

Summary



Theatre Therapy in Aiding Communication of Adults with Moderate Intellectual Disability

This book comprises a comprehensive overview of theater therapy and drama therapy related issues, focusing on the application of these therapies in activities supporting development. Humanistic and personalistic approach and resulting from this paradigm understanding of theatre as a process *following the person* can be used by theatre therapists or theatre instructors – therapists as a form of support or reinforcement of competences in any form of communication in its broad sense. On the one hand, theatre activities can be an excellent tool for verifying acts of communicative expression in individuals with severe intellectual disability, and on the other hand, they can serve as a key to open the possibility of such persons' inclusive functioning in society.

The author discusses a theatre therapy project with a focus on supporting interpersonal communication activity of adults with moderate disability. Fitting into the mainstream of research based on the assumption that man is continuously developing at all stages of life, the author advocates the view that a communication activities are indispensable to proper development, all the more so because man is born equipped with certain predispositions to use drama/play and these predispositions may well be used in the process of aiding human daily functioning. Subsequent chapters contain a presentation of a wide variety of theatre applications in therapies, the history and development of paratheatrical approaches and systems as well as their interdisciplinarity. Modern concepts of supporting development and education of adults with disabilities are discussed, with an emphasis on the necessity on the part of therapist to undertake nonstandard actions and to seek new methods stimulating the disabled to acquire specific competencies.

The author presents her own, proved by research, concept of the supportive role of theatre therapy in the Mdt model, which she successfully applied in a nine-month-long experiment carried out with the participation of the disabled. The book includes a discussion of the methodological basis and the results of the author's longitudinal experimental research on a group of 56 adults with moderate intellectual disability. The analysis of the effectiveness of custom-made theatre therapy workshops that were focused on specific dimensions of communicative

activity, such as concentration on one's own goals in conversation, speech expressiveness and preservation of social norms in interpersonal relations is based on the assessment of the level of these skills at various stages of the research process. In their statements quoted in this work, the participants and their caretakers point out the changes in interpersonal relations, which enabled the participants/actors sense the rhythms of actions undertaken by others and adapt to them in an open, natural way.

On the one hand, the concept of theatre therapy presented here is in line with the concepts of contemporary special needs education going far beyond the theory of deficiency. On the other hand, it is focused on stimulating rich, artistic aspect of theatrical activities in therapy perceived as a way of reaching art by means of drama therapy. The process of creating impacts constitutes a specific array of opportunities to awaken the potential of drama therapy participants, which includes the development of their particular skills. The methods and principles of work presented here rely on creativity viewed in the categories of the optimal functioning of man in so far as they emphasize human subjectivity and individuality. They can be utilized to solve numerous problems, at both individual and social levels, in particular by therapists working with groups. The author's scripts *Blue Horse* and *Waxworks Exhibition Room* contain proposals of tasks aimed at increasing the possibility of experiencing strong emotions and discovering one's inner potential.

Research findings comprised in this book show the importance of methods based on action and creative theatrical play that are essential in boosting communicative activity in adults with moderate intellectual disability. The author presents some research tools for the assessment of that kind of action, such as for example Z. Necki's SAK test and her own test *Body*. Contemporary theoretical and practical presumptions related to rehabilitation of adults with intellectual disability to a large extent apply to interpersonal relations. In this respect, theatre therapy workshops discussed here are based on experiencing engagement in relations and on drawing lessons from everyday experience, which takes place, however, in a different space, from the perspective of performing art. It is essential that an attempt be made to design new, modern ways of utilizing theatre therapy and man's natural propensity for role playing in therapeutic practice with adults.