we asked for a written report about his experiences during group therapy, he wrote:

“In my opinion this group is very useful, because it helps with our psychic problems, and deals with the fundamental questions of spirit. By this way, it helps to make the life during our staying in the hospital more tolerable. Although I am not a religious man, this spiritual therapy helped me to understand some topics, and made obvious to me that there are some values, which can be strengthen in us, as human beings. Such values are for instance the biblical love, the patience, the gratitude, the unselfishness, and the belief in good things. I am sure that we could make life much better for us, if we would take these values more seriously. In my opinion, we must act consciously, because only these values are essential for human relationships. Without them, everything is sentenced to deterioration and perdition. Summarizing all these, I like this group and I hope, we will have more important topics to discuss in the future, thing that will be useful for all of us.”

This so well-appreciated group therapy happened at his second occasion of his treatment in our department. His second admission was necessary because of a relapse in his mental state. He was living alone in an apartment, and his step father was taking care of him after his mother's death. He was a talented musician, played guitar, but had to stop to deal with his mental problems. He always promised to seek for some job, to continue his guitar music, looking for his previous teacher, but he was never able to succeed.

During his second stay his condition changed, and we could discharge him not too long after this therapy was finished. He regularly comes for follow-up examinations. He takes regularly his

medicine, and he has found a job at a normal working place. He is now listening to some religious radio broadcast, called Maria Radio. Also, he started to go to attend the mess, and he is considering baptism.

It is my duty to explain that we never pushed him to do such things. Everything what he did was from his own ideas and resulted from his own previous activity. He has some money inherited from his mother, and with the help of his step father he may buy a little house, because he is aware that renting is not for him. He told us last time that he started playing guitar again.

For us, the spiritual therapy team, his confirmation that his personal changes occurred because of the therapy we delivered, was the most important. It seems that the spiritual therapy group helped him to understand the value of life, and now he is able to keep himself in good condition.

This rehabilitation of a human being represents a big success, and is the result of spiritual therapy.

As a corollary of all was said here, I would like to make a statement: In my opinion, during the rehabilitation process, the new healing paradigm is the bio-psycho-social and spiritual healing.