THE IMPACT OF GESTALT PLAY TECHNIQUES ON THE AGGRESSION LEVEL OF DIABETIC CHILDREN

By

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Dedicated to my late grandmother, Mrs. K. Naidoo.

To my lecturer Mrs. H. Bauling, thank you for your undivided support and dedication throughout the compilation of the thesis; your guidance has been invaluable.

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SUMMARY

The study was undertaken to investigate the impact of gestalt group work play techniques on the aggression levels of diabetic children between the ages of eight and twelve years. The sample comprised of two boys and two girls who attended the diabetic out-patient clinic at Parklands Hospital.

The motivation for the study developed from the researcher's interaction at the diabetic out-patient clinic at Addington Hospital, where staff indicated a need for group work sessions with patients at the juvenile diabetic clinic.

Discussions with staff revealed that there were an increasing number of false results from the patients, as well as complaints from the parents regarding the aggression levels of their diabetic children. The aggression was also encountered by the health team who managed the children.

These two aspects offered an opportunity for the researcher to investigate the effect of gestalt group work play techniques and its effects on the aggression levels of these children.

The shift in behaviour of the respondents was measured by means of the Single Systems Design. A pre-test and post-test questionnaire was administered. The pre-test questionnaire allowed the researcher to establish a baseline for working with the respondents. A literature study undertaken to investigate whether juvenile diabetics experienced traumatic psychosocial changes revealed that the complex nature of the illness and its effects on lifestyle played a major role in behaviour and educational problems.

The researcher selected gestalt group work play techniques to assist with decreasing the aggression levels of juvenile diabetics as the group situation allowed support and security for group members who experimented with new behaviours. The commonality of the illness also allowed shared experiences between members.

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of respondents suggest a strong recommendation for inclusion of gestalt group work play techniques in the management of juvenile diabetics. The researcher is of the opinion that the aim of the study was successfully achieved and inclusion of gestalt group work play techniques be recommended as part of the holistic treatment of juvenile diabetics.
KEY WORDS:
1. Gestalt
2. Gestalt Group Work
3. Play Techniques
4. Aggression
5. Juvenile Diabetes Mellitus
6. Gestalt Approach to Play Therapy
7. Psychosocial Issues Related to Juvenile Diabetes
8. Single Systems Design
9. Social Work
10. Multi-disciplinary Teamwork
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE ..................................................................................................................1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................1
1.1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................1
1.2 MOTIVATION ..................................................................................................................1
1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION .............................................................................................2
1.4 GOAL ................................................................................................................................3
  1.4.1 OBJECTIVES .............................................................................................................3
1.5 HYPOTHESES / ASSUMPTIONS ....................................................................................3
1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH .................................................................................................3
  1.6.1 FEATURES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ..............................................................3
  1.6.2 FEATURES OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ............................................................4
1.7 TYPE OF RESEARCH ....................................................................................................4
1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN .......................................................................................................5
1.9 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND STRATEGY ..................................................................5
  1.9.1 SINGLE SYSTEMS DESIGN .....................................................................................6
  1.9.2 EXPERIMENTAL REMOVAL OF INTERVENTION DESIGN A-B-A ..........................7
1.10 PILOT STUDY ...............................................................................................................8
  1.10.1 LITERATURE STUDY ..............................................................................................8
  1.10.2 CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS .........................................................................9
  1.10.3 FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY ..............................................................................9
  1.10.4 PILOT STUDY .........................................................................................................10
1.11 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION, DELIMITATIONS, BOUNDARY OF SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD .................................................................10
1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY ....................................................................................10
1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS ..............................................................................11
  1.13.1 GESTALT ...............................................................................................................11
  1.13.2 GESTALT GROUP WORK .......................................................................................11
  1.13.3 DECREASE ..........................................................................................................11
  1.13.4 PLAY TECHNIQUES ..............................................................................................11
  1.13.5 AGGRESSION ........................................................................................................12
  1.13.6 DIABETES MELLITUS .........................................................................................12
  1.13.7 JUVENILE DIABETES MELLITUS .........................................................................12
1.14 CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT .........................................................................12
CHAPTER TWO ......................................................................................................................13
JUVENILE DIABETES MELLITUS .........................................................................................13
2.1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................13
2.2 DEFINITION OF MEDICAL CONCEPTS .......................................................................13
2.2.1 GLUCOSE ................................................................. 13
2.2.2 KETOACIDOSIS ......................................................... 13
2.2.3 HYPOGLYCAEMIA ...................................................... 13
2.2.4 HYPERGLYCAEMIA ..................................................... 13
2.2.5 BETA-CELLS ............................................................ 13
2.2.6 GLYCOSURIA ........................................................... 14
2.2.7 POLYURIA ............................................................... 14
2.2.8 POLYDIPSIA ............................................................. 14
2.2.9 POLYPHAGIA ........................................................... 14
2.2.10 ISLETS OF LANGERHANS ........................................... 14

2.3 THE DIAGNOSIS OF JUVENILE DIABETES MELLITUS .......... 14
2.3.1 JUVENILE-ONSET (TYPE I) DIABETES ......................... 14
2.3.2 PROCESS OF JUVENILE DIABETES TYPE-I .................. 15

2.4 THE DIFFERENT CAUSES OF JUVENILE DIABETES .......... 15
2.4.1 INHERITANCE .......................................................... 15
2.4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ........................................ 15

2.5 PRIMARY DIABETES - AETIOLOGY UNKNOWN .................. 16

2.6 SECONDARY DIABETES - AETIOLOGY KNOWN ................. 16
2.6.1 SURGERY ............................................................... 16
2.6.2 DISEASE ............................................................... 17
2.6.3 DRUGS ................................................................. 17
2.6.4 AUTO-IMMUNITY ..................................................... 17
2.6.5 HORMONAL IMBALANCE ............................................ 17

2.7 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH JUVENILE DIABETES .................................................. 17
2.8.1 MONITORING OF GLUCOSE LEVELS ......................... 20
2.8.2 PROCEDURE .......................................................... 20
2.8.3 EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR HOME MONITORING ........ 21
2.8.4 ADVANTAGES OF HOME BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITORING 21
2.8.5 INSULIN TREATMENT .................................................. 21
2.8.5.1 INSULIN TREATMENT BEGINS ................................ 21
2.8.5.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR INSULIN REGIME ................ 21
2.8.5.3 TYPES OF INSULIN ................................................. 21
2.8.5.4 CARE AND STORAGE OF INSULIN ......................... 22
2.8.5.5 DURATION AND PEAK ACTION OF DIFFERENT INSULINS 22

2.9 RELATED DISEASES OF JUVENILE DIABETES ................ 23
2.9.1 VASCULAR DISEASE ................................................. 23
2.9.2 THE FEET ............................................................. 23
2.9.3 THE SKIN ............................................................. 24
2.9.4 THE NERVOUS SYSTEM ............................................ 25
2.9.5 THE EYE ............................................................... 25

2.10 PSYCHO-SOCIAL ISSUES RELATED TO JUVENILE DIABETES ... 26
2.10.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................... 26
2.10.2 THE DIABETIC CHILD WITHIN THE FAMILY ............... 28
2.10.3 THE PARENTS OF THE DIABETIC CHILD ........................................... 28
2.10.4 THE DIABETIC CHILD ........................................................................ 29
2.10.5 THE JUNIOR SCHOOL CHILD AND DIABETES ................................. 29

2.11 SUMMARY .............................................................................................. 30

CHAPTER 3 ....................................................................................................... 31

GROUP WORK PLAY TECHNIQUES AND GESTALT ........................................ 31

3.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................ 31

3.2 RESISTANCES EXPERIENCED IN GESTALT THERAPY ......................... 32

3.3 LAYERS OF DEFENCE MECHANISMS IDENTIFIED IN GESTALT THERAPY ........................................................................................................ 32

3.4 GESTALT GROUP WORK ........................................................................... 35

3.5 THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH FOR GESTALT GROUP WORK .......... 35

3.6 AWARENESS APPROACHES IN GESTALT GROUP THERAPY ................. 36

3.6.1 SELF- AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS ..................................... 36

3.6.2 PRESENT AWARENESS AND THE GROUP ......................................... 37

3.6.3 INTERPERSONAL CONTACT .................................................................. 37

3.7 TECHNIQUES USED IN GESTALT GROUP WORK .................................... 37

3.7.1 DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF PLAY ....................................... 38

3.8 GESTALT APPROACH TO PLAY THERAPY ............................................. 41

3.9 SUMMARY ................................................................................................. 42

CHAPTER FOUR ............................................................................................... 43

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY ......................................................................................... 43

4.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................ 43

4.2 IDENTIFYING DETAILS AND PRE-TEST RESULTS OF RESPONDENTS .... 45

4.2.1 CHILD A ............................................................................................... 45

4.2.2 CHILD B ............................................................................................... 46

4.2.3 CHILD C ............................................................................................... 46

4.2.4 CHILD D ............................................................................................... 47

4.3 DISCUSSION OF GROUP SESSIONS ......................................................... 48

4.3.1 GROUP SESSION TWO ........................................................................... 48

4.3.1.1 AIMS/GOALS .................................................................................. 48

4.3.1.2 RESPONSES AND ASSESSMENTS OF RESPONDENTS .................. 48

4.3.2 GROUP SESSION THREE ....................................................................... 48

4.3.2.1 AIMS/GOALS .................................................................................. 48

4.3.3 GROUP SESSION FOUR ......................................................................... 53

4.3.3.1 AIMS/GOALS OF GROUP SESSION ............................................. 53

4.3.4 GROUP SESSION FIVE .......................................................................... 56

4.3.4.1 AIMS/GOALS OF GROUP SESSION ............................................. 56

4.3.5 GROUP SESSION SIX ............................................................................ 59
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Photograph</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Superficial Ischaemic Necrosis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ulceration of Metatarsal</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Septic Pulp</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Blepharitus</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cataract in Diabetes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary Diabetes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-test Results of Child A</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pre-test Results of Child B</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pre-test Results of Child C</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-test Results of Child D</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Assessment of Feelings and Coping Skills</td>
<td>49-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Externalisation of Illness and Aggression</td>
<td>54-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Externalisation of Illness and Aggression (Continues)</td>
<td>57-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Awareness and Understanding of the Illness</td>
<td>60-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Externalisation of Rebelliousness</td>
<td>64-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Contact with self and environment - Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pre-and Post-test Results for Child A</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pre-and Post-test Results for Child B</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pre-and Post-test Results for Child C</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pre-and Post-test Results for Child D</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Causes of secondary Diabetes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Dietary Management of Diabetes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## LIST OF APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Informed Consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Permission from William Clark Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>Pre-Test Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Group Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Attendance Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>