

## **Group Psychotherapy Program for Children and Adolescents with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.**

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### **Objectives**

The present study aims :

- To validate the group protocol for this one-week program which deals with the resolution of traumatic memories for pre-adolescents and adolescents.
- To present the pilot study protocol which is going on for low age children (less than 8 years old) and their tutors.
- To discuss the use of two different EMDR group protocol in this program.

### **Methods**

This Group Psychotherapy Program is a strategy of a multicomponent treatment for complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Treatment includes:

- EMDR (eyes movement desensitization reprocessing (F. Shapiro, 2001): The Integrative Group Treatment Protocol (EMDR-IGTP), is used for children and adolescents (L. Artigas 2009) and the Group Traumatic Episode Protocol (EMDR G-TEP) for the tutors (E. Shapiro 2014).
- Psycho-neurobiological regulation (*D. Siegel, D.2014, G. Liotti 2016*).
- Mindfulness: *Mindfulness matters* ( Eline Snel ) for children and adolescents; and *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction* (Jon Kabat Zin) for tutors.
- Yoga and creative potential through artistic activities like theatre, dancing, painting, music, etc. (Porges 2011, Bessel Van der Kolk 2016).

Prior to the current presentation, the humanitarian association IEP COLOMBIA (Inocencia In Peligro Colombia) , since its creation (2008), had carried out 13 programs for children and adolescents presenting grave PTSD and low age children having grave somatic and behavior symptoms (*Adler – Tapia 2012*).

### **Results**

For the pre-adolescents, there were three measures (pre-treatment, post-treatment and follow-up), obtained in the Short PTSD Rating Interview (SPRINT) scores. The statistical analysis (ANOVA) of the effects of treatment in all groups participating in the psychotherapy programs from 2011 to 2018 was done. The mean response of the percentage of global improvement resulting from the follow-up measure by the participants was 85 %.

Low age children show significant improvement on somatic and behaviour symptoms. The same for the adults on the Short PTSD Rating Interview (SPRINT). Vulnerable tutors enhance their self-regulation capacities.

## **Conclusion**

The authors propose the Group Psychotherapy Program as a powerful psychotherapeutic alternative option to traditional approaches. More studies will be done using randomized controlled trials.

This treatment improves attachment in tutor-child relationship and heals trauma of children and tutors. The research needs to explore the efficacy of this treatment with low age children who live in institutions separated from their family

**Keywords:** EMDR with children; complex trauma; interpersonal trauma in children; multicomponent-phased Psychotherapy.

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