

# Expressive techniques

## Expressive therapy

Expression can be understood as a form of experience that the individual feels. It is a special type of human activity in which a person spontaneously and with an emphasis on the form of expression expresses his inner mental states, impressions, feelings, moods and related experiences and knowledge. In expressive speech we say a lot (especially about ourselves), but we are not always able to control our testimony precisely. Its content is understood rather loosely, but with an emotional impact. Expression can take place on a variety of levels, from unaware expressions accompanying various emotions to artistic creation.



Expressive techniques

Expressive therapies usually contain two components, namely the **receptive** component (perception of art) and **the active** component (art creation). Expressive techniques are methods in which the patient expresses himself verbally and non-verbally using specific media, which can be artistic or movement. These techniques **relieve anxiety and internal tension**, which accompanies a lot of somatic and psychological diseases. Expressive techniques can take place either as individual or group therapies.

We can divide them into:

- **drama therapy** – using dramatic means;
- **theatre therapy** – using theatrical means (e.g. preparation of scenery, costumes, technical background and public realisation of theatrical form);
- **psychodrama** – using controlled dramatic improvisation;
- **music therapy** – using musical means (use of melody, harmony, rhythm, sound color, dynamics, tempo, type of time);
- **bibliotherapy, poetotherapy** – uses literary means
- **art therapy** – uses artistic means;
- **Play therapy.**

## Dramatherapy

It is an expressive-therapeutic method that uses the means of dramatic art. Its basis is the **conscious action of the individual** (dramo – action). It developed together with psychodrama, from which, however, it separated in the late 60s of the 20th century. Dramatherapy does not only deal with individual traumas in order to move them into consciousness. He works with signs and metaphors, uses stylization and creativity. It is focused on the development of skills **to orient oneself and respond appropriately in various social situations.**

Dramatherapy does not only solve a specific problem, but through a game, story or role, it tries to broaden the view of the situation and find a solution or contribute to it. It uses mimic and speech exercises, dramatic and verbal hua, script, myths and stories, role-playing, work with text, and storytelling. With the development of technology, experimentation and the acquisition of new knowledge from the past, present and future of the theatre, the means are constantly expanding. There is a very important space for **improvisation**, for the client's exploration of their experience, and for its spontaneous manifestations. In drama therapy, experience is a tool for changing behavior or thinking. It can interfere with the structure of the personality, focuses on restoring or improving the disturbed inner balance, and mediates the release and control of positive and negative emotions in a non-judgmental environment. It increases social integration and improves interpersonal skills.

## Theatre therapy

Theatre therapy is one of the expressive therapies, i.e. treatment methods that use artistic procedures. Its essence is the preparation **and realization of a theatrical performance, including the preparation of** scenery, costumes, sets, technical background. It leads to the final theatrical performance to be interpreted in front of the audience, which in other types of expressive therapies is only a secondary process. In this way, theatre therapy is closest to art as such. A very important role is played by the fact that the participants do not rehearse a scenario that would be chosen by someone and would be completely alien to them, but they themselves participate in the creation of the scenario with their stories and interventions, which is a considerable motivational and therapeutic element. Theatre therapy combines two elements – art and therapy – into one whole. Art itself has a great, not only therapeutic, significance in the life of every person. Art promotes relaxation and concentration, removes inhibitions and blocks, helps to get to know oneself and the surrounding world. At the same time, the influence of art awakens the ability to contact, listen to the other and empathize with the feeling of the other. Thus, it balances problems in social adaptation, satisfies the needs of deprived individuals and leads to self-reflection.

## Psychodrama

Psychodrama is a method of personal development and psychotherapy developed by the Austrian physician **Jakob Levy Moreno**. It is derived from improvised theatre and uses elements of theatre and drama. Psychodrama, however, is not group psychotherapy, but rather individual psychotherapy carried out in a group. The aim of psychodrama is to **increase the spontaneity and creativity of** the protagonist. With the help of the group, the protagonist frees himself from an entrenched structure or role. The client can look at their problems from the outside. It clarifies problems, increases physical and emotional well-being, improves learning and develops new skills.

## Music therapy

Music therapy uses music, rhythm, sounds, tone, singing, or even in connection with movement or art. The healing method is not only to create and participate in music, but it can also be listening to and perceiving the music itself or other creative expression based on it. Music therapy uses both verbal and non-verbal means. Verbalization by singing, rhythmizing words, shouting or whispering. Non-verbal work with music, rhythm or sounds. Different parts of the body resonate with other sounds and tones. Using these tones, music therapy can work to release tension in these parts or stimulate them. Singing and breathing has a great influence on other physical and mental processes. Music can be relaxing, irritating or stimulating energy. Last but not least, music, rhythm and sounds are a means of **mutual communication and expression of inner worlds**. It is used in the field of psychohygiene, for autistic clients and their family members, for handicapped clients.

## Bibliotherapy, poetotherapy

Bibliotherapy is a method of psychotherapy using the therapeutic and supportive effects of reading. It can be individual or group. The purpose of the therapy is **to reflect on the experienced stressful situation on the background of reading a book**, during which the patient experiences an overall release of accumulated psychological tension, catharsis, insight, awareness of the importance of the experienced situation, its acceptance, balance, as well as the restoration of the joy of life, the promotion of personal satisfaction, etc. It is a positive influence on the psychosomatic state of the suffering individual and strengthening his psychological resilience and balance. In addition, the reading itself develops imagination, **creativity, critical**, thinking, communication skills. Bibliotherapy is primarily focused on reading, but its principles can also be applied to written form – a typical example is writing internet diaries, blogs, the content of which is often full not only of the author's own opinions and insights, but also of his feelings, ideas, experiences that he can share with other members of the Internet community.

## Art therapy

Art therapy is a therapeutic procedure that uses artistic expression as the main means of cognition and influencing the human psyche and interpersonal relationships. Usually, two basic streams are expanding, namely art **therapy**, in which the emphasis is on the therapeutic potential and creative activities themselves, and **art psychotherapy**, where the creations and experiences from the process of creation are further psychotherapeutically processed. For a person – and especially for children and adolescents – artistic expression is a natural means of expressing their own feelings, attitudes to the world and to themselves, it is a way of self-knowledge. Art therapy can deal with this natural expression of man in such a way that artistic talent or practiced skill recedes into the background and the most important thing becomes fantasy, adventure, trying something new and, above all, the courage to express oneself. If someone is artistically proficient and sensitive, it is of course an advantage, but it is not a condition – anyone who does not feel direct resistance to it can create. Another important level of creation by artistic means is communication. Each clay painting or creation often carries an important message addressed to therapists and other members of the therapeutic group or community in which the creative processes take place. An important feature of art therapy is that it is not focused only on the result, the whole creation is important. This means that a person can learn something new about himself or experience something new from the moment he picks up a brush or ceramic clay. For the therapist, noticing the entire creative process is very important, it gives him an insight into the world of his client and allows him to better understand his world.

## Play therapy

It is used for children aged 3 to 12 years, when play is a natural means of self-expression. When playing, the child may experience anxiety, depression, fear, tension, aggression and learn to recognize and control these feelings.

## Links

### Related articles

- Psychotherapy

### External links

- <http://www.bodyterapie.cz/o-psychoterapii.html>

## References

- VYMĚTAL, Jan. *Special psychotherapy*. 2. edition. Prague : Grada, 2007. ISBN 978-80-247-1315-1.