Case Study of Bibliotherapy for North Korean Defectors’ Children in South Korea

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Abstract. Case study of bibliotherapy for 2 groups of 67 children at age 4-16 from North Korean defectors’ families was implemented for 8 weeks on the weekly basis in different districts of Seoul, South Korea. Findings of the current study show that defensive attitudes of the participants had been decreased, however, psycho-social, cognitive, cultural, and lingual needs have to be met with intimate and long-term programs at micro- and macro level of national NK defectors support system in South Korea.

Keywords: bibliotherapy(BT), North Korean defectors’ children, trans-generational traumas, SK(South Korea(n)), NK(North Korea(n)), picture story books

1 Introduction

Annual increasing population of NK families and their children request their diverse needs to be met with proper and well-matched programs fundamentally in life-time perspective as nation-wide policy.

1.1 Increasing Population of NK Defectors’ Families and Their Children

The population of NK defectors’ families has been steadily increasing in SK from year 1998 and reached up to 26,854 in June 2014 with additional 2,000 defectors every year. Especially female defectors’ population consists of 82% in year of 2014 and annual average 70% of total NK defectors. 20-49 year old females are 78% in total female population. Population of children is estimated with 1,152 under age 9 and 2,564 at ages 10-19. These statistics reveal meaningful implications for the supportive program in national systematic policy for NK defectors family[1].
1.2 Psycho-Social Wounds from Trans-generational Traumas among Parent-Child Relationships of NK Defectors

Adaptation to SK has been a hot issue for NK defectors and their children in holistic perspective as a pre-requisite tasks to be solved in advance of unification of Korea[2]. Past traumatic events in NK, present stress levels in SK have been correlated revealing emotional defensiveness, anxiety, depression, and PTSD[3]. NK parents’ maladaptation and dysfunctional parent-child relationships are inter-wound with identity problems, high divorce rates of parents, spouse/child abuses, low self-esteem, low-educational backgrounds, unstable jobs/incomes, cultural/language problems, depression, and isolation. Traumas of NK parents are likely to be transferred to their children producing low academic achievement, peer-bulling, and adaptation stresses in their school settings. Trans-generational traumas of NK defectors’ children have been resulted by dysfunctional family structures. Many of them show emotional defensiveness, maladjustment to educational competitions, low school achievement, poor peer relationship usually with SK peers, high drop-outs which seem to be interwound with parent-child dysfunctional relationships[4].

2 Needs of Bibliotherapy(BT) for NK defectors’ Children

BT is used for releasing negative feelings, social adjustment, and emotional well-being by reading literature, poems, animations, lyrics, diary, autobiography, etc. as therapeutic resources[5] for better life with healing and well-being purposes[6]. There have been lots of research reports that BT for children decreases negative feeling such as self-defensiveness, distorted cognition, depression, anxiety, anti-social attitudes and increases awareness and understanding of family dysfunction, and fostering insights of problem-solving[7]. BT with children’s literature/picture story books can be useful and effective in providing NK defectors’ children with psycho-social caring, cognitive knowledge, literacy development, problem-solving skills, emotional catharsis, in dealing with their negative feelings and defensive attitudes, helping people, gain insight into alternative solutions for their own problems[8]. BT can thus be used as a tool for not only treating therapy, but also for preventing problems of childhood psycho-social conflicts and inner problems for the later life[9].

3 Bibliotherapy Program for NK Defectors’ Children

3.1 Participants

Two groups of 67 children at age 4 through high school of NK defectors’ families participated in group BT. Participants are described in details as in table 1.
### Table 1. NK Defectors’ Children Who Participated Group Bibliotherapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Preschool ages</th>
<th>Elementary School Grades</th>
<th>Junior High Schoolers</th>
<th>Dormitory School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dormitory Child Care Center</td>
<td>5(2), 6(1)</td>
<td>1(2), 2(2), 3(2)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>4(1), 5(3)</td>
<td>1(4), 2(4), 3(2), 4(4)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 8 Sessions of Bibliotherapy Program for Children of NK Families

8 sessions of BT for children of NK defectors’ families were executed as in table 2.

### Table 2. Sessions of BT Program for Children of NK Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Resource Books/materials For BT</th>
<th>Related Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Who am I?</td>
<td>Diagnosis of Participants</td>
<td>Self-Concept Pre-Test, HTP/KFD Pre-Test.</td>
<td>Self introduction, filling each test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I am Special</td>
<td>To recognize that I am special &amp; unique</td>
<td>&lt;You are special&gt; (animated)/Lucado Polaroid camera, stationery 100 list that I am special</td>
<td>BT questions. Making 100 list why I am special with my photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Please understand my feeling</td>
<td>Tell and get empathy for my precious feeling</td>
<td>&lt;Spinky Sulks&gt; Emotion cards &amp; Color papers</td>
<td>BT questions. Tell my feeling after posting my good/sad feelings pictures on the color paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I need friends</td>
<td>Accept me as I am</td>
<td>&lt;Lonely lion needs friends&gt; Role play with animal masks</td>
<td>BT questions. Role play with animal masks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 I am happy as I am encouraged</td>
<td>I can be better with positive encouragements</td>
<td>&lt;Edardo, the horriblest boy in the whole wide world&gt; Compliment Game</td>
<td>BT questions. Write a compliment on the post-it and paste it on each child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Have a fun with my family</td>
<td>Make a happy moment with my family</td>
<td>&lt;Pete’s Pizza&gt; Making pizza with color papers. Make canapes with Ivy biscuits.</td>
<td>BT questions. Make a pizza with my body. Make canapes with Ivy biscuits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Conclusion

8 week bibliotherapy program for NK defectors’ children was useful in decreasing their defensive attitude toward SK supporters. It seems, however, that they needed an intimate and psycho-socially supportive therapy including filling their cognitive, cultural/lingual needs in long-term as a life-time program for them to open their minds and actively participate at micro- and macro-level with fundamental systems for the better integration of SK and NK defectors before unification of Korean in the future.

References

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