

CONGRESS EFeCT 23rd – 26th of April 2008

REPORT OF THE DEBATE Saturday 26th of April 2008, 9.30 – 11.30 AM

MODERATOR: BERT BOONE: DIRECTOR EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

1: Introductory: DOLPHINE OR COW?

Bert Boone shows us a slide out of the presentation of Mitchell Beck with at the left hand side a dolphin diving and on the right hand side a cow diving. The higher the amount of differences you see between them, the higher the amount of stress you are experiencing.

→ Considerations:

- There are differences between both animals, but it is important to give each other the space to differ. As long as you agree on the common things, you give space to the differences.
- You can also see the common elements: they both jump / dive, there is action
- This shows us the importance of linking, of networking and combining, of relations and commitment of people. It is important to consider that all of this is dynamic, working with persons is always dynamic

2: WATNOTOS

Bert Boone uses this concept to illustrate the purpose of this debate. WATNOTOS is a concept of an Australian trainer of organisational negotiations. WATNOTOS stands for the question “**What are the needs of the other side?**” Drumming this rhythm with a biro on the table reminds the negotiation partners to meet the needs of the others and to unblock the troubled negotiation.

3: “Structure is like the guardrails on a high-level bridge”, “if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere” (Frank Sinatra), sleepers / trouble makers

The debate is divided in two parts with two themes:

- **Part I: Structure is like the guardrails on a high-level bridge**

We want to go further, resistance is an important thing: people have questions because they have reserves. They don't want to throw away everything they've ever learned. Maybe we should combine and link old and new knowledge.

A railway needs sleepers and to go forward you need trouble makers.

- **Part II: if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere**

4: QUESTIONS

- **Part I: Structure is like the guardrails on a high-level bridge**

4.1: LSCI with little children (age from?)

Question of B.Boone:

Someone read the first edition of the LS(C)I book and compared it with the second edition, and asks why the chapter on mental disability (first edition) has been removed in the second edition.

Answer of N. Long:

This model is too mechanistic & simplistic, people tend always to use the simplest model, and didn't use the complete model anymore. In the second edition this chapter has been removed because of the fear of losing the complexity of the method and the differences of the several aspects of LSCI.

Mary Wood works specifically with younger children and children with less verbal skills and worked out this part in her "Developmental Therapy". Mary Wood works with children aged 4-6 years old. She uses another way of communicating

with the child (blocks, toys, visualisation, ...). She uses images (cfr. Workshop of Jan Decuypere regarding the use of psychodramapuppets in the third phase of LSCI). She learns to the child that there is a difference between thinking, behaving and feeling, and that control is possible. She uses very structured environments.

Question of E. Broekaert:

Do you go into the playing of the child? Do you analyse the play, or do you just let the child play? (cfr. Difference between Anna Freud – analysis of the fantasy and Melanie Klein – go into deeper inside)

Answer of N. Long:

Children in crisis are like children in a burning building: they want out of it, they do not want to talk. In psychotherapy, the goal is to give help, not to stay away of the burning building. In LSCI, we work with the resistance of the child. Pathology is a way of adjustment, it prevents children of being helped.

The concept of transfer is important in this question. Therapy uses transfer and countertransfer. Teachers who work with troubled children on a daily basis have more chance to be confronted with countertransfer than therapists who see a child individually each week by appointment for one hour. So, we have to accept that conflicts are part of the process.

4.2: Is it possible for parents to do LSCI at home?

Answer of C. Dawson:

In the former program of C. Dawson (in District 75, USA), parent coordinators were used. These are representative parents for each district who were trained in a workshop. Parent coordinators have the task to learn skills to parents, out of the school of their children. People were very enthusiastic with the results. Now in NY, this is not being implemented yet. In the future, they want to do this.

Answer of E. Lauwagie:

Ellen Lauwagie and Laure Lepoudre made a dissertation under promotorship of Dr. Franky D'Oosterlinck regarding the parental LSCI training with 12 mothers. Parents feel the need to learn skills to deal with conflict and crisis but the transfer of the skills to the home environment (the life space of the parents) is the most difficult part. They need more training time in their own house, they need training of basic skills. Training should be adjusted to the home environment.

Answer of F. D'Oosterlinck:

We have been working with the parents (only mothers, no fathers) for 3 days in the OOBC. Normally Laure would go to the families to support, but because of practical reasons it never happened. For parents, the conflict cycle was very helpful, they need a basic skills training. LSCI has still a lot of work to do.

Answer of G. De Moor:

For parents, the insight in the dynamics of the conflict cycle is indeed helpful. In fact, it helped them to look in a more objective way to the troubling behaviour of the child. But for lots of parents, the emotional bond with their children makes it too difficult to use LSCI.

4.3: We often cannot reach the parents at school. Conditions to come to school?
How far do you go?

In fact, can you put conditions, e.g. if parents don't agree with a cooperation with the school, intake is not possible?

Answer of F. Fecser:

To help parents as well as their children is in fact one of our biggest challenges, they often disagree with the advice of the staff. We need some creative thinking in motivating parents.

Lots of parents don't like to have a professional once a week in their house, so we use parent groups. Parents sign a contract in which is stated that if they attend 90 % of the meetings, they receive a reward, e.g. a trip to Amish County. During the meetings of the parent groups, parents receive free meals, child care, transport, ... As a result, 70 % of the parents show up.

Answer of C. Dawson:

In NY, schools are under the direct responsibility of the Mayor. Parents are very important; every school has his own parent coordinators (who gets a payment, has an own mobile phone, is the representative of his/ her neighbourhood/district ...). This person is the link between all parents and the school. He / she is the ally of alle parents. There are PTA's (Parent Teacher Meetings), newsletters and lots of outreach (Parent Coordinator addresses new issues, ...). Involving parents into the school is really a priority in the US.

4.4: What in therapeutic communities: shall we train the method to the other co-residents?

Answer of M. Freado:

We want to learn children to use the skills of LSCI on their own. They shouldn't need the help of others forever. On a long term basis, they should be able to use LSCI skills with each other.

Answer of E. Broekaert: (TC = Therapeutic Communities for Drug Addiction)

Out of research within TC's we know that the longer someone stays in the program, the better the effect. Running away generally happens during the first four months of the program. We could train the staff and the residents together. If

we could use LSCI already at the start of the program, we could prevent residents to run away.

4.5: What with pupils without home context?

What with pupils without home context / youngsters with mental disability / children with less verbal abilities / ... ? What are the limitations of LSCI?

Answer of F. Fecser and M.E. Fecser:

LSCI is a powerful tool, but it is a tool. It should be used in a strongly structured environment, which is predictable, with responsible adults where children can count on and trust. Children need some basic skills: enough receptive and expressive language, enough cognitive abilities, skills to reflect, and motivation to change.

Answer of M.E. Fecser:

I used LSCI with children with autism. I used a lot of visualisation. I made pictograms, and let children draw what happened and helped them to draw it. Drawing the timeline is very helpful. They could fill in text balloons to make clear what they and others had been saying and thinking. If you make it so concrete, it is possible to use LSCI with these children. You should visualize which person was in which place on which time.

Answer of M. Freado:

Children need some prerequisite skills, but we have to make sure we don't exclude some children if we put too much focus on basic needed skills. We should adjust our language and our rhythm to the needs of the children, adjust our approach.

Answer of C. Dawson:

LSCI is important because of the big respect it has for the child. This philosophy is important in the work with children with weaker abilities. We should do behavioural and functional assessment to find the needs of the child.

Answer of E. Thiery:

There are children with good pragmatics but with bad verbal skills, and vice versa. We should have a look on the pragmatics, if this is available, we should adjust our method. There are children who are good candidates for LSCI with weaker verbal skills and children who are bad candidates for LSCI but who have strong verbal skills.

Additional question to F. D'Oosterlinck: Time-out-rooms and LSCI, how to use?

Answer of F. D'Oosterlinck:

We use the time-out-room shortly to do the de-escalation, because of the fact the child cannot damage himself or the materials, and then (once the self-control is back) we go to a cozier place to continue the conversation. Children are never left alone in the time-out-room.

4.6: In his lecture, N. Long talked about two new interventions? Can we already know something about this?

Answer of N. Long:

LSCI is always a work in progress, it is dynamic and there is always evolution. The new interventions are actually not new, but it concerns two interventions which will be made more specific, more developed; Double Struggle (training skills for practitioners) and Manipulation of Body Boundaries (searching for a new and more correct term, false friendship, passive aggressive and depressed children; we need more guidance to deal with that). This will be developed slowly. LSCI is not like medication but it works in a therapeutic environment. The strength of LSCI is the direct link with the self-consciousness of the person. The

psychological fit is very important, LSCI works very good with some children, with others it just works and with others it just doesn't work at all. This is absolutely according to your relationship with the child. You don't choose the children you work with and they don't choose you. You just cannot be very good with all children. Helping always begins with us, adults, and not with the students. If you want, you can get counteraggression very easily.

- **Part II: if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere**

4.7: Prof. Dr. Thiery: Can we with modern methods exclude ADHD, CD, RAD? What was first? The disorder or the malfunctioning of the brain?

Answer of E. Thiery:

Genes and environment are both on the same time of influence. In this area of research, there have been a lot of theories; first there was the theory of the big influence of the genes, then there was a shift towards the influence of the environment, later we agreed on the interaction between genes and environment, and nowadays people agree on the influence of genes – brain – environment. These three are in fact an interplay, it is not a causal relationship. RAD can sometimes already be evoked in the uterus, but the genes still have there influence. Genes can protect you to make sure the influence of the environment doesn't become to big. This means that some very good methods in care will not have an extensive influence because of the fact that genes protect us to some extent against the influence of environment. In fact, there are control genes (always stay the same) and variability genes (can change under the influence of environment). Control genes protect us against harm coming from the environment.

There are also mirror neurons (Risolotti, Parma University has found this) which can change the memory of bad moments. These mirror neurons took place in our brain, because on that spot reserve cells were not needed anymore, our brain

got more adjusted to our needs. Mirror neurons look at the world, make decisions and make sure action in reality. In fact, by doing so people learn to have empathy, because they mirror their parents, they are “aping” other persons. People can change in function of other people and LSCI works on that principle. This makes that bad memories can be changed, but not too much. Even if you are harmed in year 3, you can change the influence of it in year 30. Biology is not limitative. Behaviour and neurobiology work together. This makes human beings changeable to some extent.

4.8: Dr. Vanobbergen: A study found a correlation to exposure to violent video games and increased violent behavior

The person who wrote this note was not on the debate, nor was Dr. Vanobbergen. This is why we skipped this remark.

4.9: W. Roosens: How can you understand anger without accepting the behavior in the way that anger keeps within acceptable limits?

Answer of W. Roosens:

If a person shows his anger by putting it to behaviour, you cannot do anything else than accepting the behaviour, because it already took place. We accept the feeling of anger, but we cannot approve damaging behaviour. If you accept the person, he cannot defend using anger as the only possibility.

Answer of N. Long:

When I meet a child who is very angry, I ask myself: “I wonder how he is going to make me feel so angry as he feels right now.” Children want you to react like they do at that time. This self-questioning gives you a sense of comfort, it makes sure you look in an objective way to a child who tries not to talk about his actual problem. It stays hard to stay calm because the rational brain of the child doesn't

function anymore at the time of a crisis. The emotional brain takes over the rational brain. But by doing so as the interviewing adult, you neutralise the impact of the behaviour of the child.

Remark of E. Broekaert:

In TC's we do not try to limit the anger, we try to provoke it.

M. Freado:

In phase 1 of LSCI it is not easy to don't let play your own feelings. After a LSCI training you have not learned to do this, you learn by experience. You can only try. LSCI needs support, you need others.

F. Fecser:

Redl says you should find the child that challenges you the most to use counteraggression and use this child as your teacher to learn to deal with your feelings. This gives you the opportunity to use self-reflection; why does this child challenges you so much? The child knows something about you which you can learn from.

C. Dawson:

You should find out what makes this child so angry.

L. Verbeke:

We really should consider time as an ally. It is the only way to work with our clients. Working with RAD – clients doesn't succeed on short terms, only on long term basis. Cfr. Gentle Teaching: working on a long term basis is motivating and encouraging for your staff.

E. Broekaert:

Life and education is like playing a role during a lifetime.

E. Thiery:

It concerns a long process of introduction, growth, elimination and integration. It is a process of transformation. When we are young, we are interested in cars, when we get older, we are interested in ideas and opinions of others about cars. Mirror neurons are like the side doors through which we imitate and “ape” each other on a high level.

E. Broekaert:

I have a moral question about this: people feel resistance if feelings are frozen by intense emotions. Can we push them to start to work?

E. Thiery:

I believe more in repetition than in pushing. If you push hard, it comes in; but if you repeat, it can come out in behaviour.

L. Verbeke:

Our most important job is to install new memories. We can also install undangerous, safe relationships to make sure the mental map of people with RAD gets more safe. This is a long process. They have to learn that a relationship is not filled with tricks, cfr. unconditional love.

Y. Van Engelen:

Is it possible to talk about unconditional love?

L. Verbeke:

Unconditionality is very important. (It is very difficult to translate the word ‘love’).

Y. Van Engelen:

I have more concerns about the term “love”; in fact is it possible to love in a professional relationship? Is it a good message to the client? I would rather speak about attention than about love.

E. Broekaert:

It is difficult to translate “love” in the right way, so we could feel what the real meaning is. It has a lot to do with acceptance.

Cfr. Falk (Hongary) Unconditional love is important, but it is important to understand the term “love” in the right way. The method of structuring the professional behaviour is very delicate. It cannot be overwhelming for the client. Like F. Dolto said: “Talk to the child, create a sort of space.”

M. Maes:

By talking to the child, you give love. If your words are not given to the child with love, they don’t reach their purpose.

4.10: What if the school and the residential care have different managements and departments?

There was no time left to discuss these questions.

4.11: What is most important? The appliance of the method or the basic attitude?

There was no time left to discuss these questions.

4.12: Joy and fun is not so evident because of social exclusion and poverty. LSCI as a lever for the next generation: OK. But what with their parents?

There was no time left to discuss these questions.

5: The GAME never seems to be OVER

End of the debate ...

Conclusion is that our work is always a work in progress. The game never seems to be over ...

6: Dropping a pebble of a new idea into the static pool of thought = always in the middle of the target => let's watch and work to make waves.

We are happy with the content of this congress. People felt it was right in the scope. We hope we can use what we learned in our daily practice and future.