

Experiential Techniques in the CBT Treatment of Personality Disorders

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Childhood trauma may be accompanied by biological changes that are caused by the stressful events. Once the events take place, amount of inner changes happen in the child. Thought suppression, developmental regressions, deliberate avoidance, sleep problems, exaggerated startle responses, fears of the mundane, irritability, and hypervigilance are prominent among these. Terr (1991) describes four characteristics related to childhood traumas that appeal to last for long periods of life. These are visualized memories of the traumatic event, trauma-specific fears, repetitive behavioral patterns, and changed attitudes about others, life, and the future. The intent of therapist during imagery rescripting is to improve the patient memorizing the traumatic events and expressing affective experience and then help him/herto rescript experience to less painful. Therapist helps the patient to understand, how symptoms connected with the events from childhood and how they are interconnected with actual problems in life (Smucker & Neiderdee 1995). Therapeutic process can be divided into of several steps (Prasko *et al* 2012c, Vyskocilova & Prasko 2012b):

1. formation of the therapeutic atmospheres (with feelings of security and control, acceptance, approbation, validation of any emotions);
2. description of the painful memories;
3. formulating the needs of the child in this situation;
4. discussing 'safety person', who could help the child;
5. imagination the event rescripted with the experience of better resolution in imagination – rescripting the story;
6. general calm down.

Imagery with rescripting techniques that focus on changing unpleasant memories have also been used as main components of schematherapy programs