

# EDUCATIONAL TREATMENT FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY IN ADULTS

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## Abstract

The Article reflects the methodology and content, as well as the results of development of transformative learning program of pedagogical intervention during equine assisted, experience-based learning process for reduction of adults' social anxiety. The theoretical grounds of the developed program is based upon the analysis of research on used methods of social anxiety in psychotherapy, its efficiency in solving of problems caused by social anxiety, analysis of methods of transformative learning theory and animal-assisted intervention, theoretical study of symptoms of social anxiety and the empirical study of learning needs of adults with disorders caused by social anxiety for reduction of social anxiety. The developed program is an innovative pedagogical solution for reduction of adults' social anxiety, where there are integrated theoretical and practical aspects of transformative learning and animal-assisted therapy within the equine assisted empirical (based on experience) learning process.

KEYWORDS: Social anxiety, educational treatment, pedagogical intervention, transformative learning, equine assisted learning, adults.

## Introduction

The social anxiety (also called as social phobia) is defined as a constant fear of one or several social situations, including interaction with other people (*Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders, 4.ed. 1994; Social Anxiety Association*). Social anxiety is indicated as the third largest mental health disorder in nowadays world (*Social Anxiety Institute*). The epidemiologic researches carried out in Europe draws attention to the fact that the social anxiety is one of the most common disorders caused by anxiety among 15-65 years old persons and it concerns almost 7% of the population (*Lecrubier et al, 2000*). The analysis of methods used in psychotherapy of social anxiety indicates that the cognitive behavioral therapy is one of the most widely used methods of intervention in work with disorders caused by social anxiety. Although the cognitive behavioral method is considered to be one of the most effective methods for reduction of social anxiety, there are made various researches, allowing making a conclusion that the cognitive behavioral therapy is unsuccessful or it has a minimal improvement in many cases of disorders caused by social anxiety (*Hofmann, Bögels, 2006*). It is indicative of the fact that there is a necessity to create new, more effective methods of intervention for solving of problems caused by social anxiety. Within the research, published on the scientific e-resource multi-purpose data base of EBSCO, consisting of several full-text and survey data bases, within the context of social anxiety, the rapid increase of its number especially during the last 5 years, proves the urgency of social anxiety all over the world. For the present moment there are made various researches concerning the different aspects of social anxiety disorders within the fields of psychology and psychosomatic medicine, but there are almost no researches within the context of social anxiety in the field of pedagogy. Therefore there is lack of pedagogical solutions for the support of people having the disorders caused by social anxiety. It substantiates the necessity to search for new innovative solutions. The Article reflects the development methodology and content, as well as results of evaluation of pedagogical intervention programs of transformative learning in equine assisted, experience-based learning process for adults in order to reduce their social anxiety. The developed program of pedagogical intervention during the equine assisted, experience-based learning process for adults in order to reduce their social anxiety is an innovative pedagogical solution for reduction of adults' disorders caused by social anxiety. The research reflected within the Article was performed as a framework of Master Studies at University of Latvia, Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Arts. There were used theoretical and empirical methods during the research. The developed program of intervention was evaluated by the expert opinion method. Data were obtained by a peculiarly-developed inquiry, processed by the mathematical-statistical method.

## The Methodology and Content for Development of Pedagogical Intervention Program

The developed program is not a traditional education program, content of which has been established by the State Education Standards and education standards of particular subjects; its target is not to meet the demands expressed within the state standards. However, during the program's elaboration, the basic regulations for development of education programs and the methodological recommendations by Pret (*Prets, 2000*) were taken into consideration. The developed program is a program of pedagogical intervention, including the following content units: 1) program's theoretical basis and philosophical orientation 2) characterization of target group's learning needs 3) program's targets, main tasks and achievable results 4) description of learning successes' evaluation 5) requirements for program implementers 6) period of program's implementation, number and duration of planned classes 7) annotation of program's topics and content, samples of activities.

### Program's theoretical basis and its philosophical orientation

The theoretical grounds of the developed program is based upon the analysis of research on used methods of social anxiety in psychotherapy, its efficiency in solving of problems caused by social anxiety, analysis of methods of transformative learning theory and animal-assisted intervention, theoretical study of symptoms of social anxiety and the empirical study of learning needs of adults with disorders caused by social anxiety for reduction of social anxiety. Results of theoretical research allowed determining the quiddity of pedagogical intervention program for reduction of adults' social anxiety. The developed program is an innovative pedagogical solution for reduction of adults' social anxiety, where there are integrated theoretical and practical aspects of transformative learning and animal-assisted therapy within the equine assisted empirical (based on experience) learning process. The pedagogical term *transformative learning* has originated from the theory of transformative learning, whose founder was the adult pedagogue Mezirow. The Mezirow's theory of transformative learning defines the process of learning as transformative learning process, causing changes within person's self-realization, confidence in system and lifestyle. The main condition for transformative learning is to understand and interpret the experience, developing an independent and new way of thinking. This learning process has its critical stage at the moment when the individual understands that the previous models of self and world perception are not topical anymore; you whether have to accept the new ones or to unify the previous models with the new ones (*Dirkx, 1998; Hatherley, 2011*). Mezirow considers that the each process of learning causes changes, although not all changes are transformative. Only the learning, by which knowledge, interpreted by rational and analytical process, is caused by experience, becomes transformative (*Mezirow, 2000*). However, animals have been included in processes of mental health intervention for more than 300 years (*Hooker, Freeman, Stewart, 2002*). In 1792 there appeared the first written testimony concerning the usage of animals for treatment of mental illnesses (*Trivedi, Perl, 1995*). Till 1960 the scientific medicine did not recognize this way of therapy as an official method of medical treatment (*Chandler, 2005*). The American psychologist *Levinson* is considered as the first person who reflected the concept of *animal-assisted therapy* in his book "*Pet-Oriented Child Psychotherapy*", 1969, where he stresses the psychosocial advantages of animal-assisted therapy (*Kruger, Symme, Trachtenberg, Serpell, 2004*). The increasing interest concerning animal-assisted therapy not only as the method of mental health intervention but also as learning-promoting method has promoted the development of different methods and programs of human/animal relation-based interventions, their inclusion into therapeutical and pedagogical work. One of the world's biggest organizations *Delta Society*, being responsible for the certification of animals involved in intervention programs and also monitoring his sphere within the United States of America, has included horses as the animals, applicable for including into intervention programs (*Kruger, Serpell, 2006*).

The concept of the programe is based on the idea that horses are extremely sensitive to the changes in the human internal state which they reflect in their behaviour and reaction. Thus a horse acts as a mirror which demonstrates to a human being his or her own life attitudes in this way helping to understand and interpret the gained experience, to develop an independent, new and transformative thinking style.

The program's philosophical orientation is its individual perfection, emphasizing the learning as moral achievement, developing person's ability to choose a new way of thinking, feeling and acting (*Prets, 2000*).

### Characterization of target group's learning needs

In order to identify the learning needs of adults having disorders caused by social anxiety, there was performed an empirical research. The findings of the empirical research will determine the targets and aims of the developing program of pedagogical intervention. For the research there was used the method of critical discourse analysis of qualitative research during the process of context analysis. The respondents of the research are adults, recognizing themselves as persons having disorders caused by social anxiety. The analyzable data consists of written information, containing utterances, narrations and opinions, everyday statements, resulting from the direct experience of respondents concerning the problematic features of disorders caused by social anxiety. Findings allowed making of conclusion that the persons having disorders caused by social anxiety are characterized by a lack of confidence. The confidence/self-assurance is a feature, being characteristic for a person, trusting in himself, his/her skills and abilities, indubitable correctness of his/her activities (*Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca*, 2000). According to this definition and analyzed text excerpts, there could be made a conclusion that persons having disorders caused by social anxiety are characterized by the lack of confidence, expressing itself as disbelief in oneself, owns skills and abilities and correctness of owns activities. The excerpts of utterances are indicative of the fact that persons having disorders caused by social anxiety also have a negative self-esteem/self-respect. The term self-esteem is explained as "the basic element of self-concept, characterizing both the person's satisfaction with himself in general and his/her skills, features and success in various ways of activity" (*Psiholoģijas vārdnīca*, 1999). However the term self-respect is explained as „an attitude, which is based upon comprehension of one's moral value and connected with respecting oneself, self-awareness, self-respect" (*Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca*, 2000). According to these definitions and analyzed excerpts from texts, it can be concluded that the persons having disorders caused by social anxiety have a negative attitude towards themselves which is based upon comprehension of owns moral value, being characterized by non-satisfaction with oneself in general. The results of the empirical research allow identifying of the need for learning, defined by the development of positive attitude towards oneself. As well as the findings point attention towards the way of learning, by which the positive emotional attitude towards oneself could be developed. This way could be defined as an acquisition of knowledge-based skills and knowledge, promoting the development of new, independent and continuous, transforming way of thinking, also promoting positive changes within the emotional attitude of adults having disorders caused by social anxiety, towards adults themselves, creating circumstances for the development of self-esteem. Creating of circumstances for development of self-esteem means the achievement of knowledge, skills and attitudes based on emotionally positive experience. It is necessary to create a program of pedagogical intervention for reduction of social anxiety, the aim of which is to reduce the social anxiety, promoting the development of new, independent and continuous, transforming way of thinking and creating positive changes within the emotional attitude of adults having disorders caused by social anxiety towards themselves.

The target of developed pedagogical intervention program for reduction of social anxiety is to offer adults with disorders caused by social anxiety *knowledge, based in emotionally significant and positive experience, for independent and constant self perfection, developing new transformative way of thinking and promoting positive changes within their emotional attitude towards themselves.*

### Main tasks of pedagogical intervence program

1) *To study, comprehend and comply with safety instructions when working with a horse; 2) to understand and to be able to recognize horse's instincts, reactions and its reasons, motivation of activity by the aim to recognize and explain own instincts, reactions and its reasons and motivation to act; 3) to understand and to be able to recognize horse's body language, to achieve the ability to deliberately use own body language in communication with the horse, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 4) within the human/horse interaction to be able to understand and recognize, how the way of verbal and non-verbal communication influences horse's reaction, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 5) to understand the interconnectedness and to be able to recognize the impact of human's thoughts and emotional state on changes of horse's behavior and reactions, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 6) to understand horse's social nature and to be able to apply it for own personal experience; 7) to understand and be able to identify the regularities, determining horse's posing as a leader of the herd, being able to apply them to regularities of socialization within own society; 8) to understand the basic principles for creation of mutual trust-based human/horse relations, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-*

perfection; 9) to understand and to be able to identify reasons of horse's fear, to be able to use various methods and techniques for work with horse's fear, to integrate the achieved experience for independent work with conquering of own fear; 10) to develop a positive emotional attitude towards oneself.

#### Planned achievable results of the program

1) person will know and will be able to use the safety instructions when working with horse; 2) will be able to recognize and explain horse's basic instincts, reactions and its reasons, motivation for activity, will be able to recognize own instincts, reactions and motivation for activity; 3) will be able to recognize and understand horse's body language, will be able to deliberately use own body language during communication with horse, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 4) will know and understand how the way of verbal and non-verbal communication influence horse's reaction, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 5) will know and will be able to recognize the interconnectedness of person's emotional state and horse's reactions, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 6) will know and understand horse's social nature and will be able to apply it for personal experience; 7) will know the regularities, determining horse's posing as a leader of the herd, being able to apply it to regularities of socialization within own society; 8) will know and understand the basic principles for creation of mutual trust-based human/horse relations, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection; 9) will understand and will be able to identify reasons for horse's fear, will be able to use various methods and techniques for work with horse's fear, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent work with conquering of own fear; 10) will develop a positive emotional attitude towards oneself.

#### Evaluation of learning success

The chosen program allows using the participant's self-appraisal, based upon analysis of learning situations for evaluation of learning success. Such participant's self-appraisal is oriented towards individual perfection, at the same time giving emotional feedback with the program's manager helping him/her to correct the process of learning, to evaluate the achieved results and priorities of further learning. Analyzable aspects of learning situation: 1) How does the participant evaluates his/her achievements during the completion of activities and tasks; 2) What experience, knowledge and skills are achieved; 3) How could the achieved things be used in new situation; 4) How could the achieved results be used for independent and constant self-perfection; 5) What new things about oneself the participant has got to know.

#### Requirements for program implementers

The program is being implemented by a mentor having knowledge in pedagogy and psychology, having experience in implementation of equine assisted intervention programs.

#### Duration of program implementation and number of classes

The implementation period of pedagogical intervention program is 6 months. Number of planned classes – 24 classes. Duration of each class – 180 minutes (3 hours). Total period of program – 72 hours.

The sample for pedagogical intervention program reflects the program's content: consecutive reflection of topics, listing of tasks and achievable results, substantiation of topics and annotation (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Sample of transformative learning’s pedagogical intervention program in equine assisted, experience-based learning process for reduction of adults’ social anxiety

Topic	Tasks and achievable results	Topic substantiation/annotation of the content
<p>Safety when being with the horse</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To study, comprehend and comply with safety instructions when working with a horse.</li> <li>2. To understand and to be able to recognize horse’s instincts, reactions and its reasons, motivation of activity by the aim to recognize and explain own instincts, reactions and its reasons and motivation to act.</li> </ol> <p><b>Achievable results</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person will know and will be able to use the safety instructions when working with horse;</li> <li>2. Will be able to recognize and explain horse’s basic instincts, reactions and its reasons, motivation for activity, will be able to recognize own instincts, reactions and motivation for activity.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Annotation of the content</b></p> <p>Even the most peaceful horse could injure someone in case if it is terrified or suddenly surprised. Since horses are game animals, they have ability to react quickly and to avoid predators in order to survive. This basic instinct has not been lost even by the domestic horse. In order to avoid such risks, participant of the program have to know and accomplish safety regulations when working with horse or being next to it. By acquisition and understanding of these regulations, at the same time there is acquired knowledge concerning horse’s basic instincts, reactions and its reasons, motivations of activity.</p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b></p> <p>Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b></p> <p>Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b></p> <p>Self-appraisal in the form of participant’s feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>
<p>Verbal and non-verbal communication</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To understand and to be able to recognize horse’s body language, to achieve the ability to deliberately use own body language in communication with the horse, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</li> <li>2. Within the human/horse interaction to be able to understand and recognize, how the way of verbal and non-verbal communication influences horse’s reaction, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</li> </ol> <p><b>Achievable results</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will be able to recognize and understand horse’s body language, will be able to deliberately use own body language during communication with horse, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</li> <li>2. Will know and understand how the way of verbal and non-verbal communication influence horse’s reaction, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Annotation of the content</b></p> <p>When working with a horse and studying its behavior within herd, we can notice similarities with our own types of communication with other people. Problems we are facing during our communication with other people will be reflected within our communication with horse as well. The more delicate and deep contact the participant would like to develop, the truer and simpler he should learn to be towards himself. Such a work with oneself, in order to improve the communication with horse, is a valuable self-learning experience.</p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b></p> <p>Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b></p> <p>Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b></p> <p>Self-appraisal in the form of participant’s feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>

<p>Creation of confidence-based relationship</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b> To understand the basic principles for creation of mutual trust-based human/horse relations, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</p> <p><b>Achievable results</b> Will know and understand the basic principles for creation of mutual trust-based human/horse relations, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</p>	<p><b>Annotation of content</b> Trust in oneself and in horse is the basis of successful relationship between human and a horse. If the participant will trust in himself, the horse will be encouraged to develop a confidence towards the particular person.</p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b> Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b> Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b> Self-appraisal in the form of participant's feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>
<p>Interconnection between thinking and reflective reaction</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b> To understand the interconnectedness and to be able to recognize the impact of human's thoughts and emotional state on changes of horse's behavior and reactions, to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</p> <p><b>Achievable results</b> Will know and will be able to recognize the interconnectedness of person's emotional state and horse's reactions, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent self-perfection.</p>	<p><b>Annotation of content</b> Both the person's body language and his/her emotional state will influence the horse's reaction and behavior, while performing the activities. If the participant won't be self-confident or he/she will distrust the horse, he/she will feel worried or troubled; the horse will feel it and will act accordingly person's internal state.</p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b> Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b> Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b> Self-appraisal in the form of participant's feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>
<p>Respect and leading</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b> 1. To understand horse's social nature and to be able to apply it for own personal experience. 2. to understand and be able to identify the regularities, determining horse's posing as a leader of the herd, being able to apply them to regularities of socialization within own society.</p> <p><b>Achievable results</b> 1. Will know and understand horse's social nature and will be able to apply it for personal experience. 2. Will know the regularities, determining horse's posing as a leader of the herd, being able to apply it to regularities of socialization within own society.</p>	<p>Horses are gregarious animals. Similar to human society, herd of horses has its own social structure (hierarchy) and its relationship. The leader of the herd is the horse which constantly keeps an eye on everything and manages the processes going on in the herd. The human also have to show constant attention, unity with himself and his own internal confidence, thus creating horse's feeling that the human is controlling and managing the situation.</p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b> Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b> Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b> Self-appraisal in the form of participant's feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>
<p>Fear and its conquering</p>	<p><b>Tasks</b> To understand and to be able to identify reasons of horse's fear, to be able to use various methods and techniques for work with horse's fear, to integrate the achieved experience for independent work with conquering of own fear.</p> <p><b>Achievable results</b> Will understand and will be able to identify reasons for horse's fear, will be</p>	<p>The horse's mechanism of survival or its instinct of self-preservation – to escape danger, inter alia, the new and unknown things – has preserved for million years and it is a part of itself. The horse has a limited visual area; however it also has a very good hearing. Horse is an herbivorous animal, thus – a game animal for others. It means that when working with a horse, human has to be responsible and his activity – well-considered. A great patience is needed in order to gain the</p>

	<p>able to use various methods and techniques for work with horse's fear, will be able to integrate the achieved experience for independent work with conquering of own fear.</p>	<p>horse's confidence, which will help it to conquer its fear. <i>(In work with horse's fear, there are used various techniques of domestication and according to their quiddity they are similar to methods of Exposure therapy, which are used in therapy for work with disorders caused by social anxiety).</i></p> <p><b>Form of learning organization</b> Individual work in stable, pasture, area, training area</p> <p><b>Planned classes on topics</b> Integrated into all classes</p> <p><b>Form of evaluation</b> Self-appraisal in the form of participant's feedback. Achievements will be reflected within the behavior and reaction of the horse as well.</p>
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Samples for activities during classes reveals a consecutive description of topics for activities, including the description of an activity sample and the description for evaluation of learning success (see Table 2)

**Table 2.** Samples of activities

<b>Description of sample of activity</b>	<b>Learning success evaluation</b>
<p>According to its nature, the horse is an easy frightened animal; therefore there is need for a great patience and well-considered activities, internal confidence, overcoming of barriers and resistance in order to achieve horse's trust, which in its turn will help the horse to conquer its fear, for instance, fear of getting into carriage trailer.</p> <p>Consecutive description of activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Explanation of the task;</li> <li>2) Demonstration of task's accomplishment;</li> <li>3) Discussing the accomplishable task;</li> <li>4) Accomplishment of the task – bringing of horse into horse trailer;</li> <li>5) Evaluation of task accomplishment, reflection, transfer to samples of personal experience and analysis;</li> <li>6) Home assignment.</li> </ol>	<p>Self-appraisal as participant's feedback.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How does the participant evaluates his/her achievements during the completion of activities and tasks;</li> <li>2) What experience, knowledge and skills are achieved;</li> <li>3) How could the achieved things be used in new situation;</li> <li>4) How could the achieved results be used for independent and constant self-perfection;</li> <li>5) What new things about oneself the participant has got to know.</li> </ol> <p>Participant will be able to evaluate whether he/she is able to conquer his/her own fear and to gain internal confidence. If the participant will be not able to show self-confidence and trust in own intensity, he/she will not gain horse's trust as well. If horse's natural fear will be supplemented by distrust in particular person, it will not be able to do required activities.</p>
<p>The classes will be arranged during the night-time, since then could be made such activities as going for a walk with a horse (by the hand), in order to promote the development of an absolute confidence.</p> <p>Consecutive description of activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Explanation of the task;</li> <li>2) Discussing the accomplishable task;</li> <li>3) Evaluation of task accomplishment, reflection, transfer to samples of personal experience and analysis;</li> <li>4) Home assignment.</li> </ol>	<p>Self-appraisal as participant's feedback. .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How does the participant evaluates his/her achievements during the completion of activities and tasks;</li> <li>2) What experience, knowledge and skills are achieved;</li> <li>3) How could the achieved things be used in new situation;</li> <li>4) How could the achieved results be used for independent and constant self-perfection;</li> <li>5) What new things about oneself the participant has got to know.</li> </ol> <p>Achievements will be reflected by horse's behavior and its reaction as well. This is one of the activities, promoting absolute confidence between person and the horse. Horse's complete trust in particular persona at any situation – the highest achievement of learning such activities.</p>
<p>Observing of horses, being involved in the program, during their activities, as well as observing of several herds of horses and particular its members with aim to determine the social structure (hierarchy) of particular herd un to develop the</p>	<p>Self-appraisal as participant's feedback. 1) How does the participant evaluates his/her achievements during the completion of activities and tasks;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) What experience, knowledge and skills are achieved;</li> <li>3) How could the achieved things be used in new</li> </ol>

<p>profile of at least two horses (involved in the program) and own personal profile (of the participant). The specialists for natural training of horses Pat and Linda Parelli (USA) have defined four main horse character types, which are similar to temper types of humans – Parelli calls them <i>Horsenalties</i>, combining words <i>horse</i> and <i>personality</i>. The participant will have to reveal the unique personal features of two horses, involved in the program, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, at the same time studying their peculiarities of comprehension and motivation, as well as participant's mistakes when interpreting horse's reaction at various situations.</p> <p>Consecutive description of activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Explanation of the task;</li> <li>2) Discussing the accomplishable task;</li> <li>3) Evaluation of task accomplishment, reflection, transfer to samples of personal experience and analysis;</li> </ol> <p>Home assignment.</p>	<p>situation; 4) How could the achieved results be used for independent and constant self-perfection; 5) What new things about oneself the participant has got to know.</p> <p>Achievements will be reflected within the successful accomplishment of tasks – determined social structure of particular herd of horses, developed personal profiles of particular horses and the personal profile of participant himself/herself.</p>
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### **Evaluation of developed program and description of its results**

The developed pedagogical intervention program will be evaluated by the method of expert opinion. In order to perform a qualitative, significant and for the development of intervention program appropriate evaluation, the experts have to be specialized in sciences of education, psychology and ethology, as well as they have to have a practical experience in adult pedagogy and in implementation of animal-assisted intervention programs; such experts should have some knowledge concerning problems of disorders caused by social anxiety. Unfortunately, there are no specialists in Latvia who would have mentioned competences. Experts who have knowledge and experience in work with adults with disorders caused by social anxiety, lack knowledge and experience in adult pedagogy and development of pedagogical intervention programs, as well as they have no knowledge and experience in implementation of animal-assisted pedagogical solutions. However, experts having knowledge and experience in issues concerning horse psychology and behavior, have no knowledge in adult pedagogy and psychology, as well as they have no knowledge and experience in implementation of equine assisted programs of pedagogical intervention and development of programs based on learning needs. Therefore, in order to ensure the representativeness of expert opinion for evaluation of pedagogical intervention programs, there were invited experts, being specialized in fields of adult pedagogy and psycho-pedagogy and whose professional competence and current its improvement are testified by the active participation in research and educational activities. In order to evaluate the program of pedagogical intervention, there was developed the evaluating inquiry concerning the following aspects of the program: 1) *Evaluation of program development principles;* 2) *Evaluation of program's theoretical substantiation;* 3) *Evaluation of program's targets corresponding with its intention;* 4) *Evaluation of correspondence of main tasks with the targets of the program;* 5) *Evaluation of benefits from the achievable results;* 6) *Evaluation of importance and the value of program's target;* 7) *Evaluation of program's topicality;* 8) *Evaluation methods of learning achievements;* 9) *Evaluation of self-appraisal opportunities of participant's benefits;* 10) *Evaluation of mutual connection between topics of the program;* 11) *Substantiation Evaluation of program's target group's learning needs* 12) *Evaluation of correspondence of main tasks with learning needs;* 13) *Evaluation of correspondence of learning approaches with the learning needs of the target groups;* 14) *Evaluation of correspondence of education content with the main tasks;* 15) *Evaluation of the education content;* 16) *Evaluation*

*of correspondence of program's duration with the achievement of learning targets; 17) Evaluation of requirements for program's implementers; 18) Correspondence of the program with its status as innovative pedagogical solution; 19) Evaluation of possibilities for program's adjustment.*

The analysis of expert opinion was performed by calculating the average rating of each evaluated aspects. None of the evaluated aspects gained less than 75% of maximum rate. The lowest result varies between 75% and 79% concerning 3 evaluated aspects. The evaluation in range between 82% and 89% concerns 9 evaluated aspects. The evaluation at range between 93% and 96% concerns 5 evaluated aspects. In its turn, 2 aspects gained the maximal rating. After the evaluating of pedagogical intervention program, the experts also gave some additional comments for its improvement. Summarizing and analyzing the obtained data, there were posed the following tasks for program's improvement: 1) to specify methods for evaluation of learning success; 2) to give a more detailed description of target group's learning needs, as well as to supplement the annotation of program's content with information giving more clear understanding about interconnectedness between learning needs of the target group and program's topics, tasks, achievable results; 3) to indicate the necessary resources for program's implementation, inter alia, to define the requirements for horses applicable for the program; 4) to specify the formulating of achievable results in order to make them more measurable, concrete and real; 5) to include the information, giving more clear comprehension concerning the transferring process in the description of the program.

## **Conclusions**

The Article reflects methodology for development of pedagogical intervention program for reduction of adults' social anxiety. The Article successively reflects: program's theoretical basis and philosophical orientation; characterization of target group's learning needs; program's targets, main tasks and achievable results; description of learning successes' evaluation; requirements for program implementers; period of program's implementation, number and duration of planned classes; annotation of program's topics and content, samples of activities.

The theoretical grounds of the developed program is based upon the analysis of research on used methods of social anxiety in psychotherapy, its efficiency in solving of problems caused by social anxiety, analysis of methods of transformative learning theory and animal-assisted intervention, theoretical study of symptoms of social anxiety and the empirical study of learning needs of adults with disorders caused by social anxiety for reduction of social anxiety. The developed program of pedagogical intervention of transformative learning offers its participants a free choice of learning while creating their own knowledge, skills and attitudes by their emotionally significant experience, gained during the learning process. However, the form of individual learning organization, where the horse is the main teacher, minimizes the human factor, which is the biggest stressor of persons with disorders caused by social anxiety.

The created programme is process-oriented and the creative activities aimed to human/horse interaction for the acquisition of study goals are integrated into all subjects of the programme as well as into the content. After evaluation of the developed program, there were achieved results, acknowledging the high evaluation of the developed intervention program, as well as there were obtained several important suggestions for its improvement, allowing to pose the following tasks: 1) to specify methods for evaluation of learning success; 2) to give a more detailed description of target group's learning needs, as well as to supplement the annotation of program's content with information giving more clear understanding about interconnectedness between learning needs of the target group and program's topics, tasks, achievable results; 3) to indicate the necessary resources for program's implementation, inter alia, to define the requirements for horses applicable for the program; 4) to specify the formulating of achievable results in order to make them more measurable, concrete and real; 5) to include the information, giving more clear comprehension concerning the transferring process in the description of the program.

It is very difficult to plan such learning process where there is involved an animal, and there are various factors related to the human/animal interrelation, therefore it is necessary to perform its empirical examination.

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## Iloņa Gēhtmane-Hofmane, Dita Nīmante

### S o m m a i r e

*Une angoisse sociale* (désignée aussi comme une *phobie sociale*) est définie comme la peur d'une ou des plusieurs situations sociales comprenant une interaction avec des autres personnes (*Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders, 4.ed.*, 1994; *Social Anxiety Association*). Des études épidémiologiques conduites en Europe indiquent que l'angoisse sociale est une des troubles les plus répandues provoquées par une angoisse dans la catégorie d'âge de 15 à 65 ans et touche presque 7% de la population (Lecrubier et al, 2000). L'analyse de méthodes utilisées dans la psychothérapie de l'angoisse sociale indique que la thérapie cognitivo-comportementale est la méthode d'intervention utilisée le plus souvent dans le travail avec les troubles provoqués par une angoisse sociale. Même si la thérapie cognitivo-comportementale est regardée comme la méthode la plus efficace pour la réduction de l'angoisse sociale, y existe des études permettant de conclure que la thérapie cognitivo-comportementale a été inefficace dans un grand nombre de cas d'une angoisse sociale ou a évoqué seulement une amélioration minimale (Hofmann, Bögels, 2006). Cela montre une nécessité de chercher des solutions novatrices et nouvelles et d'établir de nouvelles méthodes d'intervention; des méthodes plus efficaces pour résoudre des problèmes provoqués par l'angoisse sociale. Pour l'instant des études d'aspects différents de l'angoisse sociale sont conduites dans des domaines de la psychologie et de la médecine psychosomatique, quand même il n'y a presque aucune étude dans le contexte de l'angoisse sociale dans le domaine pédagogique, ainsi y manque des solutions pédagogiques pour le support des personnes avec des troubles provoqués par l'angoisse sociale.

L'article révèle la méthodologie et le contenu pour le développement d'un programme de l'intervention pédagogique de l'apprentissage transformatif pendant le processus d'apprentissage basé sur l'expérience et assisté par des chevaux pour réduire l'angoisse sociale aux adultes ainsi que les résultats de l'évaluation du programme. La partie théorique est basée dans les résultats de l'analyse des études sur les méthodes utilisés dans la psychothérapie de l'angoisse sociale, sur leur efficacité dans la résolution des problèmes provoqués par l'angoisse sociale, dans la

théorie de l'apprentissage transformatif et l'analyse des méthodes d'intervention assistées par des animaux, dans l'étude théorique des signes de l'anxiété sociale et dans l'étude empirique sur des besoins d'apprentissage des adultes avec des troubles provoqués par l'anxiété sociale pour réduire l'anxiété sociale. Les résultats des études empiriques et théoriques ont permis d'établir le cadre du programme de l'intervention pédagogique pour une réduction de l'anxiété sociale aux adultes. Le programme développé est une solution pédagogique novatrice avec des aspects théoriques et pratiques de l'apprentissage transformatif et de la zoothérapie intégrés dans un processus d'apprentissage empirique assisté par des chevaux. L'article traite des points suivants: la base théorique du programme et son orientation philosophique; la description des besoins dans l'apprentissage du groupe-cible; les buts du programme, ses tâches principales et résultats à obtenir; la description de l'évaluation du progrès de l'apprentissage; les exigences pour le réalisateur du programme; le période de la réalisation du programme et le nombre et la durée des séances planifiées; l'annotation des sujets et du contenu, des exemples des séances.

Le terme pédagogique *l'apprentissage transformatif (transformative learning)* est développé de la théorie d'apprentissage transformatif étant établi par l'éducateur d'adultes Mesirow (*Mezirow*). Dans la théorie de l'apprentissage transformatif par Mesirow, le processus d'apprentissage est caractérisé comme un processus d'apprentissage transformatif établissant des changements dans la perception de soi-même, le système des convictions et le mode de vie. La condition principale de l'apprentissage transformatif est de comprendre et d'interpréter l'expérience en développant un nouvel et indépendant mode de pensée. A leur tour, les anomalies sont inclus dans des processus d'intervention de la santé mentale pendant plus que 300 ans (*Hooker, Freeman, Stewart, 2002*). Une des plus grandes organisations mondiales, *Delta Society*, qui est responsable de la certification des animaux à inclure dans des programmes d'intervention et qui surveille ce domaine aux Etats-Unis de l'Amérique, a noté des chevaux comme des animaux pouvant être inclus dans des programmes d'intervention (*Kruger, Serpell, 2006*). Le concept du programme d'intervention pédagogique créé est basé dans l'idée que les chevaux sont très sensibles aux changements dans les conditions internes d'une personne qui sont traduits dans leur comportement et réaction. C'est pourquoi ces animaux sont regardés comme les meilleurs éducateurs qui peuvent montrer à un homme sa propre position de vie et par ça lui aider à comprendre et interpréter l'expérience acquise pour développer une manière de pensée indépendante, nouvelle et transformative. L'orientation philosophique du programme présente un enrichissement individuel accentuant l'apprentissage comme une réalisation morale en développant son propre mode de pensée, sentiments et actions (*Pret, 2000*).

Le but du programme de l'intervention pédagogique développé pour réduire l'anxiété sociale est *de présenter aux adultes avec des troubles provoqués par l'anxiété sociale des connaissances sur la base d'expérience positive, significative et riche en émotions pour l'évolution individuelle et permanente de soi-même par le développement d'une manière de pensée transformative et la promotion des changements positifs dans l'attitude émotionnelle contre soi-même*. Le programme de l'intervention pédagogique d'apprentissage transformatif développé offre à ses participants le choix libre d'apprentissage par la création de ses propres connaissances, compétences et attitudes sur la base de l'expérience significative et riche en émotions acquise pendant le processus de l'apprentissage. A son tour, la forme individuelle de l'apprentissage où le cheval est l'éducateur principal minimise le facteur humain étant le plus grand facteur de stress pour des personnes avec des troubles provoqués par l'anxiété sociale. Le programme créé s'oriente sur le processus, tous les sujets du programme et leur contenu est intégré dans l'acquisition de l'expérience positive et riches en émotions pour atteindre les objectifs d'apprentissage de l'activité sur la base d'interaction entre un cheval et un homme. La forme de programme choisie permet d'utiliser l'auto-évaluation des participants sur la base de l'analyse des situations d'apprentissage pour l'évaluation du progrès d'apprentissage. Cette auto-évaluation d'un participant s'oriente sur le développement individuel en créant en même temps une rétroaction avec le responsable du programme en lui aidant de corriger le processus d'apprentissage, d'évaluer le progrès et de déterminer les priorités de l'apprentissage futur.

Le programme de l'intervention pédagogique développé a été évalué en utilisant la méthode d'opinions spécialisées. Ayant résumé et analysé les résultats obtenus, les objectifs suivants sont proposés pour l'amélioration du programme: 1) de préciser les méthodes d'évaluation du progrès d'apprentissage; 2) de présenter une description plus profonde des besoins d'apprentissage de la groupe-cible ainsi que d'inclure l'information dans l'annotation du programme donnant une compréhension claire sur l'interconnexion entre les besoins d'apprentissage de la groupe-cible et les sujets, tâches et résultats du programme; 3) d'indiquer les ressources nécessaires pour l'implémentation du programme, y compris des exigences pour des chevaux à inclure dans le programme; 4) de préciser la formulation des résultats à atteindre pour les rendre mesurables, précis et réels; 5) d'inclure l'information dans la description du programme donnant une compréhension plus claire sur le processus du transfert.

C'est très difficile de planifier un processus d'apprentissage utilisant un animal, y existe un rangé des facteurs liés à l'interaction d'un homme et un animal qui vont affecter la réalisation des résultats attendus, pour cette raison il est nécessaire de faire une évaluation empirique de cette programme.