

# HELPING YOUNGSTERS WITH TRAUMA WITH EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY

Around the world, natural disasters, wars and violence claim numerous victims every day. Millions of youngsters experience situations which often leave them severely traumatized and alone. Their lives are changed forever and they frequently need help to cope with these experiences. Unprocessed trauma can lead to the development of severe symptoms, of actual post-traumatic stress disorder and may disturb their natural development. Age-appropriate pedagogical and therapeutic support of traumatised youngsters is central for the healing of psychological wounds. Therefore, not only psychologists but also youthworkers/leaders/educators have a role in changing crisis into chance.

## ABOUT EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY

Emergency Pedagogy is a non-confrontational pedagogical approach that helps children and young people process their traumatic experiences. Elements of painting and drawing therapy, circus education and plastic-therapeutic design are few of the pedagogical measures used to provide relief or avoid possible traumatic disorders. The concept of Emergency Pedagogy was developed by the Organization Friends of Waldorf Education and it is based on Waldorf educational methods and related forms of therapy.



 **WHAT IS TRAUMA?**



 **METHODS**



 **ADVICE**

## HOW TO USE

## EMERGENCY PEDAGOGY

## IN YOUTH WORK?

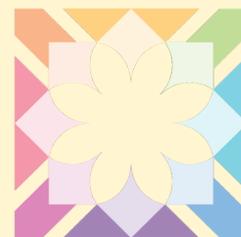
First of all, you need to know what trauma is, what the symptoms are, and what the difference is between trauma and trauma disorder. Don't forget everyone processes trauma differently.

### **Pedagogical approach to handle traumatic reactions (symptoms of over-excitement, reoccurrence, avoidance, stress-induced body reactions):**

- cultivate rhythms, establish daily routines and create rituals
- provide relaxation moments for slowing down the breath
- allow expression of experiences, feelings and thoughts
- look for creative forms of expression (free drawing, painting in watercolours, drawing shapes, singing, make music, dance, modelling, kneading, plasticising)
- include the senses (sense of touch, of vitality, of movement, of balance)
- explore the body (body geography, physical contact, massages)
- stimulate movement, walks, sports
- cultivate language, which provides release and heals, tell stories
- stimulate memory and concentration faculties (drawing shapes)
- make therapeutic handwork with handicrafts
- encourage play (free play, movement games, circle games, round and folk games, group games)
- inspire experiences (with rope skipping, circus education...)
- strengthen confidence in oneself and others: encourage and facilitate experiences of success and self-effectiveness
- forge plans: design future activities, plans (by practicing crafty practical activities, implementing and carrying out projects)
- establish and strengthen social competences
- help to establish a balanced diet
- cultivate spiritual - religious feelings
- joy heals

### **Special advice:**

- acquire knowledge about physical, social and psychological symptoms of trauma
- don't push youngsters to open up
- keep care of your own health first (enough sleep, rest, support from others), you need to be stable
- put as many elements of normal life into your work as you can
- create a safe working space, a friendly, peaceful, beautiful, clean and tidy physical surrounding is crucial
- cooperate with local organizations
- don't forget: pedagogy is love
- never give up!



FROM CRISIS  
TO CHANCE

With your help it is possible to transform the crisis into chance, contributing to youngsters' post-traumatic growth. This means that youngsters may have an increased appreciation of their own lives, it may lead to new life perspectives, deepen their capacity to relate to others, deepen their spiritual-religious beliefs and personality growth.

#### Partners:



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