

REVIEW

Doctoral dissertation on the topic: In the possibilities on cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy for mastery on depressed states at dyslexia on development
Doctoral student: Vaska Zdravkova

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. PS. n. Vanya Matanova

Reviewer: Associate Professor Pavlina Petkova, MD

Vaska Zdravkova's dissertation is on a serious and significant topic for the practice of clinical psychologists when working with adolescents, where specific disorders in cognitive processes provoke depressive disorders. This problem requires a very good diagnostic assessment, medical and psychological understanding of the problem and sustained therapeutic work to overcome it and achieve the best possible social adaptation. Zdravkova, accept this challenge!

The dissertation is developed on 170 pages, the content is organized into three main chapters and subsections, appendix, citation are mostly contemporary 214 literary sources in Latin and Cyrillic.

Already in the introductory part, Zdravkova emphasizes that recognizing depression in developmental dyslexia is important to distinguish it from usual depression without dyslexia in children and adolescents. She clearly states that her scientific development aims to make a significant contribution to the Macedonian clinical-psychological practice for preparing a model for early diagnostic assessment, therapy and improving their quality of life!

The first chapter is a rich overview of developmental dyslexia, or specific learning disabilities, which modern researchers have identified as affecting seven areas of functioning. A good historical overview of the definitions in the professional

literature, of the reasons that led to this violation, of the most complex mechanisms of Gnostic integration was made. The three main theories used in the various studies are described: phonological, magnocellular and cerebral theories, as well as research data with specialized diagnostic test tasks. The review discusses many contradictory positions between medical, psychological, social factors and manifestations of dyslexia in the dynamics of the personal development of adolescents. Very good are the overview parts on etiology of dyslexia, REI model, clinical picture of dyslexia, indicators of developmental dyslexia, emotional aspect, cognitive and social interactive theories, profile of the student with dyslexia, classification, types of dyslexia, depression, anger in dyslexia, emotional, social difficulties and perspectives. The overview presents the good awareness of the doctoral student and her ability to make theoretical analyzes and generalizations that become basis of the aims and objectives of the study.

The second chapter presents the methodological approach based on cognitive-behavioral psychology and therapy, the main goal of which is to examine and compare the differences in treatment with CB Therapy and the traditional approach. Five tasks and three hypotheses are well structured. Children from the Republic of Macedonia were studied - 64 children from 7 to 13 years old, with mild to moderate symptoms of depression, divided into two groups compared to applied CBT - group and conventional treatment TAU - group. The distribution of participants by group, the research instruments (the Demographic Data Form, the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale-Macedonian version (CES-D Macedonian version), the Children's Automatic Thinking Scale (CATS), the Social and Children's Adaptive Functioning (CASAFS) and a five-question instrument for conducting qualitative analyzes of the focus groups Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy was administered in 12 sessions, one hour per session lasting 12 weeks. The main boundaries, goals, focus on the formation of new skills, applied

specialized techniques, the structure of each session, summaries and filling in of an evaluation form are well described. After the sixth session, the participants are tested with the psychological methods are very well thematically structured, there is always a summary and analysis of homework assignments and what has been achieved, current problems, difficulties, mastered therapeutic techniques and achieved results, discussion of new tasks and personal problems of the participants. All these tasks and discussions build up in complexity and correspond to each participant's real problems and overcoming depression, improving communication skills and coping strategies to solve their life difficulties. All the important steps that the professional must follow, the risky situations that he may find himself in and how to overcome them are presented in great detail. They are very well arranged in a good logical sequence and how the specific tasks of each stage of the research should be described.

The third chapter presents the research data, statistical analyzes (Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA, covariance matrices, Bartlett's test of sphericity) , which are selected according to the objectives and specificity of the test parameters, interpretations and generalizations. First, an analysis of the demographic data is presented , participation in the two types of therapy, with no significant differences in the comparative analyses. Statistical analyzes are then presented separately regarding hypothesis 1, "a significant difference was found in each group between the effects of cognitive behavioral therapy and time, such as depression continuously decreases with the extension of the therapy time the treatment-as-usual group was more depressed from the group with applied cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy", with differences starting at time interval 2 and increasing through stage 3 and stage 4. In hypothesis 2, the doctoral student found that the level of "negative automatic thought among children with dyslexia receiving cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy

is significantly lower than those receiving treatment as usual'. Again at time points 3 and 4 there was a significant difference in favor of CB therapy, as well as slight deteriorations in the first time points in the conventional therapy group and improvements thereafter. Regarding hypothesis 3, the doctoral student found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of social and adaptive functioning , but in the CB therapy group the results improved at each stage, while in the control group there was an initial deterioration and then a slow improvement. After that, the doctoral student makes a qualitative analysis of the data from the discussion in the groups, regarding the effectiveness of the therapy. Those in the CB therapy group benefited more from the therapy, with psycho-educational information about the therapy that explained the interrelationships and expected benefits being the most important. The greatest effect was achieved in reducing depressive levels and symptoms. Very detailed for all participants in the group to describe these changes. Adolescents report a serious qualitative change, after improving their understanding of dysfunctional and positive automatic thoughts, acquiring skills to recognize and transform them, improving their self-esteem, building better communication skills with peers, authorities and better coping strategies . Adolescents report a significant improvement in their social skills and a better adjustment in the family, school and community. A very serious change was achieved by the participants who understood from cognitive therapy the specificity of human emotions, the interrelationship between thinking and behavior, as well as the benefits of homework assignments. I believe that this is a serious practical contribution in the dissertation, which shows that even in adolescence, adolescents with dyslexia and depression can understand and achieve positive change with CB therapy techniques.

In a separate part of the discussion, Zdravkova summarizes her most serious analyzes and interpretations. Very correctly based on the data and the psychotherapeutic paradigm, she makes generalized interpretations about the achieved positive changes at each stage of the conducted therapy, in relation to the applied cognitive techniques. She analyzes how adolescents achieve gradual steps of improved understanding of their mental world and behavior, therefore how and what therapeutic techniques change, therefore how the achieved understanding and new skills gradually overcome their depression and they begin fuller social functioning. In this part, Zdravkova convincingly shows that she has achieved very good therapeutic skills of a cognitive-behavioral therapist in adolescence and specialized skills for interpretations of qualitative change in scientific research. The doctoral student summarizes in separate subsections the effects of the research on CB therapy for depressive symptoms, and the generalized analyzes in the areas of thinking, emotions, social and adaptive functioning, containing the most important aspects of positive change, are extremely valuable . In this part, a comparison of CB therapy for dyslexia with depressive symptoms in children from the Republic of Macedonia with data from similar studies by foreign authors is made. The seriousness of the mental health problem in the dyslexic adolescent community , the degree of risk of deepening depression when untreated, subsequent problems in physical health, social functioning are discussed. The doctoral student, with a very good sense of self-criticism, identifies the benefits of her research for therapists, the limitations, and specifies opportunities for improvement in future research.

The abstract reflects the most essential parts and data of the research, analyses, interpretations and summaries of the dissertation. In proportion to the well-made statistical and qualitative psychological analyses, in comparison with data from scientific research by authors, the doctoral student forms four contributions of a

theoretical and scientifically applied nature , which are relevant to the data and the in-depth analyzes made.

Vaska Zdravkova's doctoral dissertation is very well developed according to the criteria for a doctoral scientific degree, reflecting her good professional skills in psychodiagnostics, cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy and scientific analyzes linked to the practice of the school of the scientific supervisor Prof. V. Matanova ! I wish the doctoral student to develop a professional school in her country RN Macedonia!

I have no critical remarks in substance, individual technical expressions reflect the specificity of the Macedonian language, which is proof of the personal authorship of the doctoral student. I recommend Zdravkova to:

- she write more studies and practical guidance to support psychologists, psychotherapists, educators and doctors who work with the problems of dyslexia and depression in adolescents.
- to promote her scientific work in journals, conferences and more online information that will be useful to the professional community in her country.
- to experiment with university professors to deliver courses in the training programs of psychologists, psychiatrists, pedagogues

In conclusion, I propose to the members of the Scientific Jury that we vote together for Vaska Zdravkova the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", scientific direction 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology) .

12.08.2024 Reviewer:

Sofia

Assoc. P. Petkova