Marte Meo - own forces

Training for Marte Meo’s practitioners 2011-2012.
Hostel Kastel, Split

The first meeting March 30, 2011 to March 31, 2011.
History

Marte Meo network experienced international development and spread to 38 countries since 1987. Everything started in the Netherlands where Maria Aarts was giving simple and practical advice to parents of autistic children. She grew up in a family with many brothers and sisters and she learned from their parents how to educate and direct each child individually. Studying the relationship of ordinary parents towards their children, we can discover how "nature itself" is acting in conditions where there is a positive and good development. "We have to ask what the gold mine of heart is," says Maria Aarts.

She began early to use video clips to demonstrate what has the best effect. The recording is support tool for finding significant moments and giving instructions in a step-by-step interaction. "We must move from their positions and use what they already have," she says, passing on experience from work in India. In India, in many places was no electricity so they had to find a solution without a video camera as they were directly giving instructions in situations that could occur in the home or the pediatric dispensary. Gradually, they developed programs for children, adolescents and adults with special needs in many fields. Special counseling programs for premature children, children with disorders of sleep and nutrition, children with disabilities, with fears, anxious, tearful and children prone to uncontrolled behavior have been developed. In addition, they have developed a special variant of the couples therapy, family therapy and treatment for the elderly and dementia in institutions. Marte Meo method is also used in professional counseling in institutions, homes for children and youth, in the education of nurses and the training of managers.
Theoretical background

Marte Meo concept has received impacts and had influence in developmental psychology, family therapy and theories of commitment and interaction that arose later. Although this method is primarily based on practical work in everyday situations, there exist solid reasons and considerations, arising from research and theory.

Maria Aarts says: "Considering seriously human nature means to create a connection between events, thoughts and feelings.” They always occur in interaction with others. Natural tendency to seek contact with others is manifested from the very birth of the child.

Developmental theory, oriented towards relation of Daniel Stern, indicates that relationship between people creates through a dialogue. By moving to meet child’s initiative, we confirm its existence. Identity is created through interaction. The child learns about itself from the way in which it is accepted, appreciated and loved. It reacts to events and situations through everyday life and through the reaction of adults and the environment in general. It needs help of adults to note that there is a connection between events and feelings and in order to transform events into words.

These levels of interaction (the existence, identity and emotions) can be identified on the video, which gives the opportunity to study the elements that are deciding for support of positive child development more closely.

In more theoretical directions emphasized that the relationship is essential for what is happening or what can happen. That means that the emotional coloring and atmosphere are crucial in the relationship. The basic principle of supporting the development are the appropriate adult's reaction on the situation in which the child is and conducting communication in a positive way.

Children met on a positive way when they demonstrate some kind of initiative are cheerful and happy. Participation in interaction with adults makes them compassionate and responsible. Opportunity to express their feelings and receive confirmation of their expression seems to feel safe and that they put their trust in adults. Based on these statements, we can conclude something about degree of commitment between the child and the person who cares about it. Commitment theorists, M. Ainsworth and J. Bowlby describe the form and content of interaction in the early
age of life as crucial for the ability of people to attach to others and develop self confidence and social relationships.

We can see clear similarities between therapeutic models and theories that are applied in family therapy and the important elements of the Marte Meo method. When interacting in family and between adults and children, adults take responsibility for formulation of rules of interaction. Parents, as positive leaders give clear signals to their children what behavior is desirable and give verbal recognition in the form of social and material rewards. Adults who give the child time and space to mark "is now your turn, and then on me.” In this way they make structure of the interaction that determines when a sequence of interaction begins and when it ends.

Own forces
'Marte Meo' comes from the Latin phrase“ mars martis” which translates “own forces”. In the center of the Marte Meo Programme is encouraging of the use of own forces and the best possible utilization of own capacities. As a method of consultation uses a video camera and image analysis to identify and show which form of child support is required, and how adults can support the child in its development. Be looking for “own forces” can represent a search for specific skills, social competence in communication and emotional expression and nonverbal communication.

Elements of Dialogue
To make it easier to identify what is important in order to well-functioning interaction, dialogue is divided into elements. Elements of dialogue are essential and basic to be facilitated by positive development. Here we will briefly present them, and we will present content more detailed after we see the footage.

Looking for in what makes the child busy, what child is interested
1. Say in what you think the child is interested
2. Wait for the reaction of the child and give him feedback reaction
3. Clearly say what you see that a child is doing
4. Be a positive leader
5. Express admission
6. Describe things and people in a given situation
7. Give clear signals for beginning and end

These are elements that are included in 'natural dialogue" every day between people who are related in some way. It is always interesting to closely examine and learn how interaction can be powerful in new contexts.

The order of the Marte Meo Counseling

First, situations in which adults and the children are together should be recorded, followed by analysis of the interaction by applying the elements of dialogue.

The training includes exercises between appointments (tasks will be assigned). In addition, you should capture each other in work with children. Bring the snapshot on the next meeting where we will look and analyze the clips together. Schematic it looks like this:

Marte Meo Counseling
Recording
Analysis of interaction
Feedback reaction

Recording
Recording can be done during the games, meals, getting dressed, or in other situations suitable for it. It is usually enough to record 5-6 minutes, but if you record for longer, with return reaction we can edit or use part of the film. Here's some practical advice:

• It is important to have good lighting with windows or lights behind the camera (recording is bad if the light turned toward the camera)
• Take through enough proximity that you can see the facial expressions
• Use of options 'Zoom' provides the ability to shoot from close range, despite a certain distance
between the one who recorded and those recorded

- The person who records is the only 'cameraman' in this situation and do not participate in a conversation with those who are recorded
- To do this successfully performed, two participants were necessary through each institution

**Analysis of interaction**

The analysis requires time for browsing and searching for specimens to be used with feedback response. The best would be first to show the whole clip at once. After that, it rewinds back and searches systematically:

- What do you see that a child does and says (compare tasks between meetings in the spring and autumn 2011th)?
- What does the child already know how?
- In what does the child need help?
- What do you as an adult do to help your child?
- What do you see in the video with what you can contribute to the development of a child?

**Feedback reaction**

During the training program for Marte Meo’s practitioner you will receive advises from trainers related to shots that you have made for appointments. Between each meeting you need yourself to practice the exercise and to provide each other support, encouragement and give feedback on clips positively. Issues listed under the "Analysis of interaction" (see above) may then be of great help. We will practice application of the elements of dialogue for the entire program of counseling.