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## **STEREOTYPES CAN CAUSE TRAUMA. AN ESSAY BASED ON THE DOCUMENTARY “THE WISDOM OF TRAUMA”**

### **Abstract**

The article presents reflections based on the documentary “The Wisdom of Trauma” directed by Maurizio Benazzo and Zaya Benazzo, and released in 2021. Here, the author focuses on the nature of trauma, its consequences for the suffering individuals and their family members. He also highlights the methods used by professionals to work with people experiencing trauma. In conclusion, he identifies important ethical dilemmas that may arise for social workers in direct contact with another person.

**Keywords:** trauma, social work, childhood, professionals

Trauma is a very difficult experience. Dr. Gabor Maté said that trauma occurs in a person. I understood him in this way that this disease comes from within a person. It is a response to all external situations, such as being beaten by the father’s belt, parents abusing alcohol, etc. In my opinion, the definition of trauma is different in this film. It is not standard understanding of the disease that it occurs to individuals who experience difficulties in life. This disease can affect everyone, each of us can carry it without knowing it. I really liked how Dr. Gabor Maté said that each man has his own and authentic personality, which is what defines the man himself, thanks to which he is authentic, unique, and exceptional in the world. According to the protagonist of this film, trauma disconnects a person from his own personality. I understand it as the way that man becomes someone else. This disease causes him to lose his unique features. Dr. Gabor Maté defines the causes of what he calls “disconnection” in that it is too painful to behave, to function in the way that is right for you. I think that is a very strong statement. In my opinion, it shows that human when he does not have the strength to fight his problems, he puts on a mask and runs away from those problems. This mask, in my opinion, is the “disconnect” that the character in the film mentions. It is the way other characters struggled with their problems until they met Dr. Gabor Maté. An example is this boy who started taking heroin at the age of 26 because, as he himself said, it helps

relieve pain. Similarly, one of the girls said that it is easier to run away from reality than to live and tire of it.

I believed that trauma is a disease that some small social group is struggling with. In my opinion, it is caused by the fact that people were just doing too well in life and do not know what to do with themselves. People who suffer from it simply cannot cope with their problems, because no one has taught them, because someone has always cared for them, did everything for them. They were brought up in a “golden cage” or “under a lampshade”. Such people never lacked money, food. They had the latest laptop and phone models. They drove expensive cars. And here it turned out that I was wrong. This movie has completely changed my way of thinking. First, I saw that not only rich people get sick, but also ordinary people who had a difficult childhood because they lived in a pathological family or because nobody wanted to talk to them. Wealth does not cause trauma. Second, it connects to the first, that is the trauma is not looking at the person. For me, this means that it does not exist in a specific social group. Anyone can get sick with it, no matter how old they are, what their education is, what house they come from, where they work, what class they are in. I understand this way that the incidence of this disease is not dependent on class factors. Third, this doctor showed in the film that trauma is common. I understand it like that most of western society suffers from this disease. This means that I can get too traumatized. In my opinion, these three things are my inspiration from the movie.

This film helped to see a person differently. Before, I was very critical of people who were sick with trauma. Someone could say that I hated them. I still have negative associations with people suffering from trauma, but I try to combat them. “The wisdom of trauma” showed me that my thinking about people who suffer from trauma is wrong, because as a future social worker I will meet such people and have to help them. If I don't change my approach, I can only hurt them. I am of the opinion that such problems need to be solved quickly and specifically, because I am a task-oriented type. Dr. Gabor Maté presented a different way of working with such people. He demonstrated the need to understand the sources of this disease. This is an approach that I have come across on other subjects. So, it is not foreign to me, but I think there are a lot of spaces to promote this approach. Not just for trauma. When I watched this film I was hoping to learn a completely different method of working. I think that it is similar to the ones I have already known. That is why I do not have enough of this film. Nevertheless, maybe in the future it will lead me to start using this method.

This film taught me not to stereotype people. This is the biggest problem I have. I use stereotypes a lot because it makes life easier. You can easily explain something to yourself. I am not forced to work harder then. I can easily give a person a category where, for example, he is ugly, fat, skinny, etc. And when I see a sick person, it is easy to say that he is guilty. If he behaved properly, he would not be sick and he would not have problems. I often forget the concept of compassion. I can sympathise with people who have lost a loved one due to death, but not due to such an illness. As a professional, I should sympathise with such people, as I will probably be working with them. This attitude is

required of the social worker. Such a person cannot be focused on the problem but must see the man who is suffering from the problem. In conclusion, this film taught me not to use stereotypes and not to sympathise with people in their problems. Dr. Gabor Maté shows in the film that society should be more compassionate. Second, society should better understand trauma.

On a scale of 1 to 10, my attitude towards people is seven, which is more than half. I believe that at the moment I am not able to get higher because I still lack the attitude of Dr. Gabor Maté. First of all, I still have problems using stereotypes too often. Although I was positive immediately after watching the movie, after a while I see that it is not easy to fight with my habits. It seems to me that my motivation is also not high enough. Still, the bottom line for me is that stereotypes are not good. I take small steps to limit the use of stereotypes. I hope it has the desired results. However, when it comes to seeing people in need, I think this movie will make me more sensitive to people's problems. I hope to be more aware of what trauma is. Maybe, this film will help me better notice people who suffer from this disease or that. Open eyes are an important quality that I need. Unfortunately, I know that I often miss this feature. The result is that I do not notice people in need. This has the consequence that they suffer even more. They may also lose hope that someone will help them.