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The possibilities of story therapy in the rehabilitation and reintegration of addicts (methodological guide with exercises)

Summary

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Thinking in stories, storytelling is a universal phenomenon that has been present in all cultures since ancient times. "Narrative, as a basic mode of human experience and existence - an anthropological characteristic - exists before language or story, and plays a decisive role in the development of human thought, personality and culture" (László, 2005, 29.)

There are many different forms, versions and levels of stories, from the simplest everyday "fairy tale", through folk tales and fairy tales to myths of origins and sacred narratives. However, despite their genre differences, they are all characterised by the fact that they only make sense in a communicative space, i.e. in the act of transmission, of "telling", in which they have a teaching and directing effect. Storytelling and listening to stories are therefore communal events through which the community can remember, be strengthened, shaped and developed, and the individual can gain an identification and recognition of him/herself that can induce a kind of cathartic state, i.e. encourage change. In this sense, the encounter with stories is identical to the mechanism of action of all artworks, which aim to induce an essential change in the recipient through the "suggestion of beauty" (Polcz, 2009, p. 81).

The identification with a story is most effective when it speaks to the listener on a personal level, when it makes him or her aware of his or her own fears and unresolved problems, and in this way "the spiritual phenomena that appear in symbolic form in stories contribute to inner development, to the reduction of the psychological problems that accompany inner development." (Tancz, 2009, p. 48)

"Through fairy tales, one can gain valid knowledge about how the world works, what one's tasks in life can be; how to get helpers, what to do with the evil and hostile forces that threaten us, and how to imagine and even do something that everyone says is impossible." (Boldizsár, 2010)

In the integration of addicts, we aim to develop the capacity for social inclusion, to equip the clientele against self-deprecation, self-stigmatisation and negative reactions from others. In the long term we also target developing coping strategies that prevent relapse and backsliding. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on self-help, self-empowerment, social and/or life skills development.

The professional outcome will further develop the following themes:

- the psychological role and significance of fairy tales;
- the role and significance of story therapy in the reintegration of addicts;
- the role of story therapy in the reintegration of drug addiction in the social rehabilitation of addicts
- how to organise and run a storytelling session;
- and the professional material includes a storybook, i.e. a collection of stories that can guide the reintegration process of addicts.

A bibliography has been compiled for those interested in the subject.