Something beyond language: SF-Work with Families with Babies and Small Children

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Factors of Efficiency in Psychotherapy (Lambert 1992, in: Wampold 2001)

- „Common" Factors (40%):
  - Client factors, like „Ego-Strength"
  - Factors of the context, like accidents, social networks and mechanisms and systems of support
- Factors of Relationship (30%): interest, authenticy, empathy, emotional warmth, acceptancy, support to new ways etc.
- Techniques (15%): special interventions
- Factors of expectancy (Placebo effects 15%): Client knows, that he/she will be treated. Trust in the therapist and the special therapeutical approach

Purpose of Relationships

- Purpose of Relationships in Life:
  Development of cooperation to survive

- Purpose of Relationship in Work:
  Development of cooperation to reach goals,
  which have to be negotiated in a dialogue

Useful Working Assumptions about Children (by Insoo Kim Berg)

- Children maybe basically want to:
  - Have their parents be proud of them
  - Please their parents and other adults
  - Be accepted as a part of a social group
  - Be active and involved in activities with others
  - Learn new things
  - Be surprised and surprise others
  - Voice their opinions and choices
  - Make choices, when given an opportunity

Useful Working Assumptions about Parents (by Insoo Kim Berg)

▸ Parents maybe basically want to:
  ◦ Be proud of their child
  ◦ Have a positive influence on their child
  ◦ Hear good news about their child and what their child is good at
  ◦ Give their child a good education and a good chance of success in life (however they define it)
  ◦ See their child's future better than theirs
  ◦ Have a good relationship with their child
  ◦ Be hopeful about their child
  ◦ Feel, that they are good parents

SF-Therapy (EBTA Practice Definition)

▸ Principles
- Client directed
- Interactional
- Competency based
- Goal directed
- Future oriented

The SF-Process (EBTA Practice Definition)

- Start with openness, supportiveness and respectfulness
- Form a client centered, empowering relationship
- Try a specific and relational evaluation
- Look at the best hopes, dreams and visions
- Focus on the client's and environments resources and skills
- Agree on goals and steps
- Focus on what works instead on what does not work and empower the client to do more of it
- Secure the change and do follow up

Cooperation: Pre-Assumptions for a SF-therapy session including small children 1

- People (Clients, Families, Parents, Children) did **a lot of change work** *before you met them first*
- In meeting with you *a next step of change was made*
- People (Adult Clients, Parents) probably have a great experience in describing problems, which could be a reason for the fact that their *thinking usually is more problem focused than focused on changes and therefore mostly directed to the past and past experiences.*

Cooperation: Pre-Assumptions for a SF-therapy session including small children 2

- *Children, especially small children, have a **short term view of the problem**. For them the problem is gone, when the person and situation associated with the problem is gone.*

- *Small children have a **special perception of time** and therefore a **special attitude of mindfulness**. They have no thinking about the past and no thinking about the future. Their major experience is to **deal and cope with the present situation***

Possible Attitudes of the SF–Therapist working with small children

- Disciplined observation („Don't think, observe!")
- Be open to the children's expressions and the reactions of the parents
- React immediately and properly
- Be aware of the uniqueness of the therapy situation
- Try to get a state of mindfulness
- Wittgenstein: „Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."

General Principles: Giving attention, interest, involvement and encouragement instead of giving praise 1

▸ Praise:
- Mostly related to the result of an action
- Classification of the success of an performed action instead of the process and the effort to go on
- Related to specific conditions
- Fear of failure
- Expect of praise means that not the own perception and validation or an action is relevant but the perception and validation of an other person.

General Principles: Giving attention, interest, involvement and encouragement instead of giving praise 2

▸ Encouragement: Means the process and the efforts of an action are in the focus and not the result

Consequences and process organisation for a SF-therapy session including small children

▶ **Preparing the situation**:
  Room: carpet on the floor, washable walls, mirror, bookshelf with plays, paper and bulb chalk, children's chairs and table

▶ **Starting:** welcome, presenting, asking about favourites, offering the possibilities in the room, encouraging

▶ **Balancing between child and parents**: Encouraging the parents to observe their child just now carefully and recognize possible differences between the actual situation in the therapy room and the situation at home, looking at the child's exploring and playing behaviour and possibly contributing and participating in the child's play, encouraging the parents to intervene if the child tends to do things, which are possibly dangerous and not allowed in the therapy room

▶ **Closing at the proper time**: *max. 30 minutes with children up to 4 years, giving compliments to the child and to the parents especially in managing the therapy situation, offering ideas of maintaining and transforming the experiences of the therapy session into the situation at home*

Useful Cooperation: Not Knowing with and without words

- Look what the child is doing when coming into the therapy room!
- Look what the parents are doing!
- Joining with the child and parents:
  ◦ Welcome and thanks for coming
  ◦ Offering the space and plays
  ◦ Give time and space to the child
  ◦ Offer parents to share present experience
  ◦ Encourage child and parents in activities
  ◦ Ask about ideas to the child's present behaviour
  ◦ Ask about interests, abilities and sucess-experience

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Socrates

▶ „It is not bad to fall down, but it is bad if staying and maintaining there, where you had fallen down."

Thank you for your attention!

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