

Annex № 8

**Annotations of the presented materials under Art. 65. from PRASPU
of Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova, Chief Assistant, Doctor of Psychology
for participation in a competition
for the academic position of "Associate Professor"
in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences
professional field 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology)**

** The order of the annotations of the submissions corresponds to the order of the publications in the list of the scientific papers for the competition in Annex 5. The abstracts in English follow the Bulgarian annotation.*

Habilitation work - monography

[Publication No 1]

Kostova, Z., Trauma and Parenting, Steno P., Varna, 2018, 978-954-449-958-7, 127 pp.

The monograph presents the importance of trauma and post-traumatic stress in the individual experience of parents of children with neurodevelopmental disorders. It also highlights its impact in psychotherapy, where the deployment of parental capacity is interrupted by post-traumatic stress and high levels of anxiety. This phenomenon also affects cooperation with professionals. the monograph is architecturally divided into several parts. Part one looked at trauma as a mental state.

Part two unfolds theoretical and empirical sides of its own study, related to a description of a symptomatic profile of mothers raising children with neurodevelopmental disorders. An analysis of the leading personality trends, as well as the accompanying thoughts, emotions and behaviours (through cognitive-behavioural psychotherapeutic paradigm) was carried out.

Part three contains its own experience in counselling and psychotherapy with families with children with mental development disorders. In the context of cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy, the paradigm's capabilities in working with individuals, couples, families, and groups are considered. Therapeutic work with these families provokes an integrative approach, such as emotionally focused psychotherapy. Principled moments of counselling/crisis counselling, psychotherapy and professional ethics, as well as a process and meaningful level of these processes, have been brought to an end.

Part four presents' "snapshots" of several stories over time (past, present, prospects for the future) of mothers parenting children with autism spectrum disorders.

Published books on the basis of dissertation for being appointed the educational and scientific degree of doctor

[Publication No 2]

Kostova, Z. G. *Emotional Regulation in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, Steno P., Varna, 2020, 978-619-241-079-7, pp. 183

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is of wide interest to specialists due to the uniqueness and diversity of behavioural and mental manifestations. However, the main characteristics describing autism are: impaired socio-communicative skills and behaviour/imagination.

But the condition itself goes beyond the diagnostic, therapeutic and educational focus on the child. Extremely difficult early diagnosis delays in time the possibility of intervention. The existing various hypotheses about the nature of autism give reason to look for alternatives to confirm or reject them.

The complex clinical picture of the autism spectrum does not imply the search for an unambiguous response.

In the process of many years of clinical practice with such children and their parents, I found that the usual diagnostic methodologies do not allow the individual appearance of each case to be caught. However, purely quantitative parameters are not sufficient, since the presence or absence of certain symptoms does not give a complete response to the peculiarities of the functioning and level of the child's development as an individual.

In addition, despite the intervention of specialists (teachers, psychologist, speech therapist) towards the child, the results are significantly more optimistic if space is provided and the mother to react to her emotions and experiences, to receive specialized support. This outlines the importance of a multidisciplinary therapy/training team involving parents/mother. It is often necessary to apply psychoeducational methods, given the duration of the condition autism (throughout life, to varying degrees).

The book is deployed in three parts. The logic of this study, presented in part two, relates to theoretical and research searches in this direction, namely, with a study of mother-child interaction with RAS in childhood, through the child's behaviour and personal history of the mother. The theoretical overview presented in the first part preceding the research part is a detailed analysis on the subject. Theories are presented, and studies have been carried out on the possibilities of the child with generalized developmental disorder for the building of affection, for recognition, expression, regulation of emotions, as well as the quality of life of the family raising such a child.

The specific clinical picture of autism is complemented by the manifestations of compensatory protective mechanisms, involved in the process of socio-emotional interaction with others – mother, family, specialists. In part three, I draw the reader's attention to the possibilities of therapy, including the use of nonverbal

aspects of communication in order to establish emotional engagement in the process of interaction with children and persons with a nonverbal form of ASD. The applications included in the book address two aspects of the diagnostic process in practice: a questionnaire about the history of the child in the family through the mother's story and a Protocol for determining the level of emotional-affective functioning of the child with ASD.

**Articles, scientific reports, scientific communications, referenced and indexed
in a world-famous database of scientific information**

[Publication No 3]

Matanova, V., Kostova, Z., Kolev, M., Brain-based treatment – a new approach or a well-forgotten old one?, in Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice, 2018, Online ISSN: 1365-2753 Sc.

For a relatively long period of time mental functioning was mainly associated with personal profile while brain functioning went by the wayside. After the 90s of the 20th century, or the so called “Decade of the Brain”, today, contemporary specialists work on the boundary between fundamental science and medicine. This brings neuroscience, neuropsychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy closer to each other. Today we definitely know that brain structures are being built and altered thanks to experience. Psychotherapy can be more effective when based on a neuropsychological approach – this implies identification of the neural foundations of various disorders and will lead to specific psychotherapeutic conclusions. The knowledge about the brain is continually enriched, which leads to periodic rethinking and updating of the therapeutic approaches to various diseases of the nervous system and brain dysfunctions.

The aim of translational studies is to match and combine scientific areas, resources, experience and techniques to improve prevention, diagnosis and therapies, “transformation” of scientific discoveries into potential treatments of various diseases done in laboratory conditions. Neuropsychological studies prove that cognition is a key element that links together brain functioning and behaviour. According to Dr. Kandel all experimental events, including psychotherapeutic interventions, affect the structure and function of neuronal synapses.

The story of why psychotherapy works is a story of understanding the brain mechanisms of psychic processes, a story of how the brain has been evolving to ensure learning, forgetting and the mechanisms of permanent psychological change. The new evidence on brain functioning necessitates the integration of neuropsychological achievements in the psychotherapeutic process. An integrative approach is needed to take into account the dynamic interaction between brain functioning, psyche, soul, spirit and social interaction, i.e. development of a model of psychotherapeutic work based on cerebral plasticity!

Brain-based psychotherapy aims at changing brain functioning not directly, but through experiences. This is neuropsychologically informed psychotherapy.

[Publication No 4]

Matanova V., Kostova Z. Neuronal Bases of Mental Disorders and Specific Psychotherapeutic Conclusion, in: "Brain-Based Treatment: A New Approach or a Well-Forgotten Old One? Neuropsychology and Psychotherapy"; ISBN: 978-1-53616-951-5; pp.105-123; Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York WoC ; Sc.

The article presents current trends in the development of neuroscience related to mental disorders and psychotherapy. In the last few decades, it has become clear that all mental processes stem from the mechanisms of the brain. This means that any change in our mental processes is reflected in the functions or structures of the brain. More and more mental disorders are explained by neuropsychological and neurological dysfunctions - depression is caused by neurotransmitter dysfunction; anxiety and worry are caused by a hyperreactive sympathetic nervous system and amygdala dysfunction; overweight - from hypothalamic dysfunction, sleep disorders are associated with damage to the reticular activating systems, autism - from disorders of interneuronal connections caused by gene mutations and others. The development of functional technologies for neuro-imaging allows for non-invasive monitoring of changes in the human brain, and in particular, training- and learning-related changes in brain activation patterns due to psychotherapy. Comparative models of the effects of pharmacotherapy and the impact of different psychotherapeutic approaches in some evidence-based mental disorders are presented. Because psychotherapy and counseling are effective and lead to long-term behavioral changes, they are probably act through learning and through changes in gene expression.

[Publication No 5]

Kostova Z. (2021). Case Report: A Case Study Significance of the Reflective Parenting for the Child Development. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 724996. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.724996> Impact Factor: 2,990 WoC ; Sc.

There are studies that connect the “child” in the past with the “parent” in the present through the prism of high levels of stress, guilt, anxiety. This raises the question of the experiences and internal work patterns formed in childhood and developed through parenthood at a later stage. The article (case study) presents the quality of parental capacity of a family raising a child with an autism spectrum. The abilities of parents (the emphasis is on the mother) to recognize and differentiate the mental states of their nonverbal child are discussed. An analysis of the parental representations for the child and the parent–child relationship is developed. The parameters of reflective parenting are measured. The methodology provides good opportunities for identifying deficits in two aspects: parenting and the functioning of the child itself. Without their

establishment, therapy could not have a clear perspective. An integrative approach for psychological support of the child and his family is presented: psychological work with the child on the main areas of functioning, in parallel with the therapy conducted with the parents and the mother, as the main caregiver. The changes for the described period are indicated, which are related to the improvement of the parental capacity in the mother and the progress in the therapy in the child. A prognosis for ongoing therapy is given, as well as topics that have arisen in the process of diagnostic procedures.

Articles and scientific reports in Bulgaria and abroad in unrefereed journals with scientific review

[Publication No 6]

Kostova, Z., Defensive Behaviour in Autism Spectrum Disorders, in the Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology, issue 3(17), 2013 ISSN 1314-0280, 24-31 pp.

The paper reveals a possibility to frame the "strange" (defensive) behaviour usually demonstrated by the children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. From the psychodynamic point of view this behaviour is considered to be in two forms - mild and severe. The children's coping strategies with the intensive emotions differ in their clinical expression for each of the two forms.

[Publication No 7]

Kostova, Z., Cognitive patterns of functioning and strategies for dealing with mothers raising children with special needs, in wed. Psychology and society. International Conference, "P. Hilendarski", 2015, ISBN 978-954-423-991-6, 264-273 pp. 263-273

The analysis of the cognitive functioning of the individual, increases the likelihood of developing skills to include more realistic, evidence-based assessment of the situation and reduce the subjective experience of negative emotions. These skills include identifying cognitive distortions, changing beliefs about the world and others, and change the behavioral coping strategies.

This paper proposed analysis of cognitive models of functioning of 10 mothers raising children with special needs participating in group support and assistance. Were examined their beliefs about themselves, others, the world and the future. Used are original survey and questionnaire Heim Research-coping behavior in stressful situations.

[Publication No 8]

Kostova, Z., Content and process level in therapy of parents of children with emotional and behavioural disorders, in the journal Clinical and Consulting Psychology, issue 3 (25), 2015, ISSN 1314-0280, 27-39 pp.

The family inevitably is getting the therapist's attention when children are treated and supported. Various aspects of child's therapy focused on the parents are going to be revealed in the framework of two consecutive articles. The hallmarks of the ethical part of the process, its basic aims and structure are presented on a content level. The internal picture of symptomatic behaviour that occurs in meeting and interacting with the parents is viewed in depth on a process level. The basic coping techniques overcoming the parents' unconscious resistances are discussed.

[Publication No 9]

Kostova, Zl., Projective Identification as a Protection of the Self in Mothers Raising a Child with Mental Development Disorder, in. Positive Development. Proceedings of the conference "Education, Development, Art", UI "P. Hilendarski", 2015, ISBN 978-619-202-075-0, pp. 84-94

Projective identification can be viewed in several perspectives when it comes to parenting a child with a disorder in mental development. On one side is a defense mechanism of the Ego of the lower order, the other - unconscious process between therapist and patient/client; between mother and child. A third part can prove that marks the line of ineffective parenting. The article presented a study of the experiences of mothers caring for children with autistic spectrum disorders. In their linguistic production is derived line, which includes protection discussed.

[Publication No 10]

Kostova, Zl., Parenting styles and emotional wellbeing of children from autistic spectrum, in "Social Competences, Creativity and Wellbeing", Plovdiv University Press, 2015, ISBN 978-619-9-202-023-1, p.p. 147-152

Raising a child with autism implies manifold opportunities for the study of family interactions. Parents show different styles, laying direct care for their children in this state. Processes occurring in this interaction have an impact on the emotional well-being of the child from autistic spectrum, despite the difficult clinical picture of the condition itself. The article presents how this occurs by comparing parenting style and behavior of the farm child.

[Publication No 11]

Kostova, Z., "Emotional Processes in the Mother/Child dyad in cases of children with Autism", in the Proceedings "Education, Society, Personality", "P. Hilendarski", 2015, ISBN 978-619-202-032-3, p. 253-266

The processes maintaining the parent-child relationship as a prerequisite for emotional well-being in the family of a child with autism are subjected to qualitative analysis in the paper. The object of the analysis is the emotional

connection in the pair (dyad) mother / child with autism. Twenty-four mothers raising children on the autism spectrum were interviewed in the study. The dynamic processes affecting their relationship were investigated. The focus is put on the experience of the mother, the emotional background of growing her child. The change of the family dynamics in raising the child with autism, as well as the specifics of its behavior in response to this process were studied.

[Publication No 12]

Kostova, Z., Koychev, O., Yordanova, P., Video modeling as a technology for learning socially acceptable behavior and academic skills in children and students with special needs, in the collection "Challenges of inclusive education", UPH "Paisii Hilendarski" , 2015, ISBN 978-954-423-994-7, pp. 144-156

The use of modeling or observation described by Albert Bandura in the 1970s shows that children develop skills by imitating actions observed by others. Based on Bandura's model of social learning (Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)), the authors found that children with special needs (autism spectrum, intellectual disabilities) learn effectively through copying the observed, video film, advertising, behavior of another child in the family. Through observation, children integrate complex patterns of behavior into a social environment. The article presents different models of video modeling as a technology by which desirable behaviors are learned in children and students with special needs. Advantages of this technology are related to the possibility of the product to be used repeatedly by more than one child or student; it does not take much time to prepare; develops cognition and skills for communication, behavior and social interaction with peers; increases the autonomy and adaptability of the individual (Collins, Gast, Ault, & Wolery, 1991; Ledford, Gast, Luscre, & Ayres, 2008).

[Publication No 13]

Kostova, Z., Emotionally Focused Therapy and Competence in Families caring for Children With Disorders in Mental Development, in Wed. Innovation and Competences in Education, Plovdiv University P. Hilendarski, Plovdiv, 2016, ISBN 978-619202-178-8, p. 1. 547-556

Emotionally focused therapy is a relatively new integrative approach in clinical psychology, unifying assumptions of three other approaches: attachment theory, systematic approach and humanistic. The application of EFT (Emotionally Focused Therapy) in clinical practice with families raising a child with a severe chronic disease is proven. Experience shows that successful therapeutic intervention in such cases appears when the process is included the whole family. Child with neurodevelopmental disorder is a symptom of the whole system.

EFT for these families is focused on the traumatic experience of parents, build a reliable attachment and emotional competence to aware of the negative behavioral patterns in the pair. This article introduces into the principal moments

of EFT, purpose, tasks and stages of provided with discussed focus group. There are also practical examples.

[Publication No 14]

Kostova, Z., Intensive intervention as an alternative method of development of communication when working with individuals with severe autism spectrum disorder, in *wed. Alternatives in Education, Part Two, "P. Hilendarski", Plovdiv, 2016, ISBN 978-619-202-159-7, p. 1. 101-111*

Intensive interaction is an approach based on a conceptual framework involving the use of nonverbal aspects of communication in order to establish emotional engagement in the process of interaction. It is associated with two processes: child-maternal intervention and the theory of mirror neurons. In order to take place in the course of therapy, it is necessary to examine the context of communication with nonverbal individuals with autism. Very often, the perception and processing of incoming sensory information inside and out is not integrated, but is perceived as an incentive of varying intensity (hypo- or hypersensitive). Various defensive behaviours are included. This further complicates the process of interaction. This article discusses the possibilities of exploring and making shared emotional contact with children and people with autism who do not use speech in order to alternatively develop communication skills.

[Publication No 15]

Kostova, Z., Symptomatic profile of mothers, which cares for children with neurodevelopmental disorders, in *Proceedings of the Second National Congress of Clinical Psychology with International Participation, Volume 2, Steno Publishing House, Varna, 2016, ISBN 978-954-449- 914-3, pp. 190-200*

During the therapeutic process with children, it is necessary and very important their parents to be included in it. With greater frequency the mothers are suffering, which they realize in different way and degree, or often deny. The use of testing diagnostic instruments provides a complete picture of their mental functioning. This is the way to outline the main lines for the mother`s therapy.

This article presents a study of mothers, which cares for children with neurodevelopment disorders. The aim of the research is to present a profile of commonly occurring symptomatic tendencies in the investigated representative sample. The used science tool is called SCL-90-R. The obtained results are related to four leading, clinically outlined profile scales: depression - with the greatest representation; anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and interpersonal sensitivity. There is a detailed analysis within the profiles. There are lined the conclusions for clinical practice in cognitive psychotherapy.

[Publication No 16]

Kostova, Z., Functional assessment of specific disorders of learning ability. Case study, in *Socio-pedagogical aspects of child development, "P. Hilendarski ", 2017, ISBN 978-619-202-279-2, pp. 90-105.*

This article aims to present a practical protocol for functional assessment of the current status of a child at an early stage of school age with specific learning abilities violations. The evaluation criteria are consistent with three main areas of functioning that are relevant to the

described age - neuropsychological, psychological and psychosocial. Preparing a therapeutic plan, united with the diagnostic, is an important principle of effectiveness.

The specificity of the described "energy stealing" case is related to a child who, in her childhood, is over-stimulated in her development in one area of functioning without having to take note of sensitive periods in the development of other areas. The issue of early development and early learning is concerned.

[Publication No 17]

Matanova, V., Kostova, Z. & Kolev, M., (2018). Executive dysfunctions in childhood. Медицинская психология в России, (4), 8-8. doi: 10.24411/2219-8245-2018-14021

The term "executive function" is used as a common term that includes various complex cognitive processes. They are evolutionary features related to survival and are based on the ability to trace the current behaviour, to track the reactions of others and to achieve a change in behaviour according to the situation. Executive functions provide the ability to plan, organize, prioritize, focus on a specific task, use information and past experience when solving current problems. The executive function is a "product of the coordinated work of various processes, to achieve a specific goal in a flexible manner". These complex processes are not separate structures but chains. Executive functions provide a buffer so as to rethink the current information, to create a plan and to choose a specific course of action.

Executive function disorders in children cause a wide range of symptoms. The term "executive function" includes a number of cognitive, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Executive functions have been studied in various developmental disorders — developmental dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders. Deficits related to the development of the higher cortical functions and linguistic system lie at the core of executive dysfunctions in developmental dyslexia. This strengthens the opinion that executive dysfunctions have a secondary character and affect, above all, the abilities related to shifting, decision-making, planning, initiating and time management. The main executive dysfunctions in children with ADHD are related to difficulties in task organization, estimating the duration of task performance, prioritizing and initiating, maintaining the focus, making efforts for processing, regulating the sleep-wake cycle and problems with emotional control, working memory, monitoring and regulation of the activity. Children with Autistic spectrum disorders have significant difficulties in analytical thinking, in self-monitoring and in mental and behavioural flexibility. Behavioural problems are related to insufficient initiation of new actions or behaviours and a tendency to fix on a particular activity.

Despite the growing interest towards executive functions in various developmental disorders, there is still no convincing evidence for the presence of a specific executive profile for the different nosology's. The therapy of executive dysfunctions in childhood requires interventions in three main directions —

providing a protective environment for the child, therapy with the parents and therapy aimed at the children themselves.

[Publication No 18]

Kostova, Z., 2018, "Intellectual Disabilities", in "Psychology of children and students with special educational needs", co-authored, IM "P. Hilendarski ", 2018, ISBN 978-619-202-310-2, pp. 148-161

Intellectual disabilities are a state of delayed or incomplete development of the intellect, characterized by impaired skills that arise in the process of development and give their share in the formation of the general level of intelligence, i.e. cognitive, speech, motor and social skills. The publication presents the definition, clinical picture, aetiology and pathogenesis, symptoms, prognosis and therapeutic possibilities of children with intellectual disabilities.

[Publication No 19]

Kostova, Z., 2018, "Spectrum of autistic disorders", in "Psychology of children and students with special educational needs", co-authored, "P. Hilendarski ", 2018, ISBN 978-619-202-310-2, pp. 161-176

The spectrum of autistic disorders is neurobiological developmental disorders, manifested in dysfunctions in the socio-communicative context and behavior / imagination. The publication presents the definition, clinical picture, aetiology and pathogenesis, symptoms, differential diagnosis with similar conditions, prognosis and therapeutic possibilities of children with autism spectrum and their parents.

[Publication No 20]

Kostova, Zl., 2018, "Professional ethics in the psychology of children and students with special needs" in "Psychology of children and students with special educational needs", co-authored, "P. Hilendarski ", 2018, ISBN 978-619-202-310-2, pp. 255-268.

In his daily practice, the special psychologist constantly encounters cases related to relationships or making important decisions related to his psychological work with the child with atypical development and his family. Centuries of history lie behind the effective ability to make ethically sound decisions that maintain effectiveness in the course of aid. It is based on a broad understanding of ethics as self-analysis and systematic understanding of the consequences and prerequisites for professional actions, and the individuals involved and involved in these actions. Such a broad understanding of ethics in psychology allows the universality of ethical principles to be constructively and critically discussed. Ethics in clinical psychology (in particular - special psychology) is not an end in itself, but raises questions about meaning, values and benefits. The publication discusses the basic principles of mental health and well-being, the topic is related to deontology in clinical psychology. Materials from various Codes concerning professional ethics in working with children are presented. The criteria for personal qualities that a professional working with children with neurodevelopmental disorders needs to have are presented.

[Publication No 21]

Kostova, Z., 2019, "Transgenerational models of family functioning", in a collection of the Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference of the Faculty of

Pedagogy at the University of Plovdiv: "Man and Global Society", ISBN 978-619-202-503-8, pp. 357-367

Every models of attachment that is once used in childhood tends to be sustainable over time. In modern psychology there is a separate strand, etc. Transgenerational analysis, who explores the interaction within the family system through generations. Where events from the outside world are perceived through the filter of internalized relationships and the present relationships are viewed through the prism of the past. There is a tendency to unconsciously seek change in relationships so they fit the internalized patterns as internal guidelines. Research on the vertical family system allows understanding the transgenerational mechanisms of parenting.

This article explores the models of affective association in mothers who have children with Autistic Spectrum disorder/s in the matrimonial subsystem and the parent-child subsystem. Trends as well as behavioral patterns are presented in attachment styles framework for all 24 participants in the study.

[Publication No 22]

Kostova, Z., Cherneva, Kr. (2019), Mindfulness and Neuropsychology, in the journal Clinical and Consulting Psychology, Year XI, Issue 1 (39), ISSN 1314-0280, 14-27 p.

Modern searches for mental health have long surpassed the classical approaches in psychotherapy. Nowadays, there is an integration between the different approaches in order to provide an optimal opportunity for effective therapeutic strategies. Mindfulness is associated with the components of intention, attention and attitude, which trains the sufferer's ability to view the content of what is happening here and now in different ways, ie. develops its psychological flexibility. The connection of this technique with neuropsychology proves its seriousness and sounds relevant today. This article outlines the main mechanisms of brain activity in the practice of Mindfulness, as well as its application in the field of health and mental disorders.

[Publication No 23]

Kostova, Z., 2020, The Child in the Family Context, in Sat. Reports from the Third National Congress of Clinical Psychology with International Participation, Sofia, 2020, Steno Publishing House, ISBN 978-619-241-125-1, pp. 163-175

Individuals who have experienced parenting through a mental disorder in their early experience have difficulty developing their parenting potential in adulthood. There are studies that connect the „child“ in the past with the „parent“ in the present through the prism of high levels of stress, guilt, anxiety. This raises the question of the experiences and internal work patterns formed in childhood and developed through parenthood at a later stage.

The article presents a theoretical transgenerational construct for the transmission of psychopathology. A case describes of a mother in treatment. She was a psychopathic parent during her childhood, and now she has difficulties to

recognize and differentiate the mental states of her nonverbal child. An analysis of the parental representations for the child and the parent-child relationship is developed. The parameters of reflexive parenting are measured.

[Publication No 24]

Kostova, Z., 2020, Scientific understanding of the father's function for the mental development of the child, in coll. Education, Science, Innovation, University Press, ISBN 978-619-202-599-1, pp. 235-247

Scientific knowledge of risk factors for child mental health has its preventive meaning in clinical psychology. This refers to the possibilities of detecting early predictors of developmental disorders in a family context. Modern research is aims at finding causal links to this. The effectiveness of psychological support provided to the whole family depends on this knowledge.

It is proving through experience that the mental health of the parents is a serious factor for the risk development of the child. The functions of the mother and the father are presents in different ways during the different stages of the child's life. When, due to the activity of various circumstances, it is difficult to develop reflexive parenting, it affects the most vulnerable element of the family system - the child.

This article aims to present literature review in the understanding of function of the father figure in the child's mental life. Two aspects of this influence are presents: when the father function is successfully preforms and when it is blocked.

[Publication No 25]

Kostova, Z., Bogdanova, A., 2020, Emotional connection and building a personal identity in twins, in coll. Reports from the Third National Congress of Clinical Psychology with International Participation, Sofia, 2020, Steno Publishing House, ISBN 978-619-241-125-1, pp. 7-14

According to sociological and medical researches the western world today witnesses a rapid increase in the number of modern societies as a result of the quick development of assisted reproduction methods and the improvement of prenatal and perinatal care.

From classical literature to contemporary research in the field of developmental psychology, the connection between twins is described as one of the most unique interpersonal relationships.

The purpose of this article is to trace the international experience on the exploration and comprehension of this bond's nature considering two important subjects - developing attachment and building personal identity.

[Publication No 26]

Kostova, Z, 2021, "Group therapeutic work for psycho-social support of mothers in distress", in Problems and perspectives of social activities, comp. Vekova, L. and Koychev O., University Press, 978-619-202-701-8, pp. 69-90

The birth and rearing of a child with development disorders outlines the test of parents, especially the mother, to overcome the high levels of stress and accumulated distress and traumatism. Dysfunctional beliefs and non-adaptive coping models are activated. The cognitive model of group therapeutically work is effective in psychosocial support of these mothers. It opens up space for up-to-date themes related to the various social roles of the participants - mother, parent, spouse, working woman. Key contributions include an emphasis on integrative group therapeutic practice; multiple cognitive, emotional and behavioural techniques; openness to the inclusion of techniques from other approaches and methodology to induce and change dysfunctional patterns of thinking and behaviour.

[Publication No 27]

Kostova, Z., 2021, "Development of mental capacity to increase parental competencies", in coll. Development of key competencies, University Press, ISBN 978-619-7663-02-0, pp. 201-215

This article is theoretical and aims to present the basic parameters of parental competencies through the psycho-social prism. The concept of reflective parenting is presented as part of these competencies. The model of mentalization theory, the degrees and the main dimensions of mentalization capacity are developed. Mentalization abilities can collapse in cases where the parent is in a state of stress. Then representations are activated which are more likely to be based on old patterns of interaction, which affects the quality of parent-child relationships. The development of mentalization capacity to increase parental competencies provides the opportunity for effective parenting through a good understanding of the mental states of the Other, who may be the child and / or the other parent. Techniques for increasing reflective parenting are described.

**STUDIES PUBLISHED IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS, REFEREED AND INDEXED IN
WORLD-RENOWNED DATABASES OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION**

[Publication No 28]

Matanova V., Kostova, Z. "Psychotherapy: Past and Present", in: "Brain-Based Treatment: A New Approach or a Well-Forgotten Old One? Neuropsychology and Psychotherapy"; ISBN: 978-1-53616-951-5; pp.1-21; Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York

In its essence, psychotherapy is all three: science, art and craft. Science, because of the scientific experiments to test reality. Reality, however, is not only what happens in the outside world but also what is in the mind and brain of both participants in the process. Art, because it is related to creativity, emotion, imagination and intuition - all of them are used to create something new. This implies constant search and improvement of new approaches and methods tailored to the needs of the modern person and their place in our technological

age. Craft, because it implies life experience, life-long learning, the ability to understand and create a therapeutic situation, contact, context, an atmosphere of understanding and safety, providing conditions for change in the patient. The psychotherapist must look and see, listen and hear, understand and support, hear behind the words, see behind the action, and look for the 'black box,' which in fact is orange! And all this in a situation where only the patient knows something about their own life and only, they can decide what to share and what not. This suggests that the psychotherapist is not an expert in the patient's life and hence their inner world is beyond psychotherapist's reach!

Psychotherapy has a long history. Its path is marked by epochal discoveries in the field of medicine. It has always been a shared field of several scientific fields. Fundamental knowledge in the fields of physiology, psychophysiology, biology of the mind, etc. is necessary to step on it. The history of psychiatry and psychotherapy is related to its consolidation with neurology. The basic postulate of psychotherapy is that the mind and brain are separate but interacting units. Psychotherapy claims that it is directed towards the mind (or psyche), but acknowledges that the effect of psychotherapeutic interventions is at least partly due to modifications of neuronal networks and, in particular, brain neuroplasticity. Historically, it turns out that Freud knew about the connection between psychopathology and brain function, but since there was no evidence of this at the time, he created a system to work with until this connection was proven. The study presents the development of scientific thought and practice in the direction of the relationship between brain and mind in psychotherapy.

The modern development of psychotherapy is influenced by some theories that arose in the XX and the early XXI centuries. Small portions of these theories have been integrated into psychotherapeutic methods for the treatment of various mental disorders, but they have not found their systematization and application in modern psychotherapy. 'Theory of mind' allows us to imagine the thoughts of others, their feelings and aspirations and to guess their intentions. According to the Simulation theory of empathy, children are aware of their mental states and can form conclusions about the mental states of others by way of imitation. Modular theory has emerged in analogy with the modular theories of language and perception. In these theories there is postulated a special mechanism in the brain which determines the mental states of people; it may be congenital or it may appear in the early stages of development. The Relevance theory of D. Sperber and D. Wilson (Sperber, D., & Wilson, D., 2004) attempts to explain communication between people. According to these scholars, cognitive processes are responsible for benefit/loss analysis – the achievement of maximum effect with minimum losses. This allows us to explain the fact that we are able to understand what others mean when they communicate with us or send us a non-verbal signal. In order to fully understand what has been said, and not just its literal meaning, the listener must figure out the speaker's intentions.

[Publication No 29]

Matanova V., Kostova, Z. "Brain-Based Treatment: A New Approach or a Well-Forgotten Old One?", in: "Brain-Based Treatment: A New Approach or a Well-Forgotten Old One? Neuropsychology and Psychotherapy"; ISBN: 978-1-53616-951-5; pp.123-143; Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York

The study presents an innovative approach based on solid scientific evidence. For many years, neuroscience has provided important information to psychology and psychotherapy. Changes in neurochemical and neurostructural levels affect neural networks and can lead to psychopathology. When formulating the type of pathology, it is necessary to take into account, on the one hand, the subjective events in the individual consciousness - brain structures and lesions, lateralization, bioelectrical activity of the brain, psychological flexibility and others. On the other hand - cultural trends and social structures that are inseparable from the development of individual consciousness. That is, any pathology is the tip of the iceberg, which includes the functioning of the brain, the stages of the Self, cultural influences, social structures and spiritual access to them. The encouragement of "brain changes" is now associated not only with survival but with personal development and improvement of the quality of life. Brain-based treatment uses neurobiological, cognitive, emotional, social and environmental information in psychotherapeutic interventions. This presupposes a solid knowledge of the neurobiological basis of mental states and behavior. Methods of psychotherapy can be improved by using the discoveries of neuroscience and neuropsychology. Brain-based treatment aims to change the functioning of the brain not directly, but through experiences and knowledge. In essence, it is the actual bio-psycho-social paradigm leading to integrative psychotherapy. This is neuropsychologically informed psychotherapy. Uses knowledge of neuroscience and neuropsychology to treat cognitive and emotional disorders.

[Publication No 30]

Matanova V., Kostova, Z. "Contemporary Achievements of Neuroscience", in: "Brain-Based Treatment: A New Approach or a Well-Forgotten Old One? Neuropsychology and Psychotherapy"; ISBN: 978-1-53616-951-5; pp.73-105; Nova Science Publishers, Inc., New York

Neuroscience is an interdisciplinary field that cooperates with medicine, psychology, physics, chemistry, computer science, linguistics, mathematics, philosophy, physics, etc. Neuroscience has a direct connection to genetics, biochemistry and physiology, and it studies the morphology and function of the central nervous system. The term neuroscience is regarded as a complete study of the nervous system, its molecular, cellular, structural, functional, evolutionary and medical aspects.

The study presents the recent discoveries related to the translation of assessment methods and data across neuroscience, phenomenology and clinical

psychology. Knowledge on brain functioning has been constantly evolving, which leads to periodic rethinking and updating of therapeutic approaches to various nervous system diseases and brain dysfunctions. Neuroimaging techniques have allowed us to specify the localization of executive functions in the brain regions. The connection between the theory of mirror neurons, the structures of the frontal cortex and the limbic system for mental functioning is derived. The development of individual brain functions in childhood, as well as the factors influencing their compromise, is presented in depth. The development of individual brain functions in childhood, as well as the factors influencing their compromise, is presented in depth. In fact, a major part of behavioral patterns in adulthood are laid down in early childhood.

STUDIES PUBLISHED IN NON-REFEREED PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS OR PUBLISHED IN EDITED COLLECTIVE VOLUMES

[Publication No 31]

Kostova, Z., (2019), *Psychosomatic disorders in childhood and reflective parenting*, in *Clinical and Consulting Psychology*, Year XI, issue 1 (39), ISSN 1314-0280, 27- 48 p.

The present study is theoretical and aims to present the clinical picture and therapeutic interaction when it comes to parenting a child with a psychosomatic disorder. It has been proven that in this type of disorders in the neurobiological development in childhood, there is a close connection with family dynamics. Then we face the questions: what is the quality of parent-child relationships and how parents can be helped. An extended literature review of the existing scientific evidence related to the causes, dynamics, disorders and mechanisms of the psychosomatic process. The topic of influencing the quality of parent-child relations is touched upon. The concept of reflexive parenting is also presented. The model of mentalization theory, the degrees and the main dimensions of mentalization capacity are developed. The mechanism of failure in mentalization is derived, when the individual is in a state of stress, which is a prerequisite for parenting a child in an illness, representations are activated, which are more likely to be based on old models of interaction. The development of mentalization capacity provides the opportunity for reflexive parenting through a good understanding of the mental states of the Other, who may be the child and / or the other parent. Techniques for enhancing reflexive parenting are described.

[Publication No 32]

Kostova, Z., 2019, "Psychological work with parents", in *Strategies and models for working with children and students with special educational needs* ", co-authored, " P. Hilendarski ", 2018, ISBN 978-619-202-521-2, p. 148-171

The family is a natural group in which stereotypes of interaction emerge over time. They create its structure, which determines the functioning of its members, outlines the range of their behavior and facilitates the interaction between them. The various structures of the family are necessary to perform the basic tasks of the family - maintaining individuality, and at the same time, creating a sense of belonging. The publication presents basic concepts outlining the processes in the family through a systematic approach in clinical psychology. The second part presents the picture of the main dimensions of the functioning of a family in which

a child with a neurodevelopmental disorder is raised. The goal of psychotherapy with these families is also stated, namely, to intensify the fulfillment of their parents' tasks - to get to know the real image of their own child, and this will give them the opportunity to expand their parenting roles.

CO-AUTHORED TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHING AIDS

[Publication No 33]

Masaldzhieva, R., Kostova, Z., Clinical psychology, basic course, co-authorship, 2016, IC Mirtani, Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-90245-2-2

The publication is a short course in clinical psychology. It outlines the thematic framework of this intensively developing applied psychological discipline. Introduces the reader to the historical and current development of this scientific field. The criteria and classifications of psychological abnormality, main aspects of psychological assessment, leading directions in psychotherapy, ethical principles, important trends in clinical psychology are considered. Knowledge of the content of this course is the basis for seeking and acquiring broader knowledge from other sources, information about which can be found in each chapter of the textbook.

[Publication No 34]

Levterova, D., Atanasova, J., Trichkov, Iv, Kostova, Zl., Sivakova, V. (2018) - "Psychology of children and students with special educational needs" - University "Paisii Hilendarski" - ISBN 978-619 -202-310-2

Psychology of children and students with special educational needs is a space in psychological science that directly correlates with the applications of psychological cognitions in the environmental context of inclusive education. Special educational needs for various disabilities, disorders and disorders have their own psychological specificity, which is fundamental for understanding the disabilities, disorders and disorders themselves, as well as for understanding and structuring individual curricula, counseling and therapeutic interventions. The textbook is intended for students in professional fields of psychology, pedagogy, special pedagogy, social pedagogy, preschool and primary pedagogy, social activities, for administrators, for parents, for representatives of non-governmental organizations, for all who work in the field of psychology, in in the field of pedagogy, in the field of inclusive education, as well as for all those who are interested in the presented issues and the presented topics.

[Publication No 35]

Levterova, D., Atanasova, J., Trichkov, Iv, Kostova, Zl., Sivakova, V. (2019) - "Strategies and models for working with children and students with special educational needs" - textbook - Paisii Hilendarski "- ISBN 978-619-202-521-2

The textbook is intended for students of the Pedagogical Faculty of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". The developments are in line with the new concepts and normative documents for children and students with disorders in neuropsychological development. Specific psychological and pedagogical strategies and rules and models of good practices for working with different groups of children and students with special educational needs and family context are proposed.

[Publication No 36]

Masaldzhieva, R., Kostova, Z., 2019, Clinical Psychology, Plovdiv 2019, 978-619-90245-4-6

The structure and content of this publication are consistent with the modern development of the discipline Clinical Psychology. Topics covered can be useful for students from helping professions. This is a short course. The essential elements of the activity of the clinical psychologist are presented. Basic concepts, theories, approaches in their historical development are included. Attempts have been made to address leading trends in clinical psychology, such as the pursuit of integration of theories and psychotherapeutic models and evidence-based practice.

Signature:

Zlatomira Kostova