

Positive Psychotherapy Application in Positive Pedagogy, Education and Prevention

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*If you want to prepare a child for its own future,
Love it like it is, and see it how it could be.*

In German schools the red pencil of the teacher is used to underline and mark the mistakes. If something is done very well or excellent, sometimes pupils find a good comment at the end of their work, usually not a very specific one. In some languages the color red also contains the meaning beautiful (i. e. krasnaja).

This is similar to the word “positum” in positive psychotherapy: The given, the existing, and existing are like the two sides of a coin: Existing **capacities** on one and existing **difficulties** as tasks to develop oneself on the other side. Symptoms, disorders and problems are seen as an individual capacity to react. Positive Psychotherapy is a humanistic based framework for different social fields like Positive Pedagogy deriving from Peseschkians psychotherapeutic model.

So, in Positive Pedagogy “mistakes” may be marked as – “here you can improve your abilities”, to encourage developing of competence. Good or excellent parts should be marked specifically as underlining the developed resources, on which the pupil can build up further qualities.

Positive Pedagogy is like Positive Psychotherapy based on three principles:

- Hope/Motivation
- Balance/Moderation
- Consultation

- like heart – head – hand.

To underline the abilities, capacities and uniqueness of a child is a motivation to develop positive qualities. This is the first **principle of hope** in Positive Psychotherapy and Positive Pedagogy. The second **principle is balance** (*Balance Model*). The Balance Model of N. Peseschkian looks at realized and developable areas of life and personality: Body, achievement, contact and imagination/motivation. This model is a visualization symbol for the four areas of life energy and development. In all of them we see capacities as emotional and social skills. Nossrat Peseschkian discovered in interviews with people of different cultures a set of capacity items, that he called **Actual Capacities**. By means of “**Primary Capacities**” (like contact, time, patience, love, trust) we can found relations, they represent also primary needs. With the “**Secondary Capacities**” (like punctuality, orderliness, politeness, openness, justice, faithfulness), that are also social norms, we organize relations.

A balance between different capacities – like in the key conflict openness and politeness, or between love and justice - is necessary for a long lasting and constructive relation. Development processes give the task to balance the different

capacities and to develop them as skills and competences. In all conflicts Positive Psychotherapy and Positive Pedagogy look at the involved capacities as values, based on often long developed cultural concepts. To talk about a conflict means to share the different values and concepts in it to find the common and to see the difference.

The **Actual Capacities** form value concepts. They are learned in four dimensions of modelling:

- By direct influence and model of the parents,
- by the partnership model of the parents and the involved capacities,
- by the model, how the parents cope with others and with groups, and also
- by the world view, cultural values and life philosophy of the parents.

The third **principle of consultation** needs tools for interaction, constructive co-operation and solving conflicts. In Positive Psychotherapy and Positive Pedagogy this is realized by the five step model for a consultation structure, conflict solving, competence development, or group interaction framework. Constructive conversation, effective consultation and co-operation needs a frame how to do. The **Five Step Approach** is a useful tool for development of the personal rational and emotional skills, for counselling and communication. It is also used in crisis intervention and in long term conflict solving. Teachers can use it in the classroom to structure the process and interaction. It gives a structure for the development of interactive competences.

The first step is

- Observation/Distancing – the capacity to listen with patience, empathy and to add different points of view: What do I see, feel and notice (in a situation, in a pupil in me)? How does it look like from a different point of view?

The second step builds up on it:

- Differentiation/Questions – to ask exactly, to define contents and possibilities: What is it about – which capacities are included, which abilities are developed?

The third step uses the competences, the resources and the positive sides:

- Encouragement in the situation: What do we have already, which are the resources, Which experience can be used, what does exist already?

The fourth step of conflict solving and negotiating is done with openness and politeness in

- Verbalisation/Consultation – it is the competence to consult openly, adequate and clearly in a conflict: What is the conflict about – which are the value and concept differences?

The fifth step goes on seeing new possibilities in and after a conflict or difficulty. This is the competence of seeing primarily the future, already concerning the experience of the consultation. The original goal will be widened to see the future perspectives:

- Goal broadening/Future perspectives – the competence to see the future in a new way: What will be the changed perspective after coping with the situation or conflict?

Positive Pedagogy in an overview

- The included balance model focuses on the individual resources of body, activity, relation, and future.

- Its view is to see first the capacities, cultural values and after that the ambivalence conflicts where these capacities and value concepts are involved.
- Symptoms, disorders and problems are seen as an individual capacity to react.
- Four Model Dimensions represent the individual, familiar and cultural experiences of the past, and the responsibility today individually, in partnership, groups and culture.
- A systematic five step approach for coping with everyday situations and also with subconscious conflicts helps to develop personal competences to be a healthy, interactive, constructive and co-operative personality.
- The art of using stories, proverbs and transcultural examples is specific for Positive Psychotherapy and useful in didactic and family therapy.
- Three stadiums of interaction – attachment, differentiation and distancing – describe relation and development.
- Positive Family Therapy helps families to grow and to overcome difficulties.
- The different approaches of Positive Psychotherapy can be used in counselling, treatment and pedagogy for all ages.

Positive Psychology (M. E. P. Seligman 1991, 2002), concerning positive emotions, individual traits and institutions, is as a scientific method to understand and to train happiness and hope, partly based on principles earlier described in Positive Psychotherapy (N. Peseschkian 1968, 1977). Positive Psychotherapy in addition to it works with realistic hope, given capacities, individuals, families and groups with a whole frame of a complete and systematic method for consultation, treatment, teaching and development. Psychodynamic research, co-operation of different professions, an integrative functioning and a transcultural background with international experience give it the possibility to be an aid in different questions of education and pedagogy.

*The smart one wants to know everything, the wise does not need to know everything
(Nossrat Peseschkian)*

Experience in different countries (i. e. Bulgaria, Germany, Bolivia, China, Ethiopia) with the models and tools of Positive Psychotherapy, a transcultural and integrative method founded by *Nossrat Peseschkian*, shows their benefit for Education in Children and Youths and in the preparation of their parents and teachers. Especially the positive atmosphere of accepting each other better, learning from each other and being motivated was visible in the projects that until now had been practiced in pedagogic fields.

Realized Projects and Experiences

Projects with applications of PPT as examples (here the projects of A. Remmers, realized in co-operation with the Bulgarian and the German Association for Positive Psychotherapy in Bulgaria in Bulgaria 1992 - 1995):

"Parents School", Self help groups of parents
"Conflict Solving and Prevention", School project

“Training in Family Consultation and Therapeutic Techniques for School Psychologists” for pedagogic counselors and psychologists

“Positive Management for School Directors” for school directors

“Education and training in psychotherapy and family consultation” for a psychotherapeutic qualification

“Seminars for balance and capacities with teachers for handicapped children” in Institutes for Qualification of Teachers

All over it tried to be an integrated prevention project for family and individual health, including education, information, management, therapy and consultation. It had been worked out in Bulgaria in cooperation with teachers postgraduate institutes and the colleagues of the Bulgarian Association for Positive Psychotherapy. Goals had been to mediate instruments for handling family and individual problems following the rapid cultural changes in these years of the early 90s, appearing as psychosomatic diseases, stress, aggression, or as flight into drugs, sects, depression, fears and suicide. The classical view of psychotherapy was directed to individual or family therapy. We used experiences and methods from positive psychotherapy and family therapy finally to form an integrated model for prevention. In this pilot project a systemic view of the situation around children and their families was used to start with different levels of active prevention in contemporary projects.

Included were:

- ⇒ interactive education lessons in the 9th and 10th forms of a language high school,
- ⇒ an evening college "School for Parents" in the same town,
- ⇒ seminars for school psychologists of the district about family and conflict consultation, using a didactic system of high efficient interactive teaching in psychotherapy,
- ⇒ seminars about positive management for school directors in two regions,
- ⇒ qualification of doctors and psychologists in psychotherapeutic and family consulting methods in a cultural adapted curriculum,
- ⇒ consultation with a drug prevention centre and a psychoprophylactic centre of the army,
- ⇒ information about family consultation in books, radio and newspapers.

The starting point was education of children in methods of salutogenesis to solve their own problems actively with the methodological experience from positive family therapy and besides that to give similar information to the parents in self help groups in the same town concerning subjects like drug abuse, educative, developmental, sexual or religious problems with their children. The short term interactive teaching of school psychologists, educators and teachers in methods of consultation, family therapy and health models gives now for children, teachers and parents a new chance to find competent partners for consultation in difficulties. To develop a productive educational atmosphere in school administration, influencing finally the communication and milieu between teachers, pupils and parents, seminars for directors of schools about positive management were held. Methods of positive personal and conflict management were mediated in the way of "learning by doing", using actual difficulties of their own everyday school situation by turning them into possibilities and chances for co-operation in pedagogic management.

Extension of the therapeutic possibilities in the national Bulgarian health system (in psychiatric dispensaries, clinics, and for private doctors) and psychological services (traffic psychologists, army psychoprophylactic centres, drug prevention centre, labour exchange bureau) was undertaken with simultaneous education of doctors and psychologists in the basic steps of a psychotherapeutic qualification program in the Medical University in Varna and institutes in other towns, organised by the Society for Positive Psychotherapy in Bulgaria and the German Association for Positive Psychotherapy. The first books about family psychotherapy in Bulgaria were published as well as literature for self help and didactic material. These are used also in radio programs and in newspapers to inform about different possibilities of self help in family problems.

As a former practicing medical doctor for general and family medicine and a specialization in medical psychotherapy in Germany I worked in Bulgaria from June 1992 till 1995. Several projects had been started together with colleges of the Medical University in Varna, the Bulgarian Association for Positive Psychotherapy and school institutions in the fields of developing psychotherapy and family consultation, general medicine, psychiatry, education and consultation. As a lecturer of the German Association for Positive Psychotherapy my task is to adapt well approved methods of Positive Psychotherapy and Family Therapy, also including different therapeutic techniques like group therapy, psychodrama, psychosomatic treatment or self help groups, to the cultural and social needs of Bulgaria. The realized projects can be seen as an integrated model for therapy, education and self help for the health of families and its members. Following they are represented with their programs, realization, difficulties and experiences, closing with a critical review for future realization from the transcultural point of view.

*One asked an old, wise man, when to begin with children's education.
With a smile he answered: "25 years before giving birth to them..."*

Projects using Positive Psychotherapy after N. Peseschkian

Realized Projects and Experiences in Bulgaria 1992 – 1994 by A. Remmers with the help of the International Centers for Positive Psychotherapy and Nossrat Peseschkian, the German Association for Positive Psychotherapy DGPP, Wiesbaden, and the Bulgarian Association for Positive Psychotherapy DPPB, Varna/Bulgaria

"Parents School"

Pilot project for selfhelp groups of parents with professional trainees for preventing and solving family conflicts, drug abuse and education problems, realized in Dobric

"Conflict Solving and Prevention with the Instruments of Positive Psychotherapy"

School project in Dobric/BG in the 9th and 10th forms of the language gymnasium in psychology curriculum to mediate conflict solving using the experience from family psychotherapy

Training in Family Consultation and Therapeutic Techniques for School Psychologists

Seminars for education in psychotherapeutic and family consulting methods in Varna and Dobric

"Positive Management for School Directors"

School director as "encourager", as model and as organiser: Workshops in Varna and Pleven to mediate knowledge and experience for school directors as encourager of their staff, as a model for them by using the balance model for managers, and the use of positive organising and consulting methods

Education and training in psychotherapy and family consultation in short term high efficient interactive didactic (Varna/BG), and curriculum for an integrative postgraduate school for psychotherapy, psychosomatic medicine and family therapy in the Psychiatric Departments of the Medical University of Varna/Bulgaria, the Medical Highschool of Stara Zagora and the Psychiatric Dispanser in Russe/Dunav in adaptation to the local needs and cultural conditions, organized with the Bulgarian Association for Positive Psychotherapy, taking selected effective therapeutic methods for a full psychotherapeutic qualification within a frame of about 2 years

Radio programs about **family consultation** (Varna, Stara Zagora, Gabrovo) and about **alcoholism** (Plovdiv)

Seminars for information exchange with teachers in the Institute for Qualification of Teachers in Varna, in the Pedagogic University in Schumen and in a school in Varna

Training of the nationwide staff of the 31 **Transport Psychology Laboratories** of the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport in psychotherapeutic, family and management consulting methods as future centers for psychosocial consultation of the 60000 professionals in the transport system and their families

Regularly consultations with officers of the Marine High School and the "Center for Psycho-prophylaxis and Psychotherapy" in the Marine Clinics of Varna about prevention, family consultation and psychic crisis, concerning especially motivation, the role of family and school in preparing boys for army service to avoid the severe psychic conflicts they undergo now.

Project transcultural integration of medical-psychotherapeutic-psychological methods: Scientific exchange project St. Petersburg/Russia - Bulgaria: Psychotherapeutic methods and curriculum - management psychology - education for family consultants, exchange of experience in psychotherapeutic training programs

Realization of these projects had been possible with the motivation, consultation and support of many interested pedagogues, psychologists of the different fields, after contacting in basic courses about positive and family psychotherapy. The programs of the projects had been worked out with the goal to inform teachers, directors, psychologists and therapists in a way that they can use them freely in their own work. I personally tested the programs, and interested colleges work with me in Varna to adapt them to their needs, so for school, teaching of medical psychology, school

psychology, unemployed, drug centre, management besides my original work in teaching psychotherapy and psychosomatic medicine in Varna. Practical use in the difficult everyday situation nowadays is what is coming out of my experiences in didactic fields, family medicine and psychotherapy, having been enough independent to flexibly adapt my work to the given situation. This independence in working for the interests of the Bulgarian country on the other side meant a lack of possibilities for scientific investigations, so that after two years co-operation now plans for works within the Medical University in Varna exist. Free of the existing difficulties of the official administration in a more flexible way the Bulgarian Association for Positive Psychotherapy supports since 1993 a well organised seminar and information exchange work, including the original medical and psychotherapeutic fields with a whole curriculum in basic and full psychotherapeutic and family consulting qualification, and the co-operation with pedagogues and school psychologists as well as with other associations.

Preventive work looks even more important than therapy in the today situation not only in Bulgaria. Co-operation between psychotherapists, family consultants and school, self help-groups and teachers is necessary. The presented projects from Bulgaria had a good resonance because of their integrative and practical character.

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