

Case presentation –Haya Libman

A falso name : עם הערות: [ט1]

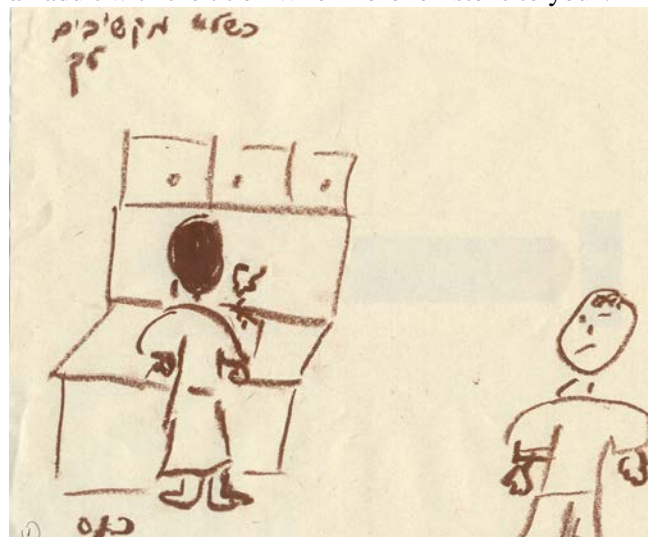
A seven year old was referred to me for treatment at the request of her parents regarding a posttraumatic reaction. Liat is the oldest of three children. Liat was witness to her 4 ½ year old brother being attacked by a dog. The adults had a tough time freeing the boy from the grip of the dog's teeth and the child needed medical attention in hospital. The grandmother who was in the yard where this happened fainted and she too was taken to hospital in an ambulance.

Liat came for treatment a few months following the incident after she had started exhibiting avoidance reactions which were steadily on the increase. She refused to leave the house without parental accompaniment and gradually she would prevent them from going along certain streets and limited them to going in specific places in particular roads. Parents' efforts to promise her that she would be safe were of no avail.

Winnicot's technique of collaborative drawing : עם הערות: [ט2] of the child and the therapist

Preliminary joining up with Liat was using a "squiggle game" where a threatening dog was mentioned but also suggested the possibility that with the right resources she could cope with it.

Liat was invited either to draw or model the dog. She chose to model it with clay and called it: "a bad dog" and placed it at the side. At this stage Liat was asked what the most frightening thing was when the dog attacked her brother. She replied that all the adults related only to her brother and grandmother and no-one paid her any attention. Liat was asked to choose a color to represent what she felt when she remembered that everyone was looking after her brother and grandmother and no-one noticed her. Liat chose brown and called it: "anger" and drew a child and an adult with the title "When no-one listens to you".



Liat was then asked what color shows what she would like to feel when thinking about the incident. She chose red and she drew a bride next to a table with a vase of flowers on it and called this: "Joy".



I asked her to look at the "brown" drawing which was called "anger" and intermittently look at the red one called "joy" and we began tapping which we called "giving it a beat". Liat tapped when she looked from one picture to the other. I suggested that if she'd like to add more colors, she could stop and tell me. Liat stopped after a few sets, chose a black color and drew a child who had broken a broom and wrote: "fear".



We kept on tapping and Liat stopped once more and chose a grey color and drew a table and chair. She called it: "I don't feel like, don't want".



אני לא רוצה / לא רוצה

We kept on tapping and again Liat stopped after a few more sets and chose a yellow color, drew a girl and a door and wrote "excitement".



We tapped some more and Liat once more stopped and chose a green color, drew a baby and mother and next to them a lone child and she said: "it's not nice when mummy is feeding the baby and doesn't hear you".



Then we kept on tapping. Liat stopped again and chose a turquoise color. She drew a child playing and said: "the child is getting bored so he's found something to play in the meantime".



Once again we continued the tapping and a few sets later she stopped once more. She chose a purple and drew an interaction between mother and child and said: "the child sees his mother isn't busy and wants her to tell him a story".



On we went with the tapping and a few sets later Liat stopped, chose a pink color and drew a mother and child with a book in the mother's hands. She said: "It's nice when someone tells you a story and has time for you".



We continued tapping and Liat stopped and said “enough”. She summarized her story by arranging the drawings in order from brown to red.

At this stage I asked Liat to look at the dog and indicate her feelings somewhere on the scale of faces between sad and happy. She still placed herself closer to the sad face.

I invited Liat to look once more over her story in drawings whilst tapping. We did a few more sets and then I asked her to model or draw a dog the way she feels about it now. Again she chose to model the dog – a different one this time and she announced: “this is a good dog”. She added a bowl of bones for the dog “so he has something to eat” whilst moving the “bad dog” further away saying that she didn’t like that one. I invited Liat for one last set of tapping whilst looking at the story and then I checked with her where she was on the sad-happy faces scale. Liat now placed herself significantly closer to the smiling face and said: “I’m not afraid of the dog but I don’t like it, I can tell it to get away from me and I don’t want to give that one a bone”.

At the next meeting Liat closed the gap even more between herself and the happy face. The parents reported that there had been a significant calming down and that she is more independent when leaving the house. In a follow-up meeting two months later Liat chose to make another dog and said that she was a friend of this good dog. She told me how she went to school by herself and also to her friends’ houses and the local grocery store. Her parents reported that she had gone back to being her old calm and independent self and that she is again a smiley and content girl.

Haya Liebman
Director of the Intensive Care Department
Community Centre, Rishon Letzion