

**EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY,
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**A RITE OF PASSAGE FOR MID-LIFE WOMEN:
DRAMATHERAPY WITH TOTEM POLE AND
PUPPET THEATER**

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Tutor: Dr. Balla Gabor Tamàs

December 2007

BÖLCSESZDOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIO

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Abstract

This study deals with the mid-life chapter amongst women, which is a normative development period that occurs at the transition between the first and second halves of life. Impacts are recognizable amongst women in diverse areas of life, whether physiological, cultural, social or emotional. This is a transitional period accompanied by normative crisis that affords a turning period for women, and involves the need for change and development. These processes are examined in the framework of an ongoing group workshop in dramatherapy in which eight women at the mid-life age participated. Personal interviews were conducted at its conclusion and a year later that explored these processes in depth and their significance for the participants.

The main research conclusions

This group dramatherapy workshop served as a transitional ritual, known also as a rite of passage, during which processes of change and development occurred that also continued during the following year. The rite of passage affords a type of transformative container for the participants. It includes liminal experimentation with transition, that creates a space for connecting being and doing, order and experience, and contributes to change and development and expanding the self.

The rite of passage has six phases, each of which includes the relative stage of the following axes. Five axes of development were found that comprised the group processes and provided the structure of the rite of passage: Content, dramatic, artistic and group and personal development. The personal processes of the participants included attributes of 'transition and change', 'collectivism and individuality', 'identity and taboo', 'the internal and the external' and 'loss and development'.

The categories that were afforded meaning of change and development are consciousness, self-perception that included creativity, authenticity, control and emotional expression, significance, self-actualization that included the intrapersonal, interpersonal, domestic and occupational domains.

Factors generating change and development were found in the components of the dramatherapy workshop - creative processes, constructing a group totem pole and creating a personal puppet theater - afford conditions for processes of change and development and serve as a rite of passage for women at mid-life.