

*Section: PPT training*

## POSITUM MGS COACHING PROTOCOL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF POSITIVE GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING FOR SPECIALISTS WORKING WITH GROUPS OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AFFECTED BY WAR, DISASTERS AND REFUGEE CRISES: A CASE STUDY



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### Abstract

War brings destruction in the broader sense, forcing millions to flee their homes, and resulting in an increased burden of depression, anxiety, PTSD and other mental and behavioral disorders. This burden grows even more in the framework of pandemics and natural disasters, as social and protection services experience crisis of resources. Providing one-to-one mental health care is no longer feasible for masses of refugee and internally displaced children and adults who need support, and, as a result, the need to have increasing numbers of mental health specialists who intervene in groups becomes more and more emergent. The paper reviews the Positum MGS approach to work with groups of children and adults in refugee settings, and not only, suggests the 'Positum MGS coaching protocol' within the framework of group Positive Psychotherapy (PPT after Peseschkian, since 1977)<sup>TM</sup>. Empirically supported and demonstrated by a case in the paper, the protocol being applied by a Positum MGS trainer or team of trainers, during an in-person training of 4-5 days, helps trainees greatly in learning to use psychosocial transcultural games and related techniques as resilience-building tools with groups of children, adolescents or adults. Either in the position of PPT trainers, psychotherapists, consultants or students, the participants in a Positum MGS core training and coaching or PPT training at basic or master levels with a focus of working with groups, can be supported through the suggested coaching protocol and questions in line with the 5-stage consultation of PPT.

**Keywords:** training, coaching protocol, Positum MGS, 5-stage consultation, positive psychotherapy

*"Take ye counsel together in all matters,  
inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of  
guidance which leadeth the way, and is  
the bestower of understanding."*

- Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)

### Introduction

As governments, public health agencies, mental health organizations, the wider academic and scientific community and other societal actors are learning to properly consult and fully cooperate on the needs of humanity and

vulnerable populations, including refugees and internally displaced people – with the most recent estimate of some 108.4 million people being forcibly displaced worldwide, according to UNHCR report (2023) – humanity is currently facing an increasing burden of the prevalence of mental health disorders, while wars, pandemics, natural disasters and resulting phenomena, such as forced displacement and refugee crises affect both developed and developing countries. The report points out that such a high number of refugees and internally displaced people was at the end of 2022 “as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order”. A systematic review and meta-analysis of Henkelmann et al. (2020) indicates “a challenging and persisting disease burden in refugees due to anxiety, mood disorders and PTSD”. More specifically, it states:

Prevalence rates were 13 and 42% (95% CI 8–52%) for diagnosed and self-reported anxiety, 30 and 40% (95% CI 23–48%) for diagnosed and self-reported depression, and 29 and 37% (95% CI 22–45%) for diagnosed and self-reported PTSD. These estimates are substantially higher relative to those reported in non-refugee populations over the globe and to populations living in conflict or war settings, both for child/adolescent and adult refugees. Estimates were similar over different home and resettlement areas and independent of length of residence. (Henkelmann et al, 2020)

Henkelmann et al. (2020) further point out “the relevance of developing public health policies in host countries” and recommend that “scalable interventions, tailored for refugees, should become more readily available”. If the above-cited numbers on prevalence rates of depression, anxiety and PTSD do not seem alarming, what else could be for the mental health community and that of Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy?! What professional interventions can be offered to address the needs?

In this context, one among several possibilities for such scalable and tailored interventions to build capacities for mental health, psychosocial and pedagogical specialists in host countries and localities who want to work with groups of children or adults affected by war, pandemics and natural disasters, can be supported by the Positum MGS™ approach

developed by Parruca (2013, 2022, 2023b). Since the start of the war against Ukraine in February 2022, as well as predating and recently new armed conflicts and wars in other regions, the Positum MGS approach within the framework of Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy [PPT after Peseschkian, since 1977]™ has trained, with the care of the WAPP Support Project, more than 70 specialists with a PPT background and training, who are actively engaged in providing support to groups of children and adults. In the framework of capacity building, a specific ‘Positum MGS coaching protocol’ is applied during the training and, ideally, after the training for up to eight sessions.

Coaching is a broad concept in the process of training and capacity building. However, it takes a specific meaning and adopts a unique procedure in the context of Positum MGS training and further capacity building when using psychosocial games and feedback techniques originating in the MGSC Methodology (Jázs, 2023; Meuwly, 2011). Therefore, in its strict sense, the Positum MGS coaching protocol comes to the assistance of specialists who are trained to use psychosocial transcultural games as instruments that have functions, similar to stories in PPT for and with individuals and groups (Peseschkian, 1986, 1987, 2006). Greatly based on the coaching procedure suggested in the framework of the MGSC Methodology training (Meuwly, 2011), it is expanded by Parruca (2013) with PPT elements to further develop the role of a Positum MGS trainer, in order to support the trainee into a deeper self-discovery when undertaking a joint reflection and positum feedback that are embedded within the framework of PPT’s 5-stage consultation (Peseschkian, 1987, 2013), while these five stages are also applicable in group psychotherapy (Remmers, 1999). The aim of the Positum MGS coaching protocol is to equip the trainee with the required confidence to facilitate group sessions for children or adults, which support their psychological resilience, and to become aware of defense mechanisms, such as generalization (Peseschkian, 1987, 2013), as well as denial, projection, justification, rationalization, irony, and resistance (Meuwly, 2011) that may be barriers to efficacy on the part of a group facilitator – either a trainer, psychotherapist or consultant receiving coaching.

## Methodology

At this point, it may be helpful to clarify certain definitions connected with facilitation, training and coaching in the context of the Positum MGS approach, as guided by Positum MGS methodological principles and its Coaching Protocol, that ultimately serve the purpose of providing qualitative group psychotherapy:

- “*Group psychotherapy*” in the framework of Positive Group Psychotherapy and Positum MGS, is group therapeutic work undertaken with beneficiaries – children and adults in need of mental health and psychosocial support – by keeping in mind PPT and Positum MGS principles, focused on the identification of experienced emotions and feelings during and after a group psychosocial transcultural game; of needs and expectations associated with them in the sense of actual capacities; of conscious and unconscious concepts connected with those actual capacities; of misunderstanding at the basis of those concepts; of conflicts and their reaction in the domain of body, achievement, relations and phantasy; of mindfulness and exploration of the actual, basic, key, and inner conflicts at intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and systemic levels; as well as gaining a broader perspective on future action and acting on those decisions arrived at individual or group level (Dobiata, 2020; Parruca, 2013, 2022, 2023b; Peseschkian, 1986, 1987).
- “*Session facilitation*” by a trainee consists of leading a group of peers during the last two days of a core Positum MGS training of 4-5 days, and/or after the training a group of ideally 6-12 beneficiary children or adults who receive mental health and psychosocial support in a public or private institution, into a session of 45-120 minutes where psychosocial transcultural games are applied for up to 45 minutes with a gradual progression of intensity, followed by a relaxation phase, and concluded with a reflective feedback of up to 75 minutes, taking the group through the PPT’s 5-stage consultation and therapy (Parruca, 2013, 2022, 2023a, 2023b).
- “*Group training and coaching*” facilitated by one to three Positum MGS trainers

consists of a 4-5-day core or advanced training in a block of days or carried out during two weekends, where ideally 10-12 students and practitioners of PPT learn interactively and under coaching in teams how to use psychosocial transcultural games and related techniques for use in group therapy in the PPT framework, containing elements of training in both theoretical concepts and practical skills when participating in group psychosocial transcultural games as instruments of educational self-experience and self-discovery. Group training and coaching enhance competencies at four levels: psychological, social, methodological and technical (Parruca, 2013, 2022, 2023a, 2023b).

- “*Individual coaching*” facilitated by a Positum MGS trainer, facilitator or peer trainee, consists of observing and assessing the performance (Parruca, 2023c) of the trainee while s/he facilitates a session for a group of peers or beneficiaries, followed by mutual constructive feedback with the trainee under coaching for training and educational self-discovery, and of further enhancing the competences at four levels (Parruca, 2013, 2022, 2023b);

As it will be demonstrated in the relevant paragraphs about the Coaching Protocol, it is noteworthy to consider that its value and use emerge during the last two days of the training and continue for the following 5-to 6 months after the training, as the trainee starts to use the Positum MGS approach with beneficiary children or adults. Thus, the Protocol is strictly connected with the time when the trainee starts to apply what has been learned during the training.

One key instrument to measure the learning and performance of a trainee in the framework of 5-6 months after receiving a core training, is an assessment form that contains 44 performance indicators under 14 competencies at psychological, social, methodological and technical levels (Parruca, 2023c). It measures progress and affects on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (always), ranging from a total of 44 to 176 points. This instrument was based on a follow-up tool developed by a team of psychosocial specialists and used during the Terre des hommes Foundation’s MOVE Project

with some 50 trainees in Albania, Moldova and Romania between 2008 and 2010. (Lasku & Lopari, 2012; Meuwly, 2011). The follow-up tool served as the basis for the empirical collection of data on the effect that the application of the MGSC Methodology had on children and the professionals working with them. Referring to the positive changes and improved skills seen in some 50 professionals in Albania, Moldova and Romania that received basic training and 6-8 coaching sessions originally, compared to the control group that was not trained and coached in the methodology, Meuwly (2011) highlighted the following positive effects:

[...] Increased self-confidence, as they felt more competent to perform their work; [...] More empathy, as they changed their way of looking at children as responsible actors whose self-respect is to be nourished; [...] A new way of communicating, more fluent, sympathetic and effective with their colleagues, families and children; [...] Better handling of conflicts, based on mediation of the needs and interests of all parties; [...] Integration of the principles of participative, interactive pedagogy with the use of feedback that changes their way of facilitating and brings them closer to the children; [...] Less competition and more cooperation, creating an atmosphere of confidence, respect and integration between the children. (p. 3)

Moreover, specifically in Albania, based on the findings of the research in the field, related to the multi-dimensional impact of the MGSC Methodology among some 250 professionals who were trained and then coached for 2-8 sessions, while implementing the methodology with some 2,500 children, Lasku & Lopari (2012) indicated:

On a *personal level* among professionals, it was observed that as a result of experiential learning by participating in practical activities, they developed more self-confidence, more empathy, and improved skills to lead a group of children. Also, this improvement was noticed by the increased self-awareness of their needs and resources as individuals, turning them into resources for the

children they work with. On a *social level*, better communication skills with colleagues and families and better stress management in work environments. At the *methodological level*, that is, in the practice of working with children, the methodology positively encouraged a participatory pedagogy where the child is at the center of the process, is actively listened to, empathized and the opinion and point of view expressed takes importance. (p. 4)

Stressing the importance of coaching as an integral part of the training, based on the vast training and coaching experience of some 250 psychosocial and pedagogical specialists applying the methodology with some 5,000 children in the three countries, Meuwly (2011) states:

Coaching or individual follow-up is part of the process of training and the integration of new skills, and it should be taken into account when planning training and its follow-on activities. The effectiveness of the process of strengthening skills largely depends on the time devoted to it and the resources available in the coaching stage. (p. 4)

The following deals with the coaching process of a new trainee who facilitates a session with peers during the training, or who will start practicing with a group of children or adults s/he works with. The Positum MGS trainer/coach, in addition to a core training package of four-five days that include psychosocial modules and game methodology ones within the PPT framework, is responsible to provide at least two up to ideally eight individual coaching sessions to the trainee. If not possible, it may be substituted by in-person or on-line supervision. With the development of the on-line video communication technologies, the trainer may observe the performance of a trainee in distance, to be afterwards engaged in mutual feedback. This process has its crucial role, because, as mentioned, it helps the trainee-facilitator greatly to conduct a Positum MGS session with the group – each following session being improved and appropriate psychosocially, technically and methodologically, after the feedback received

from the trainer/coach during the previous coaching session(s).

Based on the above, the Positum MGS coaching protocol requires firstly, a trainer or team of trainers to closely observe a trainee who is demonstrating what has been learned and, secondly, engage in mutual constructive feedback on what was observed. Either after demonstrating the facilitation of a psychosocial transcultural game session for a group of peer trainees during a Positum MGS training, or after facilitating a first Positum MGS session for a group of children, adolescents or adults, the coaching protocol is moderated in a way that considers the 5-stage consultation process. Therefore, the coaching role of the trainer consists of two main tasks: (a) observing in background the trainee-facilitator during the facilitation of a group session, and (b) facilitating mutual constructive feedback that considers the 5-stage consultation procedure. More specifically, these two main tasks have their mini-tasks and objectives described in details in the following.

(a) **Observing in background** the trainee during the Positum MGS session with the group of children or adults while s/he facilitates the game and feedback session for about 45-120 minutes, depending on the age-group of participants and their differentiation need in the group. The trainer keeps notes on the elements of the session, making a written assessment of the trainee's performance and progress indicators, including planning and facilitation of the session, respect for methodological principles, and the attitude and skills (actual capacities) of the trainee, both well-developed and to be developed (Parruca, 2023c). With the trainer observing in the background, the trainee learns to getting used to and becoming more comfortable with the idea of being assisted psychosocially, technically and methodologically, and therefore, is attached to the trainer/coach, while facilitating a session with the group that has to go through the attachment, differentiation and detachment phases of interaction (Peseschkian, 1986, 1987);

(b) **Mutual constructive feedback** after the game and feedback session with the trainee for about 30 minutes on feelings, thoughts, what was difficult and went well, and needs for improvement for the next session, by

respecting the coaching principles and guidelines of protocol. This second part is led by the trainer(s) by posing a set of questions to the trainee-facilitators, which help them reflect on the experience, bring to conscience their actual, key, basic and inner conflicts, and verbalizing them, as well as a few actions to be undertaken next time with the group, in terms of improving the quality of the session. This process consists of the differentiation and de-attachment phases of the trainer-trainee coaching relationship. The protocol of questions posed by the trainers to the trainees and discussions on them are provided in the following coaching case, featuring a social worker, male, 32 years-old, married, Albanian, working with Albanian children and adolescents who had returned from the ISIS war-zone of Iraq and Syria:

**1. "How do you feel after the facilitation of this session and why?"**

This question is aimed at helping the trainee get in touch with the emotion(s) or feeling(s) of the moment, depending on how s/he perceived his/her own performance and that of the group, as well as the general sense about the session. In connection to PPT, this question helps strengthen the attachment between the trainer and the trainee, and is the continuation of the observation task and of the Observation/Distancing stage on the part of both trainee and trainer, which started with observing the session that the trainee facilitated with the group. Here, the trainer has to listen empathically and note down key elements of what the trainee says. To demonstrate, in one case of coaching during training, the trainee said:

*"I actually have mixed feelings. On one hand, I am glad that the group reacted very positively to this new game, but I felt a little sad and embarrassed in the end, as there was some tension between me and Sarah, after I interrupted her and asked her to be briefer. I noticed she felt a little upset by my remark, and hope she didn't take me wrong."*

The trainer notes down key words from the answers and feelings of the trainee, after mirroring what was said by him/her. This process strengthens their attachment and lowers potential defense mechanisms on the

part of the trainee. Then, the trainer poses the next question:

**2. “What was difficult during your facilitation role and why?”** This intends to help the trainee make a deeper analysis of his own performance, in terms of which capacities (in the form of skills, attitudes, or actual capacities) were not very helpful to the group, as well as the group reactions to the facilitation style. Related to 5-stage consultation in PPT, this question leads to the stage of Inventory. The trainer notes down what the trainee says, in order to compare with his/her own notes from the observation of the session in the group. Again, the trainer here listens attentively, without interrupting or asking disruptive questions. The trainee says:

*“In addition to what I said about Sarah, I felt I was not clear about the rules of the game in the main part. It seemed it created some confusion for the group, which was reflected in their feedback as well.”*

The open nature of the question helps the trainee feel that he can trust the trainer and be more open and, as a result, the defense mechanisms are further reduced, when the next question is made:

**3. What did you like about your facilitation role and style?** This question helps the trainee to become more aware of what he did well, what specific actual capacities and skills helped the group interact, learn and share. It helps the trainee move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> PPT’s consultation stage of Situational Encouragement, as he shares the inner resources that he/she has access to at that point:

*“Well, I was prepared for the session, clear about the objectives to be met during the game, listened to their suggestions during the mini-feedbacks ... I increased the level of participation and cooperation according to their suggestions when the game was retried with a few progress steps, and showed empathy to their feelings during the closing feedback.”*

As it may be noticed, the trainee has a good awareness of the implemented plan and methodological principles (Meuwly, 2011; Parruca, 2013, 2023b), while pointing out the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics

(Dobiała, 2020), as well as social competences, such as empathy (Remmers, 2010). This stage prepares the trainee for the next critical question:

**4. “What were the objectives of the session and to what degree were they met?”** This question helps the trainee focus on the objectives he wanted to achieve (in terms of primary and/or secondary capacities to rehabilitate or develop) by the end of the session with the group. The trainee brings his own perception on what degree the objectives were met in a scale of 1 to 4 when observing and evaluating the performance of individuals within the group (Parruca, 2023a) and why he sees it that way. The trainer keeps notes while listening actively. In terms of PPT, this question is completing the uncovered elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of Inventory, however, it helps the trainee move to the stage of Verbalization as he moves deeper to the content of the conflict area. In the case, the trainee answered:

*“Based on the difficulties the group members have outside the institution, I planned to work with the actual capacities of trust, honesty, respect and contact. The first three were quite visible during the game, and the group could elaborate on them during the closing feedback, but you could see yourself how the group struggled to establish physical contact during the main and relaxation parts. I didn’t understand why, and they did not even want to talk about it during the feedback, when I asked them why they did not want to shake hands in the moment of the relaxation part.”*

This answer of the trainee sets the stage for constructive feedback on the part of the trainer, as both can move to a deeper Verbalization stage. At this point, the trainer asks:

**5. After reflecting again on what you shared and perhaps questions you might have about your performance, are you ready to receive my feedback?** In case of a closed body language, the trainer may decide to not give feedback. The closeness would trigger defense mechanisms in the trainee, resulting in poor absorption of the feedback given by the trainer. And therefore, it is recommended to give no

feedback at all (Meuwly, 2011; Parruca, 2023b). Otherwise, at this stage, the trainer confirms the positive qualities, attitudes and skills (actual capacities) perceived during the trainee's performance as group facilitator, and consequently, highlights additional positive elements of which the trainee was not aware of himself. This moment can supplement the PPT's 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of Situational Encouragement as the trainee is reminded of his key primary and secondary capacities, while being verbalized by the trainer. In this case, the trainer said:

*"I am glad to see that the training you received has been well-understood by you, and this was demonstrated by your diligent preparation for the session, the attachment you could establish immediately with the group through your genuine politeness, warm tone of voice and cheerfulness. In addition to that, you were clear about the actual capacities as objectives to be met during the game; you encouraged such methodological principles as unity vs. over-achievement and hope in achievement, in the form of active participation and cooperation by the group; listened to their suggestions during the mini-feedbacks and increased the level of progress, when the game was retried with a few progress steps; showed empathy to their feelings and helped them go through all the key questions during the closing reflection. I am really pleased that you took the necessary time for all the parts of the session."*

At this point, the trainee feels calmer, encouraged, with lowered defenses. This encouraging feedback is very necessary, because it builds further trust between trainer and trainee, as well as greater confidence and a sense of achievement in the trainee. He is ready to go to the next stage:

**6. The following discussion allows the trainer to provide feedback on what needs to be improved, by referring to specific and concrete moments and elements of the group session facilitated by the trainee.** The trainer says tactfully, for instance, by referring to the trainee's

actual capacities of patience, time and courtesy:

*"I noticed on both mini-feedbacks that you were not allowing Sarah to finish her suggestions, and also, during the closing feedback, you cut her off when she was speaking about the detailed way she cooperated with Mario. On the other hand, you did not cut off the other children. I am wondering why?"*

By taking the time to reflect in order to operationalize the conflict models in PPT (Goncharov, 2020) the trainer and trainee come closer to the truth about unconscious and conscious behavior. While the above statements point at a visible actual conflict with its domain in the relationship area, involving as content the actual capacities of 'patience vs. honesty', as well as the key conflict of 'honesty vs. politeness', the basic conflict with a similar content becomes visible, as the trainee replies:

*"I don't know why, but Sarah always reminds me of my elder sister, Joana, who would talk endlessly sometimes, and this would drive our mother crazy, as she didn't have the time and nerves to listen to her. She would say angrily: 'Stop it now Joanna, I get it!'... I kind of liked the way our mum would make her stop. Maybe, Sara... No, no, it can't be.... Surely, I was under the pressure of time, and cut her off."*

At this point, the trainer intervenes to avoid any further raising of defense mechanisms, such as justification among other mechanisms (Meuwly, 2011). The trainer states:

*"Well, you have to check this. I'd encourage you to be more aware of your levels of patience towards different children in the group and allow them to go to the end of their speech, as long as they don't take unnecessary time from the others. In this way they will feel more respected and listened to."*

As described above, the trainee is helped to check whether a certain attitude or behavior is a pattern or prone to a basic or inner conflict, and a very brief discussion takes place on that. As the trainee is assisted to go through the 4th stage of Verbalization, where his previous statements on negative or not-so-

helpful attitudes, coupled with the observations of the trainer, find full and clear expression in basic concepts and misunderstandings built until that moment, while the trainee honestly verbalizes them. In helping the trainee to solve the key conflict with the trainer in an atmosphere of mutual trust, the trainer helps to mirror and clear out those misunderstandings, at least at the reflection level. As the stage of Verbalization is quite traversed, what follows next is the question:

**7. "Reflecting on the feedback you received by the group and what we have discussed so far, what are two or three things that you would do differently during the next session with the group?"** This question helps the trainee reflect on 2-3 actual capacities or attitudes that were identified either by himself or the trainer previously, that need to be further developed. The question puts the trainee in the future thinking mode, so that the next session with the group would be ideal, if those changes were adopted. In terms of PPT, this is the 5<sup>th</sup> consultation stage of the Broadening of the Goals. The trainee leaves the coaching session with a clear view of his inner resources and new objectives in terms of improvement for the next session with the group. In the case, referring again to the previous statements, the trainee answers:

*"Certainly, I have to be careful with Sarah and other children in terms of interrupting them unnecessarily. I should be patient and give her and the others the necessary time to fully express their thoughts."*

This last question and answer serve to the detachment step for the live interaction between the trainer/coach and the trainee until the next coaching session in a week or so. Then, it becomes imperative for the coach to check during the next coaching session that the statements and decisions made by the coach during the stages of the Verbalization and Broadening of the Goals are implemented without falling into the old pattern. In the above case, during the following coaching session, the coach observed that the trainee showed patience to the child during the reflection part, and experienced the facilitation role with more certitude. These two indicators of result in terms of actual capacities developed by the trainee are

noteworthy in the capacity building process that the Positum MGS coaching protocol promotes.

To summarize the process described above, Table 1 may be of help:

**Table 1.**  
**Coaching Protocol during Positum MGS training or post-training group session**

Questions sequence and guideline according to Positum MGS coaching protocol after observing in background a group session facilitated by the trainee	PPT interaction step & stage of consultation
1. "How do you feel after the facilitation of this session and why?"	Attachment <u>1. Distancing/Observation</u>
2. "What was difficult during your facilitation role and why?"	Differentiation <u>2. Inventory)</u>
3. "What did you like about your facilitation role and style?"	Differentiation <u>3. Situational Encouragement</u>
4. "What were the objectives of the session and to what degree were they met?"	Differentiation <u>4. Verbalization</u>
5. "After reflecting again on what you shared and perhaps questions you might have about your performance, are you ready to receive my feedback?"	Differentiation <u>3. Situational Encouragement</u> <u>4. Verbalization</u>
6. A discussion allows the trainer to provide feedback on what needs to be improved, by referring to specific and concrete moments and elements of the session facilitated by the trainee with the group. Concrete suggestions are given.	Differentiation <u>4. Verbalization</u>
7. "Reflecting on the feedback you received by the group and what we have discussed so far, what are two or three things that you would do differently during the next session with the group?"	Detachment <u>5. Broadening of the Goals</u>

## Discussion

The particularity of this Protocol consists firstly, of the efficient use of the MGSC coaching protocol within the 5-stage consultation of PPT in just one 45-minute session, thus giving trainers a focused framework to help trainees build capacities. And secondly, the Protocol provides questions that switch the Inventory and Situational Encouragement stages, whereas the



original MGSC Coaching Protocol poses questions that do not follow this order. Therefore, PPT practitioners can be more easily oriented through the process by adhering to a PPT logical framework. Furthermore, as the Positum MGS approach of training and its coaching protocol for PPT professionals working with groups of children and adults affected by war, disasters and refugee crises helps to further build the capacities of the professionals, their intervention with children demonstrates to take additional value. Due to its stabilizing, resource-oriented and resilience-building effects, the Positum MGS approach for training and its coaching protocol demonstrate, similar to the MGSC Methodology, universal applicability for children and adults who experienced neglect, abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), exploitation, and discrimination, loss, and grief, including children and adults in the neurodiverse spectrum (Parruca, 2022, 2023b). Applying the methodology with children and adults in destabilized states during the experience of psychotic episodes and related disorders is not recommended unless the person is stabilized and the group is well-attached; it should be applied with caution. However, PPT practitioners may find Positum MGS approach to group therapy as universally applicable to all mental and behavioral disorders, because it is an integrative approach within PPT's meta-theory and meta-practice, which "offers a conceptual framework for working with all illnesses and disturbances" (Peseschkian, 2013, p, 69).

Another essential aspect for the effective application of the coaching protocol takes in consideration that the Positum MGS coach or team of coaches – PPT trainers, supervisors and psychotherapists who are familiarized with the procedure – are not only aware of the transference of the trainee, but are also encouraged to dwell on their own counter-transference, so that they may make best use of it for both group self-discovery and coaching purposes under training. Taking a "holistic approach", according to Goncharov (2012), is a necessity to understand and analyze the counter-transference:

This [...] approach is based on a broader definition of counter-transference, and calls for a more active technical use of counter-transference in therapy. Many representations of this approach are discussed with the patient and influence

their counter-transference, seeing it as an important part of the psychotherapeutic process. The desire to analyze all reactions towards the patient, sooner or later leads to a more-or-less complete painting of any 'white spots' or unconscious moments. It is useful or even necessary to understand, and be able to analyze, the counter-transference, in order to effectively use it in psychotherapy. If the therapist does not do that, he/she can never get that valuable experience and therefore possibly limit their therapeutic options.

The experienced counter-transference and the trainer's awareness about it, is thus, essential in the coaching process, as the real emotional states of the trainees can be reflected in the feedback given by the trainer in the coaching process. For example, although the trainee speaks of "feeling sad" after the session with the group, yet he comes across as anxious through his body language and non-verbal communication. The coach has a responsibility to check that emotion or feeling and the needs behind that during the Observation/Distancing and Inventory stages, in order to clear any needs for trust, certitude and safety on the part of the coach.

## Conclusions

Either in the position of PPT trainers, psychotherapists, consultants or students, the participants in a Positum MGS core training and coaching or PPT training at basic or master levels with a focus of working with groups, can be supported through the recommended coaching protocol in line with the 5-stage consultation of PPT, to encourage aspects of adequate self-awareness that address the actual, key, basic and inner conflicts experienced by a trainee during the group session facilitation. The recommended coaching protocol through observation and constructive feedback, as a decade-long tested procedure in the field of mental health and psychosocial support, helps a professionals under training to objectively assess his own performance and efficacy with a group of beneficiaries, lower unnecessary defense mechanisms towards the group and trainer, and increase openness for positive changes, aiming at further building competences at technical, methodological, social and psychological domains. The close consultation process

between a trainer and trainee leads to a better understanding of the Positum MGS approach within PPT and a more effective and efficient application of the approach with groups of beneficiaries. As such, the suggested coaching procedure helps to increase the efficacy of the professionals' therapeutic work with groups of refugee children and adults affected by armed conflicts, war, pandemics, natural disasters, and a plethora of related or other micro- and macro-traumas, as well mental and behavioral disorders.

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