The 8IATC received funding from the Australian Government.
Reaching for roots and finding a forest

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Overview

► About the partnership project ‘Reaching Further’:  
  ► Short history  
  ► Goals  
  ► Organizations involved  
  ► Process  
  ► Future  

► OUTCOMES of this partnership project
History of the PS

- **Sept. 2012**: 6IATC in Czech Republic
- **Sept. 2014**: NATURE organized a training for AT-trainers
  
  (with Luk Peeters and -a virtual part of- Martin Ringer)

  → 5 countries started dreaming
- **Jan. 2015**: Meeting in Belgium with 8 countries to work out the idea of a partnership project
- **April 2015**: We handed in the application at Erasmus+
- **Oct. 2015**: START of our 18 months partnership project
- **April 2017**: END of the project ‘Reaching Further’
Goals of the PS

- To create a **common understanding** and language of AT in Europe (at least within the 8 partner organizations)

- To provide a **platform for sharing** knowledge, experience, resources, etc. among practitioners

- To explore AT as a **method** of working with youth-at-risk
Partner Organizations
“It’s a learning process”

- 4 ‘Action Groups’ working on Website, Gate, Research (literature review), Training & Intervision (findings)
- The ‘Board’ to synchronize and solve problems
- Lots of virtual (Skype) meetings
- Every 6 months a ‘real life’ meeting in a different country
- “Trust the process” & “Find pleasure, not pressure”
- Last meeting: end of March 2017 in Belgium
Future

- Expand the platform
- Built on the network: include more European countries and practitioners
- Historical background of AT in all European countries?
- Share ideas, trainings and events on the website
- Gather every 2 years:
  - Next GATE in Germany in 2019 (24-27/7)
Overview

About the partnership project ‘Reaching Further’: 
- Short history
- Goals
- Organizations involved
- Process
- Future

OUTCOMES of this partnership project
Outcomes of the project

- Key-elements for a literature review on AT with Youth at Risk

- A common understanding on ‘What is AT?’ (for us)
Literature review
“Adventure Therapy with Youth at Risk”

- We have selected 7 key-elements
- Based on our own experiences during fieldwork
- Very happy to see them in literature as well
- Further (more specific) research is needed in Europe
We have selected 7 key-elements:

- Nature
- Biographical work
- Group process
- Metaphorical work
- Reflection
- **Relationships** between participants/clients and
  - The therapist
  - The family
  - The inner self
- **Balance of challenge and safety** (incorporating perceived risk and comfort zone)
Common understanding

“What is Adventure Therapy?”

Our shared workshop experiences

+ Meta-reflections and group discussions

+ The link with literature

= 6 QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS)
What is Adventure Therapy?

1. What critical approaches do we use in our AT programs?
2. What are we aiming for when doing AT with clients?
3. Who facilitates an AT program?
4. What about the timeframe of an AT program?
5. What kind of activities and reflections are embedded in our AT programs?
6. What role does the group play in our AT programs?
1. What critical approaches do we use in our AT programs?

Experiential Learning (and Adventure, Nature, Reflection) 
+
Different therapeutic approaches
What is Adventure Therapy?

1. What critical approaches do we use in our AT programs?

Difference with other Experiential Education programs?

- There is a need for therapy, AT program to address this need
- It is our intention to provide therapy & healing (↔growth)
- Dynamic process between identified needs and program design
1. What critical approaches do we use in our AT programs?

Difference with other therapies?

→ In therapy, there is always a perceived emotional risk
→ Difference is the active use of kinaesthetic experiences (in nature or using nature components) to pursue healing
→ In AT we value the presence of a deeper isomorphic experience in nature (kin.experience + cognitive dimension)
2. What are we aiming for when doing AT with clients?

- To create a safe environment
- Where clients can connect with their talents but also explore their dysfunctional patterns/emotions
  - → Not only where they come from
  - → But what they were functional for in older times
  - → And/or find other possible resources
What is Adventure Therapy?

2. What are we aiming for when doing AT with clients?

- Help them change these patterns into functional ones through corrective new experiences
- Rewrite old narratives of trauma and life-stories
- With Nature as a (co-)therapist & therapeutic tool

A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE & WELLBEING
What is Adventure Therapy?

3. Who facilitates an AT program? What is important in the (therapeutic) background of the AT-professional?

Triangle relation:

- Experience (Knowledge, resources, own therapy process)
- Qualification (Degrees & certifications, soft & hard skills)
- Personality (Self-awareness, presence, passion, humanity, ...)

+ ATTITUDE!
3. Who facilitates an AT program? What is important in the (therapeutic) background of the AT-professional?

The best way to ensure therapeutic quality in any AT program = An AT team with a mixture of all qualifications.
4. What about the timeframe of an AT program?

We agree that Adventure Therapy differs from Experiential Education in
- depth
- intimacy of the content
- but also in the time span

We believe that AT works best if interventions are embedded in a longer therapy process.
What is Adventure Therapy?

4. What about the timeframe of an AT program?

- Assessment
- Setting therapeutic goals
- Challenges and experiences
- Reflection
- Transfer to daily life
- Follow-up
5. What kind of activities and reflections are embedded in our AT programs?

- Extra care when tailoring activities because of the vulnerability of the target group
- Reflections go to a deeper level of understanding oneself and are focused on feelings, thoughts and the necessary and specific changes towards functional behaviour
- Transfer part is very important

What is Adventure Therapy?
What is Adventure Therapy?

6. What role does the group play in our AT programs?

- Different emphasis and focus on the group process between partners
- Overall: Group as a “reflection team”, a resource, a mirror, for peer support or in a corrective way
What is Adventure Therapy?

6. What role does the group play in our AT programs?

ROLE OF THE GROUP = SPECTRUM

‘just’ part of the setting (individual therapy in a group)  active protagonist in living the experience with the client

INDIVIDUAL GOALS  GROUP GOALS
CONCLUSION

✓ It has been a very enriching process in which we were able to sublimate both our different and common ideas into something bigger…

✓ But these findings are just the beginning!

✓ More reflective dialogue (between more partners & countries) is needed

What is Adventure Therapy?
Outcomes of the project

More info on the findings: read our online book “Reaching for Roots and Finding a Forest”

MORE OUTCOMES of the project:

A website: www.adventuretherapy.eu

Some texts on the historical background of AT in our 8 partnership countries

1st GATE in Valencia (Spain) February 2017
Gathering for Adventure Therapy Europe

140 participants
22 different countries
23 Experiential AT Workshops
3 Keynotes
Gathering for Adventure Therapy Europe

135 participants from 21 different countries:
  18 European countries
  + Australia, USA, New Zealand
WORLD CAFÉ

- What would be useful to have on an AT network website?
- When exploring the 7 key elements, is there any other element to be included?
- How would you define these key elements in your practice?
- What would you need for a sustainable network of AT practitioners?
- What are elements of your cultural background that you implement in your AT practice?
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One Planet

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Free Spirit - True North