## Bread Therapy*:* The Innovative Art Therapy Methods of the Bread Houses Network

Хлебна Терапия: Иновативни арттерапевтични методи в мрежата Хлебни къщи

**Dr. Vjara Granitzka**

**Dr. Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova**

**Kiril Grigorov**

In our era dominated by technologies and online communication, we sense a sharp need for activities engaging our hands, for crafts and for food, which we can make on our own and then share with others in order to regain our self-confidence, self-esteem, to better understand how much we need one another and to learn to better communicate with each other. Bread making is a unique creative activity in which metaphors of life, problem-solving and coping with difficulties can be successfully applied. It involves different stages in a certain sequence and teaches different social and cognitive skills, patience and cooperation.

The plasticity of the dough allows the training of motor skills, and the aroma and taste of freshly baked bread provokes the senses and enhances the emotional well-being of the participants. Bread therapy in the form developed by the Bread Houses Network mixes breadmaking with therapeutic drawing in flour, rhythm, music, poetry, story-telling and drama – diverse artistic techniques aimed at personal healing and group therapy and community building. The creative process during the bread sessions helps participants explore their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, allows them to convey their inner states, drop unnecessary defence mechanisms, and to discover and develop their talents and communication skills with others. The *Theater of Crumbs* method invented by Dr. Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova and spread by the Bread Houses Network globally is examined in this paper, which presents a summary of the in-depth research by art therapists and psychologists over the past 10 years of its application with various groups around the world. The method has various effects, including: therapeutic, psychological, and medical effects; social/community building role; educational and inter-cultural communication aspects.

**Хлебна Терапия: Иновативни арттерапевтични методи в мрежата Хлебни къщи**

В нашата епоха, доминирана от технологии и онлайн комуникация, ние усещаме остра нужда от дейности, ангажиращи ръцете ни, от занаяти и от храна, която можем да приготвим сами и след това да споделим с другите, за да си върнем самочувствието, уважението, за да разберем по-добре колко имаме нужда един от друг, да се научим да общуваме по-добре помежду си.

Приготвянето на хляб е уникална творческа дейност, при която метафорите на живота, решаването на проблеми и справянето с трудностите могат да бъдат успешно приложени. То включва различни етапи в определена последователност и учи на различни социални и когнитивни умения, търпение и сътрудничество.

Пластичността на тестото позволява трениране на двигателни умения, а ароматът и вкусът на прясно изпечен хляб провокира сетивата и засилва емоционалното благополучие на участниците. Терапията с хляб във формата, разработена от мрежата Хлебни къщи, съчетава производството на хляб с терапевтичното рисуване в брашно, ритъм, музика, поезия, разказване на истории и драма - разнообразни художествени техники, насочени към лично изцеление и групова терапия и изграждане на общността. Творческият процес по време на сесиите за месене на хляб помага на участниците да изследват своите мисли, чувства и поведение, позволява им да предадат своите вътрешни състояния, да отпуснат ненужните защитни механизми, да открият и развият своите таланти и комуникативни умения с другите. Методът Theatre of Crumbs, изобретен от д-р Надежда Савова-Григорова и разпространен от мрежата на Хлебните къщи в световен мащаб, е разгледан в тази статия, която представя резюме на задълбочените изследвания на арт терапевти и психолози през последните 10 години от прилагането му с различни групи по света. Методът има различни ефекти, включително: терапевтични, психологически и медицински ефекти; играе роля на социално / общностно изграждане; образователни и междукултурни комуникационни аспекти.

**Biography**

**Dr. Vyara Granitzka** is an artist (National Academy of Arts, Sofia). In 2013 he defended his doctorate on ‘Art therapy as a creative process. Visual models of expression and communication in people with physical disabilities, mental retardation and autism’. He teaches Practical Art Therapy to students at the National Academy of Arts in Sofia and Burgas. Since 2000 he has been an art therapist and head of the Center for Social Rehabilitation and Integration for People with Disabilities ‘Annunciation’ of Caritas Sofia.

Dr. Granitzka is the author of two monographs on the topic: *Art therapy. Theoretical and practical dimensions* (2018) and *The creative process in art therapy for people with disabilities* (2020).

From 2013 to 2017 he conducted art therapy classes with children deprived of parental care under the project DREAM UP.

**Dr. Nadezhda Savova-Grigorova** is a cultural anthropologist (Princeton University, USA), who has explored and baked bread in diverse cultures across 77 countries and was awarded by *National Geographic* ‘Traveler with a Mission of the year-2012’. Nadezhda founded the global organization International Council for Cultural Centers linking community arts for social change around the world **(**[**www.international3c.org**](http://www.international3c.org)**).** By 2009, she developed unique bread therapy methods as a form of art therapy and founded the Bread Houses Network (www.breadhousesnetwork.org) with the mission to ‘knead’ peace and friendship among isolated and feuding communities through the power of breaking bread together. Nadezhda is also illustrator and author of the children’s book series *The Adventures of HedgeHope, the Hedgehog Without Borders*, and of the educational game ‘Bakers Without Borders’ (www.thegame.bakerswithoutborders.net**)**, winner of the ‘Intercultural Innovations award-2016’ by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Nadezhda has been visiting lecturer at various universities and has given two TEDx talks on bread therapy.

**Recent publications and conference presentations**

**Viara Granitzka**

2020: Remote Art therapy for People with Disabilities in a pandemic environment.

III National Congress in Clinikal Psyhology with International Participation, October 15-18, 2020, Sofia, Bulgaria

2020: Art Formation and Verbal Morphology in Art Therapy. The international conference Education, Research & Development, 23-27 August 2020. Burgas, Bulgaria.

2020: Distance Training of Students in Practical Art Therapeutic Support – Opportunities and Challenges. Scientific Conference: Current Security Issues 2020, National Military University, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria