

## **PSYCHO-INTERFERENCE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH ANXIETY OF SEPARATION**

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**Abstract:** *The investigation of the child as a subject of scientific research is primary for the human adaptation. The erosion of the family core in the actual social and economical context favours the establishment of aggression, anxiety and desolation from early ages.*

**Key word:** *anxiety, separation, parents*

The instability of a secure background that a child needs in order to have a harmonious growth determines fluctuant emotions, inconsistency in attitudes, excitability and hyperactivity, all these being directly associated with the feeling of desolation. It is assumed the fact that a child's exposure to different situations of stress, family conflicts, over-tensions determines a high level of anxiety.

Anxiety, or more exactly, the anxious condition, becomes a very popular phenomenon for children and adults as well. Anxiety represents a psychological phenomenon that was defined in many different ways, but there is a common point of view, that one, of an ambiguous affective condition, diffused, agitation, oppression, tension, worry and reasonless fear, all these representing an unease. All these authors came to the conclusion that these have as important elements: the attitude of expecting any kind of danger, the feeling of imminence of a danger, constantly being alert and having the feeling of helplessness. The already accomplished research had in its sight the decline of anxiety and desolation of the child through a training program.

In order to present and describe this interference, we decided to use in our study the following term: the psycho-interference program. The reason for choosing this term is because this interference was the type of a guidance having the following objectives: the promotion of a better condition, the personal development and prevention. (Baban, 2001)

The major problem towards our intervention was anxiety, directing its attenuation.

After obtaining the parental agreement, there was selected a group of several children, those having the highest levels of anxiety, assessing two meetings on week of almost two hours.

### *1. Objectives and hypothesis*

Objective: testing the efficiency of the psycho-interference program for this group of children aged between 7-11 years by comparing the result of pretesting and posttesting.

Hypothesis HS1: There are significant differences between the phase of pretesting and posttesting anxiety.

The tested Subhypothesis is:

HS1: The level of anxiety is decreasing because of the participation in the psycho-interference program.

## 2. Variables

The independent A Variable    A = the psycho-interference program  
   a1 = pretest  
   a2 = posttest

## 3. The description of the test sample

Ten children, aged 10, pupils in the third grade participated to the training. The participation to the training has been made only with the parents agreement.

## 4. Instruments

For testing the efficiency of the psycho-interference program through the decreasing of anxiety was used: "The asserted anxiety Scale of the child" erected by McCandles, Castaneda, Palermo (Nut, 2003)

The employed methods in this program were adapted to any kind of sever symptom of anxiety. The steps followed in the program were:

### FIRST SESSION

Objectives: Meeting the participants at the training

Activities:

Free discussion in order to create connections between the participants;

To actively listen to every personal share;

To clearly understand his or her situation from true sources;

To make the difference between acts and prejudices towards the others behaviours

### SECOND SESSION

Objective: To learn to make the difference between his own responsibility and blaming others.

Activities:

To look up in the dictionary for the words reaction and response;

To emphasize the distinctions between reacting and responding;

Pupils are given examples of different types of behaviour and asked to make the difference between reaction and response;

### THIRD SESSION

Objectives: To learn techniques of relaxation for the management of problematic situations

Activities:

Discussions about the importance of relaxation in an effective management of problems;

Explanations for the difficulty of making decisions when you are upset or worried;

Exercises of progressive relaxation achieved;

### FOURTH SESSION

Objective: To understand the fact that being neglected by others doesn't mean you are not good enough.

Activities:

Children are being told the story of "The ugly duck", following a discussion towards the resulted lesson;

They are asked to give examples when they felt bad or wanted to feel differently if the others opinions are always true.

FIFTH SESSION

Objectives: To understand the difference between the real danger and just the feeling of fear, and to discuss the best methods they can conquer fear.

Activities:

Children are asked to define fear. They are being explained the fact that anyone of us have several fears sometimes, for different reasons. They are also asked to draw an image of something that gave them a certain fear and maybe it still does.

Before the discussion they are explained that some things they are afraid of, such as a burning or an accident can occur, but other types of fears such as a monster, the dark man are only in their imagination.

While presenting their drawings they discuss if their fear is "a real one" or just an "imaginary fear".

Through this activity children will have been able to make the distinction between a real fear or just an imaginary fear and understand that there is no evidence for the imaginary fear to be a real one. It is important for them to see that the others have also fears and share together the solutions for a typical situation.

SIXTH SESSION

Objectives: To learn that there are many other different ways of expressing emotions;

Activities:

Several groups are formed, each child receiving a card with several situations: "How do you feel?"

All the situations are read to them, and children are asked to identify the word that describes the best the way they feel in that particular situation.

After the identification of the word, every team is asked to mime the way they would express that particular emotion;

It is mentioned the fact that there can be multiple ways of expressing the same emotion.

SEVENTH SESSION

Objectives: To learn that they have to do everything in the best way possible, regardless of the result;

Activities:

Pupils are asked to give examples of moments when they tried to do something they thought was difficult and believed they couldn't make it.

The discussions towards the content of the activity were the following:

- before trying the experiment, how many of them thought they couldn't make it;
- in case of an unrealised experiment, they would have wanted not even try it;
- what do pupils believe, to try and probably not succeed or not trying at all;

It is important for them to understand that trying doesn't affect them at all. If they are trying and they do not succeed, their failure doesn't mean they are not able or that they will never learn that particular ability.

**EIGHTH SESSION**

Objective: To understand that perfection is impossible to reach and being imperfect doesn't mean you are incapable.

Activities: Children are asked if there is someone who has done something perfect. There are selected three volunteers from the group, being asked to perfectly juggle with three tennis balls. Another three pupils are asked to observe, to determine if the assignment was perfectly accomplished. The activity is stopped after several minutes.

The discussions regarding the content of the activity had the following problems:

- If there was one volunteer capable to perfectly accomplished what he was asked;
- The feelings developed because of the fact that the activity hasn't been made perfect;
- how many of the volunteers felt they were incapable or felt stupid because of not managing to perfectly juggle with the balls;

It is important for pupils to recognize the impossibility to reach perfection and avoid equalating their personal value with the performance in different assignments.

*5. Presenting the results*

For hypothesis HS1- the level of anxiety changes (decreases) as a result of the participation in the psycho-inteffernnce program.

The obtained results are the following:

Descriptive results for HS1:

From a total of 10 pupils with a high level of anxiety, who participated in the training program 60% changed their level of anxiety from a higher one to a medium one, 20% changed their level of anxiety from a higher one to a lower one. Only 20 % have mantained their high level. (table no.1)

**Table no. 1**

The level of anxiety for pretes and postest

Pupils	Pretest		Posttest		Anxiety
	No.	%	No.	%	
	10	100	2	20	High
			6	60	Medium
	-	-	2	20	Low
Total	10	100	10	100	

**Table no. 2**

Satistic values of anxiety's variable pretest and postest

Anxiety	N	Minim	Maxim	Average	Standard Deviation
Pretest	10	30	41	37,6000	3,3066
Posttest	10	14	27	22,7000	4,6200

Interferential results for hypothesis HS1:

As a method of elaboration of information it has been chosen the Paired Samples T Test, because we have been working with two sample tests (pretest, posttest). Thus, the value of t is 8,316 just as 0,001. It has been stated the fact that there is a decrease in the level of anxiety because of the participation in the psycho-interference program.

**Table no. 3**  
The 't' Test for the average equality

ANXIETY	Coefficient t	Grades od liberty df	Account barrier
Anxiety	8,316	9	.001

The universe of children is magic but also threatening, full of mysteries and real or imagined dangers, which are forgotten by most of us especially to maturity.

Studies show that 90% of the children aged between 6 and 14 have specific phobia, while those aged between 6 and 12, 43% suffer already from a phobia. Most of the childhood's anxieties are not associated with psychological disturbances. The fear from the first years of the child becomes disorganised in the following years and at the age of 7-8, develops the anxiety of separation from parents. At the age of 10 the social and sexual anxiety appears. (Marian, 2004, p.92).

The anxiety of detachment becomes a very serious subject. The fear of being apart from parents or from home can develop a spontaneous stress and anxiety.

Children suffering from detachment anxiety have the symptoms of fear even when they go to go to school, excursions etc. They need a special attention from parents, they follow them everywhere, even during night they slip into their bed. When the separation is imminent they can develop somatic symptoms. Fear can take the form of several specific fantasies regarding accidents, sickness, death. Also, these children will develop conditions of desolation and aggression.

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