



Workshop Presentation

Forum on Therapeutic Theater with Emphasis on Helping Children Cope with Stress and Mental Pressures

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Published: 1 Oct, 2014

Abstract

Using theater in the treatment as well as education traced back to several thousand years ago. In fact, drama therapy has been used for a long time in clinics and rehabilitation/treatment centers. Children theater experts intend to adopt this approach outside of the confined framework of clinics and make it as a general method in the society. In other words, let it face the theater's large audience, cause change and undergo change in itself. As far as working with all children is concerned, it is perhaps better to use the general term "theater-life", meaning the use of theater in real world scenarios for achieving a profound outlook to a vibrant life. Why theater? The deep influence of groups over individuals is known to all, which explains the effectiveness of group therapy. When speaking of the role of theater in improvement or treatment of children's behavioral abnormalities, it is important to emphasize the active and constructive role of interactions. Our attitudes consist of three distinctive dimensions: emotional, cognitive and physical. Our attitudes and perceptions are shaped and recognized in practice. No attitude is established before being demonstrated in our behavior. In fact, it is our behavior that reveals our attitudes and perception of realities. Similarly in theater, body is united the soul and "individual" is in fact demonstrated in its wholeness. Therefore, all aspects of human existence are addressed in theater and this is the key benefit of "theater-life". Drama therapy in Iran is uncommon practice for certain reasons. Some sub-categorize it under dramatic arts, and to some others it is considered a method used by psychologists in treating certain mental disorders (because of the suffix "-therapy") and therefore not usable for the general public. Hardly, though, most psychologists show any inclination in making use of drama therapy as an effective treatment method, which is due to their lack of awareness of the potential benefits of dramatic arts. In this workshop, experts will try to share their knowledge and experience about therapeutic theater with emphasis on the issue of stress and mental pressures in children.

Keywords: Theater, Children, Rehabilitation, Psychology.

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