

The Solution Stage

Exploring Exceptions, Miracles, Solutions with Psychodrama

“Try and learn how Moreno’s Psychodrama can multiply the power of Solution Oriented Coaching“

Dr Hans-Peter Korn (Switzerland)

www.SolutionStage.com

The Mission of Psychodrama

*“Well Dr Freud, I start where you leave off. You meet people in the artificial setting of your office, I meet them on the street and in their home, in their natural surroundings. You analyze their dreams. **I try to give them the courage to dream again. I teach the people how to play God.**”*

(Moreno 1946:5-6 in Blatner 1988:19)

Moreno's Psychodrama **is based on a threefolded hypothesis:**

1st: the hypothesis of spontaneity-creativity as a propelling force in human progress

2nd: the hypothesis of having faith in our fellowman's intentions ... of love and mutual sharing ... as principle of group life

3rd: the hypothesis of a superdynamic community based upon these principles

Psychodrama means:

Elimination of the playwright and of the written play.

Participation of the audience, a "Theater without spectators."

Everyone is a participant, everyone is an actor. The actors and the audience are now the only creators. Everything is improvised, the play, the action, the motive, the words, the encounter and the resolution of the conflicts.

The old stage has disappeared, in its place steps the open stage, the space stage, the open space, the space of life, life itself.

(J. L. Moreno)

The Locus Nascendi for the first official

psychodramatic session was the „Komödien Haus“, a theatre for the drama in Vienna (1. April 1921):

„I had no cast of actors and no play. I stood that night alone, fully unprepared, before an audience of more than one thousand people. Austria was restless, in search of a new soul.....But psychodramatically speaking, I had a cast and I had a play. The audience was my cast, the people in the audience were like a thousand unconscious playwrights. The play was the plot into which they were thrown by the historical events and in which each played a real part. It was my aim, as we would say today, to tap sociodrama in statu nascendi and to analyze the production. If I could only turn the spectators into actors, the actors of their own collective drama.“

(JL. Moreno)

Psychodrama is:

optimistic

inter-acting

holistic

... and clearly focused on resources and solutions

Read more about this here ==>

*„To me, **the essence of psychodrama is that moment in which the protagonist marshalls the powers of the observing self to consider alternative possibilities.** It is not just the enactment, but rather the placing of this enactment within the mental framework of an exploration or experiment. The individual is thus raised from the role of one immersed in a role to the "meta-role" position of one who can stop the role behavior, change it, re-negotiate it, or otherwise comment on the predicament.“*

(Adam Blatner, M.D.)

„Role playing is prior to the emergence of the self. Roles do not emerge from the self, but the self emerges from roles“

(JL. Moreno)

What characterizes human nature is an unlimited capacity for spontaneous and creative action, Moreno believed, and as such his outlook is an optimistic one.

(Jonathan Fox)

In the center of the treatment is the patient, always, and the task of developing the psychodramatic process is, as much as possible, in his hands. The psychiatric director and the staff of auxiliary egos act as prompters and foils for the patient as he acts out the various roles of his psychosis.

(J.L. Moreno)

One of the first steps to be taken with a psychotic patient is to discover how far he has been able to go by himself in the forming of an imaginary reality.

(J.L. Moreno)

The director must take great care to make no suggestion as to what course of action might be preferable. The therapeutic theatre is not a court, the auxiliary egos who may be present are not jury, and the director is not a judge. Moreover, the therapeutic theatre is not a hospital where the subjects come to show their wounds and have them healed by skilled professionals. The initiative, the spontaneity, the decision must all arise within the subjects themselves.

(J.L. Moreno)

Typical Steps of a Psychodrama

(by Martin Gill, www.dryw.freeseve.co.uk/Classicalindex.html)

Warm up.

Identification of a protagonist.

Agreeing a 'contract.'

Scene setting.

Action phase.

Enactment.

Closure.

Sharing with the group.

Warm Up

Within psychodrama we need to have our individual spontaneity available and group cohesion activated to enable a positive response between all group members. The warm up is the time to activate these life forces.

When members feel connected to others and can spontaneously express themselves, the cohesion is said to be high. When members are isolated and private with their feelings the cohesion is said to be low.

This preparatory period which may involve games, discussion, movement etc. allows us to call forth the emotional, physical and intellectual energy required to initiate, follow through and complete an expression.

Protagonist

The originally from Greek culture:

The chief personage in a drama; hence, the principal character in the plot of a story;

one who contends for a prize, a combatant, an actor. The leading characters in a play, story, contest, etc.

In psychodrama the protagonist is the principle actor who has chosen to work on a particular issue or theme from their life. Their particular 'prize' or goal is negotiated in the process of making a contract with the director.

Contract

(modified by H.-P. Korn)

A 'contract' ('what, where and why' a person wishes to work) might be agreed to help the director and the protagonist to pinpoint more clearly the unmet need or act hunger that the person wishes the psychodrama to address. For example: "I want to be able to stand up for myself at work."

Towards the end of the psychodrama the director is then able to use the information and spontaneity from the action phase to return to the contract. This may then take the form of a role training scene.

(SF modification: The information for the action phase can be gathered in an pre-interview, supposing „a miracle occured“: How will you / others recognize that miracle? ==> The action phase is used to discover „here and now“, how it is when it is „better“ cause by a miracle. ==> The role training scenes (acting out the solution) can be integrated into the Solution Focused (not problem focused) action phase.

Scene Setting

An acting area is set at a comfortable distance from the audience to enable good sight lines and audability. Scenes are then set at the protagonist's own pace, anchored in time and place, possessing continuity between scenes. The production may use symbolic representations or naturalistic styles of staging.

The director aims for an overall aesthetically satisfying and original production, based upon the focus of the material. The director uses staging effects, such as lighting, group sounds etc., to capture the overall atmosphere of the mood and location. This also has the function of drawing in the audience to the action.

Action Phase

Insight in psychodrama, in contrast to verbal interpretations, occurs through action.

Psychodramatists facilitate new insights through the person of the double, in role reversal, or with other action-techniques, thus emphasizing the gradual process of self-awareness evolving within the protagonist during the work.

It may be defined as the integration of emotional, cognitive, imaginary, behavioural and inter personal learning experiences.

Action-insight may appear as a sudden flash of comprehension - 'Oh; I see! - or as the gradual unfolding of discoveries over a long period of time. The insight is not simply cognitive, but an experiential and perceptual shift of awareness and understanding

Enactment

In a psychodramatic production, participants are encouraged to display (concretize) their inner and outer experience through dramatization, role-playing and dramatic self-presentation. Enactment enables experience to be shared without passing through a symbolic word translation alone. Many believe the special advantage of psychodramatic acting out is the multi fold utilization of both non-verbal and verbal communication (Polansky & Harkins, 1969).

Enactment also involves the process of '**surplus reality**' whereby the protagonist is able **to explore the 'as if' experience of a wished for relationship or situation.**

It should be noted that acting out as a valuable ingredient in psychodrama is restricted to acting within the therapeutic setting. Moreno clearly differentiated 'irrational, incalculable acting out in life itself, harmful to the patient and others' from 'therapeutic, controlled acting out taking place within the treatment setting'

Closure

Closure scenes that are productive for one protagonist may be useless for another; each protagonist needs to conclude in a most personal manner according to the specific therapeutic journey he or she has taken.

Examples of what protagonists require include:

- symbolic need fulfillment,
- forgiveness from guilt,
- concrete suggestions for the future,**
- or new experiences that plant seeds of trust and hope.**

Sharing

The sharing phase takes place at the end of the action phase. The group usually forms a circle, usually away from the stage, close to the protagonist. The director and other group members in turn validate the protagonist's psychodrama by identifying in a personal, emotionally involved manner.

Sharing can take the form of statements from role and personal resonances.

Interpretations and advice to the protagonist are discouraged as they may be in a vulnerable recovery state, unable to take in new material. **Interpreting and advice may also be regarded as an avoidance of a group member to experience and accept the protagonist's own outcome.**

Sharing is also an opportunity for auxiliaries to de-role. A re-entry into the here and now reality of the group and a closure of projecting the identity of a person onto another.

Some Resources:

**PSYCHODRAMA SECTION
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY:**
http://members.tripod.com/~portaroma/iagp_pd.htm

Other sites:

<http://psychodrama.org/>

<http://www.dryw.freerve.co.uk/mainindex.html>

<http://www.uws.edu.au/learning/courses/penpsych/PsyDrama/>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/5704/main.html>

Some documents:

"Abschlussarbeit" No. 167 at Moreno-Institut Stuttgart

Armin Reichert: „Lösungen erleben“ Überlegungen und Erfahrungen zum Systemisch-lösungsorientierten Psychodrama

"Abschlussarbeit" at Moreno-Institut Zürich

Hans-Peter Korn: "Organisationen mit mehr "Lösungs-Spiel-Räumen" beseelen"; Theoretischer Hintergrund und Anwendungsbeispiel:

<http://www.korn.ch/solutionstage/dokumente/SolutionStage-im-Unternehmen.pdf>