



המרכז הירושלמי לתראפיה ביצירה והבעה
THE JERUSALEM EXPRESSIVE THERAPY CENTER FOR CHILDREN

בחסות האיגוד הישראלי לתראפיה ע"י יצירה והבעה (יה"ת)
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An example of music and movement therapy with a child, suffering from problems in interpersonal communication, within a group at "Misholim" – The Jerusalem expressive therapy centre for children.

(the patient's name was changed for ethical reasons).

8 years old Rafael has been diagnosed with PDD (pervasive developmental disorder). The general symptom of PDD is pervasive impairment in the development of reciprocal social interaction or verbal and nonverbal communication skills.

This was the main reason for Rafael's referral to "Mish`olim" group therapy by his parents, following his neurologist's recommendation.

Rafael looked like any other child of his age, his intellectual abilities were above the average, but he could not understand social situation properly. Any social situation excited him and he could not express his feelings in appropriate way. Unintentionally he could yell nonsense words and move in perseverate way or touch other persons regardless of their will. Those strange behaviors estranged him from peers at school and made him the outsider.

For the first year of the therapy he became the scapegoat of the group. Some children rejected him and called him "stupid" and "childish", despite his attempts to interact with them. Some were even frightened by his strange behavior. Eventually he preferred being left alone and refrained from participating in any activity, offered by therapists.

Rafael discovered special interest in music. On one of the group meetings, when left alone by the group, he found out the guitar and decided to perform (in his words) "a rock concert" for the group. He invited all the participants by drawing tickets for everyone. When everything was set for the show, he jumped and yelled, accompanying himself with guitar on the open strings. This spontaneous act drew the attention of other children. Though some were confused, they showed interest in Rafael.

From now on he continued to experiment with this kind of activity and asked the music therapist to assist him. He wrote simple lyrics of nonsense and idiosyncratic scores,

asked for the accompaniment and gave strict directions on intensity and dynamics of playing. Sometimes he arranged the drums in a row and set for himself a strict order of playing, while having music therapist accompanying him with a steady beat. These activities created an appropriate setting for his yells and perseveration. As a result of these concerts, other children became more ready to accept Rafael's strange behavior. More than that, some were delighted to be the part of the show, since it served their own emotional needs.

Eventually he became more acceptable by other children in the therapy group. He could even experience the role of the group leader. Actually his use of music initiated a breakthrough for him. This helped him to gain some insights about his difference from others and manage it in a fun and not disturbing way.