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The letter to anorexia as a diagnostic and a therapeutic tool

Dorota Ryzanowska

Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

The aim of the presentation is to consider the usefulness of the narrative approach in understanding the experiences of patients with anorexia nervosa. The study included 40 patients of the Department of Children's Psychiatry and Mental Health Outpatient Clinic of the St. Louis Regional Specialist Children's Hospital in Kraków, at the age of 11-18. The retrospective qualitative analysis of 40 therapeutic letters written by adolescent female patients suffering from anorexia nervosa shows that narrative techniques of work such as letters are an important source of information useful in therapeutic context. Studies undertake among others, the question of the relationship between the "Authentic Self" of an individual and an "anorexic voice" present in the patient's mind which according to the current of narrative therapy shows such an intensive tendency of domination of thoughts, emotions, decisions and actions that patient can think about the disease like about his/her self-identity. The aim of the diagnosis and therapy in narrative approach is to identify and deconstruct this kind of internalized viewpoints connected with anorexia and build strategies which allow the patient to take control over them. The directions for potential psychotherapeutic applications of letters in the psychotherapy of patients with anorexia are proposed.

Biography

Dorota Ryzanowska is a Psychologist and Psychotherapist. She has completed her PhD in 2014 from Jagiellonian University in Kraków. In 2009, she completed her training in family therapy, which was conducted by the Systemic Psychotherapy Centre in Kraków. During the training, she held an internship in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of the Medical College in Krakow. She has eight years of experience in professional work as a family and individual psychotherapist of adolescents with eating disorders treated in the Department of Psychiatry of the Regional Specialist Children's Hospital in Kraków. She has published five papers in psychological and pedagogical journals and several chapters in thematic monographs.

dorotary@wp.pl

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