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Family with a child with a mental disability and the possibility of intervention through the therapy

Abstract

Nowadays, the logotherapeutic knowledge is most often used in the form of counseling, treatment, psychotherapy and psychotherapy within the age category of children. Each of these forms contributes to the self-development of clients in a certain way. In Slovakia, there is as much interest as possible in the use of logotherapeutic services from a higher age category. It thus enters the realms of people's consciousness. Although there are currently not many well-trained logotherapists working, interest in its services is constantly growing. This fact may be due to the spiritual component that Frankl "put" into the psychotherapy system. The current state of logotherapy in Slovakia could therefore be called the word "bloom" or development. The presented article was realized in cooperation with J. Ďuračinský, who devoted himself to the empirical part.

Keywords: Logotherapy, family, child with mental disability.

Introduction

The presented material is dealing with the application of logotherapy in practice. It describes the concept of logotherapy from the aspect of different views of experts. Furthermore, the material offers information about the goals of therapy and its focus. It also provides information and describes the possibilities of its use in working with a family with a child with a mental disability.

Logotherapy

The name “logotherapy” is based on the Greek word “logos”, which we can translate as “word” or “sense”. The main point of logotherapy is to turn the person to the world and to the meanings that life brings. It is a special part of existential analysis, it is its final phase and advisory direction which helps to each person in orientation in the world¹.

Logotherapy is an approach which basic idea is that human life can be meaningful under any circumstances. Man's job is to find and be that sense responsible for its fulfillment².

Existential analysis is a method of perceiving the man as a responsible, free and spiritual being³ Frankl describes existential analysis as an integral unity of the three main dimensions of human existence (physical, mental, and spiritual). The spiritual dimension speaks of a person who is free and responsible in his relationships, actions and decisions, despite his destiny, in the form of the external conditions of his life, physical and mental patterns. Both logotherapy and existential analysis are spirituality-oriented psychotherapies. Logotherapy is based on the spiritual, existential analysis leads to it. Logotherapy presupposes not only the existence of what is spiritual, objective in the form of meaning and values, but also integrates this spirituality into psychotherapeutic treatment⁴. Frankl⁵ explains that logotherapy seeks to make consciousness spiritual. In its specification, such as existential analysis, logotherapy seeks to bring a person to a sense of responsibility as the basis of human existence. Kollárová⁶ and the others state that logotherapy is also called according to the place and time of its origin as the third Viennese direction of psychotherapy after Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology. The term “Third Vienna School” is also used. According to her: “the most significant benefit of logotherapy is directing one's view of the person. He is the one who asks for the meaning of his life and also the one who is responsible for finding the answer to this question. We often hear from all sides how people like to get rid of responsibility for their own lives and if they are dissatisfied, they look for the fault everywhere but not in themselves. To take the responsibilities highlighted by logotherapy should therefore be kept in mind of each of us”⁷.

¹ A. Längle, M. Sulz, *Žít svůj vlastní život*, Praha 2007, p. 94.

² K. Kolárová, K. *Vplyv fenomenológie a existencializmu na formovanie logoterapie*, „Mladá veda“ 2015, nr 2, p. 101

³ S. Štofánová, E. Žiaková, *Logoterapia v systéme náhradnej starostlivosti na Slovensku*, [in:] *Sociálna práca –56 cesta k zmyslu života : zborník príspevkov z vedeckej konferencie s medzinárodnou účasťou, konanej 06.2012*, Košice 2013, p. 158.

⁴ V.E. Frankl, *Trpiaci človek*, Bratislava 2007, p. 25.

⁵ V.E. Frankl, *A přesto říci životu ano*, Kostelní Vydří 2006, p. 38.

⁶ K. Kolárová, *Vplyv fenomenológie a existencializmu na formovanie logoterapie*, „Mladá veda“ 2015, nr 2, roč. 3, p. 107.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 107.

The basis of logotherapy is the search for meaning – the ultimate expression of humanity⁸. Logotherapy has its goals, principles, pillars, deals differently with the meaning of life and values, and is variously used in practice.

The goal of logotherapy is the primary action in the spiritual area of man where this spiritual realm is distracted in some way. Logotherapy is based on the fact that if the person knows why he should live, then in every situation he also knows how to live.

The goal of logotherapy

The aim of the logotherapy is to look for objective values and various possibilities in a person's life and they can do them. Objective values help to a person to understand why the person should live for, regardless of external and internal circumstances⁹. In contrast with the humanism, logotherapy does not see the highest goal of human existence in self – realization as it is in various variants of humanistic psychology. In logotherapy, it is instead of that a more important goal in the form of human self-transcendence¹⁰.

The goal of logotherapy is to bring a conscious change in a person so that he can change his own attitude to the problems and facts in his life, in the world around him and in himself. This also results in a beneficial change in self-concept in a person's practical approach to problems¹¹. Another goal of logotherapy is to focus, through a variety of procedures, on mobilizing the “defiance” of the human spirit against various health disorders, obstacles or deficiencies, and thus seeking to break down irrational spiritual, physical and mental control over man¹². Logotherapy does not offer complete spirituality, an experience without ideology, a method or technique for escaping the stressful and depressing factors of life, because in knowing every true situation, whatever it is, although it leads a person to decide for himself and freely to accept a situation and to take a certain attitude to it, but only in co-responsibility for knowledge and to the possibilities of a real solution does he encourage to look for a deeper meaning and significance in a given situation. For man, therefore, it means that in each particular situation he can find his role, his mission or the answer to a certain challenge which man, as a human being, is actually able to achieve and fulfill due

⁸ P. Dobříková, D. Pčolková, *Zmysel života z pohľadu zomierajúcich pacientov*, [in:] *Paliatívna medicína a liečba bolesti*, 2012, nr 3, p. 99.

⁹ M. Wagenknecht, *Nástin ďalšieho vývoje Franklovy existenciálnej analýzy a logoterapie „Spoločnosť pro logopedii a existenciálnej analýzy“*, 2011. p. 4, [online], Dostupné na: <https://docplayer.cz/456036-Nastin-dalsiho-vyvoje-franklovy-existencialni.html>, [cit. 2021-02-10].

¹⁰ E. Lukasová, *Základy logoterapie*, Bratislava 2009, p. 60.

¹¹ O. Matoušek, et al., *Metody řízení sociální práce*, Praha 2008, p. 69.

¹² K. Balcar, *Speciální psychoterapie*, Praha 2004, p. 262.

to self-transcendence. This specific procedure is expressed by three basic rules in logotherapy:

- say “yes” to life in spite of everything,
- make sense for the suffering as well,
- to look for the will for the sense¹³.

Logotherapy is based on existential analyzes: “The basic pillars of existential dynamics are freedom of will, sense of life and will to sense.”¹⁴

1. **pillar: Free will** – There has always been the question of whether the person is free or not. According to the logotherapy, a person has at least the potential to be free in the level of his will. However, this potential may be limited or completely canceled by various problems and conditions that a person has in his life, such as illness, immaturity or old age¹⁵.

The human is free to be responsible, and he is responsible for realizing the meaning of his life, for his logos of his existence.¹⁶

The human is first and foremost a spiritual person who can think freely, he can decide freely and to transcend oneself in self-transcendence¹⁷. In addition, other key issues are crucial in the first pillar of logotherapy, such as freedom and its relation to the responsibility and unpredictability of a person's personality.

2. **pillar: Will to make sense** –the motivational concept about the will to make sense. This concept says that there is a desire for a certain meaning hidden in each of us, the human is trying to know this desire. When fulfilling the meaning, two analogies collide – the inner and outer part. The inner part represents the desire and effort of the human, the outer part is a situation that contains some meaning¹⁸.

The will to make sense belongs to a special position in the system of logotherapy. The will to make sense means the fact that a person is basically trying to find a certain meaning in his life, or to fulfill that meaning¹⁹.

According to Frankl, the will to make sense is inherent in every person without distinction. It is one of the specific human phenomena that cannot be reduced to a non-human level. Therefore, the questions of the meaning of life can never be an expression of something that is pathological, but must be an expression of human existence²⁰. The pillar on the will of meaning is also made up of

¹³ M. Potočárová, *Inšpirácie z logoterapie v pedagogike*, [in:] *Aktuálnosť logoterapie vo výchovnej a sociálnej práci s mládežou : zborník z vedeckej konferencie s medzinárodnou účasťou*, konanej 08.04. 2011, Bratislava 2011. p. 34.

¹⁴ M. Kosová, et al., *Logoterapie: existenciální analýza jako hledání cest*, Praha 2014, p. 14.

¹⁵ E. Lukasová, *Základy logoterapie*, Bratislava, 2009, p. 17.

¹⁶ P. Tavel, *Smysl života podle Viktora Emanuela Frankla*, Praha, 2007, p. 134.

¹⁷ J. Pelikán, *Hledání těžiště výchovy*, Praha, 2011, p. 66.

¹⁸ E. Lukasová, *Základy logoterapie*, Bratislava, 2009, p. 18.

¹⁹ V.E. Frankl, *VA přesto říci životu ano*, Kostelní Vydří , 2006, p. 38.

²⁰ P. Halama, *Zmysel života z pohľadu psychológie*, Bratislava, 2007, p. 29.

other issues, such as principle of homeostasis, existential vacuum and noodynamics. Noodynamics is especially important. Kosová and the others state that noodynamics is, according to Frankl, a term that expresses the discrepancy between what is in a person's life, ie. what he experiences, what he does and what he endures, and between what it should be in his life, ie. what he strives for in life, what he has to prove, what he has to experience and what he has to endure. Noodynamics is a constant direction towards values and efforts to fulfill meaning.

3. pillar: Meaning of life – the meaning of life and the associated thinking about human values.

The Use of therapy when working with families

Logotherapy can be used in various fields, disciplines and industries. It has different forms and there are also different methods, techniques and tools through which it can be applied in practice. Logotherapy can also be used as psychotherapy (child psychotherapy), counseling (psychological counseling), diagnostics (via diagnostic counseling logotherapeutic methods) and technique. It can be used both in education and in the educational process. It is often described as a method of treatment.

Logotherapy as a method of treatment is used mainly in the diagnosis of existential frustration as the main cause of a violation of a person's mental or physical condition, or as the main cause of disorders in relationships and in human behavior. It is also used as a treatment where, for various reasons, the meaningful experience of human life is paralyzed and realistic application of spiritual resources. However, it can also be used in the treatment of physical ailments, suffering or other disorders. The indication for treatment by logotherapy is based on the analysis associated with diagnostics, in which the human assessment of the proportion of somatic, psychological and social factors in a particular disorder and the proportion of possible noogenic, mental impacts²¹.

Logotherapy can take various forms. It is an individual form, a group form and in the other period also the family form of logotherapy. The individual form of logotherapeutic work (individual therapy) can be understood as a basic form of logotherapy, logotherapy represents, based on personal value choices, self-control and self-reflection, an individual therapeutic approach. When it comes to an individual therapy, it is personal, not group taking of the attitudes and performing of the practical steps of therapy. Meaningful anchoring in life, responsible integration of one's own choices and actions related to one's life situations and values are practically non-transferable, so in this therapy every person is offered the opportunity for personal growth. Logotherapeutic work focuses on individual therapy, especially in adults²².

²¹ K. Balcar, *Speciální psychoterapie*, Praha 2004, p. 266.

²² Ibidem, K. Balcar, *Speciální psychoterapie*, Praha 2007, p. 267.

The second form is a group form of logotherapeutic work. In group form of the logotherapeutic work, the need for life and human sensuality and performances of self-distance and self-transcendence play an essential role in logotherapeutic work, in adults this is true in full margin.

In essence, people are not substitutable for their actions and decisions by another people or a group of persons, however, in the group form of logotherapeutic work it may be a group for individuals with similar problems, disorders and difficulties a much needed source of encouragement and inspiration in their own search for the meaning of life or struggling with difficult situations in life. Some procedures and methods of logotherapy can be shared in a group form by individual experience on the example of topics that will be enriching for the group.

That is why it sometimes happens that logotherapy also has a group form based on the consideration of the potential benefits of work and exercise in a group. The group form of logotherapy requires a sensitive balance of individual evaluation, personal goals and unique decisions with their announcement and supportive or retroactive interaction with other individuals in the group. Group logotherapy is used especially for children, who tend to be more embedded in the outside world of practical goals, experiences and activities²³.

The author Lukášová²⁴ introduced a dereflex group within the principles of the group form of logotherapeutic work. The last form of logotherapy is family therapy (family form of logotherapeutic work). Family therapy is carried out under similar conditions, both individual and group logotherapy, which is focused on family work and family ties.

On whether individual, group or family form of logotherapy, decides on the diagnosis of the nature of a particular problem that a person personal or relationship context, as well as an estimate of the possibility of treating the problem in terms of individual, group and family form of therapy and the forms can contribute to overcoming human suffering or error²⁵.

Logotherapy is implemented in practice through a relatively diverse range of different methods, techniques and tools. Some have been introduced directly in logotherapy and are a unique part of it, others are also used in other directions and have been transferred to logotherapy. Logotherapy can also be a form of counseling, the first method associated with it is counseling. Logotherapists and experts in the application of logotherapeutic principles proceed in counseling in three basic phases, which are the diagnostic, therapeutic and post-therapeutic phases.

Lukášová²⁶ explains that in the diagnostic phase, the counselor tries to reach the core of the human problem, so first he searches for the reason why he has

²³ E. Lukášová, *Radosti na stope: sedem kroků k duševnímu zdraví*, Bratislava 2010, p. 29.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²⁵ K. Balcar, *Speciální psychoterapie*, Praha 2004, p. 267.

²⁶ E. Lukášová, *I tvoje utrpení má smysl: logoterapeutická útěcha v krizi*, Brno 2006, p. 58.

not overcome the specific problem yet. The counselor looks for the symptoms of the problem, recognizes the person's personality, examines his past and present, and searches for connections with the problem that the client has. In the therapeutic phase, the counselor already uses various specific logotherapeutic techniques. In the last, post-therapeutic phase, the counselor emphasizes that the client does not fall into the anxiety. The counselor emphasizes that the "health" of noodynamics lies in the right combination of tension and relaxation, stress and rest, and that these activities are purposefully connected with important human activities of the client. Logotherapy is an important diagnostic technique. Diagnosis in logotherapy is made with the help of diagnostic therapeutic tests. These include the following tests: logo test, test of meaning in life, profile of life attitudes and test of dynamics. One of the most used methods in logotherapy is paradoxical intention. Paradoxical intention develops the ability of self-self-restraint and self-transcendence of the human. Self-distance and self-transcendence are so important in logotherapy that we define them separately. Self-distance is a speech therapy method in which the client is encouraged to be able to outgrow or transcend itself. Self-distance consists of the ability of a person to detach himself from his problems, thanks to which the client subsequently gains distance both towards himself and his feelings, so that he can evaluate himself with foresight and impartiality. Self-existence tends to make a person in a certain situation when he stops identifying with himself with his feelings, he distances himself internally and takes a position on another level. From the resulting distance a new attitude arises in oneself towards oneself. The client then desires what he does the most he is afraid of what paradoxical intention itself is²⁷. Self-transcendence represents the mental stability and sense for which one transcends oneself. If a person constantly thinks only of himself and his well-being, he lives in constant tension and is afraid for himself. But if he can look beyond his self, he will become interested in other people and thus live a more meaningful life. In such a case, his life makes sense, the client gains peace and the tension in his life begins to disappear²⁸. Another technique used in logotherapy is the reconstruction of negative attitudes, sometimes referred to as a change of attitude. This technique works e.g. with various rituals of the client, with the perception of values, coping with his origin or with the change of atmosphere²⁹.

In the method of rebuilding negative attitudes, the therapist monitors the negative attitudes of a person and then, with the help of rational argumentation, strives to divert his attention in the opposite – positive direction³⁰.

²⁷ E. Lukášová, *Základy logoterapie*, Bratislava 2009, p. 35.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁹ M. Kosová, *Logoterapie: existenciální analýza jako hledání cest*, Praha 2014, p. 64.

³⁰ E. Lukášová, *Základy logoterapie*, Bratislava 2009, p. 37.

Dereflexion is one of the most used methods in logotherapy, which, according to its name, is the opposite of self-reflection. This method focuses on helping a person who is overly focused on his own problems and sufferings. When using deep spiritual space, the person focuses one's attention on values and goals that he transcends. As a result, the person turns away from himself and his problems, ceases to observe, and ceases to attach importance to his own self.

Thanks to dereflexion, a person works with the basic idea of what not to think about³¹.

Another method is the method of capturing the meaning, this method focuses on the client who should be able to identify and realize what is important in his life and what he sees in the meaning of life. The method is a good guide for counseling and therapy interview with a client³².

All these special methods and techniques focus on the traditional psychological problems that a person has in his life, and are used in the practice of logotherapists. Regardless of the area of use of logotherapy, its form and the method or technique used, the basis of logotherapeutic work with the client, and thus the content of each method, is communication. Work with the client in logotherapy is most often carried out with the help of a logotherapeutic interview, but other communication techniques and types of communication are also used. We know:

- art therapy – art treatment, often associated with fine art. There are used the techniques like draws, paintings, graphics, modeling;
- dramatherapy – an artistic, therapeutic-educational method in which they use dramatic and theatrical processes of logotherapeutic goals when working with the client;
- creative writing – the client is motivated to be creative by the finiteness of his life. From the point of view of its forms, methods and techniques, logotherapy can be expressed in a metaphor, when the client comes to the therapist and brings him various fragments of his life. The aim of logotherapy is then to discover pieces of a unique mosaic in these individual pieces and to help the client to put together an image from them, which can be followed up by other parts. In this work – regardless of the form, method or technique used – the client experiences that he is a unique being and learns that it is good to be in the world³³.

The client gradually recognizes his values, which affect his feelings. He learns to accept what he has not chosen in life. He learns being responsible for someone or something, he experiences a specific meaning in life and gradually learns to understand the meaning of what is happening in his life³⁴.

³¹ Ibid., p. 101.

³² A. Längle, A.M. Sulz, *Žít svůj vlastní život*, Praha 2007, p. 52.

³³ M. Nováková, *Logoterapie: existenciální analýza jako hledání cest*, Praha 2014, p. 125.

³⁴ Ibid., M. Kosová, et al., *Logoterapie: existenciální analýza jako hledání cest*, Praha 2014, p. 48.

The findings show that various forms, methods and techniques of logotherapeutic work can be applied in logotherapy. Each of them has a specific goal and leads the client to get to know his life better, to be aware of values and to find meaning in life and its unique situations. However, we think that logotherapy is not so unique due to its methods and techniques, although many originated in it and are more characteristic of it than for other therapeutic directions. We think that its uniqueness is rather a specific approach to the client.

Working with families with children with mental disabilities

By field work with families of children with mental disabilities with logotherapy we mean special pedagogical field work with family members (eg with a parent – mother) in the home environment. This work can be performed by an erudite expert who has sufficient knowledge in the field of logotherapy and special pedagogy. The development of individuals with mental disabilities and their families can be influenced by logotherapy, which is to remind us that everything makes sense even in these difficult circumstances.

Logotherapy and existential analysis take different forms, but the same basis lies in the pursuit of an honest and true life. Such a life can be achieved in spite of all difficulties³⁵.

Logotherapy in working with people with disabilities and their families can play a key role in promoting hope. Disability affects the adjustment and self-confidence of people with disabilities, as well as many other aspects of their lives. It also has a significant impact on other family members³⁶, which may further enhance the suitability of using logotherapy in field special pedagogical work. The work with disabled people should focus on the reciprocity of the identity of the client and the professional, building ambition and aspiration for the disabled person and emphasis on the vision, will and feelings of the disabled person³⁷.

From the point of view of a special pedagogue. Important is the ability to actively listen and sensitively obtain the necessary information, the ability to solve problems, provide the child with emotional security and confidence, create an environment of trust and acceptance, be enthusiastic and spontaneous, but emotionally relatively separate, spontaneity, ability to cope with stressful situations, ability to understand various nonverbal behavioral signal, provide feedback, etc. When working with a child with a mental disability, a special pedagogue must be able to communicate not only with such children, but also with

³⁵ M. Kosová, et al., *Logoterapie: existenciální analýza jako hledání cest*, Praha 2014, p. 11.

³⁶ L. Moein, F. Houshyar, *The Effect of Logotherapy on Improving SelfEsteem and Adjustment in Physically Disabled People*, "Education Science and Psychology" 2015, no. 5, p. 8.

³⁷ A. Kozoň, *Patopsychológia – psychopatológia postihnutých v socializácii*, Trenčín 2010, p. 22.

their parents and other professionals, and must not create prejudices and stereotypes³⁸.

From specific logotherapeutic methods in this area can be used counseling, ie. that it is a special pedagogical counseling for individuals with mental disabilities. Štefan³⁹ states that the task of such counseling is to ensure the identification, research, knowledge and optimization of the regulation of relations between the client and his environment with the emphasis on satisfying special educational and rehabilitation needs by means of targeted special pedagogical counseling interventions. Logotherapy-oriented counseling could help children and their families to achieve the desired changes by focusing on the child's strengths. Logotherapy should take into account the real condition of the child with a mental disability and his family. Typical symptoms of this difficult life situation are low self-esteem, despair, disappointment, worthlessness, loneliness, helplessness, disturbance. Many of these issues can be the logotherapeutic key to solving the problems of a family with a child with a disability. Long-term logotherapy group counseling has improved the life satisfaction of people with disabilities or in families with people with disabilities⁴⁰. It is important to lead clients to find a new life perspective, a new meaning of life, to discover their own uniqueness, responsibility for themselves and others, and to change behavior and attitudes. In this way, in addition to its prudence, logotherapy can also be practical.

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³⁸ D. Kožárová, T. Čekanová, T. *Špeciálny pedagóg ako facilitátor edukačného procesu*, [in:] *Študent na ceste k praxi II: zborník z Prvej študentskej vedeckej konferencie v odbore špeciálna pedagogika a liečebná pedagogika*, Prešov 2012, p. 198.

³⁹ J. Štefan, *Špeciálnopedagogická terapia – arteterapia, komponent špeciálnopedagogického poradenstva a edukatívnej rehabilitácie jednotlivcov so zdravotným znevýhodnením*, [in:] *Trendy a nové výzvy v špeciálnej pedagogike : zborník príspevkov z III. medzinárodnej špeciálnopedagogickej konferencie*, Bratislava 2010, p. 159.

⁴⁰ L. Moein, F. Houshyar, *The Effect of Logotherapy on Improving SelfEsteem and Adjustment in Physically Disabled People*, „Education Science and Psychology“ 2015, vol. 37, p. 8.

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Rodzina z dzieckiem z upośledzeniem umysłowym i możliwość interwencji poprzez terapię

Streszczenie

Obecnie wiedza logoterapeutyczna jest najczęściej wykorzystywana w formie poradnictwa, leczenia, psychoterapii i psychoterapii w ramach kategorii wiekowej dzieci. Każda z tych form w określony sposób przyczynia się do samorozwoju klientów. Na Słowacji istnieje jak największe zainteresowanie korzystaniem z usług logoterapeutycznych z wyższej kategorii wiekowej. W ten sposób wkracza w sferę ludzkiej świadomości. Choć obecnie pracuje niewielu dobrze wyszkolonych logoterapeutów, zainteresowanie ich usługami stale rośnie. Fakt ten może wynikać z duchowego komponentu, który Frankl „włożył” do systemu psychoterapii. Obecny stan logoterapii na Słowacji można zatem nazwać słowem „rozkwit” lub rozwój. Prezentowana praca została zrealizowana we współpracy z J. Ďuračinským, który poświęcił się części empirycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: logoterapia, rodzina, dziecko z upośledzeniem umysłowym.