

Section: PPT training

POSITIVE GROUP THERAPY THROUGH TRADITIONAL GAMES WITH A POSITUM MGS APPROACH FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST TRAUMA IN TIMES OF PANDEMICS, WAR AND EARTHQUAKES: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF “THE WITCHES” GAME



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Abstract

Why traditional games and how to transform them into powerful psycho-social and holistic instruments in Positive Group Therapy? The paper aims at looking at the space that Positive Transcultural Psychotherapy [PPT after N. Peseschkian, since 1977]TM can provide for the Positum MGS approach in utilizing traditional and transcultural games with a psycho-social aim in groups. Pandemics, wars and natural disasters such as earthquakes – among many other traumatic events – can result in forced displacement and migration for masses of populations, including children, and have severe consequences in the holistic health of affected people. The paper looks at the foundations of Positive Group Therapy, its interaction with the Positum MGS approach within it, and the value they can create for healing trauma in groups when integrating such tools as traditional games. The paper analysed the research and practice in the field, demonstrating the great value of traditional and transcultural games in strengthening the identity and sense of belonging, as key resources for building resilience for individuals in groups and through group work sparked by traditional games transformed into psycho-social ones. The features, principles and strategies of the Positum MGS approach within the framework of PPT are further explained, and cases of practical application from recent years are discussed in the light of theoretical concepts of Positum MGS and PPT.

Keywords: positive group therapy, positive psychotherapy, transcultural, traditional games, Positum MGS, identity, resilience, neurodiversity, pandemic, war, earthquake

“Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation... it is and will always be a cause of awareness and of awakening and a source of good and well-being.”

- Mírzá Ḥusayn-‘Alí Núrí (Bahá’u’lláh, 1817-1892)

Introduction

Consultation is a process of sharing ideas in a state of openness that leads to a greater awareness on the reality and, in therapeutic settings, of self-awareness or self-discovery. 'Consultation' is one of the three principles of Positive Transcultural Psychotherapy [PPT after N. Peseschkian, since 1977]TM and it is essential also in Positive Group Therapy (PGT). The original conceptual framework for the theory and practice of Positive Group Therapy (or Psychotherapy) can be found thoroughly discussed in at least two key works of prof. dr. Nossrat Peseschkian, the founder of PPT. Thus, according to Peseschkian (1986, 2013), the main focus of the consultations in Positive Group Therapy is on the primary and secondary actual capacities, which become central themes for differentiation and consultation in the group. The therapist's role is to help the members of the group become more aware of the conflict dynamics, symptoms, and disorders experienced by the group members, generated by the dysfunctions and insufficient differentiation on actual and basic concepts at the basis of those psycho-social capacities. In the same time, the therapist's role is to raise awareness and encourage the group members to see the functions of the dysfunctions, to re-interpret, to mobilize internal and external resources, to create counter-concepts, and broaden the goals. Similar to the practice of individual and family therapy, Peseschkian (1986) suggests the 5-stage strategy of consultation for groups as well, namely, (1) Observation and Distancing), (2) Inventory, (3) Situational Encouragement, (4) Verbalization, and (5) Broadening of the Goals.

1.1. *Positum MGS approach within Positive Group Therapy*

In addition to the above, Peseschkian (2013) lists the ninth thesis of PPT, stating: "Through its content-related procedure, Positive Psychotherapy offers conceptual framework within which the different methods and disciplines can meaningfully complement one another (meta-theoretical and meta-practical aspects)". It is on this foundational ground that the Positum MGS approach within Positive Group Therapy, which is largely discussed by Parruca (2013, 2022), brings its technical tools and methodological principles for therapeutic

work with groups of children and adults affected by the traumas related to pandemics, war, earthquakes and other related trauma-generating events and factors, resulting also in complex trauma. According to Parruca (2022), the Positum MGS approach uses several therapeutic instruments, and most of them are adopted and adapted from the MGS Methodology, which was developed and conceptualized by Heiniger, Meuwly, et al. between 2005 and 2011 in countries affected by war, conflict, violence and natural disasters. The MGS Methodology, in its unique form without Positum elements, is currently being applied in different regions and countries of the world. As Parruca (2013, 2022) argues, one of those tools for group therapeutic work is any traditional game that is played with a 'Positum' approach, because Positum MGS, in its technical aspects, is largely inspired by the rich repertoire of such games in every country and culture. Although traditional or folk games are originally played interactively with elements of competition and exclusion in a group of 4-20 people or more, resulting in uncomfortable emotions and feelings for "the losers", the Positum MGS approach, being in essence a psycho-social methodology, transforms the games into more co-operative, participatory and inclusive. As such, these games generate more laughter, joy, enthusiasm and other pleasant sensations, emotions and feelings, resulting in a cascade of positive neurotransmitters and hormones. These, in turn, lead to a more relaxed physical and cognitive state, which ultimately serves to differentiate with more awareness during the closing consultation and debriefing on the actual capacities of acceptance, safety, affection, contact, hope, trust, self-confidence, unity, honesty, politeness, achievement, obedience, responsibility, etc.

The participants in a Positum MGS training session (mainly PPT trainers, therapists and consultants, as well as mental health specialists from other methods) can learn through interactive and experiential activities in the training group how to work with groups of children, adolescents and mixed groups between them and adults through the Positum MGS tools. The approach helps to build the personal, social, technical and methodological capacities of professionals who want to facilitate group sessions that contain psycho-social transcultural games, played through the principles of the MGS

Methodology and Positum MGS approach, followed by “positum feedback” and debriefing, as largely discussed by Parruca (2013, 2022), which is based on the 5-stage consultation of Positive Psychotherapy (Peseschkian, 1987). The post-game feedback reflects deeper on emotions and feelings that emerged during the game, on actual primary and secondary capacities – either in the form of emotional needs or social expectations – as well as on concepts at their bases and new reflections on what can and needs to be changed.

The traditional games, when transformed into ‘Positum’ ones, become more psycho-social and transcultural, and have similar functions to stories in PPT, because they are like fairytales being played through movement and other tools, playing with the fantasy and paradoxical situations. As such, they have resulted to be powerful instruments in group psychotherapy for prevention and treatment of micro- and macro-trauma, traumatic stress, PTSD and complex trauma, including in the work with groups of children and adults with special needs, and who are neuroatypical and neurodiverse, as the groups are encouraged to establish comfortable and acceptable contact through active physical games, in which they would otherwise not be able to fully participate, if the game was played in its original traditional form. Positum MGS sessions, being part of a therapeutic process that is embedded within the psychodynamic and systemic facets of Positive Group Therapy, address also simultaneously these four dimensions: (1) intrapersonal; (2) interpersonal; (3) group; and (4) systemic aspects (Dobiała, 2020), as participants are engaged continuously in a process of entering and exiting one or another dimension with the support of the facilitator-therapist and the group. Dobiała (2020) discusses also the principles that should guide psychotherapists when considering the needs of distinct transcultural groups such as people on the Autism Spectrum.

1.2. Research on benefits of traditional games for building overall skills and holistic resilience

From 2013 to nowadays, observations by the author in the field practice of the Positum MGS approach with groups of whether mental health specialists under training or groups of children, adolescents and adults under support in Albania,

Kosovo, Hungary, Poland, Türkiye and other countries where trained specialists reside, are confirming of the findings of the study of Lester & Russell (2010). In the study, the resilience-building effects of playing in groups and the beneficial use of traditional games have been researched and largely demonstrated:

“Playing is a mechanism of survival and protection, because while children play, they create their own well-being, according to Bradshaw et al. (2007). Indeed, through playing, children externalise their impulsions and inner world in a safe environment that helps them to reconstruct themselves and develop their resilience. Thanks to new situations ‘beyond the real world’, specific to games, the children are forced to adapt and adopt original behavior because ‘everything is possible’. “This external behavior is matched with an internal connection process; a novelty of wiring potential in brain circuits (Gordon et al. 2003; van Praag et al., 2005).” [...] Play supports novel neural connections and changes the architectural structure of brain regions through its own value and fabulations (pleasurable and ‘as if’ behavior); ‘the brain not only shapes play ... play also shapes the brain’ (Pellis and Pellis, 2009:94).” [...] “Feelings of joy and pleasure are associated with more flexible and open responses to situations and with effective problem-solving, self-control, forward-looking thinking and caution in dangerous situations (Isen and Reeve, 2006).” [...] Research suggests that experience of pleasurable situations may have benefits for dealing with stress and negative experiences (Silk et al. 2007; Cohn and Frederickson, 2009).” Bonding reveals itself to be another primordial factor while playing, because friendship and positive relations between peers have protective effects, according to Abou-ezzedine et al.’s (2007). “Play becomes an important medium for establishing peer friendships, learning about social dynamics and the rules of engagement (Fantuzzo et al. 2004; Panskepp, 2007).”

Moreover, based on research and practice, Meuwly (2012) states:

“[...] playing is fundamental to stay healthy, as well as for well-being, development and child protection. Certain immediate benefits that are already recognised are, the fact of

“providing important physical exercise that develops endurance, control of body movement and perceptual-motor integration; testing aspects of the environment to deduce their value; establishing social roles and alliances that may contribute to current survival; enhancing psychological and physiological well-being and resilience (Burghard, 2005).” Beyond the topics exposed in the study on the children's right to play, playing allows children to develop a certain number of life skills for better protecting themselves: better self-confidence and self-knowledge helps them assert themselves, be more responsible, make choices, make decisions, evaluate when people are safe or not, etc. “Playing with others requires constant maintenance, reading and differentiating the intentions of others and adjusting behaviours in response. It is evident that these interrelated components enhance children's repertoire of social, emotional and cognitive abilities (Pellis and Pellis, 2009).” Playing, therefore, allow general skills (mental, emotional and physical) to be developed, which helps to acquire or modify certain attitudes and behaviours in order to improve the capacity of long-term resilience: self-esteem, self-confidence, feeling of security, cohesion in a group, etc. [...] Through their cultural links, the traditional games also have an impact in reinforcing identity – a factor of resilience. They actively [contribute] in the children's well-being by making them feel they belong to a group, a community and a collective history. This is even more important when working with displaced people, migrants or refugees for example.”

In such considerations, any PPT therapist or consultant can identify a wide range of actual capacities being outlined. And they, in addition to other mental health practitioner of other methods, may undertake the use of play therapy in groups with enough self-confidence, after receiving some core training, coaching and supervision in the Positum MGS approach. It helps to further build the required competences at personal, social, technical and methodological levels to facilitate groups through the concepts of the MGS Methodology and Positive Psychotherapy (Parruca, 2013). The results of the MGS Methodology's implementation with

groups of children in Albania, Moldova and Rumania, compared to control groups, during 2009-2010, have been satisfactory and encouraging, indicating of increased resilience, as already discussed by Lasku & Lopari (2012) and reiterated by Parruca (2022).

Methodology

Transforming a traditional game into a Positum MGS game is not difficult. However, from the author's experience of some 10 years in the approach, it requires an awareness of the features, learning stages, intensity curve along the PPT interaction stages, and guiding methodological principles of Positum MGS, and then to start implementing them during and after a 4-5-day core training under coaching and supervision. Let's see them one by one.

2.1. Theoretical considerations for transforming traditional games into Positum MGS ones

Firstly, a facilitator needs to have an awareness of the features of Positum MGS games, as summarized in Figure 1.

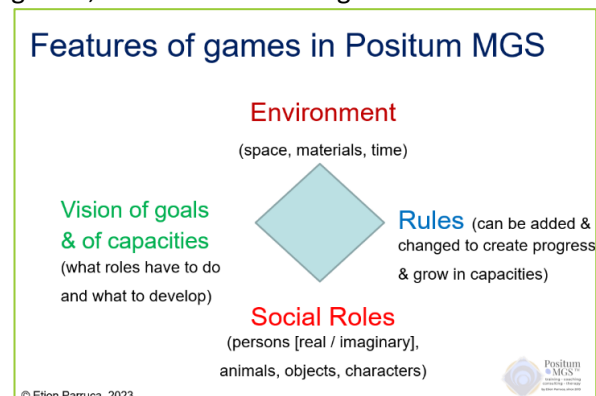


Fig. 1: Features of Positum MGS games

During training, a facilitator of Positum MGS learns how to combine and change these features in order to transform a traditional game characterized by exclusion and strong competition into a psycho-social game that gives participants a feeling of inclusion and achievement in unity. This is especially important for children and adults who have experienced exclusion and loss during traditional games. Any of the features can be changed and the game can immediately become a 'Positum' one, highlighting the primary capacities of acceptance, hope, trust, patience, contact, unity, etc.

Secondly, it requires the undertaking of a process of “experiential learning” inspired by the learning theory of Kolb et al. (Meuwly 2011) that happens within the areas of the Balance Model of PPT. Both models are harmonic in essence and process.

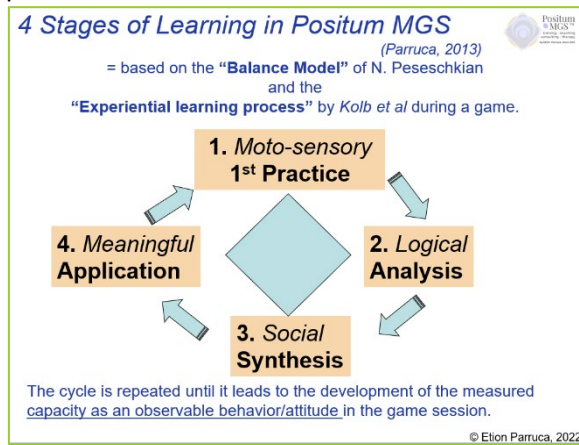


Fig. 2: Learning process in Positum MGS

Figure 2 summarizes this process. Practically, it means that after a traditional game is played with its usual rules of exclusion and competition for a few minutes, the 1st moto-sensory practice has taken place; then there is a stop of 1-2 minutes for a logical analysis in the group to discuss on what happened and what was difficult; followed by social synthesis in the group of how the participants experienced it in terms of emotions and feelings towards one another and within the group, making then a decision about the change of rules they want, in order to interact within their social roles (imaginary

people, animals, objects, phenomena, etc.) and the actual capacities that need to be engaged in the game; to then finalize the learning process through a re-application that is infused with a new vision on what needs to be done and meaning on what needs to be developed. This cycle is repeated several times during the game, to give each group participant the opportunity to experience the learning through the four modes of perception: senses, logic, tradition and intuition (Peseschkian, 1987), and when the capacities in focus are observed as desired behaviors and attitudes within the group (Heiniger & Meuwly, 2007).

Thirdly, after the session facilitator notices that there has been enough physical, emotional, logical and social engagement through several rounds, the game is stopped for relaxation and a 15-60 minutes reflection in the group, depending on the age of the participants and need for differentiation. Practice has demonstrated that adults need more time, and facilitator need to consider it when planning the stages and steps in a Positum MGS session, as demonstrated in Figure 3. Some key elements of the four integral and cohesive parts of a Positum MGS session and how they are connected with the three steps of interaction in PPT and also its five-stage strategy were explained by the author (2022). It is noteworthy to reiterate that the reflection part that follows the cool-down entails elements of both the differentiation and detachment steps of interaction in PPT.

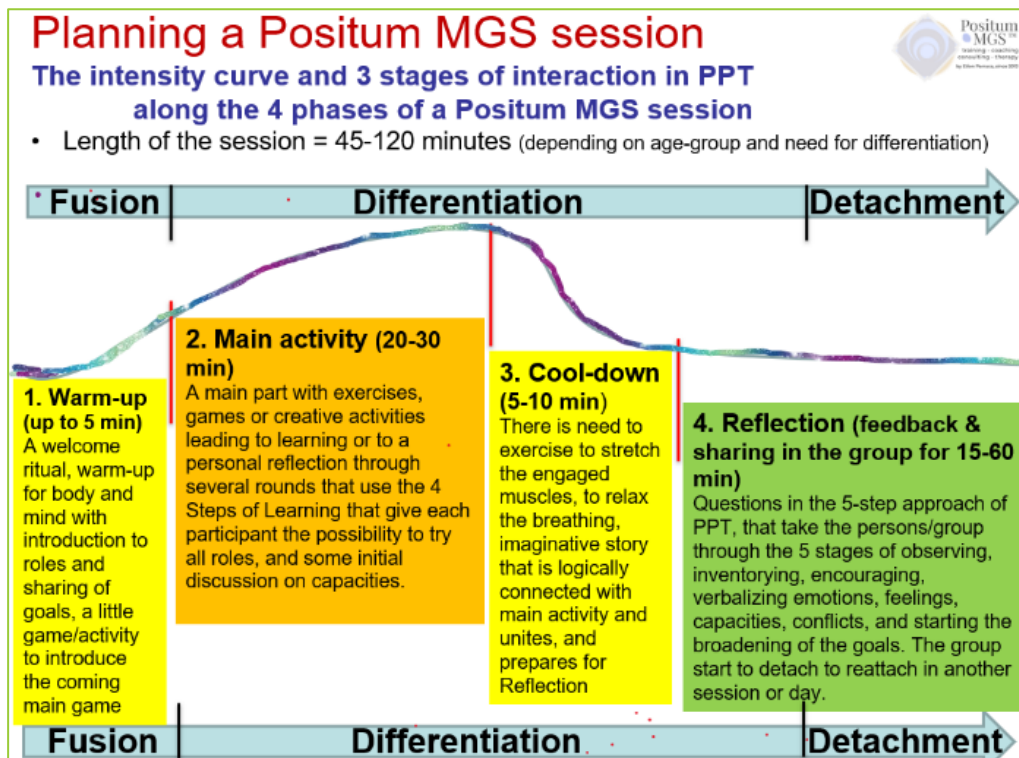


Fig. 3: Stages and steps in a Positum MGS session

Fourth, the deep self-experience process of a Positum MGS session is guided by six principles that every group facilitator needs to keep in sight and respect when facilitating a session. They are summarized in Figure 4.

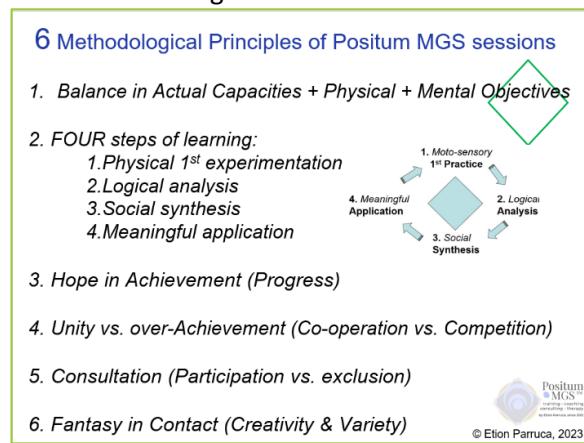


Fig. 4: Principles of Positum MGS

These principles are an integration of the three guiding principles of PPT, i.e., (1) balance, (2) consultation and (3) hope (Peseschkian, 1986, 1987, 2013) as well as the six methodological principles of the MGS Methodology, namely, (1) objectives, (2) three steps of learning, (3) progress, (4) co-operation, (5) participation and (6) creativity and variety (Meuwly, 2011). The author has readapted and recombined them into six meta principles that are needed to guide a helpful process of

triggering difficult and repressed emotions and memories while there is also laughter and joy in a safe and trusting group space. As previously argued by the author (Parruca, 2013, 2022), both PPT and MGS specialists can find in the combined approach a fresh and useful application where both methods can benefit from one another.

The example of a traditional game that is transformed into a psycho-social transcultural one through the Positum MGS will practically illustrate the above theoretical considerations. In accordance with the principle of 'Consultation', a set of key questions need to be kept in mind and practiced when guiding a reflection after a game. These questions help the group participants to go through the five stages of consultation in PPT. The five stages are mostly undergone through the feedback with targeted questions, as discussed by the author (2013, 2022):

- How do you feel after this game and why so?
 (This question is answered by all group members possibly, unless they don't want to. It serves as Distancing/Observation stage in PPT)
- What was difficult about the game/role and why? (They serve as Inventory stage in PPT)

3. *What did you like about the game/role? Why so?* (They serve as Situational Encouragement stage in PPT)
4. *What were the capacities set as objectives and when did you notice them being met? When not? Why?* (They serve as Verbalization stage in PPT)
5. *What can we do differently when we play the same game in a future session?* (It serves for Broadening of the Goals stage in PPT).

Being played in a Positum MGS approach, the games have similar functions as in stories (Peseschkian, 2006b) in a group. Application of a few such games demonstrates this fact, when group participants are invited to reflect on the feelings emerging from the game, how it relates to their reality, and how the learning from the game can be utilized to deal more resiliently in the future (Parruca, 2013, 2022). Therefore, the author has suggested, alternatively, that when the group has been stabilized through 3-8 sessions, the facilitator can introduce the following questions of a therapeutic nature, between questions 4 and 5. They contain the so-called “protection factor” as discussed by Meuwly (2012) and Parruca (2013, 2022), in order to evaluate the risk factors and resources for resilience in the life of the child. They serve to further enhance verbalization and differentiation, and to ultimately lead to the broadening of the goals and detachment:

- What does the game remind you of from the past or in real life?
- What concept (principle, motto) is leading your behaviour and what can be changed in it?
- How do you want to use the learning from today’s game in the future?

Each of these key questions can be supplemented by related mini-questions, if necessary, to help the child or youth (12-17 years old), or adult to conclude one stage and be ready for the next one. When training professional adults to use the approach, the questions are a little different and, in more depth, developed to correspond their maturity and ability for self-discovery.

2.2. *Practical illustration of transforming traditional games into Positum MGS ones*

For the purpose of the article, the example of “*The witches*” game is brought for illustration. Although it is a game that has taken a

transcultural character when developed by Heiniger & Meuwly (2007, 2012), it is based on the original traditional “freeze-unfreeze” game that is played with two main social roles: the witches and the villagers, with the latter ones being frozen by the touch of the witches, which are self-appointed before the start of the game. The witches chase in silence, by walking instead of running. The freezing leads to disqualification and end of the game when all villagers are frozen. In contrast, the psycho-social approach in Positum MGS introduces the principles of ‘Hope in Achievement’ and ‘Unity vs. Overachievement’, while there is physical contact characterised by the actual capacities of responsibility, affection and love. The game concept links with child real situations of danger and rescue, unsafety and safety, bringing the capacity of contact (both physical and emotional) at the forefront and deals with the question of touching, personal borders, the people who are threatening or those who are protective, or even the feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, and shame. The Positum MGS approach introduces also the social role of the ‘fairy godmother or godfather’ who helps the group work with the capacities of hope and safety, free from fear, anxiety and helplessness. The details are explained in the following.

Actual Primary and Secondary Capacities:

- The capacities of safety, physical and emotional contact, affection, trust, hope, responsibility for others, obedience and honesty in respecting the rules, as well as unity and empathy when unfreezing the fellow villagers come to the front as psycho-social objectives to be observed and reached.

Other Capacities:

- On a mental level, the capacity of observation and concentration are developed in spotting the witches; strategic thinking is required amongst the witches to work together to bewitch all the villagers, as well as amongst villagers to develop a plan to protect and free the others.
- On a physical level, everything is walked at a fast pace, and avoiding the witches requires an ability to react quickly, flexibility and agility.

Environment, Vision of Goals, and Social Roles

The game requires a relatively large space, ideally outdoors, marked out and recognised by the participants. The game begins with the players (minimum eight) standing in a circle, the witches and the villagers. The witches' goal is to bewitch all the villagers by simply touching them. The bewitched villagers must then freeze. The villagers' goal is to keep away from the witches and to free the bewitched victims by hugging or putting their arms around them (in case of sensitivity to touch). The Positum MGS approach brings the fairy godmother or godfather in the game, who is immune to the witches' touch and whose goal is to unfreeze the villagers. This role is brought into the game after some 3-4 rounds of playing, and it creates a different dynamic and more positive feelings for the villagers due to an increased sense of hope and safety. Please note that sometimes, when working with children, adolescents or adults in the Autism Spectrum or with high sensitivity to physical contact, it is important to specify in advance what kind of touch or hug is acceptable. For instance, an air balloon could serve as an object of indirect touch by the 'witches'. The game stops when all the villagers are bewitched. Before starting, the group has their eyes closed in the circle and the facilitator designates the witches (one for every 4-5 or so players) by touching them discretely on the back. Everyone opens their eyes and the game can start at a fast-walking pace, but without running.

Rules:

- Players are not allowed to run or speak; everyone walks in silence.
- Anyone who starts running or who goes beyond the boundary of the play area is automatically frozen.

Advice:

The facilitator must ensure the players respect the game's environment (boundaries) and the rules: no running, no speaking. Children have a tendency to accuse others of running or speaking, rather than focusing on their own fair-play during the game. The facilitator is there to remind them that they must each take responsibility for abiding by the rules. For example: the child who is touched must stop, the ones who go out of the play area or who start running must bewitch themselves immediately and stop where they are without anyone having to tell them to do so. It is not easy for children and adults not to run, but the facilitator must insist on it, for this gives the game a different

dimension compared to the usual chasing games and helps participants work with their impulse control and observe their emotions. The fact of having to walk allows more time to observe and develop group strategies (witches or villagers), by communicating in a non-verbal way. In maintaining the principle of '4 Steps of Learning', it is useful to pause the game several rounds in order to ask the group what strategies they are using, if they are playing as individuals (not being touched) or as a group (freeing their playmates). And the facilitator insists that unity, affection, respectful contact and responsibility are paramount capacities for the game to work well. Please note that physical contact might seem difficult for certain children and adults (putting the arms around someone is not always easy, especially for pre-adolescents and adolescents of opposite gender). It is therefore possible to ask the children to find another creative way of freeing the "victims". But the idea of a hug helps build links and trust for both children and adults. The freed victims can also thank the person who hugged them (by a nod of the head, thumbs up, a simple thank you, etc.).

Cool-down and Reflection (Feedback)

After playing several rounds where all participants are given the chance to try all roles, the facilitator invites the group into the circle, ideally under a shade, and asks them to close their eyes (or to look down between their feet for those who don't feel comfortable to close their eyes) and imagine that they as villagers are together with the fairy godmother resting and relaxing their body in the middle of the village square. Then, while slow breathing and stretching exercises that connect in fantasy with the main game take place, the group is invited to imagine a scenario where the evil witches, after being transformed into good witches by the magic dust of the fairy godmother, take the villagers on a journey on their brooms that ends up in a relaxing and safe place by the seaside, even with humoristic notes. After that state of relaxation, the facilitator invites the group to open their eyes and sit, opening then the floor to the typical questions that take the group through the 5-stages of consultation that were described in the previous subsection. The following Table 1 gives the results from applying the game with three groups of participants, focusing on the responses from three different persons as the game was played in three different reality situations in Albania. It relates to the experience

of a 10-year-old boy with the deadly November 2019 earthquake, the experience of extremist religious war and repatriation of a 17-year-old Albanian adolescent girl, experience of an adult trainee with the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

Results

The “Witches” game was played with many groups and the following gleans on the reflection and feedback from three different participants of different age-group after different traumatic situations. It is noteworthy to see how the game and the questions of the facilitator help the participants connect with their emotions, feelings, the needs and expectations behind them, the capacities and concepts to be further developed, when necessary.

As it may be observed, the last few questions lead to detachment and broadening of the goals until the next group session, when the same game or a different game may be played in the beginning of the session.

Links with protection and therapeutic goals

The game requires physical contact which may allow the facilitator to observe and notice

the children or adults who are too open to such contact or those who are bothered by it. The facilitator can also ask if there is a reason for such behaviour. In cases of neurodiverse children or adults, the focus should be on how to make the contact in a comfortable way for promoting participation and inclusion. In other cases, the question of acceptable and unacceptable touching and personal borders can be dealt with for unresolved bonding and childhood trauma. This game can also provide the opportunity to encourage free associations and then talk about situations when the children and adolescents [and adults in training or self-discovery] felt powerless or ‘bewitched’, without knowing what to do. The facilitator can perhaps explore what the child can do the next time in a similar situation and whom to ask for support. Use of the ‘witch’ character means the facilitator can talk about the ‘bad people’ to avoid in real life; and the ‘villagers’ and ‘fairy godmother’ who free the ‘villagers’ can be linked to the protectors in the real world: in concrete terms, who can they turn to if they need protection and safety?

Table 1: Feedback of the “Witches” game participants

Profile of case	Luis, 10-year-old boy, Albania, 2019 earthquake survivor whose house was destroyed in a village, suffering with Acute Stress. Session took place one month after the experience in 2019.	Hana, 17-year-old girl, Albania, deported from “ISIS” post-war refugee camp in Iraq after 7 years of being away from home, suffering with PTSD. The session took place six months after repatriation in 2022.	Andy, 30-year-old man, social worker, Albania, trainee of MGS and Covid-19 survivor, suffering with Generalized Anxiety. The session took place one year after the experience, but still under pandemic situation in 2021
Questions according to PPT 5-Stage Consultation 1. How do you feel after this game and why so? (Distancing/Observation stage)	<i>I feel tired but happy. I enjoyed hugging the others. (Smiles)</i>	<i>I felt sad that sometimes I wasn't hugged. I was waiting but nobody approached me. But it was nice to make peace with witches in the end. (Smiles)</i>	<i>I am relaxed now, but was a little afraid during the main part of the game, when being chased by the witches. Oh, definitely being a witch or flying on the broom of the witch was fun. (Smiles)</i>
2. What was difficult about the game/role and why? (Inventory stage)	<i>It was difficult to be a witch, because I couldn't catch all the villagers</i>	<i>In the role of the villager... it definitely made me feel uncomfortable whenever I was frozen and had to wait to be unfrozen.</i>	<i>The villager, definitely, because I felt stuck again after being released. My hands were cold and sweaty while waiting to be unfrozen in the first two rounds.</i>
3. What did you like about the game/role? Why so? (Situational Encouragement stage)	<i>As a villager I could give warm hugs to others and they smiled at me.</i>	<i>I am glad that I could play the role of the fairy godmother. Giving a warm hug to all and unfreezing them gave me great joy.</i>	<i>The role of the witch suited me more. [smile] It was fun to chase others rather than being chased. As three witches, we could make a strategy and co-operate in the team how to catch all the villagers.</i>
4. What were the capacities as objectives and when did		<i>Responsibility for those who were frozen. I could notice it</i>	<i>Something else that wasn't mentioned by the group was</i>

<p>you notice them being met? When not? Why?</p> <p>(Verbalization stage)</p>	<p>We had to show affection when hugging.</p>	<p>in the role of the villagers and fairy godmother. Affection also, but it was not shown always, as I said before.</p>	<p>hope. I was telling myself to be hopeful while waiting for other villagers and the fairy godmother.</p>
<p>5.What does the game remind you of from the past or in real life?</p> <p>(Verbalization stage)</p>	<p>My house was destroyed by the earthquake. It was like a witch. I had to stay frozen under the table for two minutes, but my father came to rescue me by hugging me and taking me outside. He is like a fairy godfather to me. (Smiles)</p>	<p>For a few minutes I was frozen during the game as memories flooded my mind from the war and situation in the camp. I and my mother and sister were running all the time from something, confused and hopeless, and didn't know where the danger was coming from. I felt abandoned and alone.</p>	<p>Well, it was similar to my situation after getting Covid-19 and ending up in the hospital with complications. Before being infected, everybody was avoiding everyone and it was like running away from something invisible. Then, in the hospital, somehow, I had to hope in the help of the medical staff, which I now regard as the fairy godmothers and godfathers. Somehow, they were there providing relief, although walking in the middle of the pandemic. I had been vaccinated before contracting COVID, but it seemed that I was like a villager who didn't have full immunity. [smiles].</p>
<p>6.What concept (moto) is leading your behaviour and what can be changed in it?</p>	<p>No answer.</p>	<p>Coming back home as an adult after leaving as a child, I was hoping to find a welcoming family and community. But it was a different reality which disappointed me a lot. I understand now that real friends and family are those who care for you, not necessarily those from the same bloodline and town.</p>	<p>Honestly, I was guided for many years by the belief that the health system and the doctors in our country can't be trusted, because they are self-interested. But, after my own experience, I believe that there is genuine desire for service in most of the medical staff.</p>
<p>7.How do you want to use the learning from today's game in the future?</p> <p>(Broadening of the Goals stage in PPT).</p>	<p>When we take care of each other, it is safe and we can feel protected against anything that harms us.</p>	<p>After listening to the group, I can see also why people in the neighbourhood have been looking at me like a 'witch' for the last six months, like someone that needs to be avoided. I understand that, but I don't have the energy to convince everyone of the opposite. Somehow, time will change things. I leave some things in Allah's [God's] hand.</p>	<p>I was curious to hear what the others in the group had to say, and I am quite surprised to hear that there is a consensus about the need to behave more like villagers in our life and to be aware of who are the villagers and fairy godmother in my life. I can tell from the work experience with the children and adolescents I work that they have enough witches in their lives, but, on the other hand, they have also sufficient villagers and fairy godfathers, for which they should be helped to become aware... I have a role in that. [smiles]</p>
<p>8.What can we do differently when we play the same game in a future meeting?</p> <p>(Broadening of the Goals stage in PPT).</p>	<p>I would add more than one fairy godmother. I want to unfreeze as many people as possible... :)</p>	<p>No change in the game, but I will try to be more patient next time I find myself in the role of villager. Somehow, I have to trust and hope that if not in one round, there will be a chance to be hugged and unfrozen in another round.</p>	<p>I have a 14-year-old Autistic boy in my group at the day social centre. I will have to check with him first on what kind of hug or physical contact he is more comfortable. I know that he is a little hesitant when it comes to hugging. And we have to talk in the group about his need to be respected in his preference.</p>

The positive effect of the Positum MGS approach on participants' mental health and their psychosocial wellbeing, observed as clear changed attitudes and behaviors during the game and within group dynamics, can be assessed during each session and reinforced with each successive session and reflection on the primary and secondary capacities. Some of the measurable criteria that the approach is changing and further improving in the duration of 12-50 sessions in a year, are categorized under three key components that are differentiated through a short assessment form and marked with a scale of 1 to 4, where both active and reactive states are defined and measured: (1) the improvement in the primary capacities of love/affection, unity, patience, acceptance, contact, trust, safety, empathy, openness, and the secondary capacities of honesty, politeness, justice, obedience, and responsibility, as clear indicators of increased resilience; (2) the improvement of the key conflicts within the group, as better balances between the capacities of honesty and politeness; and (3) the improvement of actual conflicts within the group, as an expression of better balance between the capacities of acceptance and openness (Parruca, 2023).

When group play or game is applied in a systematic way, respecting the methodological principles, the process of building or rebuilding the resilience through transformed traditional and transcultural games is accelerated.

Conclusions

Experience and research has demonstrated that participants in traditional games with a psycho-social approach during Positum MGS sessions, while their difficult emotions and feelings are being triggered and discussed, derive also a lot of joy and valuable reflections during and after a meeting on capacities and resources that can be newly mobilized, re-utilized, with the effects to be strengthened in a series of meetings, ultimately leading to greater psychological resilience, greater trust in the group, enthusiasm to overcome current challenges, and new ideas on how to cope with similar challenges in the future. Traditional games can be transformed into psycho-social ones by simply changing at least one of the features, while respecting the principles of Positum MGS. By being an integrative and

trauma-sensitive approach within Positive Group Therapy, Positum MGS gives both professionals and groups a space for personal growth, self-discovery, further capacity building, and strengthening of resilience in the face of loss due to pandemics, war, armed conflict, natural disasters, including earthquakes, and forced displacement that accompany them.

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