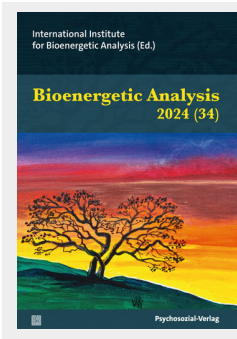


Périsson Dantas

Feeling the Joy of Life in the Body



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Feeling the Joy of Life in the Body

Ludic Activities in the Bioenergetic Analysis with Children

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Abstracts

The article aims to present how Bioenergetic Analysis exercises can be applied in a playful way in Child Psychotherapy. There are specificities in handling body work with children, which are: a) the understanding that patients are still in the process of ego development; b) plasticity of armor formation in this phase; c) the intention to strengthen more adaptive defense systems. As an initial theoretical review, the pioneering initiatives of body psychotherapies on child clinical psychology are discussed and a proposal for the use of bioenergetic exercises is launched, following the assumptions for the energetic mobilization of the armor rings in children, in the bottom-up sense. Finally, this article justifies the importance of training psychotherapists for specific care with children as a way of promoting health and rescuing Reich's intention to prevent neuroses.

Keywords: Bioenergetic Analysis, Therapeutic Exercises, Child Psychotherapy, Prevention of Neurosis

Sentindo a alegria da vida no corpo (Portuguese)

Atividades lúdicas na Análise Bioenergética com crianças

O artigo pretende mostrar como os exercícios da Análise Bioenergética podem ser aplicados de uma maneira lúdica em psicoterapia com crianças. Existem especificidades no manejo do trabalho corporal com elas, que são: a) A compreensão de que os pacientes estão, ainda, num processo de desenvolvimento do ego; b) a plasticidade da formação da couraça nesta fase; c) a intenção de fortalecer sistemas de defesas mais adaptativos. Como uma revisão teórica inicial, discute-se as iniciativas pioneiras de psicoterapias corporais na psicologia clínica infantil e lança-se uma proposta de uso de exercícios bioenergéticos, seguindo as premissas da mobilização energética dos anéis da couraça em crianças, no sentido "bottom-up". Finalmente, o artigo justifica a importância do treina-

mento dos psicoterapeutas para um cuidado específico, ao lidar com crianças, como uma forma de promover a saúde e resgatar a finalidade de prevenção das neuroses, proposta por Reich.

Sentir La Alegría De Vivir En El Cuerpo (Spanish)

Actividades Lúdicas En El Análisis Bioenergético Con Niños

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar cómo los ejercicios y movimientos del Análisis Bioenergético pueden practicarse de forma lúdica en la Psicoterapia Infantil. Hay ciertas diferencias en el trabajo corporal con niños, que son: a) la conciencia de que los niños están todavía en el proceso de desarrollo del ego; b) la plasticidad de la formación de la coraza (y bloqueos) en esta fase de vida; c) la voluntad de aumentar los niveles de adaptación de los sistemas de defensa. A modo de revisión teórica inicial, se abordan las iniciativas pioneras de las psicoterapias corporales en la psicología clínica infantil y se propone el uso de ejercicios y movimientos bioenergéticos, siguiendo los principios de la movilización energética de los anillos en el sentido ascendente. Por último, este artículo argumenta la importancia de la formación de psicoterapeutas para la atención especializada con niños, como manera de promover la salud y prevenir las neurosis según Reich.

Sentire la gioia della vita nel corpo (Italian)

Attività ludiche in analisi bioenergetica con i bambini

L'articolo si propone di presentare come gli esercizi di Analisi Bioenergetica possano essere applicati in modo giocoso nella Psicoterapia Infantile. Ci sono modi specifici di gestire il lavoro corporeo con i bambini, che sono: a) la comprensione che i pazienti sono ancora nel processo di sviluppo dell'Io; b) la plasticità della formazione dell'armatura in questa fase; c) l'intenzione di rafforzare sistemi di difesa più adattivi. Come prima revisione teorica, vengono discusse le iniziative pionieristiche delle psicoterapie corporee sulla psicologia clinica infantile e viene lanciata una proposta per l'utilizzo di esercizi bioenergetici, seguendo i presupposti per la mobilitazione energetica degli anelli dell'armatura nei bambini, nella direzione bottom-up. Infine, questo articolo giustifica l'importanza di formare psicoterapeuti per l'assistenza specifica ai bambini come modo per promuovere la salute e salvare l'intenzione di Reich di prevenire le nevrosi.

Ressentir la joie de vivre dans le corps (French)

Activités ludiques en analyse bioénergétique avec les enfants

L'article vise à présenter comment les exercices d'analyse bioénergétique peuvent être appliqués de manière ludique dans la psychothérapie de l'enfant. Le travail corporel avec les enfants présente des spécificités, à savoir: a) la compréhension du fait que les patients sont encore dans le processus de développement de l'ego; b) la plasticité de la formation de la cui-

rasse dans cette phase; c) l'intention de renforcer les systèmes de défense les plus adaptatifs. En guise d'analyse théorique introductive, les initiatives pionnières des psychothérapies corporelles sur la psychologie clinique de l'enfant sont discutées et une proposition d'utilisation d'exercices bioénergétiques est lancée, en suivant les hypothèses pour la mobilisation énergétique des anneaux de la cuirasse chez les enfants, dans le sens ascendant du terme. Enfin, cet article justifie l'importance de la formation des psychothérapeutes à la prise en charge spécifique des enfants comme moyen de promouvoir la santé et de préserver l'intention de Reich de prévenir les névroses.

Die Lebensfreude im Körper spüren (German)

Spielerische Aktivitäten in der Bioenergetischen Analyse mit Kindern

Der Artikel zielt darauf ab, darzustellen, wie die Übungen der Bioenergetischen Analyse auf spielerische Weise in der Kinderpsychotherapie angewendet werden können. Es gibt Besonderheiten im Umgang mit der Körperarbeit mit Kindern, die da sind: a) das Verständnis, dass die Patienten sich noch im Prozess der Ich-Entwicklung befinden; b) die Plastizität der Panzerbildung in dieser Phase; c) die Absicht, mehr adaptive Abwehrsysteme zu stärken. Als erster theoretischer Überblick werden die bahnbrechenden Initiativen der Körperpsychotherapien in der klinischen Kinderpsychologie erörtert und ein Vorschlag für den Einsatz bioenergetischer Übungen unterbreitet, der den Annahmen für die energetische Mobilisierung der Panzerringe bei Kindern von unten nach oben folgt. Abschließend wird in diesem Artikel die Bedeutung der Ausbildung von Psychotherapeuten für die spezifische Behandlung von Kindern begründet, um die Gesundheit zu fördern und Reichs Absicht, Neurosen vorzubeugen, wieder aufzugreifen.

Ощущение радости жизни в теле (Russian)

Игровые занятия с детьми в биоэнергетическом анализе

Цель статьи – показать, как можно применять упражнения по биоэнергетическому анализу в игровой форме в детской психотерапии. Телесная работа с детьми имеет следующие особенности необходимо понимать, что: а) пациенты все еще находятся в процессе развития эго; б) на этом этапе структура панциря еще пластична; в) задача – укрепить более адаптивные защитные системы. В начале дается теоретический обзор новаторских инициатив телесной психотерапии в области детской клинической психологии и выдвигается предложение использовать биоэнергетические упражнения, следуя гипотезе об энергетической мобилизации панцирных колец у детей в направлении снизу-вверх. В финале в статье обосновывается значение обучения психотерапевтов для специфической терапии детей как способа укрепить здоровье и реализовать стремление Райха предотвращать неврозы.

在身体中感受生命的喜悦 (Chinese)

儿童躯体动力分析中的玩耍活动

本文旨在介绍躯体动力分析练习中，如何将游戏的方式应用于儿童心理治疗。对儿童进行身体工作有其特殊性：a)患者仍处于自体发展过程中；b) 此阶段具备自体盔甲形式的可塑性；c) 具有加强更具适应性的防御系统的意图。作为初步的理论回顾，本文讨论了身体心理疗法在儿童临床心理学方面的开创性举措，并根据儿童自体盔甲的能量动员的假设，从自下而上的意义上提出了使用躯体动力分析练习的建议。最后，本文论证了培训心理治疗师对儿童进行特殊照护的重要性，这是促进健康和挽救赖希预防神经官能症意愿的一种方式。

Once Upon a Time ... The Beginning of a Path in the Children's World

Why work with kids? When my desire to address to this audience, so fragile in our contemporary world, was born?

To begin this work, I believe it is important to address a little of my history with Bioenergetic Analysis. It all started when I was still studying psychology, in the 1990's. At that time, I had the opportunity to take my first course aimed at assisting children and adolescents in the body approach. I was in the last year of the university course, in Natal/Brazil, and I was very interested in the clinical area. During this period, I participated in two extracurricular internships: in one of them, I attended children in a private clinic and, in the other, I developed a group work project with teenagers living in a peripheral neighborhood of the city. I was supervised by pioneering psychologists in body psychotherapy in the city, Fernanda Wanderley and Alzenira Gomes, to whom I pay my respects here.

They were university professors with extensive experience in Play Therapy and Humanistic Psychotherapy with adolescents, in the 80's and 90's, being supervisors referenced in the clinical area. They were the pioneers in the introduction of Body Psychotherapy in the city of Natal, as they began to take courses in Bioenergetic Analysis and Reichian Therapy, and brought this knowledge to the university. Based on their experiences, they initiated innovations in their practice, adapting body psychotherapy exercises and techniques for child and youth care, offering training courses and internships. I had the opportunity to take courses with these teachers, which gave me the first enchantment with the bioenergetic approach, through which I was able to work on deep issues from my childhood through therapeutic groups and supervised practices. Sadly, both passed away too soon, to the point where they were unable to systematize their discoveries in writing, but the legacy of their wisdom and creativity lives on in my heart with deep gratitude.

For the first time, I began to work on the issue of the inner child in my personal therapy. Through Bioenergetic Analysis, I accessed deep processes: my birth trauma, my issues with oral frustrations, the muscle fragility I felt in my body, the episodes of bullying for being a chubby boy who wore glasses, my difficulties in responding to the expectations of aggressiveness attributed to boys my age. I found refuge in my head – I ended up becoming one of the best students in the school and was finding the connection and identification with the teachers to move forward. Physical education classes were definitely torture for me, as I was a clumsy boy who had no sports skills. I developed a difficult relationship with my body, which demanded expression, but did not find encouragement in the school environment. My body was more identified with creative activities in the arts, theater, dance, which came to be developed only in adolescence. It was not by chance that, when I entered the Psychology course, Body Psychotherapy immediately attracted me, the experiences with courses and therapeutic groups provided the opportunity to rescue the expression of this body that had been denied since I was a child.

Later, at the end of the 2000's, I had the opportunity to take a course in Body Psychotherapy with Children and Adolescents, taught by Brasilda Rocha, in Rio de Janeiro. As will be seen below, she is one of the pioneers in the systematization of the use of toys and games in therapeutic work with children. It was a very deep path of theoretical and technical improvement. This work, in addition to being a central reference for my reflections, is one of the starting points for the development of my practice as a psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor in Bioenergetic Analysis. A differential of this course concerns the possibility of working on the emotional issues of our inner child, through the use of toys as resources to work through emotional conflicts and mobilize the energetic blockages contained in the armoring, originated in childhood traumas and frustrations.

Concomitantly, I had the opportunity to start my international training in Bioenergetic Analysis, at Libertas Comunidade, in Recife. This fact consolidated my trajectory as a psychotherapist who understands the human being in its integral dimension – mind and body in a functional unit based on its energy processes. However, one aspect caught my attention: although trainers are often talking about childhood traumas existing in the character defenses of adult patients, little was said about actions aimed at the psychotherapeutic treatment of children. Bioenergetic Analysis, as well as Psychoanalysis, addressed childhood experiences based on the effects they had on adult bodies. That is, behavioral fixations, emotional neuroses and the complex network of neuromuscular armor that block vital energy originate in the frustrations of child development. In this

sense, the focus was on learning techniques to treat adult patients with armoring and neurotic defenses already consolidated. There was no content for learning skills aimed at serving children and youth in the IIBA training programs. This article is an attempt to systematize all the knowledge obtained from this history. Its central objective is to present the theoretical and technical bases for adapting the Bioenergetic Exercises aimed at children. I will begin by addressing a conceptual foundation, traversing the pioneering initiatives in Body Psychotherapy in clinical work with children. Finally, I will bring the specific contribution to Bioenergetic Analysis in this context, describing a sequence of exercises adapted in a playful way, following the bottom-up methodology of energy mobilization in body work with muscle armor.

Psychotherapy: A Bioenergetic Approach

The work with children, in Body Psychotherapy, began with Wilhelm Reich's concerns about the prevention of neuroses in children, acting mainly within the sphere of institutions responsible for the socialization and regulation of children's natural impulses – the family and the school. Reich (1984), in his book *Children of the Future*, observed that children showed signs of contraction of vital energy from the first moments of life, resulting from difficulties during pregnancy and traumas in the birth process, difficulties in breastfeeding and repressive behaviors of educators influences on later psychosexual development. The author reflects on the primary origins of defensive characterological patterns in children and the interruption of the normal energy flow in the body, factors that result in the formation of armor, preventing a functional and healthy relationship with the world, with sexuality and with oneself. In several moments of his work, it is possible to perceive the relationship that the author establishes with the sexual repression of the parents regarding the interruption of the energetic, affective and sexual flow of their children. He emphasizes the harmful role of the repressive moral education in the development of the emotional plague that the culture imposed on children from birth.

His preventive actions focused on sexual education projects for parents and teachers, prenatal therapeutic care and postpartum infant first aid, helping in any difficulties that occur in the birth process, a key moment of primary cell contraction that can be established as a trauma in the newborn body. Later, his daughter Eva Reich (1998) continued the work focused on accompanying pregnant and postpartum women, through interventions promoting the improvement of con-

tact and attachment in the mother/baby relationship, through subtle touches, massages and ergonomic work with the neuromuscular armoring of the pregnant woman's body, to facilitate childbirth, puerperium and breastfeeding. Reich was also very active in the proposal to bring the ideas of free education to the school environment, which did not repress libidinal tendencies, centered on the spontaneous interests of children and adolescents, as well as their emotional self-regulation capacities.

One of the first authors to develop a more effective prophylactic and psychotherapeutic thinking to the treatment of neuroses directly with children from a bioenergetic approach was Elsworth Baker (1988), who, following Reich's ideas, developed ergonomic procedures to prevent the chronicity of neuromuscular tensions in children, based on interventions in the seven segments (rings) of the armor. Children are considered energetically open and plastic beings, with a self-development that allows, on a psychosomatic level, a very effective energetic reconstruction, as they have an innate potential for positive growth and health. Preventive work with mothers and family systems is also extremely emphasized, because the child needs to develop in an energetically open environment to accommodate their libidinal/drive demands according to the different phases of their psychosexual development, which, if unsatisfied, lead to the unleashing of characterological defenses.

Xavier Serrano Hortelano (1997), coordinator of the Spanish School of Reichian Therapy, reformulates the theories of Reich and Baker based on the contributions of Federico Navarro, proposing a post-Reichian paradigm for Character Analytic Vegetotherapy. The author, with whom I had the opportunity to carry out training focused on the prevention of neuroses, contributes to an ergonomic theory of child development, approaching the energetic flows that are present in the different moments of the constitution of the child's ego, from intrauterine life, birth, breastfeeding/orality, the search for individuation and genitality. Despite theorizing about the stages of child development, the author disagrees with the need to carry out a psychotherapeutic action with children, as he believes that their symptoms should always be seen in relation to the different systems that act to repress the child's psychosomatic organism (family, school, society). Thus, his work is focused on a proposal for the prevention of neuroses in childhood and adolescence, defined as Ecology of Human Systems, which consists of actions aimed at families and schools, based on Reichian principles.

Regarding Bioenergetic Analysis, Lowen (1990, 1994) was one of the main authors in body psychotherapy who systematized a theory of character according to Freud's stages of child development, revealing the functional/energetic and

psychodynamic constitution of character defenses and concomitant body armor-ing structures from the experiences of frustration that the child would experience in the constitution of their ego, culminating this process in the Oedipus Com-plex. In this perspective, there would be more primary defenses of pre-genital constitution (schizoid, oral, narcissistic and masochistic, arising from frustra-tions during pregnancy/birth, breastfeeding and control of autonomy in the anal phase) and

genital/phallic defenses (resulting from conflicts in the oedipal triangulation and the love/sexuality split). However, like Freud, Lowen never got to work with children in his clinic, elaborating his theory based on the symptoms observed in the care of adult patients, who exhibited several complaints related to their histo-ry as children.

Another important point to highlight in Lowen's works concerns the impor-tance he brings to the spontaneous movement of the body, the possibility of expansion experienced through exercises and therapy in Bioenergetics. The au-thor addresses the need to play, move around, dance, as a contact with joy – the primary core of existence and organismic pulsation, which is gradually lost with the educational process of repression. The recovery of the ability to feel pleasure in life permeates the work with the blockages that prevent the free expression of spontaneity, so natural for children.

Christa Ventling (2001) points out that Arnt Halsen was the first therapist to develop a pioneering initiative to apply bioenergetic exercises in a center for children with psychiatric disorders in Norway. The author points out that Halsen even presented the results of his work at an international conference, in the 90's, which was received without much enthusiasm by the bioenergetic community, a fact that left him quite discouraged for the development of further reflections and sharing. Ten years later, the author publishes the book *Childhood Psychother-apy: A Bioenergetic Approach*, with chapters by therapists who developed different works with children and their families, pointing out the need for greater attention to this public within our community. The book honors Halsen for his initiative and republishes, in the form of a chapter, the article where he reports the previ-ously cited work with children, which was first published in the IIBA journal. Another author who carried out a work along the same lines, combining behav-ioral psychotherapy treatment with bioenergetic exercises to treat children with different psychopathologies in a child mental health unit in Germany, was Wills (2001), whose article is in the book quoted here.

In 2007, Dennis MacCarthy released the book "*If You Turned Into a Mon-ster*": *Transformation Through Play: A Body-Centred Approach to Play Therapy*,

in which he addresses his career as a child therapist, through session reports, theoretical and technical reflections, using play therapy and the principles of Bioenergetic Analysis to guide their clinical practice. The author uses a combination of Jungian concepts to understand the symbolic dynamics contained in children's games and language, as well as the energetic look to work emotions through the body, privileging the of grounding and orgasmic curve in his observation and intervention on symptomatic behaviors. Resources such as drawings to symbolize the conflicts existing in the child's psychodynamics, sand play work, dramatization and bioenergetic exercises are combined to unite body and mind in the therapeutic accompaniment in individual and group clinics.

What characterizes the work of these authors is the combination of play therapy elements with the practice of bioenergetic exercises that can be performed in group or individual therapy, emphasizing massage procedures, touch, exercises for limits and improving trust, grounding, surrender and various expression techniques to mobilize/flexible neuromuscular tensions in children. However, it is noticed that there is no theorization about the development about child emotional development based on the notions developed by Reich and Lowen. Bioenergetic work comes in as a complement, in the form of exercises to energetically mobilize and help express repressed emotions, promote body regulation and awareness. The work of psychotherapy is carried out through a behavioral or analytical perspective, giving us the impression that a lack of coherent integration between theory and practice in the therapeutic setting, regarding the diagnostic understanding of the child in terms of character and its correlation with the armor development.

In Brazil, Brasilda Rocha (2014) developed an integrative theory and technique of body psychotherapy aimed at childcare. Her experience with child psychoanalysis, added to her training in various neo-Reichian approaches (bioenergetic analysis, biosynthesis, biodynamic psychology, formative psychology) enabled this pioneering author to develop an approach that combines elements of play therapy and a characterological understanding of the child's play and its energetic movement according to the orgasmic curve elaborated by Reich. In this way, the central objective of psychotherapy is to enable a return to the normal energy flow in the child's development, considered as a being with an open, plastic egoic constitution, with very fragile structured defenses. Unlike therapy with adults, which aims to deconstruct the characterological defenses, in child therapy the focus is on the continuous construction of healthier and more adequate defenses so that the child can establish a more integrated and functional relationship with the world around them and with themselves, so that their impulses,

emotions and thoughts can have a safe space of containment, expression and creation.

Regarding the therapeutic process itself, Rocha (2014) states that before the child enters the therapeutic process, they must undergo a careful psychodiagnostics evaluation, in which a mapping of the child's difficulties in the various areas of their lives is carried out, along with the parents. An extensive process of anamnesis and investigation of family dynamics begins, in addition to the application of tests, mainly evaluating cognitive, affective and interpersonal relationships. Only then would it be possible to survey goals and work techniques. Soon after this process, there is the return of the evaluation to the parents through a feedback interview, in which the therapeutic contract is agreed, emphasizing the importance of their participation in follow-up interviews, for the progress of the treatment process.

Once referred to therapy, the child will use toys and various resources (ludic box, theater, paper, sandbox, materials for cutting, drawing, painting and collage) in order to express their inner world, their emotions and conflicts. The therapist must be attentive to work on the energy flow of the child's play during the session and the formation of character structure defenses displayed in the quality of play and in verbal and non-verbal expression. Toys are selected by the child according to their age group and their character defenses that are not yet fully defined. The toy, in this perspective, represents the body and is used as an interpretation and/or intervention in the child's bioenergetic process.

It is important to respect the development of the child's energy flow, not interrupting it, but rather creating facilitating conditions for the child to work out their blockages within the rules and limits of psychotherapy in the therapy room. The therapist performs functions of fundamental importance, such as: a) in bodily terms, embracement, holding, establishment of limits, sensorimotor integration and grounding; b) in psychodynamic terms, the recognition and interpretation of character defenses that are being projected into toys and games. The intervention must follow an integrative look at the analytical, corporal and energetic aspects of the child, through exercises, presentation of new toys or changing the way the child plays, in order to help break through emotional blockages and discharge the energy that is stagnant.

The instruments used by Rocha (2014) basically consist of toys and different games, chosen according to extensive research that verified with 150 children, the quality and mobilization of defenses and the energy invested in more than 120 toys. It is interesting to observe how children, during the process, can change the way they play with the same toy, associating it with different contents, according

to the theme of character defense that was configured from frustrations in their moment of development. Often, the child may show a fixed pattern of behavior, rigidly manipulating toys and games, or avoiding them, for arousing anguish.

For example: a child with schizoid defenses tends to play with “collect fragments” toys or seek containment for their disorganization and aggressiveness/freezing, just as a child with oral issues may have the need to play with toys and games that evoke content of separation. That is, each child will choose the toys they need to deal with the challenges and anxieties inherent in their development process. In addition to toys, massage techniques, grounding, expressive exercises are used; work with the Swiss ball (indicated for expanding the muscles involved in breathing in a more ludic and smooth way, as a substitute for the bioenergetic stool when working with adults); songs (to stimulate the spontaneous and relaxed movement of the armour through dance); plaster (metaphor of affective freezing, outline, fragmentation), clay, sand, twine, rope, elastic, play dough, among other resources.

Brasilda Rocha also developed a work methodology of a preventive nature, focused on the application of Body Psychotherapy in schools, with teachers and students, in order to enhance the educational relationship for the formation of people more connected with their feelings and the development of creativity in the school space. In her book *Brinkando na Escola (Playing at School)*, Rocha (2010) presents a proposal for intervention rescuing the importance of playful spaces to promote the social, cognitive and emotional development of children, through body exercises, use of toys and expressive materials. The work was initially carried out with teachers, to make them aware of the importance of playing in the school context and, later, with students, with very positive results.

Integrating Body and Imagination: Our Proposal for Bioenergetic Exercises for Children

Based on all the theoretical and technical influences mentioned, I developed a way of working with children with bioenergetic exercises that can be used both within the psychotherapeutic space and in group exercise classes in the context of the clinic, school or other institutions aimed at children’s audience. Halsen (1992), in his article, precisely defines the main objectives in bioenergetic work with children, which are:

- improve children’s knowledge and awareness, contact with their bodies and feelings;

- increase the ability to express these feelings, completely, and verbalize them;
- increase conscious control of emotional expressions; improving the ability to tolerate and contain emotions and tensions; helping them to see the meaning and reason for emotions and reactions;
- building and establishing boundaries, physically and psychologically;
- reduce the tendency to split childishly by recognizing that other people are not all bad or all good;
- strengthen the identity and the ability to stand on one's own feet;
- develop concentration, firmly, and seek goals, developing containment mechanisms;
- provide a secure base for further development of interpersonal relationships.

I can add another therapeutic goals, thinking about the energy intervention that bioenergetic exercises can promote in psychotherapy:

- develop orgasmic potency in children, in order to sustain the cycle of muscle tension – energy charge – energy discharge – muscle relaxation;
- make the development of neuromuscular armor more flexible, avoiding the energetic fixation that serves as a somatic base for character neurotic symptoms;
- work on the armor segments, respecting the pulsatory rhythm and energy charge of each child, promoting a healthy psychosexual development.

My proposal is to adapt the bioenergetics exercises, reported by several authors (Schoereter & Thompson, 2011; Hoffman & Gudat, 1997; Lowen, 1989) to the child context, combining body movements with guidelines that invite to fantasy, in a ludic way. Thus, my proposal can integrate an intervention that associates somatic and symbolic elements, favoring pleasure in contact with the body, in the therapeutic relationship. As the child is in the process of development, it is very important that the therapist can perform the exercises respecting the needs and limitations of the patients, based on the energy diagnosis. Children with schizoid and oral issues, for example, will need exercises that stimulate more energetic charge, which must be performed slowly at first, within what they are able to bear and internalize. Children with anal issues, with narcissistic and masochistic defenses, need to work on autonomy, containment and energetic discharge, with games that can involve a more intense rhythm. The principle of Reichian orgasmic curve is the key paradigm for all interventions. So, it is essential to respect the process of pulsation: tension, charging, discharging and subsequent relaxation as a central map to promote the regulation of the autonomic nervous system.

Bioenergetic Analysis is based on the theoretical assumption of the therapist's need to work first on the patient's contact with his legs and feet, as a form of anchoring, rooting in the principle of reality. Lowen (1989, 1994) points to the importance of progressively grounding the ego, in order to subsequently work on upper muscular tensions, related to older frustrations in the development process. For example, armoring in the ocular and oral rings are related to difficulties experienced in the first moments of the mother/baby relationship, correlated with schizoid and oral defenses. With the children, in a soft and gentle way, this work provides, through the exercises, the possibility of expanding the bioenergetic charge/discharge circuit in the grounding position. Some examples, for this purpose, are:

1) Exercises for the Pelvic Segment, Legs and Feet (Grounding)

- Walking like a ballerina on tiptoe, trying to balance and twirl like in a ballet show;
- Walk on your heels, like a duckling, and if your feet or legs hurt, make the duck noise "quack quack";
- Imagine that you are walking in an orchard with very tall trees and that you need to stretch your arms out towards the ceiling to pick up as many fruits as you can;
- Walking like a gorilla, with knees bent, stepping with the outer edge of the feet, making monkey postures and grimaces, imitating its noises;
- Ask to march like a soldier, singing some military music, emphasizing the marked step and the voice, paying attention to the rigidity of the body. Depending on the cultural context, the figure of the soldier can be replaced by the robot, as a way of working with mechanical movements;
- Tread lightly, as if you were stepping on clouds, or walking on eggshells;
- Stepping as if crushing grapes on the floor to make wine – depending on the children, imagine stepping on cockroaches or monsters on the floor, to release aggression. This exercise can be a continuation of the previous one of stepping on eggs, imagining that disgusting animals are emerging from their shells, working on fear, disgust and defense;
- Walking around the room as if sneaking off somewhere so no one can hear, or imagining you are playing detective and looking for someone no one can hear. You can also imagine that it's nighttime and you want to get a candy from the fridge hidden from your parents;

- Grounding exercise: ask the child to stand up and imagine that they are a tree that takes root in the ground. Ask them to imagine that the feet are the roots, the body is the trunk and the arms can be the branches that slowly reach towards the sky. To stimulate the vibrations, ask the child to flex and stretch their knees, as if they were pulling food from the earth that will feed the tree. If the child feels the vibration, reassure them, as they may feel strange because of the novelty of the sensation. One resource is to imagine that this tremor is the earth's energy that feeds the plant to grow. Always remember that the tree needs to breathe to grow and carry out photosynthesis.

From the legs and pelvis, the therapeutic work can ascend to the energy rings/segments (Baker, 1988) of the abdomen and diaphragm, which are intimately involved with the processes of breathing, centering, and contacting the internal organs. Because it raises content that can generate anxiety, it is recommended that the exercises be done with great care, observing how the child can assimilate the internal movements of the body without arousing fears, hyperventilation or high excitement.

2) Exercises for Abdominal and Diaphragmatic Segments (Breathing)

- Imagine your belly as a big balloon that can inflate and deflate with air. Ask to inhale and fill your belly very slowly and then let go little by little. When releasing, try to blow, exhale with your mouth open. Observe existing blockages for both filling and emptying. You can ask to touch the belly and feel the inflation and deflation from the hand on the navel or ribs;
- Balloon exercises: ask the child to fill the balloon as much as possible without bursting it. If it bursts, deliver another one and work on the scare that may arise. You can ask to put bad feelings, things that distress you, tiredness, or any content they want to put there in the balloon. Then ask the child to empty the balloon and put that content somewhere. Later, fill it again with good feelings and be able to leave the feelings inside, tying the balloon. There are children who cannot inflate their balloons, due to lack of energy in the mouth and diaphragm, work patiently within limitations;
- After this step, throw the balloon into the air and interact with the therapist, asking them not to let the balloon with the good feelings fall to the floor. This game works well on stretching the arms and diaphragm. In groups, it is

a very fun activity, in which the children try hard not to drop the different balloons that are thrown into the air. After a time of interaction, you can ask each child to look for their balloon and stay with it. The work is completed by asking each child to be able to separate from their balloon in the way they want – it is interesting to note that some want to keep the balloon, others burst it, others empty it, depending on the attachment pattern and associated emotional content;

- Imitate the dog's breathing when it gets tired, sticking out the tongue and giving a rhythm to breathing through the mouth, in order to mobilize the diaphragm musculature, with sound. It is important to be careful with the hyperventilation that can happen;
- Exercises with the voice, asking to inhale deeply and vocalize the vowels until all the air that was inhaled is released. You can ask the child to do it in front of a wall and imagine that the sound is a wave that can hit the wall, almost to the point of piercing it. Another variation is to play who can make the sound as long as possible during exhalation.

The thoracic segment includes movements with the arms and the articulation of the shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers. In psychological terms, the chest and arms are related to affection, contact, as well as the intention to grab, fetch, bring, movements that are important in the attachment pattern in child development (Hoffman & Gudat, 1997). Lowen (1989) addresses the chest as the somatic center of identity, in which the notion of self in children is distinguished, closely associated with emotions: in contraction – fear, anguish; in expansion – aggressiveness, love. In my practice with children who have primary developmental traumatic issues, I noticed a slightly expanded chest, requiring gentle movements to thaw the fear of contact and of their own feelings. As for children with anal and phallic issues, there is a tendency to stiffen up that needs to be relaxed.

3) Exercises for the Thoracic Segment

- Spin your arms back and forth in large circles, like a weathervane at different speeds;
- Imagine that the joints need oil to be able to move better, as happens in robots and machines and the oil would be passed through circle movements in the joints of the shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers, moving very slowly. You can expand this same exercise to the leg joints;

- Playing tug of war, pulling a towel or rope, saying loudly: “Me” or “It’s mine”, expanding the sound well on exhalation;
- Raise your shoulders up and make a startled face as if you’ve seen a ghost or a monster. Stay a few seconds and relax, imagining that the ghost is gone – do this a few times;
- Afterwards, react and punch the ghost, releasing anger, with sound, emphasizing strength and ability to defend yourself. Expressive exercises should be worked on observing the child’s blocks, familiarizing them with empathy for emotional contact and expression, welcoming the contents that come, especially shame;
- Imagine that the child is in a boat or canoe, in which they need to row widely, opening our chest, to reach a very beautiful place. It might be that some children enter the fear of being in the water or drowning, the therapist’s support to offer a safe support image is fundamental to allow the expansion of the chest and overcoming the fear;
- Remember a very dear person you love. Feel your heart and body, open your arms in search of giving the person a big hug. Gradually, imagine that the person approached and the child is hugging with great affection and receiving a lot of positive energy. It is an exercise in expanding, bringing in and embracing one’s body, which can be repeated a few times.

Now it will be approached about a very delicate segment, the cervical, which involves the muscles and vertebrae of the neck, as well as the throat. Michel (1997) points us to the need to observe the neck as the bridge between the head (seat of cognitive processes) and the rest of the body (where the viscera and motor processes are located). It is a region closely linked to experiences of controlling emotional expression, represented by strong tensions located in the back of the neck and in the lateral and posterior muscles. In children, it is a segment that can arouse anxiety related to suffocation, birth trauma, repression of expression, insecurity and disorientation. The exercises must be performed slowly and smoothly, allowing tensions to be relaxed without awakening primitive fears, such as lack of control or panic.

Exercises for the Cervical Segment

- Swing your neck sideways, in a pendulum format, as if it were an old clock, very slowly. You can sound the idea of “ticking old clock” as a stimulus to the pendulum’s imagination;

- Search the environment for all the details that exist on the ceiling, floor, walls, activating curiosity, moving the neck and eyes. This exercise conveys a sense of exploration and security to children, making the neck more flexible without triggering intense emotional discharges;
- Imagine a pencil on the tip of your nose drawing a circle in the air. Ask the child to slowly rotate the neck to one side, completing the circle and to the other, leaving the neck very soft. Check if the child does not feel dizzy. Ask the child to draw the number 8 lying down with the tip of the nose to work on tension in the back of the neck. You can also ask them to write their name in the air with the tip of their nose, as a way of working on identity;
- Do the “no” movement slowly with the neck sideways, saying no to the bad or annoying things/people that they don’t like or don’t want in their life;
- Make the “yes” movement very slowly with the neck up and down, imagining saying yes to the good things/people they want to have around their life.

The next segments involve the muscles located in the head, which Navarro (1996) conceptualizes as “tele receptors”, related to the processing of information from the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. I am talking here about oral and ocular armoring, whose tensions refer to frustrations experienced in the first moments of life in the relationship with the maternal figure – traumas during pregnancy, childbirth, difficulties in postpartum attachment and breast-feeding/weaning. The exercises must be proposed with gently care and delicacy, as very primary ego defenses can emerge, such as dissociation, depressive anxieties, associated with fear and sadness, abandonment and rejection. That’s why this segment is worked on last, as the energy of the progressive segments has already been mobilized, providing a psychosomatic structure for the child to deal with what may arise from the proposed movements, in order to integrate all the primitive experiences in a safe way.

Exercises for the Oral and Ocular Segments

- Play making different sounds with the mouth – car sound (brrrrrr), explosion (boom), smacking kisses, letting the laughter free, as a way to also release the diaphragm and relax the defenses;
- Suck in the air with your mouth in the shape of a beak, imagining that you are having a milk shake or a very tasty juice through a straw (breathing in), filling your belly with what is being taken and then releasing the air between

your teeth with sound of S, really emptying the belly, mobilizing abdomen and diaphragm. Do the exercise being careful with hyperventilation;

- Imagining chewing gum, then a food or a very hard candy, stimulating movement with the jaws in a very exaggerated way;
- Imitate a cat or dog showing teeth to mark territory or to defend against a threat;
- Making different faces: showing tongue, teeth, making the ugliest face you can, with sound – observe inhibitions, in case they arise – you can ask to make faces initially with eyes closed, then open your eyes and maintain contact. Impersonating a clown or some funny character can help overcome shame;
- Look up at the sky, down at the ground, without moving your neck, repeating a few times;
- Look left and right, trying to see what's behind the body;
- Playing with the facial expression of emotions: fear, anger, sadness, disgust, shame, joy – it is important to mirror the emotions together with the children, so that they feel free to recognize them. A good resource is the use of emoji pictures;
- Close your eyes, place your hands over your face to block your vision. Ask to feel the temperature and the touch of the palms over the eyes and then open them inside the shell so that they can rest. Finally, slowly open your fingers, letting the light in little by little and take your hands away from your face, showing your eyes again.

For the finalization of the work, it is always interesting to integrate what has been experimented with the inverted grounding (bend over) and arch postures (Lowen, 1989) as a way of giving children an opportunity to discharge energy and subsequently relax. After a sequence of exercises, it is suggested that the child spend some time lying down, listening to relaxing music or in silence, as a way for the parasympathetic nervous system to promote self-regulation.

- Inverted Grounding (bend over): imagine the body as a tree, feeling the feet as strong roots, the tree will have the magical power to bend its trunk and touch its branches lightly to the ground and experience this. Gradually, the tree will rise and return to the starting position. Another way to work on this posture is to imagine that the spine would be a curved Lego tower that will be built piece by piece, with the head being the last to fit in when lifting;
- Arch: still using the metaphor of the tree, imagine that a very gentle wind sways its trunk and branches gently back and forth. Ask the child to feel the strength of the plant's roots in the ground, that the wind comes and does not knock it down.

And the Moral of the Story Is ... Our Last Words

This work will be the embryo of a future book that I intend to publish on Bioenergetic Analysis with children and adolescents, in which I will address clinical handling with toys, character theory and parental counseling. I need to emphasize the low incidence of articles focused on bioenergetic care with children, as well as themes aimed at this audience, in books and publications of our community (*International Journal of Bioenergetic Analysis*, *Latin American Journal of Body Psychotherapy*, *European Journal of Body Psychotherapy*, etc.). My candidacy for the international trainer aims to raise this topic for the IIBA Faculty, in order to develop actions, courses, training workshops for the child therapeutic care in Bioenergetic Analysis, since the current faculty has few specialists in this topic.

I justify the need to consider that therapeutic work with children in today's world is fundamentally important, given that some studies (Catani & Salatino, 2019; Porto & Valente, 2014) point to the high demand for child psychotherapy, with few professionals trained to treat this public in their specificities. The skills and competencies for working with children are not the same as those taught in our adult clinical care training courses.

It is necessary to create training strategies for therapists who can take care of the psychic suffering of our future generations, who are immersed in a very challenging world. Problems such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, psychosomatic issues, panic – formerly related exclusively to adults – today are frequent complaints from our children, who are experiencing difficulties in their ego formation, immersed in a virtual world of excessive information and stimuli, with lack of contact with the body and opportunities to play.

Working with the body, rescuing children's self-regulatory potential is a mission to heal the future of the planet and humanity. Bioenergetic Analysis needs to rescue the Reichian origins of committing itself to the prevention and treatment of neuroses at an early age. I hope this work can inspire new exercises and creative interventions that promote healing for children – whether they are our patients or the inner children that live within us.

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