

**“SOCIO-EMOTIONAL PROGRAMS; PREVENTING  
AGGRESSION: EMERGING THEMES FROM 21<sup>st</sup>  
WORKSHOP ON AGGRESSION 2016" ORADEA / BAILE  
FELIX, ROMANIA**

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*Abstract*

*At the 21<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Aggression, organized by Department of Psychology, University of Oradea, held in Băile Felix, Romania, on November 18-19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, approximately 103 researchers, psychologists, educators and students met together. The first objective of this event was to introduce, disseminate and promote the results of scientific and technological development on explanatory models of aggressive behavior, prosocial behavior, and methods of assessment. The second aim was to present state of the art applications of socio-emotional programs in a large variety of contexts where aggression takes place. Participants submitted symposia, oral, and poster presentations which can be grouped to the following main topics: Bullying and cyberbullying, Anger, aggression and violence prevention and intervention programs, Forensic Assessment and Intervention, Aggressive behavior in work, Social and civic behaviors. In 2016, the Workshop on Aggression gave us the opportunity to have a wonderful celebration of 20 years of education and research in Psychology at the University of Oradea.*

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Aggression; bullying; cyberbullying; anger; aggression; prevention and intervention programs; forensic assessment; social and civic behaviors; 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Psychology

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Everyone needs to be a responsible and dutiful citizen. Usually, the main purpose of education laws and strategies is to prepare people to become responsible citizens. To reinforce this point, responsible behavior has been defined by Bear, Manning, and Izard (2003, p. 140) as being, "the ability to make decisions that concern issues of justice, rights, and the welfare of others, and to act in accordance with such decisions".

A recommendation of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 18 December 2006 states that each citizen will need to develop a range of eight (8) key competencies to be able to responsibly behave and to adapt flexibly to rapid changings in the world. The eight key competencies include both typical cognitive skills and more transversal skills such as learning to learn, social and civic competences, initiative taking, and entrepreneurship. Pellegrino and Hilton (2012) referred to "21<sup>st</sup> century skills", which each citizen needs to develop in order to meet future economic, environmental, social challenges while preparing for different roles as employees, managers, parents, volunteers, and entrepreneurs. These skills were grouped into clusters of competencies within three main domains: cognitive (cognitive processes and strategies, knowledge, and creativity); intrapersonal (intellectual openness, work ethic and conscientiousness, positive core self-evaluation); and interpersonal (teamwork and collaboration and leadership).

In order to adapt to today's demanding, changing, and unpredictable world, people need to balance sets of cognitive, social, and emotional capabilities. The cognitive and socio-emotional skills interact to mutually influence each other. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development report (OECD, 2015) showed that an increase in cognitive skills increased the probability of completing tertiary education, finding a job, and earning a good salary. Social and emotional skills show higher predictive power in improving health-related outcomes and reducing anti-social behavior.

Social and moral responsibility promotes positive relationships with others, positive school climate, academic achievement, and self-worth. Social and emotional skills help both to protect individuals from being victimized by aggressive behaviors, and to reduce the likelihood of becoming the perpetrator of aggression and engaging in conduct problems.

At the 21<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Aggression, organized by Department of Psychology, University of Oradea, held in Băile Felix, Romania, on November 18-19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, approximately 103 researchers, psychologists, educators and

students met together. They discussed current and future scientific research regarding the impact of social and emotional skills in reducing aggressive behavior.

The first objective of this event was to introduce, disseminate and promote the results of scientific and technological development on explanatory models of aggressive behavior, prosocial behavior, and methods of assessment. The second aim was to present state of the art applications of socio-emotional programs in a large variety of contexts where aggression takes place.

### **Bullying and cyberbullying**

Bullying among young people is a serious, common social problem that can have repercussions through adulthood. Dorothy Espelage, professor of psychology, University of Florida, USA, and the recipient of the APA Lifetime Achievement Award in Prevention Science was one of the conference keynote presenters. In that presentation, *School-Based Bullying Prevention & Intervention: Research Informed Strategies*, she discussed youth bullying, including face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying, gender-based bullying and harassment, plus teen dating violence among middle and high school students.

The most comprehensive definition of bullying was offered by Gladden et al. (2014). Bullying defined is the unwanted aggressive behavior (among school-age children that has a high likelihood of causing physical or psychological harm or injury and can be characterized by: 1) an imbalance of real or perceived power that favors the aggressor(s); 2) is repeated or has a high likelihood of being repeated; 3) the victim(s) of bullying may feel intimidated, demeaned, or humiliated as a result of the aggression. Further, cyberbullying was defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) as being willful and repeated harmful behavior inflicted through the use of computers, cell phone, or other electronic devices.

Bullying perpetration often is an antecedent of cyberbullying perpetration in middle school, whereas face-to-face bullying is a powerful predictor of cyberbullying. It is possible that cyberbullying puts youth at particular risk for peer victimization. After this type of experience, youth assault in return and revenge in supposedly more safe, cyber space. So, bullying prevention programs need to consider how face to face bullying perpetration might spill over into cyberspace. Cyberbullying perpetration predicts peer victimization (Espelage, Rao, & Craven, 2013).

Bullying perpetration is associated with homophobic name-calling over the middle school years. According with Bully-Sexual Violence Pathway Theory, bullying perpetration and homophobic teasing were significant predictors of sexual harassment perpetration over time for boys. For girls, bully perpetration was associated with sexual harassment perpetration over the time, whereas homophobic teasing was not a noticeable moderator for females. It would probably be helpful, then, that bullying prevention programs address homophobic teasing and sexual harassment components among middle school youth (Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012; Espelage, Basile, De La Rue, & Hamburger, 2015).

Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava (2008) concluded that anti-bullying interventions appear to increase awareness, knowledge, and self-perceived competency in dealing with bullying, yet such interventions do not dramatically influence the incidence of actual bullying and victimization behaviors. A meta-analysis conducted by Ttofi and Farrington (2011) concluded that anti-bullying programs are effective. On average bullying decreased by 20-23% and victimization decreased by 17-20%. One of their conclusion was that work with peers was associated with an increase in victimization. Based on their results revealing that treatment effects were greater for high school samples, Polanin, Espelage, and Pigott (2012) supported the idea that bystander intervention behavior is a developmental process and not mechanisms of change underlying the programs. Bullying often is concurrent with other types of aggression and other risky behavior, often it is associated with other emotional problems including both internalizing and externalizing difficulties. Social emotional learning programs are an alternative to address bullying because they focuses on the systematic development of a core set of social and emotional skills that help youth more effectively to manage life challenges such as violence and aggression, peer victimization, homophobic teasing, and sexual harassment / violence.

Peter Smith, emeritus professor of psychology at Goldsmiths College, University of London talked about anti-bullying interventions in different cultures. Starting in Scandinavia 40 years ago, research on bullying picked up rapidly in European countries. It was learned that there was a strong correlation between decline in bullying rates between 1993 and 2010 (Health Behavior in School-aged Children) and increase in publications over similar period ( $r=.90$ ). However, as bullying decreased, cyberbullying increased. EU Kids Online

follow-up in seven countries from 2010 to 2013 suggested some rise in cyberbullying from 9% to 12%.

Evans, Fraser, and Cotter (2014) reported a meta-analysis of 32 studies evaluating 24 interventions implemented between 2009 to 2013. Programs implemented in the USA tended to be less successful than those implemented elsewhere (Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Turkey, and U.K.). Cantone et al. (2015) found seventeen intervention studies from 2000 to 2013: eight in the USA, three in Australia, and three in Finland, and one each in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Twelve (12) studies were implemented only in primary school settings. There was no statistical effect sizes calculated, but about 80% of the studies reported improvements in the experimental group in at least one of the principal components (bullying, victimization and bystanders' behavior). In their meta-analysis, Jimenez-Barbero et al. (2016) included 14 studies on bullying or school violence published from 2000 to mid of 2015. The results indicated moderate effect sizes for bullying frequency, victimization frequency, attitudes and school climate.

In Japan, bullying or *ijime* in Japanese has become the focus of research there in the last three decades. *Ijime* is a group phenomenon, as arguably something in the classroom context drives this kind of behaviors. *Ijime* is repetitive aggression during relationships among peers. In South Korea, bullying or *wang-ta* began to be studied in the 1990s. Several terms in that language have been used for bullying phenomena, but all imply group behaviors rather than one to one. The Chinese word defining bullying is *qifu*. The distinct feature of *qifu* is the imbalance of power, a stronger person or group harms the weaker while repetition is not a necessary characteristic. In Hong Kong, bullying is a taboo topic, few schools are willing to support research. The term *hei-ling* defined bullying as an intent behavior of a powerful person that harms a weaker one. There is no specification of the context. Smith and al. (2016) designed The Cartoon Test to study the differences between bullying defining terms and to explore these linguistic issues on a cross-national basis. The *bullying* term includes gender based exclusion. Bot *wang-ta* and *ijime* involve severe social exclusion, while *wang-ta* is low on physical aggression.

The symposium *Conventional and cyber forms of bullying and victimization in late childhood and adolescence* comprised four independent studies conducted by a Cypriot team. In the first research, Kyriakos Charalampous (University of Cyprus) and his colleagues indicated that both

conventional and cyber forms of bullying/victimization were close related. On the other hand, cyber bullying/victimization showed significant change during the four and a half month period of the study, whereas conventional forms did not. The findings were somehow similar with those of Espelage, Rao and Craven (2013). Girls had higher initial values for conventional bullying and cyber bullying, and showed greater change in conventional victimization and cyber-bullying. No gender difference was in place with respect to cyber-victimization. The second study was conducted by Panayiotis Stavrinides (University of Cyprus) and his colleagues. They found an important role of early peer alienation (three months before acting), on bullying/victimization and cyber bullying / victimization. Parenting style constituted a significant predictor of the bullying phenomenon and the effect of parenting style were mainly through its effect on the relationship that students develop with their peers. Myria Ioannou presented the third study results and concluded that locus of control explained significant variance of the effect of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles on bullying and victimization. Horizontal individualism was positively related to victimization, whereas vertical individualism was positively related to bullying. The findings point to the importance of considering contextual parameters of bullying and victimization as integrative components in prevention and intervention efforts. Bullying and victimization fully mediated the effect of psychopathic traits on delinquent behaviors established the last study conducted by Ifigenia Stylianou and her colleagues.

Eight oral presentations also focused on the topic of bullying and cyberbullying.

The Austrian team led by Petra Gradinger aimed to learn if a person (gender, age, aggressive behavior, and victimization) and class (class climate, ethnic diversity) characteristics moderated program effectiveness and sustainability of the ViSC Social Competence Program. Aggressive behavior, victimization, ethnic diversity and class climate moderated program effectiveness and sustainability. Elisabeth Stefanek and her Austrian colleagues identified groups of bullies and victims, investigated the level OF differences in depression, peer relations, and school variables, and studied how peer relations (i.e. reciprocal friends, social impact) and school variables (i.e. school liking, motivation, academic self-efficacy, grades) were associated to depression in these groups. Bullies and moderate victims had lower levels of depression

compared to severe victims and bully-victims, more reciprocal friends compared to severe victims, and higher level of liking school compared to bully-victims. Bullies had lower motivation to learn in school compared to non-involved adolescents and severe victims. Severe victims had least reciprocal friends, and highest social impact compared to the other groups. Severe victims and bully-victims had the highest level of depression and lowest levels of liking school. The groups did not differ in academic self-efficacy and grades achieved.

Susanne Robinson presented the conclusions of the research conducted by Smith, Robinson, and Marchi (2016). They had examined four large scale data sources for self-reported victim rates; EU Kids Online Survey, Global School Health Survey (GSHS), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC). Despite quite similar measurement procedures, agreement on country differences in victim prevalence rates was low to modest, raising questions about the validity of such data sources.

The Czech team represented by Hana Machackova examined the relationship between parental characteristics (gender, age, education, neuroticism, and conscientiousness), child characteristics (gender, age, and level of victimization) and parental worries about their child being bullied. Worries were more intense in mothers and parents with higher neuroticism and conscientiousness. There was no significant relation to parental education. There was no significant direct link between parental worries and the awareness of their child's victimization by a bully.

Ioana Sarbu, a Romanian doctoral student investigated bystander perception of victim and perpetrator. Victims of bullying were perceived as vulnerable, weak, isolated, fearful individuals, and that these traits were easily noted by perpetrators. Labels such as powerful, dominant, popular, and superior were assigned to perpetrators. The results were concordant with other studies, suggesting that the pursuit of status and esteem to be the reason for perpetrator behavior. This was supported only when it was related to the victim vulnerability and weakness.

Our German Colleague, Stephanie Pieschl, presented the results of four studies. In the first explorative study, the results showed that negative experiences of family problems and cyber-perpetration predicted low generalized trust. In the second exploratory study, trust was related to low

online privacy concerns and the willingness to self-disclose online was positively related to cyber-victimization and cyber-perpetration. In the third study, Surf-Fair program was implemented in secondary school, following a pre-post research design. Results showed no reduction in cyber incidents, but students indicated using better coping strategies afterwards and they evaluated Surf-Fair positively. In the fourth study, a stand-alone Surf-Fair Bystander Unit was explored. That would successfully increase the perception of empathy and reduce cyber incidents at mixed-track comprehensive schools. No significant effects were detected in a pre-post waiting-control-group design, most likely due to the difficult school context.

Results obtained by Olga Solomontos-Kountouri and her team confirmed that traditional and cyber bullying and victimization were interrelated phenomena. Traditional bullying was highly related to cyberbullying and vice versa, while traditional victimization was highly related to cyber-victimization and vice versa. Similar were conclusions presented by Kyriakos Charalampous and those published by Espelage, Rao, and Craven (2013). These results also confirmed that adolescents who were involved in bullying and victimization at school had socio-emotional problems. It seemed important to note that prevention and intervention programs focus on the development of socio-emotional competences.

### **Anger, aggression and violence prevention and intervention programs**

Violence among students has emerged as a major concern in most European countries. Herbert Scheithauer, professor of psychology, Freie Universität Berlin, was invited as a keynote speaker about: *Prevention of targeted school violence by responding to students psychosocial crises: the NETWASS program*. NETWASS (Networks Against School Shootings) is a standardized, school-based prevention program designed in reaction to dramatic cases of school shootings in Germany. It is based on early intervention in student psychosocial crises, combining the threat assessment approach with a general model of prevention of emergency situations in schools. The primary aim of this program is to identify and help students in a critical pathway to violence and to train teachers to be more attentive to indications of a student in psychosocial crisis. NETWASS was nationally implemented in ninety-eight German schools with 3,473 staff participants. The results showed that the program increased school staff expertise and evaluation skills. It enhanced the



abilities to identify students experiencing a psychosocial crisis that led to targeted school violence recognition and prevention. The program also improved confidence in school organizational structure, trust in external partners who worked with schools, improved teacher-student interaction, and promoted school staff cohesion and feelings of safety.

Aggressive behavior is perhaps the clearest risk factor for poor adjustment and psychopathology over time and may lead to the developmental social-cognitive biases that include viewing aggressive behavior as effective, endorsing positive social norms for aggression, and moral disengagement. Aggression has trait-like quality and it is among the most temporally stable of all negative human characteristics (Dodge et al., 2006).

Ann Vernon, emeritus professor of psychology, University of Northern Iowa, USA and president of Albert Ellis Institute is the author of two well-known Rational Emotive Behavioral Education (REBE) programs: *Thinking, Feeling, Behaving*, and *The Passport Program*. REBE is a socio-emotional learning program, the aim of which is to teach children and adolescents to become more rational and better adapted personally and socially. In her presentation, *Stop the Fight! Effective Strategies for Helping Children and Adolescents Deal with Anger and Aggression*, prof. Vernon identified effective strategies for helping children and adolescents develop socio-emotional skills in order to deal more effectively with anger which so often leads to aggression and violence. In their meta-analysis, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) obtained a main effect of the universal school-based programs ranged between .22 and .57 on conduct problems, attitudes, positive social behaviors, emotional distress and social and emotional skills. Academic performance was also improved. Trip, Vernon, and McMahon (2007) investigated the effectiveness of REBE through a quantitative meta-analytical study. The effect size was the largest for academic problem solving. A powerful effect size was obtained concerning anxiety reduction. An average effect size was recorded with behavioral problems decreasing. The effect size of REBE seems to have supported even a primary prevention program that aimed to reduce the strength of dependent variables (irrational beliefs, dysfunctional inferential beliefs, emotions, and behaviors) in a normal population (i.e., no problems).

A series of presentations were focused on aggressive behavior among children and adolescents with disabilities or those from orphanages. Mihai

Predescu, West University of Timisoara studied the efficacy of implementing Life Space Crisis Intervention managing aggression of children with intellectual disabilities. The program proved to be more effective with children with lower level handicaps. They were able to better understand and identify disruptive patterns of behavior. Delia Cristescu, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca investigated resilience to bullying victimization in residential care. More specific, Ildiko Szanto, University of Oradea presented a case study of residential care, focusing on institutional changes that build resilience in children and adolescents.

Students' attitudes and reactions towards aggression, but also the functions of aggressive behaviors were studied by Ioana Darjan, West University of Timisoara. Gabriel Roşeanu and his team from University of Oradea investigated which one of the irrational beliefs and anger dimensions better predicted psychopathology and specific developmental issues of adolescents. The most important predictors for maladaptive behaviors and clinical syndromes were low frustration tolerance towards rules, trait anger, external expression of anger, global evaluation of self, and low frustration tolerance towards other students' behavior.

Howard Kassinove, professor of psychology, and director of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Anger and Aggression, Hofstra University, New York, as a conference keynote speaker presented the paper - *Anger and Interpersonal Aggression: Theory and Treatment*. Anger and aggression are separate phenomena that lead to significant interpersonal and intrapersonal distress in many environments and across the age span. "Anger is a felt emotional state that varies in intensity, duration and frequency; is associated with cognitive distortions, verbal and motor behaviors and pattern of physical arousal. Anger is not a form of aggression, and most often does not lead to aggression" (Kassinove & Tafrate, 2002, p. 12). The anger episode model has five parts: triggers, appraisals, experiences, expressive patterns and outcomes. Triggers could be external or internal stimuli, but most commonly reported were the unwanted, unexpected, aversive interpersonal behaviors. Many appraisals of stimuli focused on the themes of unfairness. The appraisals are the irrational beliefs of awfulizing, low frustration tolerance, demandingness, global evaluation of self and others. The experiences is the internal awareness of anger. It leads to a pattern of observable verbal and motor expression of anger. The outcomes are positive, negative or neutral events that

typically follow angry behavior. Based on anger episode model, Kassinove and Tafrate (2002) developed the SMART anger management program.

### **Forensic Assessment and Intervention**

Prevalence rates of mental problems in forensic populations exceed those found in the general community. One of the invited keynotes, PROF Raymond Chip Tafrate, Central Connecticut State University and former chairperson of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice there gave a presentation, *Forensic CBT: An Integrated Approach for Working with Justice-Involved Clients*. An emerging body of research indicates that reducing future criminality has little to do with reducing mental health symptoms. Less than 10% of criminal behavior can be linked to symptoms. Mental health symptoms were unrelated to recidivism, whereas criminal risk factors predicted general and violent re-offending. Addressing lifestyle issues (e.g., routines, relationships, and destructive habits) most associated with criminal behavior produces larger reductions in future criminality. The “central 8” criminal risk domains were reviewed, both the “big four” (history of criminal/ antisocial behavior, antisocial orientation, antisocial companions, criminogenic thinking) and “the moderate four” (lack of connection to work, school, substance abuse/ misuse, dysfunctional family / romantic relationships, aimless use of leisure time). The presentation offered specific examples and empirical support for the incorporation of criminal risk domains into assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning.

In the field of forensic psychology, the symposium: *Signaling and decoding aggression: from evolutionary significance to advanced techniques of analysis (micro-facial expressions, polygraph and profiling)*, was chaired by Alina Rusu, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The aim of the symposium was to approach in an interdisciplinary manner the ways animals and humans signal aggression, deceive and decode information about aggressive tendencies and actions. The first paper, presented by Alina Rusu, discussed several modalities and potential adaptive functions of strategies used by animals (and humans) to signal aggression. Gianina Alexa, police commissary, polygraph expert, District Police Inspectorate Arad, Romania introduced a qualitative research, aiming to identify and described the aggression components of sexual offences among juveniles using a methodology that included semi-structured psychological interview,

psychological observations and a standard polygraph procedure available for the Romanian police (forensic labs). Dorin Dumitran and Florentin Neagu, profiling experts, Service of Behavioral Analysis, General Inspectorate of Romanian Police, described indicators of high aggression at the crime scenes, focusing on profiling strategies of decoding the hidden signs. Emanuel Andelin, principal inspector, Maximum Security Prison Arad, Romania used the behavioral analysis of the facial emotions indicating that the emotion of happiness was often associated with negative emotional triggers such as lies and verbal description of the physical aggression against another person, or by antisocial acts (theft, robbery).

Three oral and four poster presentations could be relegated to forensic psychology domain. Arielle Sagrillo Scarpati, University of Kent explored the relationship between moral values and ambivalent sexism for adult men in Brazil and England. Cultural acceptance of sexism could be an important indirect variable that was related to perpetration to occur by creating a context where the idea that certain groups should be dominant over other groups, is considered normative. Sarah Edwards, Middlesex University used a discursive approach to consider the social construction of empathy by offenders when engaging with a victim awareness program (RESTORE). Violent offenders constructed violence from provocation or self-defense, thereby justifying previous behavior and asserting accountability to the victim. The analyses revealed how offenders used varying discursive strategies either to offer or to withhold empathy toward others. Alina Decsei-Radu, University of Oradea described a program for domestic violence prevention in a prison population. Yoshihiro Horio, Ph.D., Aichi Prefectural University, Japan found that young offenders experienced significantly more victimization than non-delinquents. Young offenders who had a strong emotional reaction to their experience of abuse began their misconduct at an earlier age. Anger of young offenders was stronger than that of non-delinquents. A strong emotion of anger may be related to juvenile delinquency.

James McMahon, Albert Ellis Institute, New York, professor emeritus University of Oradea, who bought the first REBT training programs from New York to Romania in 1998, offered a presentation about murder, discussing its root causes, diagnosis aspects and factors that if heeded could head off some murders in the human condition. With Laszlo Litkey MD who performed over four hundred forensic psychiatric evaluations of admitted and convicted

murderers, McMahon has testified and written reports for both plaintiff and defense in such matters.

### **Aggressive behavior in work**

Intense and frequent anger experiences and aggressive behaviors are associated with many costs for individuals, in many areas of activities, including the work place. Georges Steffgen, University of Luxembourg investigated work-related anger in a longitudinal study. The feedback, mobbing, and mental demands at work were incrementally linked to work-related anger. The longitudinal findings underline the importance of differential working conditions as diagnostic indicators of work-related anger. Corina Zmole and Marius Cioara, University of Oradea studied aggressive behaviors in sport practice. The results revealed higher levels of aggression in sedentary persons, but no differences between the two sport disciplines (karate, escalade). In their second study, a sample of behavior disordered pupils have been randomly assigned in three groups, one receiving cognitive-behavior counseling sessions focused on aggression reduction, the second followed a movement-based intervention and a non-intervention control group. Short term benefits have been found in both experimental groups, but only cognitive behavior counseling proved to be effective in a follow-up assessment. Angelica Hålmåjan and Alexandru Botos, University of Oradea conducted two studies. In the first study, they analyzed personality and locus of control as predictors of auto driver aggression. The persons involved in accidents with victims showed a significantly low level of openness and conscientiousness and a significantly higher level of external locus of control. For professional drivers, a high level of openness can lead to low level of involvement in aggressive behaviors. In the second study, hostile aggression and revenge were related to dangerous driving and traffic violation and local driving customs. Marian Mihai studied the state of stress experienced by students, due to end of semester exam session. Students who experienced a moderate to high level traumatic event will report less problem-solving abilities, and an increased level of potential depression symptoms after the exams session.

### **Social and civic behaviors**

Social and civic behaviors are key competencies for lifelong learning. Twenty three years have passed since the Maastricht Treaty established the

European Union. During this period, Europe has experienced pleasant events, but also issues such as migration, economic crisis, discrimination and aggression against citizens. The symposium *Europe 2038 - Voice of the youth*, chaired by Carmen Bora, University of Oradea was part of the project with the same name, funded from Europe for Citizens program 2014-2020 (Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation; Action 2.3: Civil society projects; call 2015; project ID 564710). The project is currently conducted in seven European countries: Albania, Austria, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and UK. The aim is to identify young people's visions for the future of Europe: personal and European priorities and worries. Also, attitudes, values and behaviors of young people between 16 and 26 years are being assessed in order to identify their connection with the visions of similar aged cohorts throughout the countries studied. Four national teams presented their results: Romania, Austria, Italy and Spain.

The above results have shown that Romanian youngsters are focused on health, job, happiness, safety, and health environment about what concerns their personal future. Women considered these priorities as being more important than men. Regarding the future of Europe, their priorities are related to freedom, health care, human / children's rights, security, and education. Women also considered these priorities as being more important than men. The top five worries were linked to injustice, violence and crime, increase in diseases, terrorism, and corruption. Reportedly, women are more worried regarding this topic than men. Romanian young people identified themselves as European citizens. The most important values embraced by young Romanian citizens were human rights, diversity, democracy and justice, rule of law. They reported openness to diversity and to other people, and they have high community efficacy. Frustration intolerance and ambiguity intolerance have been shown to influence young people in setting their personal priorities and their worries.

For the Austrian young people, the top priority was human rights, followed by education and security. Gender and country of birth moderated the priority list. More women than men and more people who were born abroad than were born in Austria choose human rights. The top five worries identified by Austrian young persons were: war in Europe, terrorism, rise of the extremist right wing parties, prejudice / discrimination / racisms, and climate change. More men than women were afraid of a war in Europe, and of terrorism. A

percentage of 68,3% of the young people reported some kind of social exclusion and discrimination in school, 42,5% at work, and 38,1% during their education. Gender and country of birth moderated the exclusion experiences. Young people with higher levels of exclusion experiences expressed more fears for the future of Europe. They would prioritize migration and refugees less, but would prioritize the reduction the number of EU countries.

The results of the Italian team showed that the issues evaluated by youngsters as top priorities for the Europe relate to education, human rights and rights of groups at higher risk of discrimination, safety and unemployment. Adolescents (16-18 years) rated these issues among Europe priorities at higher levels than young adults. Young people's top worries for the future mainly include terrorism, unemployment, discrimination and racism, and war and violence. Again adolescents were worried about these problems at higher extent than young adults. Personal priorities are being happy and healthy, having a job. Italian youths, in particular adolescents, reported the need of a future Europe caring more of the issues of integration unemployment and safety, a more sympathetic Europe with stronger identity and connections, and in which the education and the respect of human rights are the most relevant priorities for the future.

Well-being variables such as happiness were the most relevant consideration for Spanish youth. A very important place into the ranking was "employment" due to the difficulty that Spanish people have actually getting a job, and about the 20% of young people being unemployed. To be healthy was the third priority, probably being the key to achieve many other variables. It was much more difficult to identify the most important worries for Spanish youngsters for a variety of ranking reasons. Nonetheless, terrorism and unemployment were their two main worries. According to their desires and worries, Spanish adolescents would prioritize education as the key to unlock and resolve all the rest of the issues.

### **Conclusions**

The conference aimed, in addition to reporting research, to stimulate interdisciplinary research of aggressive and pro-social behaviors. The participants had the opportunity to develop further cooperation such as participation in international research teams, writing and publishing articles in

the top journals. Fifty two researchers from 24 foreign universities were represented, mostly from Europe (Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the UK, Poland, Czech Republic, Spain), but also from USA and Japan attended the conference. The number of Romanian participants was by last count 31, representatives of the University of Oradea, Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj Napoca, the Western University of Timisoara, University of Bucharest, Police Academy from Bucharest, Police Inspectorate from Arad, the General Romanian Police Inspectorate, Penitentiary of Maximum Security from Arad. In order to raise the awareness in society about the importance of research and development of socio-emotional programs, there were invited representatives of socio-economic institutions. Romanian Ministry of Education was represented by one its advisers. The Romanian Parliament, Chamber of Deputies sent one of its member, the present vice-president of the Parliamentary Education Committee. One of the Romanian Euro parliamentarians responded also to the invitation to attend the conference. Specialists working in the three County resource centers and educational assistance (Cluj, Bihor, Sălaj) shared their experience in counseling children with externalizing problems and in implementation of socio-emotional programs. Representatives of students were also involved. One student was entitled to speak for The National Council of Secondary and High school Students. Many university students associations attended the conference.

2015 marked the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of the *Workshop on Aggression* at an important academic center, the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz. In 2016, the *Workshop on Aggression* gave us the opportunity to have a wonderful celebration of 20 years of education and research in Psychology at the University of Oradea. 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Psychology with great thanks to faculty members who played or still play a role in the life of faculty and students there: prof. Elena Bonchiş, Ph.D., prof. Nicolae Mitrofan, Ph.D., prof. Mihai Aniţei, Ph.D., prof. James McMahan, Psy.D., Ph.D., Th.D., Sc.D., prof. Daniel David, Ph.D., prof. Paul Negruţ, Ph.D., prof. Tinca Creţu, Ph.D., prof. Anca Dobrean, Ph.D., prof. Stefan Szamoskozi, Ph.D., prof. Pavel Petroman, Ph.D., prof. Adrian Hatos, Ph.D., prof. Sergiu Bălăţescu, Ph.D., prof. Florica Ştefanescu, Ph.D., prof. Floare Chipea, Ph.D., prof. Ann Vernon, Ph.D., prof. Irina Holdevici, Ph.D., prof. Howard Kassino, Ph.D., associate prof. Cecilia Sas, Ph.D., associate prof. Gheorghe Oros, M.D., lecturer Hadrian Vaida, Ph.D., M.D.; and those who



have passed from the scene including prof. Teodor Maghiar, Ph.D., prof. Nicolae Jurcău, Ph.D., prof. Ion Radu, Ph.D., and prof. Mielu Zlate, Ph.D.), each a great teacher and benefactor who helped with the birth of the department and sustaining its programs in Psychology.

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