

# Psychocorrection Of Psychological Traumas In Children Through Art Therapy

Azgarova Gulsum Alisherovna

Samarkand State Medical University

Trainee assistant of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology

**Abstract:** *This article covers the types of trauma in children, causes of origin and Prevention. In addition, solutions to childhood psychological trauma and one of the most effective methods of psychology have been covered about psychocorrection through art therapy.*

**Keywords —** psychological trauma, psychocorrection, art therapy, trauma of rejection, trauma of separation, trauma of loss, trauma of physical threat to life and health, trauma of psychological violence.

## Introduction:

Childhood trauma is often described as a severe adverse childhood experience (ACE). Children can experience a range of experiences that can be classified as psychological trauma; these may include neglect, abandonment, sexual abuse, emotional and physical abuse, witnessing violence against a sibling or parent, or living with a mentally ill parent. These events have profound psychological, physiological, and sociological effects, and can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being, such as antisocial behavior, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and sleep disturbances. Similarly, children whose mothers experience traumatic or stressful events during pregnancy are at increased risk of mental health and other neurodevelopmental disorders. A 1998 study of adverse childhood experiences by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that traumatic childhood experiences are a major cause of many social, emotional, and cognitive impairments, including unhealthy behaviors, risk of violence or re-victimization, chronic increases the risk of adverse health conditions, low life potential and early death. As the number of adverse experiences increases, so does the risk of problems from childhood to adulthood. A 30-year study after the original study confirmed this. Many states, health care providers, and other groups now routinely screen parents and children for ACEs.

In adulthood, anxiety that begins with childhood trauma can continue as feelings of shame, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, sadness, and anger. Additionally, those who endure childhood trauma are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, suicidality, PTSD, drug and alcohol use, and relationship difficulties. The effects of childhood trauma are not limited to the emotional consequences. Survivors of childhood trauma also have a higher risk of developing asthma, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or stroke. They are also more likely to develop "stress overload" that makes it harder to regulate their emotions, sleep difficulties, lower

immune systems and an increased risk of a number of physical ailments in adulthood.

Children's psyches are more flexible and vulnerable than adults, who have already formed defenses. At the same time, children respond to changes and new experiences more easily and quickly, so the consequences of stress are treated faster. With the right support, a child will go through a difficult situation with fewer consequences than an adult. But a difficult situation without support and help from significant adults (parents or surrogates) can really lead to trauma. The psychological trauma that occurred for the first time in childhood is called psychological trauma of children. How children's psychological injuries appear. For an event to be traumatic, it must meet one or more criteria at the same time: Events that happen suddenly, there is no way to prepare for the traumatic event. Such an event can be the sudden loss of a loved one or an unexpected, extreme anger for adults, even without the facts of physical violence. The child feels vulnerable, cannot control what is happening and cannot resist it. He does not support or is afraid to ask for help. The most obvious example is bullying at school, teachers do not "feel" the actions of the poisoned, and the child is afraid to tell his parents, because they will not believe him, or their intervention will make everything worse. At the same time, in a traumatic situation, not only the poisoned person appears, but also the existing children - they are powerless to change the situation and are afraid of being subjected to violence. In the perception of a child, after a traumatic event, the world changes irreversibly for the worse. In the case of bullying in the same school, the child who encounters it for the first time will conclude that it is certain to happen again in any other group or class. A complicated situation can turn into a chronic situation and thus become a traumatic situation. For example, no matter how much a child tries, his parents or teachers will always face the fact that he is not satisfied with his achievements. Since he has no influence on the situation, his actions do not produce results, and important people repeatedly "punish" him with their displeasure, he feels powerless and his opinion about himself becomes very

negative: "like me can't be", "nothing to love me". Of course, such an opinion about yourself will inevitably affect the quality of relationships built in the future. The sooner a child is exposed to a traumatic situation, the more difficult it is to treat the injury. First, the initial events can be completely erased (replaced) from the memory, the ability to live after the trauma seems to be the only possible, regulatory one for the child. Second, early trauma affects critical stages of child development and can affect the quality of cognitive and personal development. These changes cannot be completely eradicated, treatment will be based on knowledge of the trauma, living with it and relying on your experience. The psyche tries to "encapsulate" the trauma, to replace the experiences associated with it intolerable. This makes it difficult to reassess the traumatic event and find ways to cope with it. At the same time, the psyche of the child strives for homeostasis, that is, the child is unconsciously attracted to similar situations and relationships, unconsciously hoping to "rewrite" them in a new way, gaining experience that can overcome the situation. The difficulty is that it is almost impossible to recover from such an event without support, so the repetitions are retraumatic and make the child feel that the bad, good relationship is not for him, but that the world is the enemy.

Causes of psychological damage to children

The most common causes of injury are:

Diseases: chronic, long-term, limit the child in communication, movement, freedom of choice. Painful procedures, pain, anxiety, feeling "different". Psychological pressure: raising a child by comparison, rejection if there is a mistake, love and attention are given only on the condition of "correct" behavior. Physical and sexual abuse. In addition to the obvious damage caused, cases of violence are exacerbated by the experience of betrayal, because they often come from people close to the child who are called to protect him. Losing a loved one, especially if there is no way to burn it with someone. Unfair treatment, betrayal by adults in important matters for the child; ridicule, humiliation.

Any "fragility" of parents: chemical (alcohol, drug) and non-chemical (gambling) addictions, emotional lability, unpredictability of reactions, psychiatric diseases of a close relative (uncompensated or undiagnosed).

Nevertheless, the reasons listed above may not have such a devastating effect on the child's psyche, if there are adults nearby who can support and explain what is happening in understandable language.

According to the listed causes of traumatism, the following types of psychological damage to children can be named:

- rejection trauma;
- separation trauma;
- trauma of loss;
- injury of a physical threat to life and health;
- trauma of psychological violence.

The division into types is, of course, very conditional. We can talk about the leading traumatic process,

but it can be accompanied by several types of psychological injuries of children. For example, as a result of bullying, the child deals with psychological violence, physical threat trauma (if physical violence), rejection trauma. There is no one to share his experiences, attempts to tell adults can be met with rejection and anger, and in this place the child experiences shame: "this could only happen to me, because I am not like others, I'm the worst." Soon after the traumatic event, socialization impairment, learning difficulties, behavior, anxiety and sometimes aggression are observed. This includes fears that prevent you from leading a normal lifestyle (sleeping, going out, being alone in a room). Neurotic manifestations are possible: enuresis, obsessive movements, stuttering, tremors. The initial effects occur shortly after the traumatic event. Delayed ones include consequences that appear in adults, formed on the basis of traumatic experiences. With age, such a child encapsulates and isolates a part of the psychological "I" that has experienced trauma. Therefore, in situations that are similar to or cause similar experiences to traumatic events, adults "immerse" in this part, turning into a child who has to independently cope with a difficult situation in order to survive. The differences between the traumatic state of childhood and what is happening in reality seem to disappear. For example, a person who has experienced physical abuse in childhood, with the slightest threat (real or imagined), loses the idea of adult opportunities, what he can do from the position of an adult, who he can ask for help. He again turns out to be vulnerable and fearful, forced to freeze and not resist, or to suppress fear and show aggression as clearly as possible, without taking into account the real situation. Not only direct aggression, but also a carelessly spoken word, an unpleasant look, a disapproving reaction from important people (partner, boss) can be considered as a threat. A traumatic experience prevents maintaining long-term close relationships, getting out of inappropriate relationships, helps to lose the sense of control over the events in one's life, "freeze" (refrain from the manifestation of emotions and, in the worst case, refusing to feel one's feelings). There may be difficulties in rejecting your body, recognizing vital needs (hunger, thirst). Another serious consequence of rejection trauma and psychological abuse is the formation of a false self, where the concept of true self-awareness is not formed, but there is a picture of how you should be. Any perceived difference between the real and the imagined creates a lot of shame, guilt, and fear. The imaginary image of the ideal "I" is usually fixed, does not change when life circumstances change, and can never be fully achieved.

How to understand that a child is injured?

The appearance of changes in behavior that were not there before, fear, the loss of already formed skills (study has deteriorated, often gets sick, avoids communication, etc.) is a sign of children's psychological damage it can. Stuttering, hesitancy in speech, the unexpected appearance of obsessive actions should also alert parents. Perhaps the child is often upset, always sad, and often begins to cry. Or, on the contrary, hyperactivity appeared, it became difficult to concentrate,

behavior became aggressive, quarrels and conflicts were frequent.

Diagnostics includes an interview, observation of the child's behavior and ways of adapting to a new place (in the psychologist's office), drawing and game tests for psychological injuries of children. Sometimes it may take several sessions before a child is comfortable and able to talk or demonstrate their experiences in play. Correction of the initial consequences of psychological injuries in childhood is carried out with the help of art-therapeutic, game techniques. Sand therapy and interaction with flexible materials have proven themselves well: kinetic sand, clay, plasticine, dough. Parental support during and after a traumatic situation can reverse or minimize the consequences. To do this, it is necessary to allow the child to speak, cry or pose without interrupting his manifestation or resorting to advice or accusations. It is important not to stop the process until the child chooses to stop. It is enough to be around, to hug, to confirm that what was said was heard. One of the most important conditions for child support is to keep the parents calm and stable. If the adults are not able to cope with their feelings, the child is forced to stop or even begin to calm the parents, and this confirms the idea that it is impossible to support him. For adults who experience the delayed effects of childhood psychological trauma, there is an opportunity to consult a psychologist. With the help of a specialist, you can explore the causes of trauma and repeat it, creating a new perspective on yourself, your children's limitations and the possibilities of adults. Trauma is a dark place that is difficult, almost impossible, to enter alone. Its power and influence are "disintegrated" by reliable communication, support and the presence of another person.

There are several methods of psychocorrection of psychotraumas received in childhood. Art therapy method is very effective among them. Art therapy is one of the most popular and demanded methods of psychological support in child psychotherapy. Children, especially preschoolers and elementary school students, participate with interest in creativity and discuss the process itself and the results with the Art therapist.

Art therapy methods

Route options can be chosen for any taste:

- drawing,
- modeling,
- movement itself as a dance,
- singing,
- free imagination,
- dramatic performance,
- sand therapy,
- doll therapy,
- view art objects.

They say that there are as many types of art as there are many types of art therapy.

Why is art therapy useful?

The method improves the psycho-emotional state of the child, relieves stress (emotional and physical), processes

and eliminates fear, complex events (moving, changing kindergarten or school, losses, etc.) helps to cope. At the same time, the child's development is stimulated, because self-reflection develops in the process of work (the ability to understand and name their feelings) and resources are released for cognitive activity by reducing anxiety and tension. Another advantage of the method is the possibility of directly diagnosing the condition of the child during the operation.

Art therapy for children does not focus on results. The creative process itself and what the child feels and experiences in this process is more important. The result is not evaluated and it helps to remove the fear of doing badly and wrongly. By creating new things, the child learns that he is capable of inventing something, realizing his idea and doing it with pleasure. A mandatory element of the work is to discuss with the child his feelings during creativity and immediately after it.

The method does not have serious age restrictions - you can work with children from the age of two in the art therapy technique. It is enough that the child is interested in creative expression and has the opportunity to talk about what is happening, at least in a limited way. Art therapy methods for preschool children include both individual lessons and groups. Of course, individual training is preferable for the youngest children, although the method shows good results when working in a large group (3-4 people). Group activities for older children can help creative expression and alleviate neurotic symptoms. They also provide an opportunity for peers to see how they are experiencing their own challenges, to feel that they are not alone in their experiences.

Art therapy for fear in children

Art therapy is especially often used in working with preschool children and young students. At the age of 5-8, children usually have many fears. Such growth is associated with the development of imagination and increased social activity of the child. Social relations are expanding, kindergarten and/or primary school appears in the child's life. The child has access to new information, he interacts with new people and has to "digest" many emotions, sometimes not at all socially acceptable. The child has a lot of stress, especially if he is not very successful in the children's community or if his relationship with new adults (teachers, teachers) does not improve. Stress and anxiety increase, children's active fantasy turns into scary images of animals, terrorists, dangerous animals, etc. Art therapy for fear in children includes a series of exercises aimed at directly identifying the images of fear and finding a way to overcome it and eliminate general anxiety.

### Conclusion

How to deal with fear? Here's what it might look like to look for strategies to deal with fear at home. An adult invites the child to draw a series of drawings on the theme of fear. The first picture may depict the terrible situation itself - the meeting of the hero with the object of fear. Here the hero is not the child himself, but some representative of him (some boy or girl or any character chosen by the child). The hero

plays a symbolic role, you can connect with him and at the same time, watching his adventures from the outside, you are not too afraid. In the following pictures, you can draw stories from the life of the object of fear - where he lives, with whom he communicates, what he does and what he wants. Thus, fear is learned, and the symbolic role of the picture allows the child to master the denied individual characteristics of the object of fear. It could be strength, tenacity, stubbornness, the ability to get angry—a scary fantasy monster probably has one of the following. The child is engaged in drawing next to adults, he can ask questions, reflect what is happening, notice and name the qualities of the object of fear that can be useful to him. After a series of drawings is completed, you can redraw the situation of the hero's meeting with the scary object. At the same time, remember everything that is known when drawing about fear and fill the image of the hero with new qualities that will help him face the danger. The whole series of drawings can be drawn at once, or if the child is tired, it can be divided into several sessions. It is better if adults do not insist on continuing the work and allow the child to be distracted. All you have to do is show interest in the pictures and gently invite them to continue and support. Working with fear can be difficult for a child. He can regulate the process of being afraid himself and stop if it is too difficult.

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