

**BIOENERGETIC
ANALYSIS**

*The Clinical Journal of the
International Institute
for Bioenergetic Analysis*

**Trauma
Part II**

VOLUME 10 • NUMBER 1 • SPRING 1999

BIOENERGETICS APPLIED TO SOCIAL CLINICS

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The Northwestern Bioenergetic Analysis Society from Brazil, home office in Recife, Pernambuco, has as its founders and directors the psychologists Jayme Panerai Alves, Lucina Araújo, Gedalva Rapela and Grace Wanderley de Barros Correia, that are also the directors of Libertas Community.

Libertas Community, founded eighteen years ago, develops activities in the clinic and organizational fields. About twelve years ago a Social Clinic began to exist through apprenticeship curriculum in Gestaltherapy, from the Psychology Colleges in Recife, under the supervision of the psychologist Lucina Araújo.

When the staff of Libertas Community began the initiation in Bioenergetic Analysis, there was a greater identification with this approach, being today the main basis of their work. The Northwestern Bioenergetic Analysis Society from Brazil, was recognized in 1997, and had embodied activities related to social clinics.

BIOENERGETICS APPLIED TO SOCIAL CLINICS

The socializing service, has as its main objective to make possible to the most destitute people from the society, access to psychotherapy in its several applications: children, adolescent and adults in groups as well as individually. Nowadays, this kind of service, basically, well-founded in the Bioenergetic Analysis, enlarges itself into a focus upon the prevention and maintenance of the biopsychosocial health.

The work is related to pregnant women, companies, and schools, by means of the use of Bioenergetics exercises that help people to deal in a healthier way with the stresses of today's world and to keep themselves grounded, centered and alive.

In the groups, we give focus to the integration, and, through Bioenergetics we work with the competitions, fights to get the power and other phenomena that occur during the process of living together, having in mind a fluent working group, coherent and using not much energy.

Today, we have about ten psychotherapists attending to from sixty to eighty people.

The advertising of this work is made through the clients, through students, through psychology courses, district associations, companies, folders and newspapers.

When we started this kind of program, people that looked for it were in the majority students, maids, building caretakers, and other people that had a income of about a minimum salary (R\$ 230,00). No sooner had Brazil's financial economical and social crises gotten worse, than clients began to change, people that would never before think to look for this kind of program before were now searching for our help, such as civil servants, bank clerks, teachers and many others.

The psychotherapy session happens once a week and people pay an amount of money that is defined in the first session, depending on their economical situation at the moment. A session's price outside this program is R\$ 80,00. We have to consider that up to 50% of this amount goes to the socializing program. However, the majority of the people that look for this service pay R\$ 10,00; R\$ 15,00 or at the maximum R\$ 25,00.

The definition of how much has to be paid constitutes the most difficult part of this process. Moreover, if we think about the symbolic meanings of money, it is possible that money may become a vehicle of resistance and of conveying transference. The real and great financial difficulties mix together with the relation of each one of the affection approaches, power, privation, self-esteem, pleasure, the right to live, or only the right to survive.

We know that money may mean how much a person values itself, or deserves, thus having a relation with the self-esteem. Money can be mistaken with affection. We know of many conflicts among brothers and sisters that fight after the father's death; each one wants more than the other, maybe with the illusion of being the best loved, or to feel closer to the father. Our society keeps the myth of Money associated to Power, to Happiness and to Sexuality. It is the illusion that the rich are happy and mighty.

Dr. Ronald Robbins associates the form and the capacity of each person to earn money with the orality's degree. Then people with a personal history of deprivation, probably, will repeat their relation with their mother, not allowing themselves to earn more than the necessary to survive.

The affective misery they suffered during their childhood continues within the material misery. Among these people we can observe many times little investment towards the process. The act of earning money requires

energy; that gets to be very difficult in a system that is being kept with low batteries. Besides this, there is the secret wish of "do it for me".

Many people arrive here hoping not to have to pay. Among them, it is frequent for them to desert the process without any explanation or payment. Because all of these factors, it is necessary that the therapists use all their ability and care regarding the definition of the amount to be paid by the client. The most difficult part is to separate and distinguish the subjective context from the concrete reality. It is necessary to pay much attention so that money does not become an object of manipulation. Experience teaches that there are cases of exploitation: people that want to pay less than their financial condition allows. When, during the process, the therapist perceives that the amount stipulated is not a fair one, after the symbolic analysis, they go over the contract. We consider that as the program involves people with great financial difficulties, even a symbolic amount asks for an investment and motivation so the resistances may be transcended. People that survive that initial moment, and dive deep into the process, show changes reflecting in a search for a better financial life through a recovery of the self-esteem and of the right to live with dignity and more pleasure.

Probably looking for this program brings to the surface the condition of destitution that those people are in. Socially speaking, they feel as if they were inferior, destitute, put aside by life; they feel prejudice against them and they feel angry for this. Depending on their personal history, other kind of sentiments may predominate, such as disdain, failure, shame and humiliation. During the therapeutic process, beginning from the objective reality it is necessary that the subjective sentiments and the family dynamics come to the surface so that the person working bioenergetically can open possibilities of change on the self level, with the world and with the way of existing.

To many people, the therapeutic way of getting better is also shown in a better life quality and in a social condition that also gets better. Even as the unconscious contents of the mind are being elaborated and worked, people begin to control their bodies, their sexuality, their affection, directing their energy towards a more dignified kind of life. Our experience shows us that some people began to look for complementary jobs and/or they began to discover talents to be raised and be given more power.

As an example we will tell the history of a young woman that got to know about this program through the community of one of Recife's poor districts.

She was 26 years old, single, a virgin, protestant, an elementary school teacher. She worked in a school's office earning a minimum salary. She was a very introverted person without new perspectives in her life. She used to live with her parents, and her religion was her life. She began a individual therapy process, paying a symbolic price, and during the process that took four years to be completed, she broke up with the oppressive and closed way of the church to which she was a member, that in the truth had not been hers as a personal choice. Little by little, she began to open herself to life, taking hold of her body and sexuality. She is not a virgin anymore, and she permitted herself to plunge into a sexual-affective exchange out of wedlock.

As a professional she began to look for development courses and to help to pay for her studies and therapy, she began to make homemade bread and sweets. She graduated in Pedagogy and participated in a course of Bioenergetics related to Education. Nowadays, she lives in another city, being the director of two different schools, and it looks like she has a more independent and better life, not only in a personal way, but also professionally speaking.

In relation to the therapists that work in the project, we know that the amount of money that is paid by the clients is irrelevant since it is proportional to their financial condition. It is necessary to perceive when money becomes an instrument of manipulation, of exploitation or even a way of being special. All these aspects are already part of the difficulties and of clients way of acting which need to be analyzed and need to be worked in a therapeutic way.

Psychotherapy, inside a social program, asks for a continuous follow-up of the process in its singularities so that it can achieve the proposed aims of a therapeutic approach being accessible to destitute people capable of making them more alive, healthy and with the right to Be and Exist.

BIOENERGETICS BEING USED INSIDE A DESTITUTE COMMUNITY

In Pernambuco, northwest of Brazil, agricultors' families got hold of a construction ground that a government office, DNOCS, had cast aside after the construction of a dam to avoid the floods that were frequent in the region. The women occupied themselves doing the housechores, working in the agriculture and fishing in the lake formed by the dam, risking their lives because of the dam's lack of safety. The community of about two hundred people, including men, women and children used to living with all the difficulties related to their social condition.

A non-governmental organization (NGO) called Casa da Mulher (Woman's House) developed a project called "Projeto Peixe" (Fish Project) aiming to give the women the opportunity of productive activities that could generate a better life to the community. About forty women have participated actively in the project that besides fishing included other complementary activities such as raising ducks, making manioc flour, pig pens and a vegetable garden.

The project had as its sponsor the Fundação Interamericana (Interamerican Foundation), that supplied the amount of money to the installation of all the substructure, the dam's cleaning, the building of the manioc flour small plant (Casa de Farinha) the acquisition of equipment such as: a vehicle, scales, freezers, etc.

The Casa da Mulher (Woman's House) had a two years period of time to organize, give instructions and advise the women about the project implementation and development. After that period of time, the expectative would be that the community would be independent so the NGO would be just with the supervision responsibility.

A system to sell the fish and the manioc flour was created and afterwards a nursery was organized. As the project was directed to the women, the responsibility and management of the project was theirs. Two women got a drivers license, and only these two women could drive the van. The men were only collaborators. As long as the women organized themselves and worked with productivity, many changes began to occur and had a repercussion among the different aspects of the personal, family and social lives of these women. The man-woman relation was directly touched. The women were completely and totally involved and excited with those new experiences of validation, the new space conquered, power rise, personal development and consequently a better life. The men felt themselves menaced, lost, confused, excluded and angry.

In addition to this, as soon as the women discovered themselves, they began to make a review about their role into the family and inside the society they lived in. Some of them started to recognize themselves as a person that has her own body, sexuality, desires and a voice. The values were affected and the paternalistic model was shaken.

The men were perplexed, because even during sex, the women behaved themselves in a different way: they allowed themselves to express their desires, preferences, take the initiative, give limits. It was possible to say "no" without the headache excuse. The matrimonial relationship, the sexuality, the people and the families were not the same.

All the community was affected. The process had no way back and the man-woman conflicts were worse, being necessary an urgent intervention, because the fights and menaces were too frequent. Some of the men when drunk arrived home very aggressive demonstrating all their indignation and hate by feeling themselves excluded and menaced by this "new woman". The meetings were full of tension caused by an atmosphere full of menace. The situation became serious with risk of violence or even murder.

On this occasion, the people that were responsible for the project "Casa da Mulher" (Woman's House) looked for Libertas' directors that immediately got ready to do a group work, aiming to facilitate the administration of the conflicts, searching for a better man-woman relationship and a greater integration into the community. It was decided that it would be better that in the first moments, to work with the group of men.

The meeting aimed to work the lack of security among the men, making possible to them to express all their fantasies and emotions experienced. In the beginning names and the objectives of the meeting were asked. We defined a mini-contract of secrecy, compromises, roles, and limits. We explained our proposal and through Bioenergetics, we started to work with the breathing, the rings, to end of the tension blockage, making grounding possible.

We introduced the communication between the couples as a way of raising bonds and breaking the resistance. The work was balanced between the corporeal and the verbal interaction of the group. The facilitators attention was directed to the subjective feelings that were in their majority of fear and anger. The anger was expressed with Bioenergetics help, by means of exercises like "Who do you think that you are?", other exercises related to competition, fight to get the power, limits, were experimented and worked in a corporeal way.

Taking out the mandible blockage and stimulating the expression in the eyes, teeth and arms caused lots of anger to come to the surface and only just after that expression integrated to the pelvis and legs was that the loss and the fear came to the surface, linked with sadness and to the impotence feeling. It was at the same time painful and beautiful to see the deep down truth appearing after the negativity expression. At that moment of the men's fragility there happened the true wedding union between the masculine and the feminine, revealed in the act of sharing the pain, in the tears, in the affection, in the love. It was a magic moment of peace, of existential meeting; the changing roles, the sex transcendence, the completion, the hope, the silence, the Unit.

Instantaneously they started to talk and to perceive the project's positive aspects: education for the children, a budget's complement, the community's development, and the familiar and social lives getting better. At this moment a possibility of proximity opened to them, and the men began to see how important it was to take hold of some of the project's spaces as collaborators. The compromise of collaboration in which men and women together would unite themselves for everybody's well-being, was developed inside the community's meetings.

The work was finished with Libertas' facilitators putting themselves at their disposal if they needed them later on. We evaluated this experience as an enriching but difficult one; in our perception it extrapolated the aimed objectives, allowing us an archetypical and transcendent experience.

It was a gift to everybody that have lived those moments, where the differences between the sexes, generations and social classes lost their meaning in front of the great beauty of bright eyes, reflecting the joy and the hope of the meeting of Mankind.

Five years have passed and we tried to know how the project was going, and we were informed that with the "Casa da Mulher" (Woman's House) withdrawn, little by little the project lost its characteristics.

The van started to be driven by one of the drivers' husband for his personal usage. It also happened that one of the leaders (she was considered the community's witch) began to use the production of the Manioc Plant (Casa da Farinha) to her own benefits. The "Woman's House" (Casa da Mulher) intervened, took the van back and also some of the equipments. The evaluation of one of the project's conductor is that probably the community wasn't still prepared to get its independence and there should have been more individual and group work. Even though, the experience was worthwhile, she says, because everybody has experienced an educational process, where they got a better self-esteem, they have learned, they developed themselves and today, for sure, they are not the same as they were before the project.

At last, we want to emphasize the great contribution of Bioenergetic Analysis, as a psychotherapy and as a practice that keeps the health, and

that can be used on the different sectors and society's layers. We want to express our gratitude, admiration and affection to Dr. Alexander Lowen by making it possible through Bioenergetics the crossing of the road to oneself's encounter by the redemption of ones body, of natures and of life.