



A Way to Understanding Children and Adolescents

A body-oriented and neurobiologically well-founded psychotherapy and educational theory for children, adolescents and their parents



Dear reader,

The term „feeling-seen“ aptly describes the central idea of this approach for solving the problems of children, adolescents and their parents.

„Feeling-seen“ is about allowing the child or adolescent to actually feel seen within the therapeutic process.

This will be accomplished primarily through the therapist’s open and accepting attitude, his specifically trained skills in recognizing emotions and affective sensations flitting across the child’s face within split seconds, as well as the therapist’s ability to label the feelings experienced by the child or adolescent in a pertinent way.

If this succeeds, the child or adolescent will feel understood in the emotions he experiences and will feel truly seen by the therapist.



Consequently, this growing trustful atmosphere and an orientation towards their own feelings enable the children or adolescents to succeed in breaking through to their fundamental difficulties and hardships with the help of the therapist.

It’s not unusual that the problems of the children turn out to be rather different from what their parents or other persons involved may have assumed.

With this brochure we would like to invite you to come along on an exciting journey, frequently leading into unknown areas and oftentimes including unexpected turns, thereby striving to encourage the process of working through and finally solving the problems of children and adolescents.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Di. Bachg".

Michael Bachg

Services

- Psychotherapy for children/adolescents and their parents
- Advanced vocational training for professionals, e.g. psychotherapists, medical doctors, counsellors, educators, judges, school administrators, social services employees etc.
- Basic and advanced training in feeling-seen
- In-house-Trainings



Basic assumptions

Feeling-seen is based on the positive assumption that in the course of their long evolutionary developmental process, human beings have gained genetic knowledge about how a successful life is possible and how to achieve this.

We have been equipped with a sense of hope, we expect joy, and it seems as if the knowledge about how life is supposed to be was passed on from one generation to the next.

The neurobiologist Gerald Huether, widely noted in the educational and cultural field, has demonstrated with regard to cerebral development and the significance of psychosocial factors, that a child's brain needs as many challenges as possible in order to develop – but children must not fail due to these problems and therefore need emotional security through bonding with their parents.

Feeling-seen aims to enhance relationship skills in children, to strengthen their attachment towards others and towards themselves.



Benefits and goals

Feeling-seen shows us ways to bring children and parents together in problematic situations, instead of separating them in different therapy settings such as child therapy and parent counselling, which is a somewhat common practice.

In constellations such as these, the therapist frequently puts himself in a key position, since he is the only one who knows both the child's and the parents' viewpoint, and who is confronted with the task of connecting these views and communicating them mutually.

When asked, most children and adolescents treated with feeling-seen prefer their parents to be present.

It is the intention of feeling-seen to see and understand the child or adolescent with regard to his own inner experience and his perspective on his own life – if possible, while the parents are present. Only in this way will we be able to identify what the child is lacking, which are the uncontrollable border violations he is suffering from, or where he is trying to fill roles and functions that are not being filled within the framework of the family, either entirely or partly for himself or for the well-being of other members of the family, in order to relieve them.



Holes within the family role system

In the above-mentioned sense, children are trying too soon to help, i.e. to take on a high measure of responsibility for themselves and others, even before they have had sufficient opportunity as a child to develop the necessary maturity for this in a friendly dependent relationship with their parents.

These children support their parents way beyond any ordinary measure, hoping or expecting thus to enable their parents to fulfil their parental tasks in a better way than up to now.

Children within such family constellations often give the impression of being strong and appear to be self-dependent at an early stage. This is why their dilemma of experiencing a false role, vacillating between neglect and appreciation, frequently remains undetected.

For instance, after a separation, children often try to comfort or stabilize the remaining parent by relieving him or her of certain responsibilities, e.g. taking care of other siblings like a parent, making an effort to replace their parent's missing partner, or even adopting a parenting role for their own parent.

It is the aim of our therapeutic approach to trace and correct those tendencies or undesirable developments. Therefore, it is essential for the parents to become aware of their child's motivation to relieve them, and thus consciously and deliberately to prevent those tendencies by enabling themselves to accept responsibility and to fulfil their roles within the family.



Parents' attendance

In order to achieve the parents' necessary insight and motivation, their presence during the therapy sessions is of great benefit.

In this way, they become eye and ear witnesses of their child's therapy process, to a big part experiencing this process first-hand, attending as observers and not having to explain or justify their behaviour directly and in person.

It is easier for parents to feel sympathetic towards their child even in conflict situations, when witnessing how the child really feels about the present situation.

In short, it is a question of satisfying the basic developmental needs of the child, as well as putting the parents in the position to recognize and fulfil these needs for their child, e.g. food, support, protection or boundaries.

Children need to feel that they are granted an important place in their parents' lives. Then they can feel that they are right and they are wanted.



Interactions

The quality of the interactions between the parents and their child is our central focus. These interactions may be improved with the help of feeling-seen by including all the senses, which means on a physical level also, e.g. by appropriate touching or the physical contact the child desires.

Successful points of contact such as these, where parents can experience how it feels to satisfy an essential need for their child, which however they had not known before, are an exhilarating experience for themselves also, not just for their child, which the parents and the child can take home with them after the therapy session. It may influence strongly their relationship as well as their interactions with one another.

Understanding children and adolescents at the right time is the basic concern of feeling-seen. It enables us to recognize negative relational patterns and living circumstances and to deliberately influence them.

Thus, undesirable developments may be corrected at an early stage, before acquired dysfunctional patterns can manifest themselves as psychological disorders in adulthood.



Therapeutic space and intervention techniques

In this form of body-oriented psychotherapy for children and adolescents it is imperative to provide a secure atmosphere, which the therapist himself contributes to throughout the session due to his respectful, empathic and authentic attitude towards all those involved.

This way, a therapeutic space emerges where processes such as this may become possible. In their concept of the Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP), Albert Pesso and Diane Boyden Pesso describe this space as „possibility sphere“.

It is the starting point and permanent basis for the use of well-honed intervention techniques such as „microtracking“, a highly specialized form of therapeutic dialogue, focusing on meticulously tracking the momentary make-up of the patient’s consciousness, i.e. his perception, action, emotion, and cognition.

The emotions, recognizable in the face and the body of the child or adolescent, are being made conscious by naming the feeling which adequately describes the corresponding emotional experience. The primary feature of this sequence of emotion, feeling and consciousness is its body-relatedness.



Results

Feeling-seen can help parents to get to know and understand their child in a new and better way, to perceive the child's developmental needs as well as their own interactive behaviour, and to deepen the relationship with their child.

Indications

Affective (depressive) disorders, stress and adjustment disorders, behavioural and emotional disorders with onset during childhood and adolescence (e.g. disorder in social behaviour, emotional disorders such as anxieties, phobias, social hypersensitivity, attachment disorders as well as current psychosocial stress situations of children and parents because of special circumstances (e.g. separation, experience of loss, physical disease, contentious relationships with classmates and teachers (scape-goating)).

The experience of how the inner images of children and adolescents, as well as their emotions and thoughts become visible and audible, is oftentimes impressive for both the therapist and the parents.



Experts' opinions

"Unnoticed by the PBSP public, feeling-seen is probably the most significant and beneficial application of PBSP in German-speaking countries."

Prof. Dr.med. Dr.phil. Serge K.D. Sulz

MD, PhD, Specialist for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Specialist for Psychotherapeutic Medicine, Honorary President of the Deutsche Aertzliche Gesellschaft für Verhaltenstherapie DAEVT (= German Medical Society for Behaviour Therapy)

"A lovely and effective application of PBSP principles and procedures for the field of parenting".

Albert Pessa und Diane Boyden Pessa

founders of Pessa Boyden System Psychomotor (PBSP) – Psychomotor Institute, Boston, Massachusetts

"What you are doing in facilitating emotional processes is really good, and as a result you get to the core of the matter very quickly. Actually, this kind of approach ought to be obvious, but it takes a lot of courage and a deeply rooted empathic attitude."

Prof. Dr. Gerald Hüther

MD, Director of the Centre for Neurobiological Prevention Research at the Universities of Goettingen and Mannheim/Heidelberg



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