

## THE LONE WOLF: A COPING STRATEGY IN A PRESCHOOL PSYCHODRAMA GROUP

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The method of psychodrama, and the group situation itself, creates an atmosphere of mutual understanding and acceptance. In this space, children can try out different social roles, which helps them to better understand the impact of interpersonal connections (Kende, 2003). Psychodrama develops altruistic and empathic skills, as it encourages us to consider the needs and feelings of others. It also develops sociability and supports modeling — that is, adopting and embracing healthier behaviors of others (Blatner, 2004). Child psychodrama sessions may help children to integrate into a community, to learn the adequate behavior in different social situations, and to enhance their social competence. Thus, it also makes them more courageous and sensitive, and contributes to the growth of their self-power, self-confidence and assertiveness. They learn the rules of struggle, so that they do not try to enforce their will with physical force in everyday life (Majsai-Hideg, 2020). There may even be several defining psychic experiences during the game, such as catharsis and a corrective emotional experience. Catharsis is a powerful emotional release, a healing phenomenon in the therapeutic process (Blatner, 2004). In our work, we present a series of psychodrama sessions with Hungarian preschoolers in Vojvodina, which consisted of ten occasions with five children participating in the group work in the second half of 2020. In this presentation, we present a case study. The focus of the work is on one of the group members, with the pseudonym Virág. Virág is five years old, and speaks two languages. It is difficult for her to express herself verbally, and there are two main sources of this problem. One is that Virág's father has been suffering from post-traumatic stress for 3 years, and the untreated nature of this condition has led to a dysfunctional family structure. The other source of the problem is a lack of continuity in Virág's life: the family has changed their home which, in this case, entailed a change of residence from another country. We found that Virág experienced a lack of reciprocity. She had a hard time identifying with others, she could not see herself as part of the community. We examined the extent to which the child's role choices and the roles themselves changed the child's behavior. Virág chose the role of wolf in most sessions. During her play, a cathartic key scene developed, a form of symbolization that set in motion, and cathartically disturbed the child's entire self-esteem. The child experienced a complex attachment and acceptance that brought about a change in her behavior, and her social competence showed improvement based on the post-work parenting report.