שאלון הבנתה

בבחינת מיון ללימודי השילוח והשכלה המיומני לתואר שני בשכיחות 살וני

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וצר את.

אפשי לקוח או המאמר בבחינת.
Preparing adolescents for immigration:  
A group intervention.

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes and illustrates a group intervention that prepared adolescents from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) for immigration to Israel. The intervention was implemented for students setting out to Israel for a special educational program and was carried out in summer camps held for these students in the FSU. The intervention was structured according to the principles of primary prevention in the sphere of mental health. Its contents were based on the conceptualization of migration as a separation-individuation process. The techniques were attuned to previous cultural experiences and future needs of the participants. A scheme for the intervention was formulated in advance, however the facilitators were free to implement their ideas as well. Vignettes that demonstrate the different variations of the model are presented.

One of the exciting things about adolescent boys and girls can be said to be their idealism. They have not yet
settled down into disillusionment, and the corollary of
that is that they are free to formulate ideal plans.
Winnicott, 1968 (p.165)

INTRODUCTION

Major psychological pitfalls typify both immigration and adolescence. Yet the two
processes also promise new opportunities and hopes. Which tendency will
predominate in the case of immigrant adolescents? Descriptive and clinical studies
have demonstrated both favorable (Mirsky, 1990) and unfavorable (Tartakovsky &
Mirsky, 2001) outcomes of migration in adolescence. The results of empirical
research on the psychological well being of immigrant adolescents also remain
inconclusive. Several literature reviews identify immigrant adolescents as a high-risk
group for psychological distress (Aronowitz, 1984; Jayaskuriya et al., 1992). Some of
the more recent studies confirm this view (Beiser, 1990; Ekblad, 1993). On the other
hand, other studies fail to demonstrate greater psychological distress among immigrant
adolescents than among their non-immigrant peers (Klimidis et al., 1994; Scott & Scott,
1989). Moreover, longitudinal studies show that the psychological adjustment of
immigrant adolescents improves over time and that in the long run their psychological
problems do not differ in context or in intensity from problems normative to
adolescence (Hepperlin, 1991). It appears that the psychological consequences of
migration in adolescence depend on a variety of individual, social and cultural factors
(Beiser, 1990; Scott & Scott, 1989, Mirsky, 1997). The present work deals with one
such factor - preparedness for immigration. Specifically, it describes and illustrates an
intervention designed at preparing adolescents from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)
for their immigration to Israel.

The theoretical support for the intervention lies in the conceptualization of migration
as a separation-individuation process (Mirsky & Kaushinsky, 1989; Mirsky, 1990;
Gottesfeld & Mirsky, 1992; Akhtar, 1994). This conceptualization is based on a
psychodynamic model of early psychological development (Mahler et. al., 1975), and
borrows its concepts from this model. When it is applied to migration, it suggests that
migration re- evoke s early conflicts between needs of dependency and independence
and presents an additional opportunity for the resolution of this conflict. Adolescence
is also considered a separation-individuation process (Blos, 1967), therefore in the case of adolescent immigrants the two processes are taking place simultaneously.

The decision to immigrate represents a transient solution to this conflict: the dependency needs are temporarily pushed aside and the desire for change, development and independence prevails. This is achieved through the defense mechanism of splitting whereby the homeland is devaluated, while the land of destination is idealized. Adolescents, who contemplate migration, are also prone to idealize their future independence and achievements in the new country. To a certain extent, this idealization is adaptive. As in the “practicing” sub-stage of the original separation-individuation (Mahler et. al., 1975), in immigration the euphoric mood helps the immigrant to acquire mastery in his/her new environment.

However, the painful realization of separateness and of loss eventually replaces the feeling of euphoria. Immigrants soon begin to realize that they have lost many things dear to them, things that were part of their identity. In this most painful and stressful stage of migration the initial unresolved conflict surfaces once again and the immigrant becomes torn between needs of dependency and independence, between old attachments to the homeland and newly created emotional bonds with the new country, and between old and newly acquired self-representations. In an unconscious attempt to undo the reality of immigration and out of deep feelings of nostalgia, the splitting mechanism is mobilized again. But this time the reverse occurs - the homeland is now idealized while the new country is denigrated and disparaged. Through a prolonged inter-psychic and inter-personal negotiation, similar to the “rapprochement” sub-phase in the original separation-individuation (Mahler et al., 1975), a genuine resolution of the conflict occurs and an integrated representation of both countries is accomplished. The group of peer-immigrants is particularly important at this stage since it offers a temporary asylum from the external environment and the internal conflict. Adolescents undergoing immigration acutely need a group of peers to share and work through their experiences. At the final stage of adjustment an open-ended process of developing an integrated self-representation, which will include old as well as new components, may begin. For adolescents this coincides with the development of an adult identity and adult identifications.
The mental health in migration is at the greatest risk in the realization stage when the conflict is revived. The onset of this stage is often unexpected since, paradoxically, it occurs when the sense of mastery in the new environment is at its peak. Most of the immigrants succeed in containing and working through their feelings of frustration, depression, aggression and despair. In a minority of cases, these emotional manifestations may reach the level of psychopathology or trigger latent pathology. But some level of psychological distress is experienced by most immigrants.

The present paper presents a primary prevention intervention that is aimed at preventing the development of mental health problems from the natural stresses of immigration. Primary prevention programs for immigrants that include some of the elements of the present intervention are often implemented following immigration, in the new country. “Acculturation” groups with adults or “discussion” groups with adolescents have been successfully carried out with ex-Soviet refugees in the United States (Dorfman, 1996; Kochkine, 1996; Berger, 1996). Group work was implemented successfully and emerged as a protective factor in the adjustment of adolescents with immigrant background in the US (Lopez, 1991; Glasgow & Gouse-Sheese, 1995; Peeks, 1999). Preventive group interventions have been also practiced in Israel, especially with immigrant adolescents (Guttfreund & Mirsky, 1992). The demand for such interventions with immigrants from the FSU in Israel, led to a special training program for Russian-speaking group facilitators (Benyakar et al., 1995). The present paper presents a more rare paradigm where the intervention takes place prior to migration, in the country of origin. The intervention was implemented with youths that were about to come to Israel for a special educational program. A brief presentation of the program and of the setting precedes the description of the intervention.

THE “NAALE” PROGRAM

“Naale” the Hebrew initials for “Youth Immigrating Prior to Parents”, is an educational program for Jewish adolescents from the FSU. It targets youth aged 14-15 who have graduated from junior high school and offers them the opportunity to
complete their high-school education in Israel. In early spring, Israeli teams are sent
to a number of cities in the FSU to assess applicants. The educational part of the
assessment focuses on evaluating the scholastic abilities and is based on previous
school record and on achievements test that is administered as part of the assessment.
The aim is to identify and accept candidates who will be able to cope with a school
setting and school tasks in a wholly new environment and in a new language. The
psychological part of the assessment is aimed at identifying candidates who are
psychologically able to separate from home and function independently within a
group of peers. It consists of a group simulation where the social interaction of the
candidate can be observed and a personal interview with both the candidate and with
his\her parents. Standard psychological tests (Bender, TAT and Draw-a-person) are
also administered. The decisions are made by early summer and the program starts on
the first of September. When possible, summer camps are conduced in the FSU to
prepare the new students for this major step in their lives.

In Israel, groups of Naale students, typically of 20 to 28 youths, are placed in various
schools all over the country. Those are residential or kibbutz schools, where students
live on campus. The placement depends on the scholastic level and the scholastic
preferences (humanities, sciences, art etc.). Students and parents also choose between
secular or religious education. During first year Naale students usually study in
separate classes and the emphasis is on mastering the Hebrew language. Then they
usually join the regular program of their school.

A wide support structure is maintained for the Naale students. Apart from the school
staff, two counselors work with each group. These counselors receive supervision
from members of Naale's psychological unit that includes 12 psychologists and social
workers. Students can also apply or be referred to a Naale psychologist for evaluation,
consultation and short- or long-term psychotherapy. A team of pedagogues also works
with the students, visiting each group once or twice a month. Additional professional
staff is at the disposal of the group counselors on request.

The Naale program has been operating since 1992 and has been steadily growing. It
began with about 300 students in 1992-1993, expanding to over 2,500 students in
1998-1999 school year and has expanded to include students from other counties.

THE SETTING

Preparatory Summer Camps

In the summer of 1998 five preparatory summer camps were set up for the new Naale students. Out of the 540 students accepted to the program that year, 426 participated in the camps (figures on the camps are presented in Table 1). Central cities were chosen to host the camps in order to provide easy access for a large periphery. A camp in Moscow accommodated students from central Russia, and an additional camp (Simferopol) accommodated those from northern Russia. One camp in Minsk absorbed all the students from Belorus. Because of the large number of students from the Ukraine, two camps were conduced there, separately for students who chose religious (Kharkov) and non-religious (Kiev) schools in Naale. The camps were located outside the cities in secluded recreational centers and were run for a period of 3 to 4 days.

Table 1: The number of participants and staff and the quantitative characteristics of the interventions in “Naale” preparatory summer camps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Students (N)</th>
<th>Duration (days)</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>No of Sessions</th>
<th>Session Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minsk</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharkov</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An educational team, which comprised pedagogues and Naale alumni, ran the camps. The daily routine at the camps was designed so as the participants get a sense of what it was like to live together as a group. The students were divided into small groups (of 15-20) in which they performed group-tasks and shared meals and sleeping quarters. Each day was devoted to a different topic such as “Leaving home”, “First steps in Israel”, “Jewish identity”. These topics were addressed through light educational group activities, which included many social games.

In addition to the educational activities, psychological group-sessions were held. The groups met for 1 to 3 sessions, each of which lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours.

**The participants**

This psychological group-work was performed in the “natural” small groups in which the adolescent lived all through the summer-camp. It should be remembered however, that these “natural” groups were created only two or even one day previously. Initially the participants did not know each other, but the intensive life in the camp, where they spent all their time together, very soon brought them close to each other.

The intervention was implemented with all the teens, that took part in the summer camp. The inclusion criterion was, therefore: “being accepted to the Naale program” and none of the accepted students was rejected from the group. This was clearly a selective group of adolescents since they were chosen to the program based on their high scholastic potential and their assessed ability to separate from home and function independently within a group of peers.

**The facilitators**

Four Russian speaking members of the Naale's psychological unit, three psychologists and one social worker, facilitated the group work. The four were experienced professionals who had been working with Naale for a several years. Their workload in Israel included group and individual work with Naale students and consultation to
teams that cared for them, as well as participation in weekly staff meeting and group, and individual supervision. Each of them worked in a different summer camp and they each held between 1 (long) to 3 (short) sessions a day.

The facilitators were not familiar to the participants and had practically no direct contact with them outside the group sessions. However, they also on the camp and were visible to the students.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL GROUP INTERVENTION**

*In its very essence, the group setting is a fitting intervention medium with adolescents and is widely practiced with this age group (Kolodny & Garland, 1984; Malekoff, 1997; Malekoff & Laser, 1999;). The first definition of group work was provided as early as 1935 by Wilber Newsstetter: “Group work may be defined as an educational process emphasizing 1) the development and social adjustment of an individual through voluntary group association; and 2) the use of this association as a means of furthering other socially desirable ends. It is concerned therefore with both individual growth and social results. Moreover, it is the combined and consistent pursuit of both these objectives, not merely one of them, that distinguishes group work as a process” (Malekoff, 1997). This combination between the individual and the social levels, is what renders the group work so potent with adolescents. It provides adolescents with a perfect setting for discovering, experimenting and practicing with their individual and social potentials and identities. When this process takes place in the presence of benign adult, who protects each individual in the group and facilitates the group process, change and growth may take place.*

*The model for intervention*

The structure, content and techniques of the present group intervention were based on
conceptual approaches to primary prevention, on the theoretical model of immigration and on an understanding of specific features of the target population.

**On the structural level** the intervention adopted the basic principles of primary prevention programs: (a) group oriented intervention; (b) designed for people, who because of specific circumstances are at risk for psychological difficulties, but who are not sick; (c) intentional intervention that is based on the understanding that it has the potential to promote mental health (Cowen, 1982).

The intervention was designed as a semi-structured task-oriented group, in spite of the fact that the understanding of its processes derived from the psychodynamic perspective. The core group process of idealization of the leader and of fellow group members, a process postulated already by Freud (Kernberg, 1998), was conceived as a fuel for the group work. But, contrary to the psychoanalytic technique, instead of being interpreted, this process was harnessed to the task of the group. Similar attitude was adopted towards other regressive processes, such as the basic assumptions (Bion, 1962). These processes were overtly addressed only when they obstructed the task structure of the group.

The contents of the program were deduced from the theoretical conceptualization of immigration, which suggested foci for intervention that could promote the mental health of prospective immigrants.

It was deduced that the moderation of idealization and splitting mechanisms might encourage a more profound and permanent resolution of the conflict between dependency and independence needs inherent in migration. This, in turn will help the immigrant to be more resilient to subsequent stresses of immigration.

An early awareness of separation and of the accompanying pain and grief was perceived as necessary for a genuine resolution on the conflict. It was assumed that such awareness might diminish the shock of the realization of loss, thereby lessening psychological distress.

The peer group was viewed as a potential source of support. Therefore, interventions that would maximize the peer group support were considered as potentially health promoting.
These principles are supported by clinical experience (Mirsky, 1990) as well as by experience in community interventions (Mirsky & Kaushinsky, 1989). Literature in the sphere of personnel preparation and training for working abroad, also supports these postulates (Furnham, 1990). One of the directions advocated for personnel-preparation programs is helping future immigrants to anticipate and begin to plan for hardships and frustrations. A less idealized perception of life in a new country could help soften the blow of disappointments and improve the potential to cope and adjust. Another element emphasized in the personnel-preparation programs is the creation and strengthening of formal and informal social support systems in the new country (Furnham, 1990). As will be described shortly, such systems are built into the “Naale” program. This emphasis on social support, which is known to be a major stress-mitigating factor in migration (Scott & Scott, 1989), confirms the importance we have assigned to the group of peers.

Although the complex issue of the cultural character of the Russian and Soviet people, is beyond the scope of this paper, it had to be addressed on the level of intervention techniques. Adolescents, who were brought up during the age of Russia's democratization, still bear many Soviet cultural features, which were transmitted by their parents. Studies on adolescents who were born in the west to parents of Soviet origin confirm this assertion (Slonim-Nevo & Sharaga, 2000). Two cultural features were especially relevant to the present context. The first one was the lack of experience of these youth with basic assumptions of psychological work, which have become “common knowledge” in the western culture. For example, the assumption that expressing one's feelings is psychologically healthy contradicts the Soviet ideal of rational self-control and suppression of individual feelings and needs (Horowitz, 1989). The second cultural feature that had to be considered was a distrust of strangers and a tendency to hold back personal experiences or share them with family and close friends only. These characteristics are reflected in the help-seeking behavior of ex-Soviet immigrants. They prefer to cope with their emotional difficulties by themselves or rely on the help of family and friends. When they do seek professional help, they tend to turn to primary physicians, rather than to members of the helping professions (Levav et al. 1990). These cultural features also surface in psychotherapy with ex-Soviet immigrants (Goldstein, 1984) and are especially manifest in group
settings (Halberstadt & Mandel, 1989; Bardin & Porten, 1996; Benyakar et al., 1995).

Such cultural features had a two-fold influence on the intervention. On the one hand, they led to the adoption of a relatively structured, task-oriented model of intervention. Emotional expression and introspection were encouraged, but in order to lower anxiety the facilitators were active and directive, and unconscious group-processes were not intentionally evoked or interpreted. On the other hand, the intervention was viewed as a vehicle for psychological socialization of the participants and they were encouraged to experiment with the medium of psychological group-work.

**Objectives:**
The objectives of this work were:

(a) To help the participants verbalize and share their motivations, expectations, fears and wishes. The intention was to help them sort out their feelings, alleviate anxieties and challenge idealized expectations.

(b) To bring the participants in touch with their unconscious emotional reactions to migration such as pain, fear, homesickness thereby helping them to begin working through the separation from their families.

(c) To help the students visualize future difficulties as well as solutions to these difficulties in order to reaffirm their capacity to cope and solve problems.

(d) To introduce the participants to a model of psychological group work thereby laying the foundation for future group support and psychological interventions.

**The scheme of intervention:**
The psychological unit of Naale prepared a structured scheme for the psychological group work. But, the psychologists on location were encouraged to use this scheme only as a point of departure and while adhering to its principles, to rely on their own judgement. The scheme included an introduction round and a number of group activities, aimed at bringing the student into emotional contact with the experience of immigration, separation from their families and their future in the program. The three
optional activities that were constructed are described as follows:

a) “Me in Naale” activity: Each participant is asked to draw a drawing that conveys how he/she pictures him/herself in Naale and to write down three wishes from the program. Participants present their drawing and wishes, and a group discussion follows.

b) “My first week/year in Naale”: Each participant creates a scenario of his/her first week/year in the program. The scenario relates to four levels of experience: the instrumental (living arrangements, everyday activities, clothing, behavior), the interpersonal (friends, relationships with friends, group experience), the emotional (feelings) and the cognitive (thoughts, language, schoolwork). Participants present their scenarios and a discussion follows.

c) “Difficult situations”: Each participant is asked to write down his/her anticipated difficulties in the program. They read out the situations they imagined and one or two situations, shared by a number of participants, are chosen. These situations are role-played by a number of participants and others give advice or step in to take an active part in the role-play and demonstrate their point of view.

The facilitators were expected to be active and directive by presenting the tasks, answering questions and determining the order of presentation and discussion. Their responsibility was to summarize and integrate the group discourse: to reflect shared emotions and thoughts, to point out individual differences, to point out gaps (for example, when only positive aspects were presented, they introduced negative ones, and vise-versa) and to offer information. It was also the psychologists’ task to encourage the students to speak, to maintain an open and warm atmosphere; to react in a non-judgmental and supportive way and to encourage the participants to respond similarly.

The facilitators were requested to make notes of the group process. Shortly after their return from the summer camps, they were interviewed by the author. Referring to their notes, they described the setting in which they worked and vignettes from their work with the groups. They were asked to describe one typical and recurrent vignette and an unusual one. The following section is based on these interviews.
The scheme in practice:

Most of the group work was performed along the lines of the structured scheme. The following vignette illustrates a typical group work.

**Vignette 1:** The psychologist in Kiev chose to work with the “Me in Naale” activity. She asked the participants to draw a picture of how they imagine themselves in the program and to accompany the drawing with a short story. Some of the participants volunteered to show their drawings and to read their stories to the group. The discussion that followed centered on two issues: the pain of separation from their families and the wonderful future that awaits them in Israel. The psychologist tried to moderate the idealization of Israel, but the group resisted her efforts.

All the facilitators reported having a similar and recurrent experience in which the students idealized the future and resisted any realistic confrontation. Consequently, the greater part of the psychologists' interventions was directed at challenging this idealization and helping the students build a more realistic picture of their life in Israel. Among the participants in the specific group described in the vignette, there happened to be students who had visited Israel and supported the psychologist's efforts to paint a realistic picture of life there. Since other participants were more willing to accept the views of their peers, the psychologist encouraged them to share their experiences with the group. This proved to be effective and served to advance the group work.

In this case the group facilitator was active in responding to and integrated into her work the unforeseen presence of students who visited Israel. The next two vignettes illustrate deviations from the model activities that were called for by specific group processes. In the first case the facilitator succeeded in reestablishing the group-work through creating a smaller group and the introduction of psychodrama techniques. In the second vignette the, having failed to engage the groups cooperation, the facilitator abandoned the non-interpretative stance and interpreted an unconscious process that blocked the group’s work.

**Vignette 2:** Having completed the full round of work with all the groups (using the
"Me in Naale" and the "Difficult situations" activities, the psychologist in Kharkov realized that the candidates whose acceptance was not final, had been passive during the group activities and therefore she was unable to complete their assessment. She decided to form a new group consisting only of those who had been passive. She held an additional session in which she implemented psychodrama techniques that proved successful in stimulating their active participation.

Vignette 3: In one of the groups in Minsk, the psychologist encountered intense resistance. When he worked with the "Me in Naale" activity, the students drew caricatures and composed facetious wishes. They resisted any serious work beyond the entertaining games that they learnt to play in the previous educational sessions. When the facilitator tried to switch to "Difficult situations", they said they didn't want to think about difficulties and would deal with them as they came. Having failed to engage the group's cooperation, the facilitator decided to keep silent. Eventually, the group realized that clashing with him did not work and began taking responsibility, trying to decide what they could do. At this point, the time was over.

The facilitator thought it important not to leave the process unfinished. However, because there was no possibility to hold an additional session, he decided to join this group on an educational activity that followed. Observing the group process, he discovered that there was a scapegoat in the group – a girl that spoke in a sophisticated manner and was clearly trying to impress the staff. He verbalized his interpretation that there was a fear in the group of being eye-catching and this was the reason why they put up a facade of solidarity and directed their aggression towards this girl. Following this intervention, the atmosphere in the group clearly improved. The students' feedback on the psychological work was positive. Moreover, in a performance they prepared for the farewell party they included a short humorous sketch on the psychological group work.

In other cases variations of the model were a result of the professional preferences of the psychologists. Such variations are illustrated in the next three vignettes.

Vignette 4: The Simferopol psychologist felt that it was important to break the set of
the educational activities that had been enjoyable and emotionally simple and could, in his opinion, interfere with the heavier psychological work. Therefore, he replaced the introduction round with a more complicated activity: he asked the students to introduce themselves by choosing an animal towards which they experienced ambivalent feelings. He encouraged the participants to look into these feelings and present the two poles of their ambivalence. Then the facilitator proceeded to the “Difficult situations” activity and the group worked seriously and productively on the difficulties involved in separating from their families and in learning to live in a new surrounding.

**Vignette 5:** The psychologist in Minsk also chose to work with the “Difficult situations”, but instead of role-play he conducted an open discussion. He asked the participants to specify the difficulties they think they will encounter and wrote them on the blackboard. Together with the group, he sorted and arranged the difficulties according to their gravity. He then invited the participants to recall their previous experiences of transition, their difficulties, fears, feelings and thoughts at the time. Guided by these recollections he proceeded to describe the universal “U” curve of adjustment in a new country: the initial honeymoon and euphoria, followed by “shock” and sadness, and the ultimate readjustment. As usual, the group tended to emphasize the positive aspects of immigration and to idealize the future. In order to counterbalance this idealization, the psychologist urged the group to discuss concrete difficulties and to look for concrete solutions. He then commended them on their ability to come up with creative solutions, emphasizing that this was a reliable source of strength that they will be taking with them into their future.

**Vignette 6:** The psychologist in Moscow implemented a creative elaboration of the “My first year in Naale” activity. He invited the participants to imagine that they had already spent some time in the program and were now recalling their first year. He then asked them to present their recollections to the group. The psychologist intervened with clarifications and reflections on the group level, explaining that one may view the group as a person who experiences many different things. Then he divided the group into four sub-groups of experience: Thoughts – Actions – Feelings and - Relationships. The participants could join the sub-group of their choice. The
The task in each of the sub-groups was to “recall” the experiences of the first year in the program in one of these experiential modes. Then a representative from each group presented their collaborative effort to the whole group.

The psychologist’s interventions were aimed at balancing and integrating: when only positive aspects were mentioned, he interjected the negative ones, and when negative aspects dominated, he reminded the group of the positive ones. He offered group interpretations and also translated them to the individual level: “There may be many voices in one person: thoughts may say one thing and feelings another. There is room for everything and for conflicts as well”. He also tried to bring across the importance of being in touch with one’s feelings and fears. He illustrated this idea by a story about pilots of the Royal British Airforce in World War II. These pilots were tested for their ability to take part in active duty and among other things they were asked whether they were afraid to fight. Some admitted to fear while others said that they had no fear whatsoever. To the great astonishment of the students, the psychologist revealed that the pilots who acknowledged their fear were the ones chosen.

Conclusion and implications

Immediately following the intervention and again 8-10 months following arrival in Israel, the effects of the intervention were evaluated (Mirsky, 2001). It was found that the intervention had an immediate effect of raising the awareness of the participants to the pains of separation involved in emigration. After 8-10 months, it had facilitated the establishment of support-providing relationships in the new society. One of the positive effects of the intervention was the adolescents' recognition of psychologists as a potential source of support. However, the psychological well being of students who took part in the group-work did not differ from that of students who did not receive the intervention and was high in both groups. An initial benign, sometimes euphoric reaction is typical in migration and is a key to subsequent successful coping with the painful experience of loss. It follows, that the intervention and the awareness of separation that it created, did not interfere with the natural sequence of
psychological adjustment in migration, at least not in the first stages of adjustment. The long-term contribution of the intervention in promoting psychological wellbeing in migration is yet to be determined, through a follow up in later stages of adjustment.

A number of implications can be drawn from the present study.

This study has described and demonstrated a pre-emigration psychological group intervention that can promote the post-migration adjustment of adolescents. It is therefore worthwhile, when possible to implement preventive interventions with potential immigrants already in their country of origin. If such intervention is impossible, preventive intervention in the earliest possible stage after immigration is recommended.

Social support is universally recognized as one of the major protective factors in migration. The present experience demonstrates that support should also be the focus of a pre-immigration intervention. Not only should the intervention be a supportive one, it must also provide a model for creating social ties and mobilizing social support in a new environment. This is particularly crucial with adolescents, who in migration loose their group of peers, an essential catalyst of their development.

The pre-immigration psychological state is typicafied by
the denial of the loss to come. This state of mind is conducive to the intensive instrumental activity demanded of the potential immigrant in order to prepare for emigration. Following immigration, it is conducive to no less intensive activity essential for the mastering of the new environment. However, the intervention described in this paper demonstrates that the denial can be challenged with positive results. This challenging is especially important with adolescents who tent to simplistic cognitive appraisal of reality and extreme emotional reactions (e.g. idelization vs. depreciation). However, considering the complicated emotional state of potential immigrants, and especially the precarious psychological balance of adolescents, such reactions should be handled with uttermost care.

Cultural sensitivity is one strategy that may safeguard against inappropriate interventions. Therefore, information should be collected on culturally acceptable and familiar patterns of interaction of the group participants. A representative of the culture of origin should take part in planning the intervention, and preferably in facilitating the group work. Another strategy that may help intervene appropriately is a careful structuring of the group-work. The structuring process calls for a needs assessment and preliminary planning and both encourage cultural sensitivity.
The structured nature of this intervention also lends it especially disseminable. It can be introduced as one module into a larger or longer group process. Group facilitators for such work model do not necessarily need to be social workers or psychologists. Teacher or counsellors can be trained to facilitate structured groups under the supervision of professionals.

At the same time, the semi-structured nature of the intervention, gives the facilitators considerable license to adjust to particular circumstances and express their personal skills, preferences and ideas. We have shared here the rationale and techniques of this intervention in the hope that it can be applied to other settings, with different groups of immigrants and be improved and refined.

REFERENCES


