GAMES4THERAPY — Archipelago

Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

The Archipelago method offers a structured, playful and creative way of working with a child who has experienced divorce or parental separation. The method helps the child to accept the new situation in the family, adapt to it and continue to grow.

Archipelago means a series of islands. The program works with the metaphor that each family is a bit like an archipelago made up of several islands, separated and yet connected together. Individual members of the family differ from one another – with different needs, ways of experiencing, behavior, and are just simply not all the same. At the same time, they have a lot in common because they meet each other, respect one another, speak together, share their experiences, think of each other, enrich one another and are important to each other.

At first, children feel as if the whole family was only one single island, but over the course of the child's development and at the latest in adolescence, they become increasingly aware that just as they themselves are not the same as their parents, the parents are also not the same, and even if they live together and like it, they are also by and large different. Hence, they do not form one single island, but rather an archipelago.

Divorce in families with small children can then be perceived from the child's point of view as an earthquake that causes disruption of the family as one single island. These children then lose the illusion of the family as one single island and must face it even though they may not be ready yet to understand it spontaneously and they may need some guidance.

Even at the time of the earthquake or some time after it, there are various new feelings and events that sometimes are not easy to integrate, but gradually there is a new archipelago, new ties and new ways of separating family members from each other and meeting each other again and again and to interconnect. Even a divorced family remains in many respects a family with newly created links.

THIS METHOD IS DESIGNED ONLY FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS OR COUNSELLING PROFESSIONALS.

THIS PROGRAM IS NOT FOR PARENTS TO WORK WITH THEIR CHILDREN. THIS IS NOT A SELF-HELP PROGRAM.

TO BE USED ONLY FOR TERAPEUTIC AND ADVISORY HELP, IN NO CASE IS THIS A DIAGNOSTIC METHOD.

This Handbook explains to experts how to work with Archipelago materials. It deals in particular with the computer program. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the method in detail before you start working with a specific child. The method is recommended to be used only in accordance with this Handbook.

Part of the method is the interactive computer program Archipelago, the Method Handbook, and cards for the initial work with children (available at www.games4therapy.com).

THEORETICAL BASIS

The method we present to you is applicable across different theoretical approaches and schools of thought. For the development of this method, we were also inspired by different approaches. However, our goal is not to force you to integrate approaches if this is not something you normally do in your practice. We appreciate the diversity of approaches and differences between them. We respect the different philosophical and methodical starting points of individual therapeutic and counseling approaches and schools. We assume that you will use this method as it corresponds to your education, your skills and your practice.

In this handbook, we mostly refer to the theory and practice of work in Gestalt modality, because we as authors are trained in this psychotherapeutic and counseling approach and we work with this method. However, we believe that the terms we use will be comprehensible for everyone and many are described precisely so that they remain comprehensible. Our other major sources are also narrative approaches and new insights into trauma.

We welcome critical remarks and other theoretical extensions. If you have experience with the Archipelago method in a different therapeutic approach and would like to give us a similar introduction to working with the method in your approach, we would like to publish or link it on our site. Write to info@games4therapy.com

Basic principles of Gestalt therapeutic work (not only) with children

Gestalt therapy helps the child to become aware of their psychological processes and behavior in the therapeutic relationship and, as a result, in their relationships with other people. The basic building block is self-awareness and the associated experience and support for healthy contact. Awareness is the way a person understands themselves, their needs, their wishes, and the ways in which they achieve what they want. It is the ability that we also attribute importance to our experiences (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 2004; Yontef 2009; Philippson, 2012; Oaklander, 2003; Mackewn, 2009).

When working with children, the Gestalt approach emphasizes integration, healing feelings of guilt and shame, and also the search for strength and internal resources as well as supporting external resources. This is aided by working with games, experiments, and stories. In line with Perls (in: Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 1951), we see that the goal of psychotherapy is to achieve a degree of integration that will allow for further spontaneous development. Psychotherapy respects, above all, the fact that humans are living organisms, who in their lives and growth follow natural biological processes. The human organism with which the psyche is a part, is governed by processes of self-organization that we recognize, describe and work with in Gestalt therapy.

We would like to note that integration is not just a psychological process, but instead is embedded in the function and structure of the human brain. The development of the brain generally leads to greater integration. Interpersonal contact and dialogue in psychotherapy help the human brain to evolve and mature and operate as a whole (Caroll, 2017; Siegel, 2013 and 2015).

In Gestalt therapy, we work with the concept of disrupted contact functions (we describe what prevents us from being fully in touch with ourselves and with others), but at the same time we notice that what we sometimes understand as a disturbance, resistance or even failure, is a meaningful creative adaptation in a given context. In addition, there are moments in the child's development where it is necessary to adapt to the parents and not respond to their own nature. (For example, when we learn that we need to look first before crossing the road.) Only gradually, in their next development, the child learns to understand the meaning and sense of internal commands, prohibitions and beliefs. In this respect, therapy is never aimed at dissolving or eliminating such reactions, but rather in their awareness and acceptance (Philippson, 2012; Polster, 2000).

When doing psychotherapeutic work with children, we value their own activities and awareness through dialogue and new experience (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 2004). Our goal is to find a position where the therapist and the child can meet in accordance with the child's developmental level. Every child benefits from working with different materials (Oaklander, 2003). It is important to create a working alliance, a partnership between the client and the therapist. We also aim to return the child to a sense of control over the situation in which they find themselves. We are aware that working with children is a fluid process consisting of many phases (Oaklander, 2003). In communication with the child we use the phenomenological approach, exploration, and as therapists we are curious and interested in the perspective of the child, which sometimes can be very different from what adults perceive.

Children rely more on their own current experience, and if they are given enough support, they often quickly and clearly realize their own independent needs and desire to evolve and grow. Self-confidence and ambition in the case of children naturally spring from trust in their surroundings. In therapeutic work, it is always a great challenge to help ensure that the whole system of relationships in which the child lives in is safe and supportive for all family members to respect their existential and developmental needs (Levi in: Francesetti, Gecele, Roubal, 2013).

Gestalt therapy is holistic and looks at humans always in the context of the entire bio-psycho-social field, even in the context of the relationships in which they developed and in which they find themselves in. We never work with children in therapy as isolated beings, but we always map the widest range of relationships around them. We respect the processes the child needs to go through in a safe therapeutic relationship, but we also always work with parents, and ask about grandparents, teachers, activity leaders, friends (Caroll, 1996). In the case of divorce situations, this is even more important. Parents are sometimes less accessible due to their own worries and emotional responses, and other supportive grown-ups and friends can play a significant and positive role.

Children are more dependent on the field of relationships they live in, but we also see them as capable of actively reacting to their closest ones, creatively adapting to them and actively co-shaping their own experiences. It is crucial for us and our work that we do not perceive the children as victims in contrast to their parents - the "guilty party" (Philippson, 2012). We also repeatedly see that children who find themselves in the same situation (for example, siblings who go through their parents' divorce) ultimately respond very differently.

The relationship with parents is for the child a complex of emotional, mental and behavioral aspects. It is an integral embodied experience created in many thousands of individual specific interactions between child and parent, which in many ways determines the child's further life and relationships with others. In relationships with their parents the child repeatedly experiences and adopts different ways on how to seek and regulate the closeness of two independent individuals while maintaining balance in meeting the needs of one and another (Levi in: Francesetti, Gecele, Roubal, 2013).

Gestalt therapy also avoids linear or sequential models that may lead to comparing each child with stated developmental goals. In a phenomenological Gestalt approach development is seen more like a dance between the child and their caregivers in which they adjust creatively to each other. We do not ask at what stage of development the child is, but how his or her present capabilities for contact are combined as a whole gestalt. We seek for and describe competencies for contact-making that may be seen as belonging to background experience but also may become figural as an actual process of contact-making with the environment. We differentiate several domains of contact competencies and again we especially focus on the capacity of being fully present at the contact boundary with an awareness of the uncertainty of the situation of contact with the other who is different than me. Symptoms and illness then can often be seen as a creative adjustment to the life situation as a whole. This experience is phenomenological but also aesthetic. (Spagnuolo Lobb, 2016).

It is also important to realize that it is precisely how flexible or rigid they treat their own borders and the boundaries of their own members that individual families often differ greatly. Other important factors that affect the development of individual family members are how they can handle closeness and distance in their relationships. (Levi in: Francesetti, Gecelle, Roubal, 2013).

A situation in which parents realize that they can not or will not live together is also greatly influenced by the ability of parents to perceive and experience and respect each other not just as two people the same but (maybe again) as two different people. Other important factors are the ability or the inability of parents or their surroundings to provide children with sufficient support at that particular moment, to be available to contain their emotions, to remain empathic, non-judgmental and non-invasive in the expectations and demands placed on children, to offer patience and sufficient time for event processing including credible and reasonable explanations of events so that the child can understand their meaning.

If this fails, then divorce is seen as an unfinished business in the therapy from a child's point of view, which takes up a lot of energy and prevents further growth. When we are unable to organize our experience so that it makes sense or to come to a certain conclusion, we are restless, feel dissonance and we can not be fully in touch with our own experiences (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 2004, Polster, 2000, Zinker, 2004 Philippson, 2012).

Children are often also trapped in a fantasy about their parents getting back together or in different fantasies about how and who can (by themselves) regulate the emotions or instability of their parents. There are plenty of things that still need to be said to the parents or experienced with them, but it is either not possible or it is possible, but children do not know how to do it. They forget their own needs and merge into the dynamics of the field, which in the given situation reflects mainly the fluctuations

in the position of the parents. The task of therapy is then to look for ways to close unfinished things and to deconstruct such fixed patterns in behavior and to do so sensitively and creatively. We are also looking for new, adequate and acceptable life perspectives for children.

For example, as Polsters (2000) point out, incomplete or unfinished life events (Gestalts), if they are strong enough, often come to the forefront of experiencing and prevent good adaptation to the current situation. It is not easy to know when and how time has come for closure, but at least the offer and support for such a process is part of the counseling and therapeutic work. Incomplete matters can be concluded by returning to past events or by playing back and safely re-experiencing events in a similar situation in the present. In the Archipelago program, for example, through a story of an animal that experiences something similar to (and something a little different than) that of the child. Closing unfinished business in relationships can be done directly with parents (e.g. by telling something to them or painting something for them, etc.) or working with a therapist or counselor through an animal and a metaphor (for example, if the animal tells something to its parents or something to other animals and children, etc.) or even in fantasy (for example, a child draws a picture of how it would look if they could still experience something important with both of their parents together).

The Archipelago's psychotherapy tool emphasizes the overall completion of the events surrounding the divorce or parental separation, the clarification and processing, and the inclusion of what has taken place in a meaningful, integrated story.

Each therapy in a similar situation is also a space for rejecting everything that was not possible for the child to accept and "digest" in the divorce situation. This also helps to work with feelings of guilt or shame and to renew any energic and vital boundary function of the ego. Because every "no" and every correction, even at least the imaginary one, contributes to the discharge of stored emotional energy and moves the self from an uncontactable place to contact and growth (Philippson, 2012).

The Archipelago program offers the child the opportunity to explore the living environment in which it is located, to experiment with it, to play with it and to transform it. The child can repeat his or her choice and has the opportunity to explore the existing one and try out new behaviors. We do not take away any of their symptoms, but we offer the child the opportunity to become aware of them, play with them and appropriate them or refuse them according to their actual needs and possibilities.

The goal of therapy is through a relationship and experiment to create a safe space in which new contacts and experiences emerge. This is a space where the client can decide to act in new ways (and face the anxiety associated with not performing within a familiar framework), or even make their own choice to stay with the old ways of acting but all this from a position of ownership of their own actions (Philippson, 2001).

DIVORCE OR SEPARATION OF PARENTS

 According to a number of authors (Berger, Gravillon, 2011; Smith 1999; Teyber 2006; Ricci 2006; Lowenstein, 2013) we understand divorce as a more or less unlimited event that rarely ends with

divorce or parental separation, most children face a period of emotional confusion one to two years after the divorce. The divorce situation affects the identity of the child and affects their healthy development. Identity naturally evolves in the family as a child regularly meets family members and recognizes and defines themselves in relation to them. When a family breaks down, this natural foundation for identity development can be lost, its clarity and integrity being disturbed. Divorce challenges the very origin of the child as if the "object" of the parent couple was lost. At that moment the child experiences an important and often forming experience, which can be potentially traumatic.

A child is overwhelmed by a number of incosmprehensible feelings in the situation of parental break-up, the integration of which is not yet matched by development. Lacking a sense of security and comprehensibility within his or her relationship field, the child experiences feelings of helplessness because there is no possibility of influencing the situation. Many children are not able to imagine that someday it will be better again and they will gain stability and feel fine and safe. They may feel overwhelmed by intense emotions and their awareness of their needs and contact with themselves and with others may be disrupted. Even after years it may seem as if their emotional life stopped and waited for completion. During the divorce, children make false conclusions, including self-blaming, as if trying to find meaning in events that are full of emotions and uncertainties.

Working with a child in a post-divorce situation is important for rediscovering a positive perception of oneself, finding value for a new life reality. We assume that working with the past, in spite of the current experience, opens up the possibility of actively grasping the future and opens space for enjoying the joy of the newly created and found connection of "islands". A child can benefit from being aware not only of their experiences and needs, but also formulating questions and ambiguities that they can open with a therapist's support to communicate with their parents. From our point of view, it makes sense even in hindsight. When children in counseling or psychotherapeutic work understand their own reaction to the situation and realize it, they can also leave it if they no longer need it. We also believe that it is important that the child does not embrace the concept of what it was *then*, often in an idealized form, rather it is necessary to begin to experience what it is *now* and to find meaning and value in a new perspective. This may support the child's further emotional development and the processing of potentially traumatic events.

USE OF COMPUTER PROGRAMS IN THERAPEUTIC AND CONSULTING PRACTICE

The use of computer software in therapeutic practice is still uncommon, but there are many approaches and types of gamification in the field of mental health care. There are many kinds of psychotherapy applied games, but there is no systematic scientific research into their effect (Flaming et al, 2017). Most of the software offered is based on the principles of cognitive behavioral therapy.

The authors of the Archipelago method were inspired by the Dutch method *My Backpack*, which helps professionals work with a child's life story in alternative family care. It is based on creative therapy, narrative therapy and a mentalization-based approach (Šimečková a Vykypělová, 2014,2016, 2017).

Archipelago computer software is an interactive multimedia therapeutic tool. The program combines the use of images, sounds, animations, interactive elements, recorded poems, etc., including the possibility to print all the created scenes and work with them as pictures and create a book or a whole story.

Although the program uses the elements of computer games, it can not be considered as a computer game and it is not recommended to label it as such. A computer game has specific features such as suggestive music and rhythm engaging on many levels, correct and wrong answers or solutions, points acquired and competition Developers of computer games have other goals than those which psychotherapists have.

The Archipelago program is referred to as "a program for children in divorce situations" or as "a project for children in a divorce situation", etc. We do not call it a computer game. The program does not have any correct and wrong answers or solutions. One could say that everything the child does in it is right. The program is not a competition and the child does not collect any points in it. It has no levels, so it's not possible to get to another level. The program has no music or no predetermined tempo in which it is necessary to work and it can be fully adapted to the child and you. The program does not aim to take on the child's demands, but rather it tries to offer a stimulus at every step, which makes it possible for the child to touch their inner emotions. Sometimes it is necessary to explain it to children and parents.

The advantage of a computer program is that children are used to computers and multimedia software today. It does not come as an unwelcomed surprise and often actually pleases them. Children quickly use these programs to project their fantasies and work with them often intuitively and without problems. Children are in this way better motivated to work with you and we often see that they open up and communicate more spontaneously while working with the program. Sometimes it is also an advantage for them to avoid eye contact, for example when they talk about the topics they are ashamed of. They like the ability to print images and later look at them again. Usually, the child will quickly and easily understand that they are creating a story.

Another advantage is the clear structure and methodology developed to work with individual parts of the program. The little game and interactive elements in the program give the child an opportunity to experiment and give them control over the situation in the program, although they often have less possibility to look at things or even change things this way in their lives. A child experiences the opportunity to express themselves not only in words, but also in pictures or moving pictures on the screen, spontaneously understanding that the program is designed not only to "do" things but to "try them out". Incentives such as "try it out", "try it," or "you can try it anyway and see what it is like," "How is it working for you now?" and "What is it now ... " will likely be used very often. The purpose of the work is by far not only the end result, but the process of its search and the freedom of experimentation with the otherwise difficult and demanding life situation.

Bits of animation of some subjects usually have no purpose but to entertain and encourage the child's curiosity to explore objects and events on screen and in the field.

WHAT ARCHIPELAGO IS AND IS NOT - BEFORE GETTING STARTED

Archipelago is only a therapeutic or counseling aid. It certainly can not replace and does not replace any basic therapeutic and counseling work. As with any other therapeutic aid, you can only work with Archipelago after you have established good contact with children and their families, and have created a therapeutic or counseling contract. We recommend that the ability to work with this method is already part of the initial contract.

Archipelago can be useful and can only help if a well-educated professional is working with it. The method and the program by themselves can never be useful. That's why parents and other childcare professionals never work with the method, only psychological or psychotherapeutic specialists.

Archipelago is not a diagnostic tool. The Archipelago method does not have the ambition of measuring something, it has not undergone any standardization to become a diagnostic psychological test. And it must not be used as such. Use other standardized psychological diagnostic methods to diagnose a child. We strongly advise to not use any information or materials obtained by working with the Archipelago method as part of or annexing written reports about the child for any purpose. The reason is that the method has a different purpose than getting information about the child or writing about it. Keep in mind that in the process of parental divorce, a child may be found in situations involving different investigations, litigation between parents, a subject and unfortunately often even an object of many arguments and often accusations. The therapeutic or advisory-therapeutic or supportive therapeutic work with a child have different goals. When working with the Archipelago method, the child gets a chance to use his or her own imagination, is supported in creativity and gains space for safe self-expression. The child's secure connection with themselves and their surroundings helps them to heal and grow. For example, a child may express a great deal of anger with one of the parents, although it does not mean that he or she should not associate with the parent, etc. Never confuse the inner subjective world of childhood fantasies and child emotions with the objective diagnostic examination of the child.

Each therapist and counselor also has their own process and rhythm for working. We assume that the method we put forth to you will be used in accordance with our recommendations, but at the same time you will not apply it word for word but to instead adapt it to your own approach and practice. Although we try to describe in detail the theoretical and practical background of all the steps in working with the computer program, we are primarily concerned with making the sense and meaning accessible. What we define is rather the overall framework and the basis for particular work, not a final and complete or perhaps just a single list of instructions and interventions. Many of the instructions and interventions are specifically mentioned, but primarily so that we clearly and comprehensively illustrate our own thinking and our approach.

Additionally, each child has their own process and their own individual needs, which the therapeutic and counseling work must respect. In the end, each child finds their own self-expression material. The task of the therapist and counselor is therefore to offer various materials and to find that which is the most suitable for the child and the therapist or counselor's work (Oaklander, 2003). Despite how it may appear at first glance, Archipelago is not based solely on working with a computer program. The program creates a basic framework, a clear and predictable structure that can be retained, offers a number of breaks and incentives, and slightly motivates the child to complete the task. However, every part of the work invites us to use a variety of materials according to the needs and possibilities of the child and the expert working with him or her. Whatever from the story can be played around with (masks, hand puppets, disguises, plush toys, sandbox ...), as well as anything that can be processed or modeled during the work (drawing, painting, clay or plastic, collage ...), or their photos can become part of the final book about the story of an animal.

A therapist therefore has the opportunity to be repeatedly in contact with the different parts of the whole therapeutic process in a variety of ways. We believe that such cyclical work for children greatly helps to process various difficult periods of life and to find a space for recovery and empowerment. It is also a job in which the child gains a lot of opportunities for various minor active and creative problem solving.

The structure of the computer program and working with it enable it to maintain a clearer focus of work and its limits (which can, for example, be based on the context of work, parent or child contract, etc.) and to help children with different events and processes within the therapy to link and integrate more clearly and intelligibly. The clarity, the clear focus, as well as the specific result of your child's work (individual products or a whole book) can also help you clarify and summarize your child's work with their parents and help them deepen their relationship with the child through sharing.

The computer program never captures the full world of a child's imagination. From the beginning, let your children know that if you create a book together, they can draw whatever or add stickers later, etc. Keep track of what they need, so you do not forget it.

Before you start working with kids, try the program yourself, get familiar with the metaphors, play around with it, learn the steps and instructions, discover different options, try where and how to save the pictures. As with any other technique, some practice is needed before you learn everything.

INITIAL CONTRACT

We assume that you work with children and their families only after concluding a therapeutic or consulting contract and that you have your own forms for these purposes.

We recommend that in order to work with the Archipelago method, you should include it in the initial contract with the child's parents and the child themselves.

Do not apply the method on each child in a divorce situation. See our recommendations when it is not appropriate to work with the method.

On the other hand, consider that even with children who have entered the therapy or counseling process for quite different reasons, you may decide to use the method. Most often we expect that this will be in cases with children who have had to experience their parents' divorce in the past, and you can only conclude while working with them that their current problems or symptoms are related to this. In that case, write up an initial contract with the parent and inform them that you are thinking about it and want to get the child started with the Archipelago method.

Contract with the parents

Before you introduce the program to a child and offer to work with them, inform the parent about this option. Give them a brief overview of the method, telling them that part of the work takes place on a computer so they are not surprised. You can demonstrate and show the first page of the program (the main menu with the path image) and eventually also the selection of characters page. Do not show more than that to the parents as they may tend to advise the child what to do in the program.

However, do not promise to work with the Archipelago method, because the child may reject it.

Inform the parents about the fact that the child creates a fantasy story of an animal in the program, where they can identify with the animal in some experiences and yet in others they do not have to. Make it clear that this story helps children express and process their own experiences. Let them know that some products may be the result of the work, and that the child may want to show them. You do not, however, promise products (or a book) to the parents, because a child may decide not to show their parents and that is to be respected.

Clearly agree with the parents (and best done in writing) at the beginning that the result of your work with the child will not be a point that could be the subject of arguments in any dispute about a child or litigation. Exceptions are only in cases where the legal framework of the state in which you work is required (notification duty or specific situations in which your confidentiality is broken, etc.). While most of countries' legal frameworks protect the privacy of the child, it may happen that parents or some other institution will request such information. That's why it's good to have such a written contract from the beginning. If you are not able to get such a contract, choose alternative therapeutic and counseling methods for working with the child. Archipelago is a program that guides the child in depth to his or her experiences, and at the same time can bring many materials and products that say a lot about the child (seemingly objectively). Ensuring the child's safety for such work is very important.

Contract with the child

Also think about using a contract with the child. Consider if working with the method will somehow contribute to what the person expects and needs.

For various professional reasons (most of all, we assume the child's protection and the confidentiality of his / her communication with you), you can decide not to share some of the child's creations or products with the parents. This already belongs to your own professional competencies. That's why sharing the child's creations with the parents can be offered, but do not promise this.

As with any other counseling or therapeutic work, you agree with the child that you will respect what creations or other materials they decide to create while working with the method and not sharing with parents or e.g. with one of the parents. Agree in advance the conditions in which you would respect their wishes, as well as the conditions upon which you could not respect their wishes (such as a specific contract with your parents, a notification duty or a specific situation where your confidentiality is broken, etc.). The child should always be well aware of what will happen to the results of their work. Predictability and comprehensibility are extremely important when working with children in this life situation.

WHO THE ARCHIPELAGO METHOD IS DESIGNED FOR

The method is intended for children from approximately four to twelve years of age. It always depends on the particular child. It is also necessary to consider the emotional and social maturity of a child, not just their chronological age.

The methodology takes into account the experience of pre-school and younger school children, uses metaphors, pictorial materials, and encourages the use of plush toys, hand puppets and various objects. We recommend working at a time when the situation is already relatively stabilized after the divorce and the child can start exploring their own defense mechanisms. We are interested in the child's perspective, we support them in deepening their awareness, we give their feelings legitimacy, we help to identify these feelings and we focus on the integration of the experience. The method allows experimentation with the offered material. The chosen form of work (play, externalizing, experiment) helps the child open up and share, the child is relaxed, focused on the hero of their story, and they also communicate more easily about topics they cannot talk about at other times. Similarly, the use of externalizing work is referred to in, e.g. White and Morgan (2006).

With different age groups of children, you will probably benefit from various parts of the whole method. E.g. With younger children, you can put more emphasis on playing and experimenting in the work (you will use puppets, masks and plush toys) and you probably do not use messages, with older children you can pay more attention to messages (you can modify them differently, make them collages and even big posters, etc.) and sharing (you might be more interested, for example, from the advice of other children who have left a message in your office) or perhaps just the individual questions the child has realized or described in the process. With older children, we have solid and profound experience in working with feelings of guilt, or some other time they describe various memories from a distance and with relief. They describe various memories, when they tried to work out how to bring their parents back together, etc. With older children, it is sometimes necessary to admit that the pictures are too childish and respect if they reject the method.

WHO THE ARCHIPELAGO METHOD IS NOT DESIGNED FOR

Individual work with children in situations of acute divorce disputes

The method is not intended for individual work with children in situations of acute divorce disputes where their parents are still deep in conflict and litigation. In such situations, you may prefer to work within a child support group in a similar life situation or other supportive therapeutic and counseling methods for working with a child. Archipelago is a program that guides the child in depth into their experience, and from our point of view, doing so would not be possible and appropriate at this stage of the divorce situation. In this respect, we fully agree with the recommendations and practices of the Dutch program No Kids in the Middle (http://www.kinderenuitdeknel.nl)

If you decide that parents are proceeding without conflicts and in accordance with the interests of the child, you can, of course, start working with the program at your discretion even before the whole process of parental break-up is finalized.

Children who have not experienced divorce or parental separation

Because of its clear purpose and methodic closure, the method is not suitable for working with children who have not experienced divorce or parental breakdown.

Your own children

Again, we would like to repeat, that it's important that parents never work with the method. Even with trained and registered specialist-parents, we do not recommend using the method themselves with their own children. It is not a self-help tool. Ask a colleague in your region to work with your children.

Working with siblings

We do not recommend working with the siblings together. We have the experience that the children themselves, according to their age and their possibilities, actively co-create their relationship with their parents and respond to specific life events and changes in their own original way. We see that similarly older children who have experienced the same events eventually respond differently and have different needs both in their parent relationships and in the therapeutic or counseling process.

Our recommendation is therefore to work with each of the siblings separately. Books or works created by the work can later be shared by children, preferably in common consultation with you so that sharing remains safe for all children.

THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF ARCHIPELAGO

The Archipelago method has a structure that reflects how we think about the work with children in difficult life situations. During the work we gradually introduce to the child the whole issue (working

with cards), we offer them the opportunity to get into one of the characters of the story, to grasp their skills and advantages, to get to know their family, friends, resources (Choose Character and Safe Place), learn how to handle common life obstacles and difficulties (Winter and Thunderstorm) and gradually begin to work with feelings (Choose Character, Safe Place, Winter and Thunderstorm). Only then will we start exploring the difficult events and the feelings associated with them (After the Earthquake) and offer the child to use all the resources and reinforcements and skills acquired in the previous work to help themselves cope with an unusual and challenging life situation (New Archipelago). The next step is to build a new life perspective with each of the parents separately (With Mom and With Dad) and to promote deeper communication between the child and his or her surroundings (Message and Working with the Book). Part of working with the Archipelago includes working with parents and relationships throughout the family (educating the family, offering metaphors in order to comprehend the whole situation, etc.).

We certainly do not recommend jumping around the program. We understand that with different children you will work differently and likewise in different stages of the work, but do not jump around because the structure is important to keep your work safe and effective.

NUMBER OF SESSIONS – HOW LONG THE WORK TAKES

We cannot answer that exactly. It always depends on the child and the specific situation. We do not recommend working with the program without a previous contract with the parents and at least 1-2 meetings with the child (establishing trust, getting to know the child with you and your workplace, etc.).

Some older children will go through the program very quickly, even during 1-2 meetings, and we stop with them only on the themes and processes which are relevant.

When considering the amount of time to do the work, consider the following:

Within the framework of an introductory meeting, you work with the cards and get the child established in the program. Next, you work with selecting a character. You play, replay, test all the animals, talk about everything. You can also create the selected animal or at least color it on preprinted paper.

At the next meeting, focus on Safe Place and Winter and Thunderstorm. Name the resources and skills that help the animals. Then work with Earthquake and the two proceeding screens. When working with the scenes called After the Earthquake and New Archipelago, we recommend never separating them. Have them always in one meeting so that the child does not leave without completing the work with the New Archipelago stage.

At the third meeting, you can finish the program and print everything.

The following meetings can be devoted to the book - coloring, collage, adding things, binding, making a cover ..., it depends on the child and how much time you have and how much work you are doing.

It is a good idea for this work, if the situation allows and if the child agrees, to make a joint meeting with the parents or at least with each parent separately, where you will introduce the book to them. (see chapter Working with the book)

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF WORKING WITH THE PROGRAM

- Working with emotions (education, experiment, play, self-expression)
- Child resource mapping (self-support)
- Self-acceptance (and self-nourishing work)
- Working with stress response and child self-regulation process
- Working with shame and guilt
- Exploration of difficult events - interest in the child's view and experience
- Space for concluding some events and working with the emotions associated with it (sadness, anger)
- Naming the eventual losses and working again with emotions
- Working with the fantasy that parents will get back together
- Opportunity to experiment
- Concluding incomplete events
- Small opportunities for at least a fantasized correction of some events (explanation, excuse, discovering that it will get better, etc.)
- Regaining the feeling of control over certain situations in a child's life
- Mapping the support network of the relationships the child has
- Facilitating the communication of the child with the environment (parents, siblings and relatives, friends)

CARDS FOR THE INITIAL WORK WITH THE CHILD

Cards can be downloaded separately at www.games4therapy.com.

This is a set of eleven cards that you can print and laminate. We recommend color printing to A4 size, but it is entirely up to you.

This is one of the ways to get the work process started and to get the child into the project.

The cards help the child to realize what the whole thing is about.

If you are working with children or families where some of the following do not apply, change the instructions or completely omit the cards.

Recommended instructions for working with cards:

"Before we start working with the program I told you about, I want to show you something."

You take the first 6 cards:

"Here is the lioness mother and the lion father. Do you know which is which? "

"And here, you see they decided to live together. Do you understand that and do you know about that?"

"Here children were born …. Maybe boys, maybe girls … And they're family. "

(The child can be pulled into the dialogue in different ways depending on the situation.)

"Here the kids grew up. And now, as I can see, they started to separate a bit, what do you think? Do you see that too? Do you know that too? Are they already big kids and sometimes sleep over at a friend's place or maybe see things differently than their parents? "

"And here they've really started to live separately. One of them even found someone and now they live together. Do you see that? "

"And now, and this is important, have a look - it's important for everyone that they can still stay in touch. Maybe they go for a visit, call, wish happy birthday and so on. "

"If we were to mix the cards now. Could you sort them? "(Help the child if they need it, let them play with other sorts of possibilities and take a look at them.)

Then you will take the remaining five cards:

"And here's another family - Mommy Tigress, Daddy Tiger, and Two Tiger Kids."

"And something happened, we do not know exactly what, but the parents decided not to live together anymore. And it was when the children were small. "

"But here, just like the family before, it is also important for everyone to stay connected. To know what's going on in their lives, make phone calls, write, visit each other. Maybe some people more and some people less, but everyone a bit. Do you understand this? Do you want to ask something? "" Do you know someone who experienced this? "

At this stage of the work, do not force the child to talk about themselves unless they start by themselves. Talk about other children, other families, about the tiger family on cards, and so on.

You can end the work as follows:

"Well, now we were talking about two animal families. If you want, we can now / next time work with the Archipelago program, where, as you will see, there are even more of these types of families. "

WORKING WITH THE COMPUTER PROGRAM

After the initial work with the cards, we offer that the child can get to know other animals and their families and with the help of a computer program, create their story.
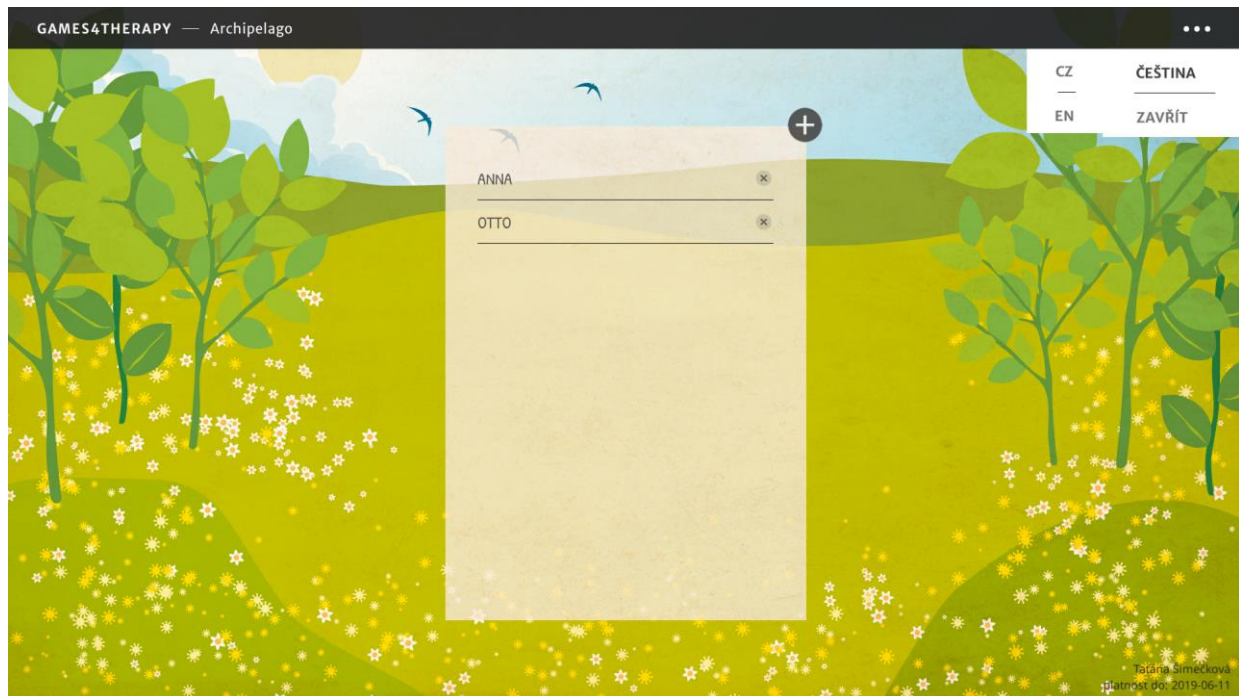
Languages

For English click on the three white dots icon ⬛ in the upper right corner and then click on ČEŠTINA. (See below.)
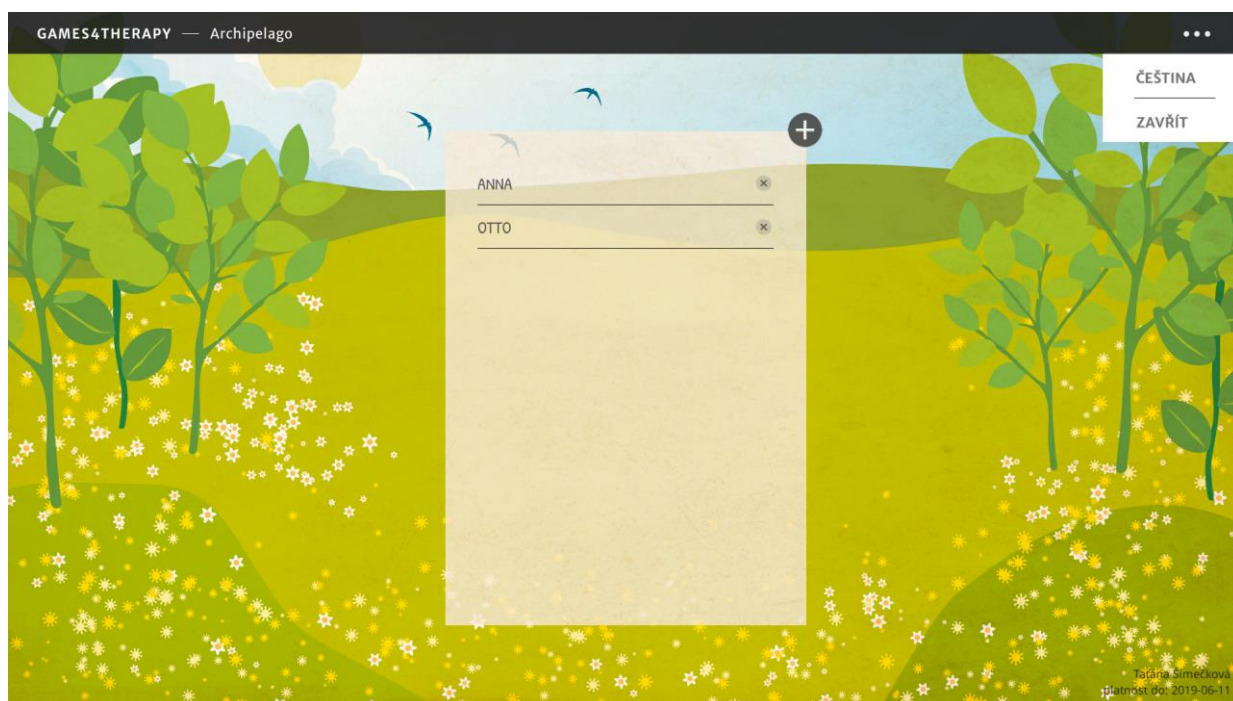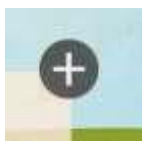
It will offer you either CZ or EN and you select the EN for English. (See below.)

Setting up an account for the child

To add a new profile, click the "+" symbol at the top right corner of the profile list.

Use the child's first name or nickname that they themselves choose for the account. Protect their personal information. Consider what data protection (computer, notebook, flash drive, etc.) you use, where you upload, where you print it, and so on.

Our company has no access to this data. Everything is stored only on your computer or notebook and the only administrator of this data is you.

Individual scenes of working with a child are stored in their individual account and can be returned to at any time. Everything can also be printed at any time.

After completing the work with the child, do not keep the accounts unnecessarily long. Every account can be easily deleted.

Icons and images important for program control

Main menu

This is a scene with the map and the individual stages of the work. We recommend following the structure and do not jump around in the program. However, depending on the child's needs and your work with him or her, it is possible to return to individual scenes. Click on the icon: ··· at the top right of the screen, which expands the inventory with offers for additional actions. Click on the pictures on the path to work with a partial scene.

Print

In the main menu when you click on [···] you can always either leave the program (Close) or print the scenes you created (Print Out).

This allows you to quickly print the created scenes. Scenes can also be printed directly from the directory on your computer in the Print folder.
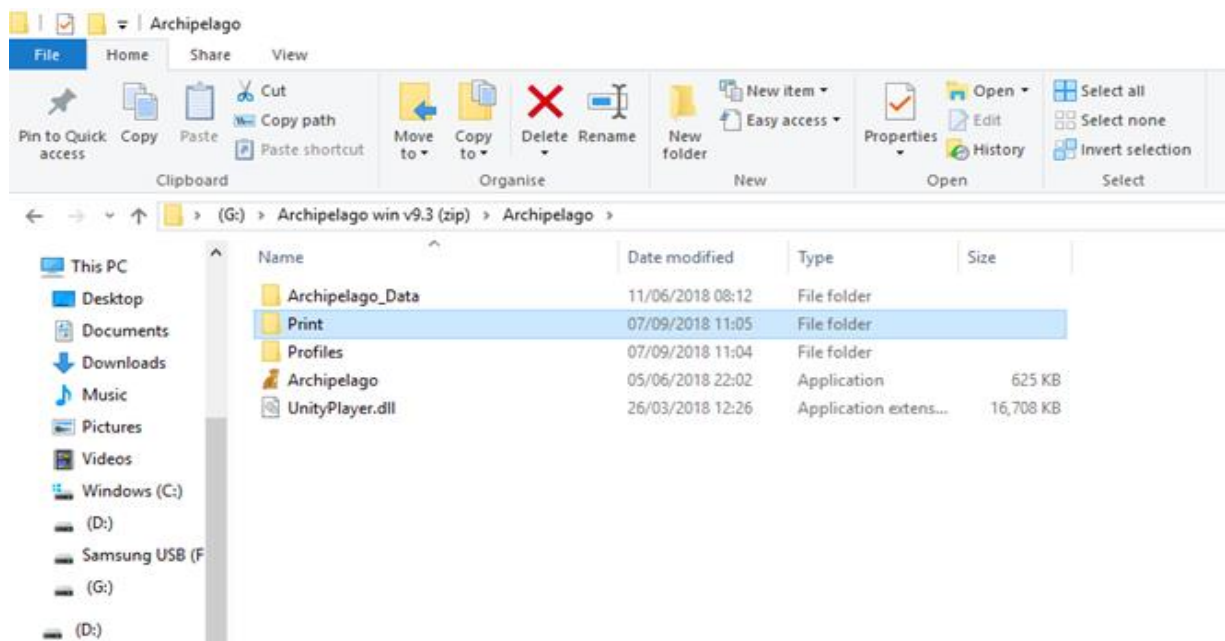
In Profiles (as you can see the folder above), you can also easily erase / delete profiles if you do not want to work with them anymore.

You can always print either single scenes or just selected scenes or all scenes at once.

Door

This icon enables you to leave the individual scenes and go back to the main menu. When you work with emotions this icon enables you to go back to the individual scene you worked with before.

Owl

It first appears when choosing a character. The owl is the program guide. The owl has a male voice to offer a male guide for the children, because there are generally more women working with children in this profession. The owl does not serve as a substitute for you. You also give all the instructions personally to the child.

Emotions

This icon is accessible from any scene other than the main menu. It allows you to work with emotions.

The screen is saved whenever you work with it. It saves the last changes you make on it before leaving the scene.

Several images with different emotions will appear in the final print, and it is worthwhile to make small notes during your work, so you know what scene the emotion picture belongs to.

Save After the Earthquake screen icon

This icon saves the After the Earthquake scene into the following New Archipelago scene. This is to make it possible for the child to repair the original After the Earthquake scene in the New Archipelago.

It's the only place where you need to think about saving a scene. If you forget to save the scene before leaving it, it will not be lost, you can always go back to it, but it will not record to the following New Archipelago scene. If you forget to save the scene, you can easily fix it.

Who controls the program?

The guide throughout the entire program is clearly a therapist or counselor. Although in the program the Owl plays a guiding role for children with its voice and instructions, it is better when the child hears the instruction also from you. Be the one who decides whether to continue on with the program and do not be afraid to become the program controller at any time.

Be the one who presents the individual scenes and shows what can be done in them. If the child is fast or impatient, do not let them control the mouse and the screen. Be the one who controls everything and let the child navigate exactly where to go. Always make sure you do it right, whether it should be here and like so or otherwise .... Ask a lot of questions. Slow down the process and give the child the opportunity to better map the field / screen, identify their own impulses and needs, and implement actions with greater awareness. The whole work process can at any time become figural - the main topic you are talking about, you are describing and exploring.

When working with calmer type children, you can leave the larger part of control up to them.

Some children need support when working with different parts of the screen or options.

MAP WITH INDIVIDUAL STAGES OF WORK

A child's voice introduces the computer program and says, **"This is a program about animals who may share similar experiences to you. Let´s meet them. "**

At this point, we only explain to the child that the screen is the way we enter the program. A child from the beginning of the job whenever you return to the main menu, sees the beginning and the end of the journey that they will be joining with you in the program.

The work begins by selecting the character at the bottom left and continuing up to the horizon and the sun.

It's another metaphor you can use - the way. It is up to you and your child's perspective if and how you use this metaphor. Generally speaking, for creating the story, the motive of the journey is important because it makes it possible to express a certain development or shift, expressing the fact that the shift did not occur immediately, that it had its phases and stops, that it required some effort, and so on.

WORKING WITH REACTIONS TO STRESS - selecting a character

Theoretical basis

The process of divorce or parental separation often becomes unintelligible to the child as the events are full of emotions and losses and children often can´t or are unable to share what they think and feel. The child is trying to adapt to the months and sometimes years of change and chooses the coping strategies that sometimes persist long after they are no longer adaptive. Such originally good and creative solutions can then gradually prevent a child from naturally and spontaneously contacting his or her surroundings, prevent the child from growing, inhibit their creativity, and harness their energy to the past or imagination (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 2004; Oaklander, 2003 Philippson, 2012).

Inspired by the different approaches in working with childhood trauma (Levine and Kline, 2007; Siegel and Bryson, 2015; Tempe and Hughes, 2008), we have chosen three of the many responses to stress, which seem to be a foundational background in the human neural system. Each reaction forms an involuntary triggered emotional and behavioral complex. They all have models in animal behavior. When we use animals as the bearer of reactions, we remain comprehensible to the child. It is clear to us that in many ways the choice of these three responses is limited and inadequate. Perhaps the child you work with would be better identified with another animal. We had technical limitations and only three options were available. If it turns out to be important, and for additional work stimulating, you can create another story with the child, which is inspired by Archipelago, and use a completely different animal. It depends on you and the child's creativity.

The animals we chose are bearers of the reactions: fight – flight/escape - freeze.

Each animal is the bearer of one of them. The reaction itself brings advantages and disadvantages. Each animal reacts with its reaction when you click on it. When you do not click on it, it stays calm. The one who controls the computer controls an animal. The animal has the opportunity to repeat the reaction at any time throughout the work process and in the other scenes (it remains its skill). Each animal can also be imagined through the poem we wrote about it. The poem invites you to play with the child, to work with the body and also educate. It describes the skill of the animal, its advantages and disadvantages as well as the circumstances or skills that allow the reaction to stop.

It is your job and competence to work with externalization or to do imaginary and projective work. We offer just a bit of inspiration:

The tiger represents the Fight. Its actions are fast, often regardless of its surroundings or even its own needs. To a reasonable extent and in a normal situation, the reactions are healthy and strong. It needs strong muscles. The tiger can be challenging for his surroundings, but it does not have to suffer unless its surroundings do not understand it or reject it.

The hare represents flight/escape. It can act for a long time as if nothing is happening. But it is alert and whenever tensions appear, it runs away. To a reasonable extent and in a normal situation, it is also a healthy and strong reaction. Therefore, it needs strong legs and enjoys the fastest way possible. Its actions and contacts with others, however, may lack energy which was used up while running. It probably does not make any great demands on anyone, but it may feel misunderstood.

The hedgehog represents Freezing. It stops in a threatening situation and curls up its body into a ball. It does not hesitate, it does not care, it remains fragile and passive, its reaction is developmentally older, more common in younger children. It has fewer opportunities to cope with stress. However, it is not entirely passive. It can curl itself up and it can need help finding circumstances where it can uncurl itself from the ball. It's good to talk about how it knows when it is safe, where it feels safe, and to play around with curling and uncurling into a ball, and possibly relaxing.

From the perspective of Gestalt therapy, these reactions can be understood according to the situation and context as a creative adaptive solution or vice versa as a disruption of the natural process by which the child adapts to the environment and in contact with others. The aim of the method is not to

eliminate these reactions. When working with them it is important for us to explore (description, interest, playing, experimentation with different roles and also with different intensity and form of individual reactions), and it is important for the child to realize his or her reactions and to gain more control over them. This is in order to be able to choose whether or not to react. And we aim for greater regulation of the child's behavior in order to determine the extent of his or her reaction.

Instructions

"Each animal is special. Choose one of them."

The child is instructed that every animal knows something. He or she is encouraged to get acquainted with them and instructed that they will need to choose one of them and create another story about it. From the introductory screen, the child already knows that the animals have experienced something similar to them.

Help the child look at the animals, test their reactions, play with them on their own or with the puppets, and listen to the poem.

Together with the child, you can also look for what other animals are close to his or her reactions. This can open up room for more detailed work with the child's internal processes. You may ask yourself: "When do you act like a tiger?" Or: "In what situation is your reaction like the hare?", and so on. During the next work sessions regarding the possible adaptation of the presented contents and processes and their integration, it is possible to start to sensitively explore the reactions of the child related to the divorce situation.

Next to the animal are its parents - mommy and daddy. They are just there to be looked at and are prepared for the proceeding work.

The whole stimulus situation can also work only as projective (externalizing) work. In other words, you can consistently talk only about animals and not ask the child directly, if they do not come to that themselves. But if it is at least possible, we also recommend offering the possibility of appropriation of projection and identification with it. You may ask, for example, "Do you know this too?" "Have you ever experienced it?" Or "Do you ever behave like that?" Or "Has this already happened to you?" If the child answers "yes", you can show interest and continue. Pay attention to what helped the child in the situation, how they got out of it when the reaction ended. For a description of the behavior, you can use words that are offered in comparison to animals and which are offered, for example, in poems. If you identify a child with a reaction, always confirm that it may be that this reaction is not wrong in and of itself. However, it is important for the child to be able to react and eventually stop or regulate or adopt a larger repertoire of responses. For further inspiration in working with externalizing, for example (White and Morgan, 2006), or project identification work with children (Oaklander, 2003) and the use of poems and inspiration from the animal world for working with childhood trauma (Levine and Kline, 2012).

We recommend not to force children into re-owning or appropriation of their own projections and identifying with them. It is good to offer, to be interested in it, but not unnecessarily urgent. If the

child does not spontaneously connect the story of the animal with their story, you should respect that. Externalization or projection is natural in childhood. The work should remain safer, smoother, more playful. With more children's imagination and creativity, the child will be relieved to benefit from the distance they gain from their own problems by exposing them. It will give you a lot of material about your own resources, ways to solve things, teach you as a professional what they really need from you. (White and Morgan, 2006). However, if it is important for you and your work, that the children talk about themselves, then in such a case it is possible, for example, after the story is finished and the book can be made as follows: "Well, now I know a lot about the bunny Sam. I learned that its parents separated, and it .... You know, but I'd love to know more about you and what it was like for you when your parents separated. Perhaps it was similar for you as for the bunny, maybe different. Do you think we could ever talk about it or paint it or make it somehow?" We think sometimes that the child is actually just forming a story of an animal together and talking about it to talk about things that until then they were not used to speaking about. The child learns words (e.g. emotions), learns the narrative structure (the main hero, the characteristics, their surroundings and their friends, their resources, their abilities to handle the problems, their own story plot and solution, the outline of the future ...) how and if you listen to them, whether you let them tell you in their own words, whether they can afford to experiment, look and do not know, check how you can rewrite the animals to their parents. Perhaps the child needs it all before they dare to say that something of what has been experienced by an animal has been experienced by themselves as well.

The older the child, the more secure they feel in the situation, and the more secure they are, the better their own projected content is and the ability to work with it. Otherwise, if it is important for you and your approach not to remain only with externalizing, the child will need more help and support to prove it.

Working with the selection of a character does not necessarily relate to the divorce situation at all. It is not needed. Many children, however, in this part of their work begin to describe their own reactions to family events.

Some children cannot decide which animal to choose. To continue this work, you only need to select one, but others may be their friend and accompany the program. Or the child can create two to three different stories with two to three different animals. We recommend to first complete one (slowly and gradually elaborate it) and then eventually do the next one (even in one session). To work with another animal figure, start from the beginning when creating a new profile. This ensures that you have the previous work with the first selected character available.

If a child thinks during the program that they want another animal, it can be done at any time by returning to the original character selection. The animal then changes along with the parents in all scenes, even those you've already worked on.

The need to change something, modify it or just try it "another way" is completely natural and should not be feared. The program allows it.

In the process of choosing the animal, ask for its name (let the child name it) and also be sure to touch on its characteristics. You may be surprised at what skills and qualities your child will think of for their

animal. Certainly, do not avoid different special skills, magic or superpowers. Make note of everything you work with. Any skills and super-skills can also be symbolically expressed while working with the book of animals in the various scenes. Some children make up the animals and add more details with the help of various guides and helpers. There is room at this point for an interesting and stimulating therapeutic interview. Keep in mind that in this introductory work you basically create the child's identification with the animal, its emotional interconnection, and the fine tuning of it. This is essential for the following work steps in the program. Do not rush things.

For many kids, at this stage, you can also use the language and principles they actually know about through computer games if they play them. The characters they choose have their attributes, their weapons, or their protective items, their weaknesses and their strengths.

You can easily make animals with children from a piece of cloth or a towel. Making it does not take more than 5-10 minutes, the materials are not expensive, and we offer instructions on www.games4therapy.com. Children have fun making the animals and like to take them home. Once again, their identification with the animal is enhanced and it is easier to consolidate and further develop the language of externalizing. With each particular animal it is better to create its own story ...

Poems

Tiger

Tiger, tiger in the bush
Angered by [a noisy] someone
who would not shush.

Tiger, tiger waking up,
stretching out.
Every muscle, every nerve
ready –
Its whole body steady.

Its chest expands, it takes
breath in,
the tiger roars loud and
grim.
Roar after roar, eardrums
pop,
all who listen just wish it'd
stop.

You too are like the tiger,
a master of this fearful
anger,
you clench and bare your
wild teeth

at those who dare give you
trouble.
Every muscle, every nerve
ready.
Your whole body steady.

Rabbit

Clever rabbit sits
and eats the grass.
It watches and listens.

It uses it´s wits
when it´s forest home
shares its secret knowledge.

Ever careful, always
aware of everything.
It will jump up

like a spring,
and run from anything
that upsets it.

It can turn in a hop,
zig and zag to the stream,
The fastest runner in the
woods

It leaves its fear above
ground,
and takes shelter in its
burrow.
But, you also know how to
run,

jump, dash, and loop.
Your body listens to you
while your heart races away.

You flee along the meadow
passing through the field.
You escape in a flash
beyond the horizon.

Hedgehog

Little hedgehog is a friend
who plays well. It scurries
around the garden and
sleeps
in a house of sticks and
leaves.

It doesn't run, it doesn't
fight.
If frightened, it wraps itself
up.
Protected, hidden in its
spines,
it waits until the danger's
gone.

If a fox approaches, it does
so with care, avoiding the
hedgehog's
sharp pointed quills.
Because
of its protective coat

it never needs to hurry.
When it's ready, without
worry,
it rolls out of its spiky ball,
to stretch and shake in the
warm sun.

When you are ready and
sure,
You too let your guard
down.
You roll out of your
protective shell
and relax in the warmth that
surrounds you.

EMOTIONS

This icon is to enter the screen where you can work with emotions. The icon is available for each scene except the start menu and the Earthquake.
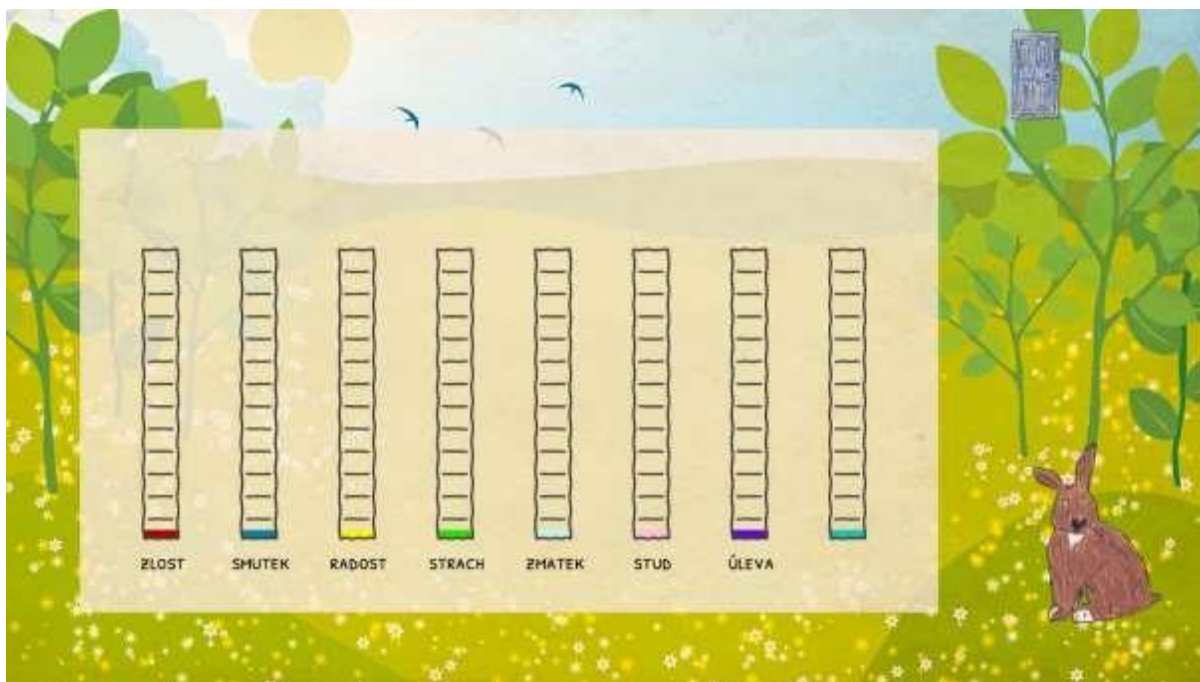
Working with emotions is, as we suppose, part of any counseling or therapeutic work with children. The fact that children tend to be confused about the parental divorce or separation, that they have a great variety of mixed and often ambivalent feelings they do not know about, are referred to in multiple sources (Berger, Gravillon, 2011, Smith 1999, Teyber 2006, Ricci 2017, Lowenstein, 2013, Levine and Kline, 2012). We also have such experience and therefore we offer a sub-program within the Archipelago program, which is dedicated to emotions. Our goal is once again as playful education, and above all experiment, experience, self-expression and sharing.

This software is just one of the many tools for working with emotions. In the Archipelago program, you work with emotions in a way so that you set the level of emotions on imaginary scales. The maximum degree is then accompanied by a short animation and sound. Sounds alternate from the sound of natural elements through human voice or the clinking together of glasses. The variety of sounds encourages you to find other options for expressing your emotion through sound or through a musical instrument.
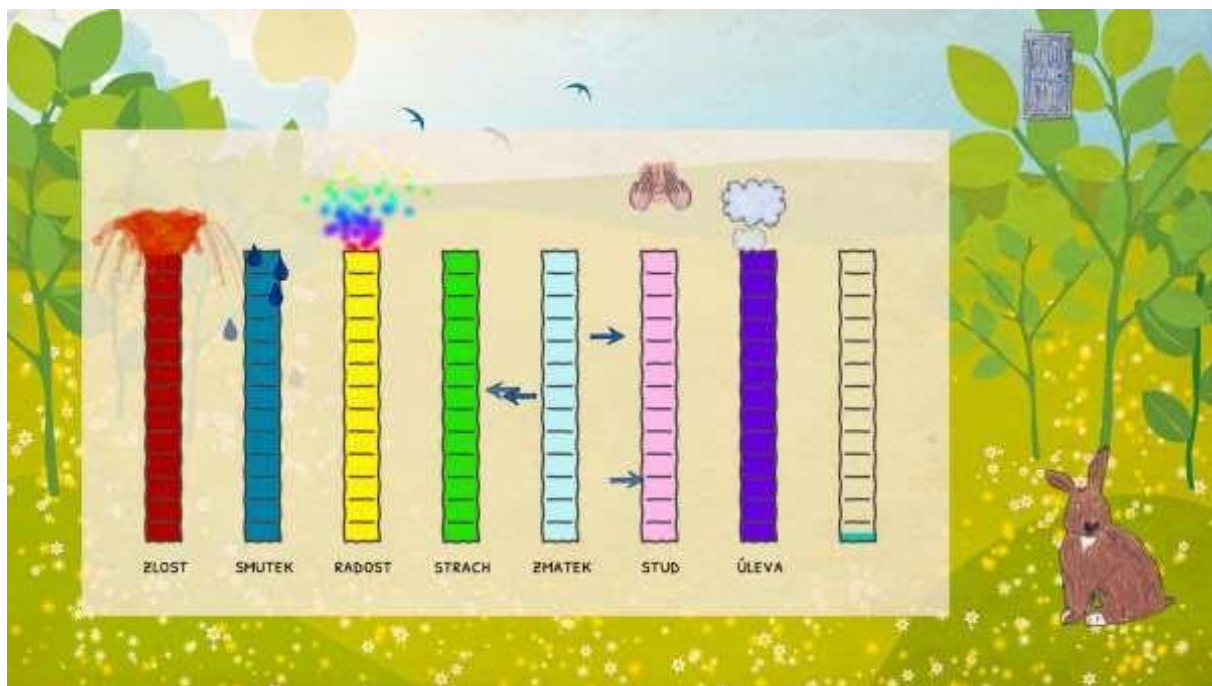
The screen is saved whenever you work with it. It saves the last changes you make on it before leaving the scene.

Several images with different emotions will appear in the final print, and it is worthwhile to make small notes during your work so you know what scene the emotion picture belongs to.

Working with emotions is recommended when choosing an animal. The icon also appears for the first time, and it is likely that some children will ask about it. At this point, make them familiar with the work, explain everything to them. The aim of the work is probably also a complete education about emotions. Let the child play in the program with all the animations of emotions, explain to them that no emotion is "good" or "bad", and ask about their experiences. Again, if necessary, play around with any emotions, etc. Ask very specifically about situations where the child feels emotion. You will learn a lot about their ability to identify emotions.

There is emotion without designation - explain to the child that the program makers may have forgotten some emotions. Ask a child how he or she still sometimes feels. Offer them the ability to set the level of that feeling, and when they choose to print it all, make note of this. The child can also give this special emotion a name.

If you work with this sub-program, for example at the end of the first meeting over the Archipelago, you can print this scene straight away, the child then colors it and takes it home. There is the chosen animal in this scene too, so the child also gets a picture of the animal to take home, including information that the animal has a lot of different feelings. The image may or may not be part of the book later.

Working with emotions is crucial, especially in the <u>After the Earthquake</u> scene. However, it is up to you how often and when to work with emotions.

As a further inspiration for working with emotions, we recommend choosing a color, symbol or an object you use for working in a sandbox, etc. We recommend that you show interest in where the child feels the feeling, what happens to their body when they experience the emotion (for inspiration we recommend: Oaklander, 2003). You can also invite the child to paint the feeling, and the printed Archipelago book can also serve for this purpose. It is important to look together and to find the right word for the feeling the child will understand, and they will also know that you understand them. Emotion naming itself helps to integrate experiences as the child gets a tool for communicating with the environment. Describing and understanding the content of what I experience is also helpful in self-regulation (Carroll, 2017; Oaklander, 2003). Children need to know that we understand what they are experiencing and that it is all right that they have these feelings. Do not be afraid to educate the child, familiarize them with a whole range of feelings, explain their content. This may be helpful, for example, in searching for the opposite feeling, or mapping what the child needs to feel emotion or eventually stop the feeling.

SAFE PLACE - WORKING WITH SELF-SUPPORT AND SELF-NOURISHMENT

Theoretical basis

At the beginning of working with a child, but also later in the process, we put emphasis on supporting self-functions. We perceive the self in accordance with Gestalt therapy, which is more of a function than a state. The self develops in contact with others, and the experience created thus forms the basis of our self-concept. Family breakdown often causes self-weakening. Knowing your strengths, resources, and your own ways to take care of yourself are some of the cornerstones of all our contacts with our surroundings (Mackewn 2009; Joyce and Sills, 2011).

When children work with Archipelago, thanks to externalizing and some variations on the imagination of a safe place, according to our experience, they are able to discover the principle of taking care of one's self / animal. Through continued work with the program, children tend to apply this principle further and come to the things that they did not come up with until they were often stuck in the perspective of their parents´ experiencing. That is why children usually do not manage to identify their own needs in this stressful family situation, let alone try to meet these needs. When working with the story and the process of caring for an animal, children can oftentimes see and understand things clearly and suddenly. Together with the child, we create a sense of security here for the animal and name its resources. Good and adequate care is important for creating healthy self-esteem and for working with feelings of guilt and shame (Yontef 2009; Caroll, 2017).

In working with the child, we try to create the strongest feeling of stability. That's why screens with an animal were created and therefore, even when working with the earthquake metaphor, the animal always stays in its fixed place, on a solid bank! Everyone around the animals can move, change their positions, shift around. But the animal stays and nobody moves with it. By the way, this is an experience that is in contrast to what children normally experience in parental divorce or separation.

To create a Safe place stage, we were inspired by variations in the imagery of the safe place and working with them (for example, Lynn Stadler - workshop Karlovy Vary 2016).

Instructions

"Please ensure your animal is safe and comfortable."

Clicking on the icon [...] again makes it easy to expand the inventory with the offer:

From the offer, the child can choose what animal to pick. Other animals or items from the menu can be moved on the screen with the mouse. They can be further moved and placed as needed. You can also remove them by moving them to the right edge of the screen. You can also roll down the expanded inventory menu by clicking on three dots and view and edit the image without this menu, which is also how it will be printed later.

At this stage of work, we encourage the child to create a good and safe place for the animal so that it has everything it needs. If necessary, talk to the child about what the concept of safety means. We can learn a lot about the animal as well as about the child. Gradually, thanks to working with the program, we legitimize different ways of taking care of an animal and that the child can do it themselves. The child also further enhances identification with the animal. Because all the tigers, hares or hedgehogs are not the same and everyone has their own special needs. Take an active interest and do not forget that the animal expert is the child.

WORKING WITH FEELINGS OF GUILT

WINTER

RAINSTORM
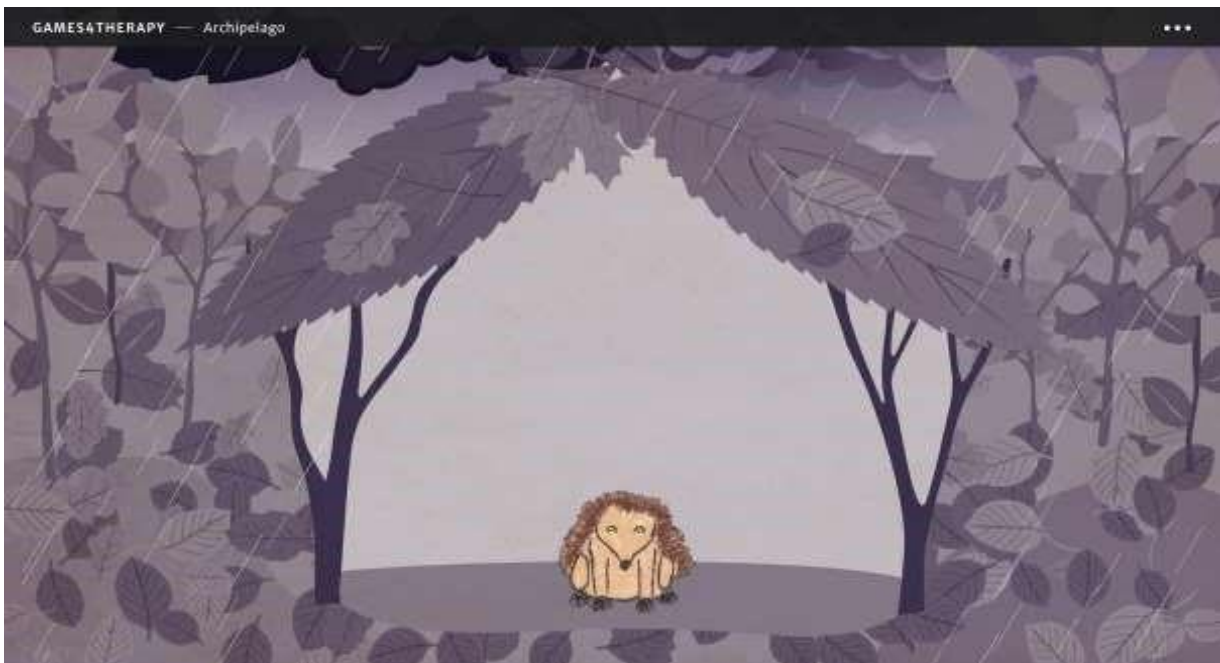
Theoretical basis

When creating the Winter and Rainstorm stages, we drew inspiration from David Denborough's Collective Narrative Practice. We were inspired mainly by the feelings of guilt in The Tree of Life methodology (Denborough, 2008).

Children's thinking is magical and self-centered in pre-school and often even in primary school ages. Also difficult life situations may contribute to self-centered thinking, low self-esteem, depressive mood and self-accusation. Therefore, children may think that the parents´ divorce is their fault because of their behavior. There are several reasons why. To a certain age, the child barely identifies the feelings, thoughts, and decisions of others. Gradually he or she begins to realize that people around him can think and experience events in their own way, different from what the child thinks and experiences. Fantasies also arise that children can reconnect their parents by wishing for it or with their behavior or prevent family breakdown. Conviction of great power prevents them from accepting reality and starting to build a new future. The reasoning is that when I have caused divorce, I can also arrange for parents to come back to themselves. And if I cannot do it, it's my fault. The process of dealing with accusations is so closely related to fantasies about family reunification (Lansky 2009; Lowenstein 2013; Teyber 2006).

A denial mechanism can also play a role, as one of the first stages of sorrow over family loss (the child refuses to accept the painful reality and disconnects from their experience). There is a split - the mind holds two shapes - one is reality, the parents are no longer together, the other is a fantasy of reconciliation and return to which the child spends great energy, which is missing in their current experience and contact with their surrounding (Levine and Kline, 2012, Teyber 2006, Berger and Gravillon 2011).

It is therefore important to respond to the child's understanding that we perceive their perception and experience, but we also offer them a different view of events and attitudes aided by the animal story. We communicate with the child directly, basically we assume that they themselves and their animal can handle various common obstacles, difficulties and complications. We are interested in how they do it, what helps them. We ask repeatedly about the blame of the animal for the events in its surroundings and we support a realistic answer, not that an animal be the reason for a storm or cold weather. Later, we speak in the same open and natural way as to whether an animal did or did not cause her parents´ separation. And we can easily say: "No, it is not the animal's fault."

In a normal conversation with a child, the subject is difficult to grasp, the child is often not fully aware of the feelings of guilt, has no insight into it, does not perceive the content of the word as well as adults. The common rational assurance "It's not your fault." often does not work because the child does not really understand what the adult is talking about. Archipelago, thanks to a clear metaphor, offers a safe space for an interview about what the fault is and what it is not. And because it is without conflict and safe, we open the door to guilt for various events in the animal's life. If necessary, we briefly talk about it with the child, we are asking for a clear understanding. What is important is the emotional experience itself, as well as the progressive cycle work, proceeding from a clear, concrete statement that the animal cannot be responsible for weather, until the recognition that the animal

(and with it also the child) cannot be blamed for his or her parents' divorce. At this stage of the work, we also recommend emphasizing the non-verbal level of communication with the child (head nods, prominent mimics, eye contact, etc.).

Children also benefit from the possibility of talking directly to their parents about whether or not the animal can/cannot be blamed for the divorce. While well-oriented and therapist-ready parents (see Chapter Working with the Book and Working with Parents) confirm that not only an animal but a child can not be blamed for the divorce, it can be crucial for a child to relieve feelings of guilt.

Working with feelings of guilt offers questions about feelings of shame. Sometimes it is not easy to distinguish whether the child feels guilty about the separation of their parents or whether they are ashamed of the events. In this respect, we refer to other literature (Yontef, 2009; Tempe and Hughes, 2008). This distinction is one of the basic competencies of child therapists and counselors. Children can often experience both guilt and shame. Shame is an emotion you and the child can work with at any time by clicking the Emotion icon.

Instructions

The child is instructed to take care of the animal in situations when it's cold or in a rainstorm:

"It's cold outside. Please ensure your animal is safe and comfortable. Is it your animal´s fault that it´s cold outside?"

And in the next scene:

"Now it seems to be raining. Please ensure your animal is safe and comfortable. Is it your animal´s fault that it´s raining?"

At this stage of the work, the child knows how to take care of the animal. In addition, we add working with the feelings of guilt. We encourage the child to create a safe scene where they are trying to meet the needs of their animal. Again, we are interested in whether everything we offer is what the animal needs, **we offer the possibility to paint anything and stick it to the printed book, or add stickers there, everything is carefully recorded.**

When responding to feelings of guilt, we actively respond to the child and verbally emphasize the fact that the animal does not, of course, blame the weather for change. In this part of the work we are preparing primarily for the question which the child receives later when working with the New Archipelago stage.

EARTHQUAKE

This scene is mainly an animation. Your task is to watch the animation with the child. You can comment on the scene for example with the words:

"An earthquake had separated the parents. Many things changed. Let's have a look at what happened next. "

The animation for children is not pleasant and they watch it with some tension. Here it is worth remaining in the language of the narrative story "about" the animal. If you need to stop the animation, you can do this by clicking (click again to continue with the animation). Then you can with the child describe what happened in the picture. Who is there, what has changed, etc. We do not recommend asking about the child's own story at this point ("Do you know this as well?" Or "Did you experience this?"). You will have this opportunity later. In the next steps, your goal will be to allow the child to play, experiment, take care of the animal, etc.

Nonprofessionals, but often experts as well, sometimes have concerns and reluctance to return with the children to the difficult events they have experienced. They are afraid to remind them of their conversation or therapy, fearing their emotional reactions or retraumatizing them. That's why we see the children therapeutically and mentally untreated. The past is not discussed with them ("something" is not recalled), the connection with possible current symptoms is not made, many topics are tabooed. It is usually done with the good intention of "protecting" the child. It is often forgotten that memories and emotions can be (and most often are) triggered by stimuli other than psychotherapy (film, similar events in the surroundings, etc.). But the experience of therapists and professional references suggest that children suffer from tabooing and secrecy as well as adults or even more (Siegel 2015; Hughes, 2008). What is not talked about doesn´t disappear and very likely it still exists. Children feel many things or it is directly reflected in their behavior. Due to the fact that the topic is avoided by adults with the child, they are missing words to describe their experiences/feelings. Due to missing narratives sometimes they do not understand the causes and the context of their difficulties.

If you feel you want to alleviate the effect of the animation on the child, you can mute the sound or shut down the sound completely. Each animal also still has its own special skills or super-powers or let´s say coping strategies when you click on it.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE – EXPLORING DIFFICULT EVENTS

Theoretical basis

In line with literature and our own experience, we would like to emphasize that not every return to difficult past events is healing. We expect that such work needs a clear structure, slow pace, cyclical returns to individual themes. We believe that the work in externalization or projection itself is safer as the child doesn´t have to speak about themselves. We offer mapping of resources and skills before we start to talk about difficult events, we also offer working with emotions (mapping, naming, identifying, regulation, playing with them). All this gives the child the possibility of creating a safe and healing distance from difficult past situations. We believe that the Archipelago program takes most of these basic rules into account. The After the Earthquake part follows the animation of the earthquake and maps the situation "at that time". In the next phase of the program we explore how it is "now" and, of course, how it "will be" further down the line.

Please note that it is very important that the animal stays on a fixed shore in this scene and is not part of the movement and sometimes ongoing battles on the screen. Together with the child we explore this phase of family breakdown.

In this part of the work, the child may need your support and interest. In our experience children tend to be less creative and productive in this scene. Take advantage of the description and show interest in "how it was" (phenomenological approach). We also recommend making more use of externalizing, offering the Archipelago metaphor to the child and asking for the feelings and experiences of the animal and its parents.

We work basically with a loss, the child in this part of the work re-introduces feelings of loss of safety and disruption of family functioning. We have the experience that children talk about loneliness, uncertainty, anger, confusion, fear, and a whole range of incomprehensible and often ambivalent emotions. Working with emotions at this point is crucial from our point of view. We help the child to connect to the experience of the animal, and so to his or her implicit (and therefore difficult to describe) feelings and memories. We ask, "How was the animal there?"

Some children, at this stage of their work, also refer to what it was like between parents before family breakdown (e.g., long and conflicting pre-divorce situations). Sometimes the child also talks about the relief that took place when the parents moved away. We have the experience that children gradually release and start to talk while working with the scene, even through active manipulation of objects and the scene. Encourage the child to get in touch with their feelings of helplessness and loss of control. These potentially traumatic experiences need to be verbalized. These powerful experiences without processing persist, do not disappear. We place an emphasis on understanding past events, trying to discover their meaning together with the child, and create a story that is communicable. Although it is "only" about the story of his or her chosen animal hero. (Levine and Kline, 2012; Siegel, 2013; Rothschild, 2015).

Instructions

The instruction is:

"An earthquake has separated the parents. How did that feel?"

We help the child to create a scene after the break-up of the family. We focus on the description of the situation and work with emotions. At this point, it is advisable to use the Emotion icon and work with a stage devoted directly to them.

Let the child play, experiment, try anything else.

If you notice that a child tends to fix spontaneously created events and the scene, try pausing, do not rush them, give them enough support to deepen the awareness and describe the events at that time. The child's tendency to describe and "repair" things is important. And at the same time, you can assure the child that if they need it, the owl will prepare the next scene for them, where they can use all their ideas to fix the situation.

In this scene, the child may need your help to discover and take advantage of all the options offered. You can show them how the individual objects move, what sounds they make. Show the child that you can move the islands, look for the distance between the islands. In our experience some children in this scene repeatedly look for a way to reunite the islands.

This icon saves the created After the Earthquake scene into the next scene of the New Archipelago. This is to make it possible for the child to adjust or repair the original After the Earthquake scene in the New Archipelago.

This is the only place where you need to think about saving a scene. If you forget to save the scene before leaving it, however, it will not be lost. You can always go back to it, but it will not record in the next scene of the New Archipelago. So, if you forget to save the scene, you can easily fix it.

NEW ARCHIPELAGO - OPPORTUNITY TO MODIFY EVENTS

The image that appears is the exact copy of the image you created with the child when working with the After the Earthquake scene. So, make sure you save the scene after the earthquake (see above).

If you've forgotten to save the After the Earthquake scene, nothing terrible has happened. It will not get lost, you can go back and save it. So, if you forget the save scene, you can easily fix it.

The instructions here are as follows:

"Please ensure your animal is safe and comfortable. Is it your animal´s fault that the parents separated?"

The child at this stage of the work is then given instructions again to take care of the animal. Plus, the question about its fault. The scene is at the beginning the exact copy of the created After the Earthquake screen and the child has the option to modify it or as it might be said *to repair* it.

Modifications are variable, again, except for the possibility of the parents returning to each other.

The child thus gains a unique opportunity, with a certain distance, experiment, playfulness and creativity, to see themselves again in the Mommy-Daddy-Me triad, and to organize it as he or she needs. Your task will mainly be to support the child (just to play, explore different options, etc.).

In our experience children are initially focused primarily on parents. Seeking distance between themselves and them and between them, placing bridges and rocks and cannons and guarding attorneys and partners, etc. It is good if they comment on your work on the screen, if not, ask for it. But as far as parents are concerned (on screen), children often forget to take care of the animal as well. If that happens, you are sure to praise them for taking care of their parents but remind them that even the owl gave them instructions to take care of the animal to make it feel good and safe. Children will remember how to take care of the animal from the previous work (safe place, rain, cold weather).

This is the space to find out who else is in the vicinity of the animal / child and is available (other islands), who the animal / child still has and needs to help feel good (siblings, friends), what he or she enjoys, what resources they have ... Do not forget to suggest that the child can later draw whatever else or whoever else into the book.

This work again contributes to the completion of the events around the divorce. A child who arranges the screen as they need and manages to share with you, begins to gradually conclude the issues of the parents' separation (past) and defines his or her own current needs in the given situation and in the future (present and future). For example, Zinker (2004) says that Gestalt therapy is permission to be creative as it uses crative therapeutical experiments which can go to the core of resistance, transforming rigidity into the flexible support system of the client. The experiment as he sees it does not have to be demanding, serious, or even may not exactly match, it can be theatrical, cheerful, crazy, transcendental, metaphysical or even humorous.

For professionals, it is extremely stimulating and instructive to see what all kids need to do on the screen in order to stop taking care of their parents and start taking care of the animal!

While the After the Earthquake phase is emotionally demanding, the new archipelago stage makes children more relaxed, more creative, taking more control over the screen. They move further along.

In the After the Earthquake and the New Archipelago scenes, there is also an opportunity for the child to see the triad of me and Mom, me and Dad, Mom and Dad, because that's exactly what the child loses after the divorce. The child loses the opportunity to experience themselves with their mother and father. The loss of this triad is a significant loss from a psychological point of view because it is in this triad that the child develops and shapes its sexual identity, its goals and ambitions, its basic relationship framework. The Archipelago program offers to again create, talk and think about it, experience it, save it, and print it as part of a book the child takes home.

To work with out of blame, read the Chapter on Working with Guilt.

WORKING WITH THE FANTASY THAT THE PARENTS WILL GET BACK TOGETHER

In our experience, we know that many children, even years after their parents' divorce, still have different fantasies that their parents will get back together. Similar references also appear in most available literature. More or less a certain desire to simply return to the old and original parental relationship is common for many children and is understandable (Berger and Gravillon, 2011).

Adults sometimes mistakenly believe that such a desire will not be present in children who have experienced parents quarrel. But it is not the case. The illusion that the return to the original state of affairs is still possible and protects them for a certain time from feelings of sadness or fear, but at the same time it prevents the child from actually coming to terms with the breakup of the parents and starting to move on in life.

The older they are, the longer the divorce or the breakup of their parents have passed, the less intense these fantasies are. Children, for example, hide parental photos of their parents or just imagine through daydreaming what it would be like if they were all together. Mostly, they have a clear rational correction in the sense that their parents are not getting back together. Such a correction is useful, but it also often prevents the child from confiding with his fantasies. They are ashamed of them just because they are irrational. As part of working with the Archipelago program, children open up and confess how they have tried to get their parents back together or how they have dreamed of it. The professional here has no other task than to listen to the child, to assure them that their fantasies and wishes are understandable and share with them the emotions that are related to the fact that the return of the parents is no longer possible (sadness, anger, fear, shame ...).

Smaller children and children shortly after divorce or parental separation, have such fantasies much stronger. They do not even know how to talk about them. For straightforward questions, they often answer the learned phrase that "Parents will not get back together", but they experience it differently. Even their feelings about losing the parent couple, or the imagination that parents return to each other, are confusing. In the Archipelago program these children often struggle as they try to connect their parents' islands together. The islands cannot be returned to one another, even making sounds such as growling or snorting to make it clear. The job of a professional is nothing different than to say "It's not possible." Sensitive, gentle, but clear. "It's not possible." Some children are testing it over and over again. They will find it impossible. They will say it and confirm it. But at another moment they need to try again. You probably know it from working with other therapeutic materials. Children in sand, with dice, etc. try to connect the parents over and over again. For some of them, this part of the work may be absolutely crucial and the most important. The Archipelago program offers children the opportunity to connect their parents with a bridge or make boats or submarines or dolphins floating between or around them. It is important to ask the children what the bridge means to them, what the

ship or the dolphin mean, etc. None of this means that the parents will get back together. There are different ways of communicating between them, the ways that they still have, but there is no reunion.

It is expressed here that the islands of moms and dads cannot be connected to each other. The islands can directly touch the land on which the animal is, but they can not directly touch each other. (Or at least it is very difficult to do it.)

If the child in the program pays a lot of attention to the connection between the parents and the experimentation, if the islands could not by chance get back to the other islands again, let the child try whatever. Our programmer has assured us that the islands are not going to join, so we hope that no child will discover this possibility (you never know with children). Your task will be to gently and clearly hold this boundary (connection is not possible) and accept and eventually explore all the feelings associated with it. It is not uncommon to discover the various connections between the child's feelings and other symptoms that brought the child to the psychotherapy. It is only up to you whether you will name such a connection at any given time, or you will still be waiting for it. The overall timing of interventions is again your responsibility. We recommend not to hurry, we believe that the goal of working in the program at this moment is rather the sharing of emotions and reconciliation with the parents' separation than anything else.

Working with this fantasy and the emotions associated with it can be one of those moments that will help the child to end (not just rationally but also emotionally) the events associated with the loss of the parental pair, stop fixating on fantasy instead of reality, and in the real sense start getting on with their own lives.

NEW PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDHOOD AND MAPPING THE NEEDS IN RELATION TO BOTH PARENTS

Animals with Dad

"Your animal is with its Dad. What will they do together?"

Animals with Mommy

"Your animal is with its Mum. What will they do together?"

Together with the wise owl, we encourage the child to create a scene of what an animal likes doing with a dad and mom. Again, you can take advantage of the icons offered or illustrate what you need.

Sometimes we work with children for whom one parent is unavailable. Our experience is that it is valuable for these children when they create both scenes. Breaking contact with one of the parents may interfere with the perception of self (as if this fact gave part of the child a negative connotation, as if part of a child and the history associated with that parent became inaccessible to the child). In our program, a child can also create something for their animal that they themselves do not have. It is perfectly okay if you do this with the child. Tell them you are, for example, sorry that the child can not have or does not have contact with one of the parents, and that you appreciate creating such a relationship for an animal in the program.

At this stage of the work we can also encounter the so-called loyalty conflict. Children tend to be categorical and tend to stand on one side of the conflict between their parents and thus gain stability. They are less resistant and may be easily pulled into in parents' disputes. Sometimes children may feel they have to choose one of their parents and they also think that it is expected from them. (Gardner, 1985; Warshak, 2002; Teyber 2006). Again, we recommend working with externalization and asking primarily for an animal to allow the child to create a scene with both animal parents and to support them in thinking about a new perspective with each of them.

Acceptance of current feelings is important, but for adaptation to the divorce situation, it is in our view, above all, a significant awareness that the situation will be better, that the relationships with parents will transform into new value, quality. In the context of possible integration, we look at the sources of these new relationships, and we ask, "What do you do with each parent?" We often encounter new activities that can be valuable to the child in relation to separated parents. At that moment, we recommend to name and support the child in the statement "What would they like to do with each parent in the future?" The above topic may also appear in follow up work with messages.

We believe that creating a new relationship with each parent is important for the further development of the child's identity. By projective working with both parents of an animal, we give the child a symbolic message and the permission to love both a father and mother - the above may seem obvious, but unfortunately, we often encounter in our practice that parental conflict, this naturalness and nature is disturbed.

MESSAGES
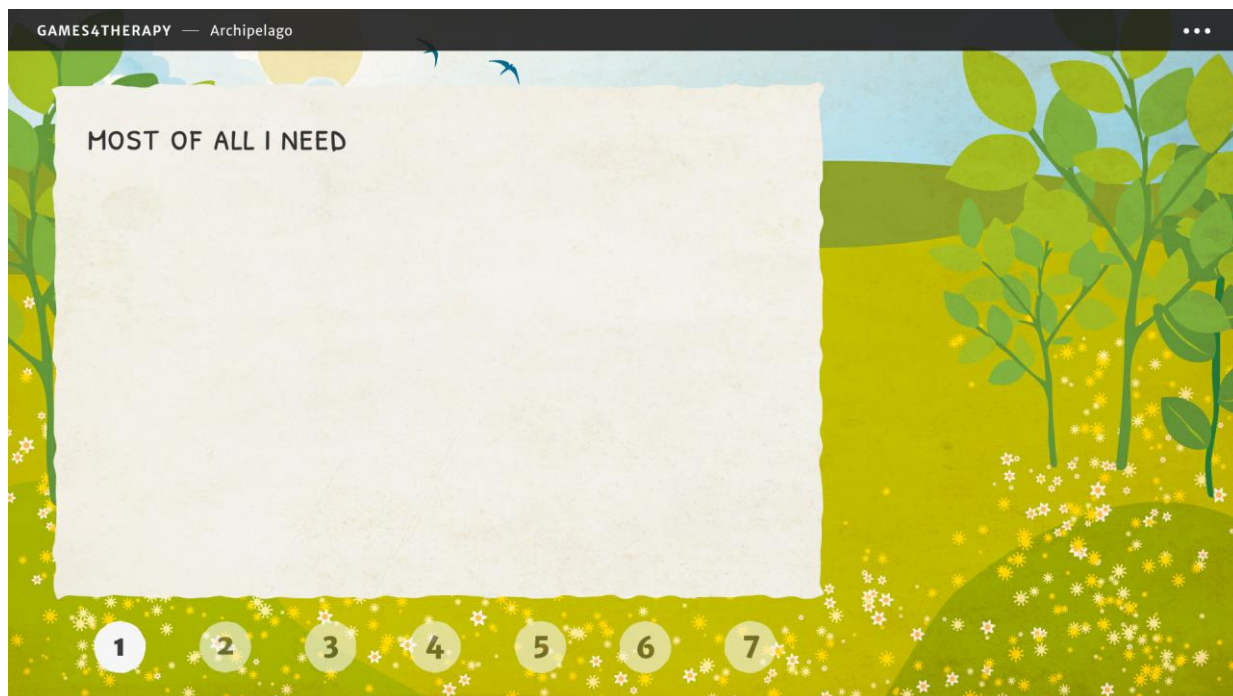
One of the things that we teach children in psychotherapeutic or counseling is to give their surroundings a clear message about what they feel and need or what they do not want, do not need or cannot accept. Although it seems natural, many children need our support for this, and they are just learning it. Sometimes they are surprised ("I'm supposed to tell Mom and Dad what I want? It's always they who tell me what to do ...") and they still get the courage to do it. Sometimes we see that children express their needs indirectly through their behavior or symptoms. This phase of the work helps to find new and more effective ways of expressing it.

Consider again that the ability to record messages in the program and a story in the book is just one of many options. You can create similar messages with different materials (such as collages), and you can deliver them to parents or important people in the life of the child in different ways, not only just by working with Archipelago. Many messages can be delivered directly and personally, and no materials are needed.

Messages and working with them in the broader sense also make it possible to complete unfinished events related to the divorce of parents. As already mentioned in the introductory chapters, unfinished business can bind a lot of energy and hinder further growth. When we are unable to organize our experience so that it makes sense or to come to a certain conclusion, we are restless, feel dissonance and we cannot be fully in touch with our own experiences (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman, 2004, Polster, 2000, Zinker, 2004 Philippson, 2012).

Sometimes we see that there are plenty of things children still need to tell their parents or experience with them, but either it is not possible, or it is possible, but the children do not know how to do it. They forget their own needs and merge with the dynamics of the field, which in the given situation reflects mainly the fluctuations in the position of the parents. The task of therapy is then to look for ways to close unfinished things. We are also looking for new, adequate and acceptable life perspectives for children. All this can be done by working with messages.

Sometimes, of course, it's not easy to know when and how the time has come to complete, but at least the offer and support for such a process is part of the counseling and therapeutical work. One way to complete some events is, for example, with the parents by telling or painting something for them, etc. or working with a therapist or counselor through an animal and metaphor (for example, if the animal tells something to its parents or something to advise other animals and children, etc.) or even in fantasy (for example, the child will draw a picture of how it would look if he or she could still experience it with both of their parents).

For older children, you can really use the blank message to work on the question: What else do you need to experience with your parents or tell them? If you had them together, how would it look? Could you describe or paint it...?

Below you will find incomplete sentences in our program, it is not necessary to follow the exact order, the numbers are rather for orientation. First, you can look at all the messages with your child and encourage them to choose which message they want to start with. A child may also have the need to invent his or her own message, for which reason a blank sheet is available in the offer, which the child can use for their current needs. Messages can be decorated in a variety of ways (the program allows it), give a child space for their own creativity as well.

You can get more messages by clicking on the numbers below the message. Messages can be typed using the keyboard. Again, you can add images from the menu.

The Messages are:

- **Most of all I need**
- **Sometimes I feel**
- **I know I can**
- **I do not like**
- **When I grow up**
- **What would you suggest to other children, who might be in a situation like you or your animal?**
- **Blank sheet**

Part of the message is also a message for children in a similar life situation. For inspiration, we offer a technique where you can offer the child to store a message in a box in your office. At the end of the program, together with your child, you can look at the contents of the box. For children, it is important and interesting that other children may have similar feelings and life experience. Additionally, the

possibility of counseling or helping other children is considered to be one of the important factors for developing active management and self-healing mechanisms in difficult life situations.

We often see that children guided by this program are, at this stage of the work, much more confident and more open when defining their own experiences and their needs in relation to parents and the future. Messages also map the child's skills, plans and goals for the future, opening up space for supportive work with both internal and external resources that are so much needed.

The divorced family is still a family and has its value, the message "it will get better", which appears in various forms, is very important for children.

PRINTING

Scenes created with a child in the program are stored automatically and can be printed at any time.

When you click on the icon ••• in the main menu, you can always either leave the program (CLOSE) or print it (PRINT OUT). When you choose print out, it allows you to quickly print the created scenes. Scenes can also be printed directly from the directory on your computer from the Print folder.
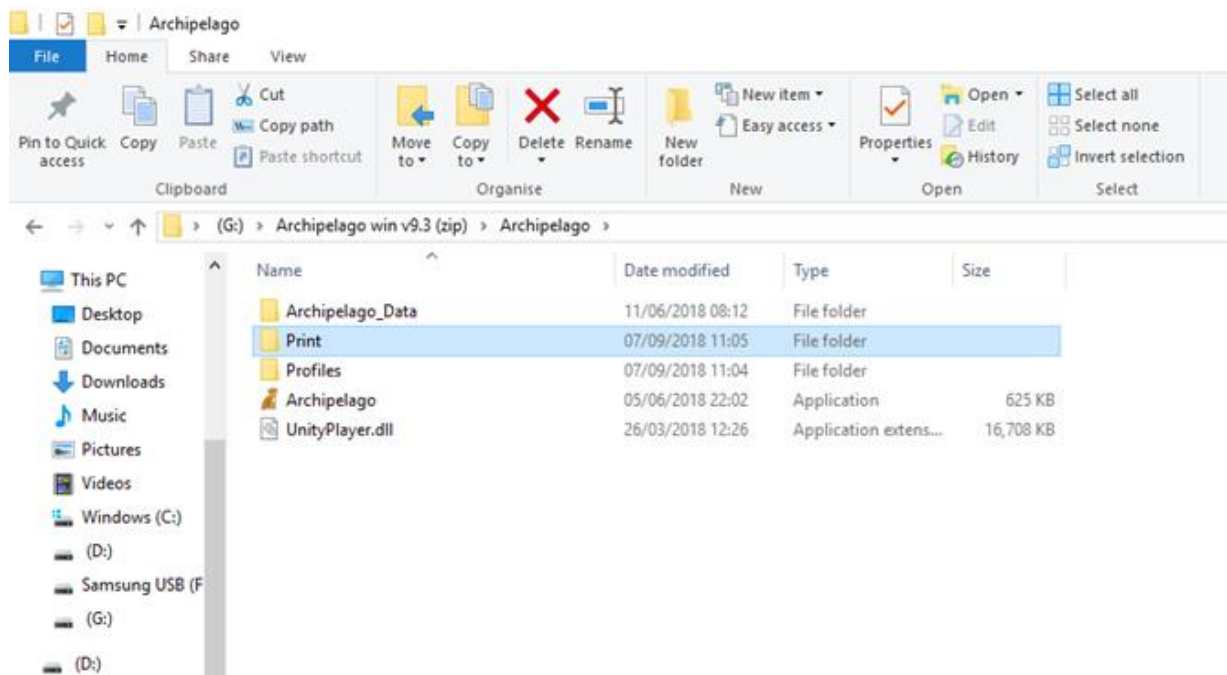
You can always print either single scenes or just selected scenes or all scenes at once.
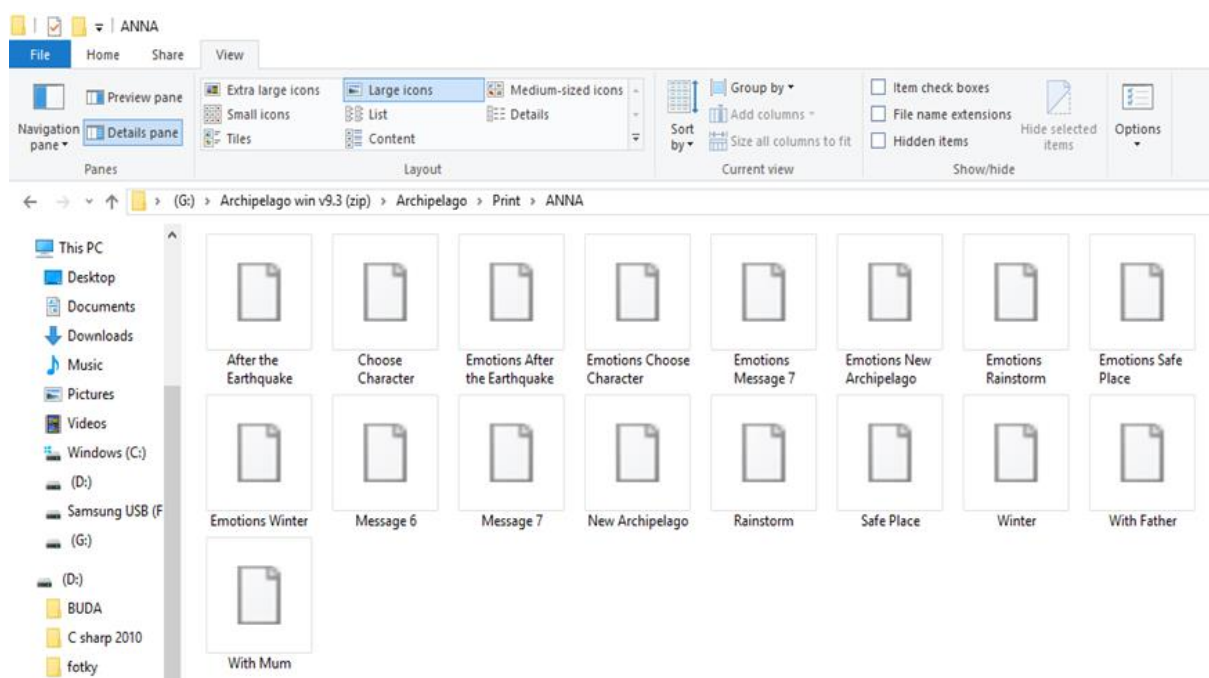
Remember that the Emotion scene will be printed multiple times if you have worked with emotions several times. Make some notes to get to know which scene the emotion picture belongs to.

WORKING WITH THE BOOK

As we wrote in the introduction, offer the child the opportunity to create a book, but do not promise that you will definitely show it to their parents. Tell the parents that working with the program can lead to the creation of different images or other artwork, but do not promise that they can see

everything. You may decide not to share a book with them, or you will only be looking for the parts of the images a child wants to show and share with parents. Be prepared for it.

All the work that you do with the child in the Archipelago program can be printed at any time. It depends on you if you print continuously and immediately everything that you create, or if you wait until the conclusion of the work.

The book prints in black and white. The reason is that in this way it remains unfinished and ready for further finishing (at minimum coloring). Another reason is greater financial and technical availability (you do not need a color printer). If a child wants a coloring book and you have the option to do it, you will need to use the PrintScreen key and save, edit and print all of the images separately. But definitely do not consider it to be better or even preferred option, although children can sometimes try to persuade you to do so.

The computer program never captures the world of a child's imagination. From the beginning, let the children know that if you create a book together, later they color whatever they want, add stickers, etc. Keep track of what they need to create later so you don't forget. You can draw additional pictures at any time. You therefore enhance your work with a computer.

Working with the book allows you to return to the work and issues you have already talked about but again with different material. Make use of painting, drawing, collage, gluing on newspaper clippings, whatever the child is having fun with. The book can be bound in many ways, no problem with choosing the easiest one (hole punch and string). Do not overly emphasize perfection when creating the book. Here too, the process of making it is more important than the result.

The book can be supplemented with any written texts - the title of the book, the names of individual pictures as if they were chapters of the book, explanatory texts, whole stories…

If possible, offer that you and the child can show the book to the parents together. Never send a book with a child to be shown by them alone to their parents. Parents may not understand what the child needs at that time. It is your task as an expert to show and read the book with the child to the parents. Agree in advance, who will show the book, who will read it, what is written in it.

Narrative work is a very important part of working with various traumas and difficult life events (Siegel, 2013; White and Morgan, 2006). Proceed slowly and in repeated cycles of narration - re-writing - narration - re-writing. This is the way healing stories arise. Listen to the child, help them write the story and write it briefly, read the story again and let the child listen to you as you read it, let them rewrite anything ... When you are happy with the story, once again, you'll write it to the book (keep in mind that some children do not write yet or they don´t like writing as it reminds them of homework and they will be happy if you do it instead of them). You become the first listener of the story. Parents are other listeners. It is good to talk to them about their role, so they understand it. In order not to try to modify the story, not to interfere with it, to try first and foremost to listen to it. The presentation of the book should be a bit of a festive event, a celebration of the work the child has done and the joy of what he or she has created.

If you are going to write a story, follow the narrative policy, even if you normally work in a different way. Whenever possible, write down everything in the child's words. Even if it seems like gibberish or agrammatism, it may have its meaning and authenticity. In addition, you put emphasis on the child's own and spontaneous creativity.

If the parents are well-prepared and you discussed it with the child in advance, definitely use a common meeting not only to look at the book about the animal, but also to tell the parents what the child has in common with the animal, what the child needs, what he or she is experiencing and so on. If the child does not say it themselves (young children rarely do) and you are going to say it, do a good job in advance to check if you think it is right, if you are saying it right and if you can tell the parents. If you need to tell the parents other things about the child, plan an independent meeting with them.

The fact that you read and finish a book you can imagine the sound of "closing the book" at the meeting with a child and parents as symbolic to the ending of the divorce situation. Sort of a: "And there it is." "And so, with that behind us, we can keep on living. We do not have to come back to it again. " However, it entirely depends on the specific context.

Also, do not worry if you do not create a book or print it with your child, but instead you eventually realize that the child does not need or want to return to it. Again, remember that perhaps the process of working with the program, the game and the experiment was what the child needed. Although we have the experience that children enjoy creating the book, it certainly does not apply to all children. You always have a possibility to print and work with just one page. Color it, fill it in, add things, share it with the parents, etc.

Older children also sometimes need a different format (A3, A2) for their messages. It is not necessary to use the messages that are published in the program. Collages on what they want / do not want, need / do not need ... you can create independently from the program.

COOPERATING WITH PARENTS

The atmosphere of safety, which is a prerequisite for working with this specific subject, involves acceptance and respect for both parents. To work with a child in a transcendental situation requires, from our point of view, great effort to create a working coalition ideally with both parents. The basis is respect and an effort to understand and look at the life situation and perspectives of both parents, which is sometimes a challenge for the therapist themselves. It is difficult, but appropriate, not to be drawn into a coalition with one of the parents or to become a part of the parental conflict. Only in this way is it possible for everyone involved to create a secure space for open sharing.

In the context of communication with parents, the interest and the needs of the child is of utmost importance, so we recommend it to be comprehensible. As a therapist, we try to take a neutral attitude, trying to defend the best interests of the child. The professional judgment and experience of each therapist is, what information and in what form it will be shared with parents. Ideally there is a balance of available information among parents or people involved in child care. It is important to

ensure a safe place especially for the child. The goal is for a child to express their feelings without fear that the parents, overwhelmed by their unprocessed collision with their partner, will not be able to understand and will not accept them as legitimate.

On the other hand, it is important and from our point of view an important part of any work with the child so that parents understand the child's situation by understanding the child's work and can then adapt their behavior to the needs of the child (educating the parents about the child's experience). The goal of working with parents is to make accessible a child's experience and needs, and we try to look at the divorce situation with the so-called "child's eyes". Thanks to metaphoric processing, Archipelago can support and facilitate the parents' insights.

An integral part of working with a family in a transcendental situation is also the work with parental guilt and its potential influence on parent-child contact. We are trying to guide our parents to keep the child's identification base, even with the simple message "We loved each other and that is why you were born". We see that it is important for parents to tell their children the appropriate reasons for family breakdown.

Our sometimes unobtainable goal when working with family is to conclude the whole situation with a message in the sense that the divorced family is still a family, and that it is of paramount importance to find appropriate interconnection and a form of meaningful mutual contact. This is also a possible answer to a question that parents sometimes ask therapists. "What can we do for our children when we are already getting divorced?"

CREATING THE BOOK COVER

A good thought-provoking idea was given personally by Christine Stevens (Personal Message, 2017), so we also offer it to you. If you have experience and space for art therapeutic work, you can create a completely original book cover with the child or even better with the child and parents (or with the child and one parent, and later with the child and the second parent) using, for example, acrylic paints. Again, the goal will be a joint experience more than the creation itself, even though the result can be very beautiful. Before the colors dry up, parents can sprinkle little golden or silver glitter on the cover of the book as a blessing to the child and a wish for the best after their break-up. The creation of the book itself will remain part of the work with the child (this is important), but perhaps its cover can be a common family creation and experience.

In this case, use all of your expertise in working with the family. Keep the experience safe.

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