**Integrative Psychodynamic Coaching (IPC)**

**specifics of our approach**

### Integrative Psychodynamic Coaching is an innovative approach to coaching, with predominantly psychodynamic orientation. Its theory is based upon integration of four psychoanalytic psychologies: Drive psychology ([classical psychoanalytic theory](http://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=classical+psychoanalytic+theory&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholart&sa=X&ei=igq8UuCsIo2IyQPlp4GgBg&ved=0CCQQgQMwAA)), Ego psychology, Object relations psychology and Self psychology.

**The emotion processing fundamental capabilities theses, extracted from the theories mentioned above, are the theses IPC is based on.** **The method of working with clients is likewise integrative, as it includes the techniques and skills originally established in variety of other coaching approaches** (such as: Psychoanalytic, Gestalt, Transactional analysis, Bioenergetics, NLP, Focusing, Biofeedback and Neurofeedback, REBT etc. ) combined with the techniques and skills emanated from IPC, such as “IPC personality development protocols”, “Basic emotional competencies development protocols”, “Emotive accounting” and the “Mathematics of Psychology”… (Jovanović, 2013).

Nevertheless, IPC method is not an eclectic, but an integrative approach. **The model of fundamental emotional competencies is the integration foundation for the variety of other coaching approaches, techniques and skills.** The basic premise of the IPC method is that a person can not change unless his/hers basic "tools for life", basic skills for processing emotions, or so to say , ‘software’ that our psyche uses to process emotional information (emotions are a form of processing information), are undeveloped or blocked. The bugs or viruses in these executive programs lead to unhealthy emotions, faulty perception and irrational interpretation of relations with the Self, the others and the world. IPC coach works with two levels: the level of content and the level of process. By listening the content of clients’ problems, talking to them about this content, their life events, their relations and love and work problems, IPC coach pays profound attention to the specific patterns and manners in which a client processes his experiences, as well as emotions triggered by these experiences.

Coaching techniques emanated from different approaches are used inwork with clients if they can contribute to development of a certain emotion processing fundamental capability. This represents the integration foundationof techniques from different approaches, whether they originate from psychodynamic, behaviour or any other coaching approach.

IPC method focuses on two main, composite capabilities: capability to work and capability to love. These two broad compoundlife handling capabilities are, like “Lego-bricks”, built of a certain number of smaller, much simpler bricks – basic emotional competencies:

1. **Prudence and thoughtfulness ("regulator and articulator of the psyche", self-awareness)**/ **Neutralization and mentalisation**

**2. Realism - wholeness of the experience ("glue of the psyche")/"Object wholeness"**

**3. Stability and consistency - constancy of the experience - ("psyche stabilizer")/"Object constancy "**

**4. Determination - ability to make the choice ("the guide of the psyche")/"Ambivalence tolerance"**

**5. Frustration tolerance ("the immunity of the psyche")**

**6. Will ("the engine of the psyche")**

**7. Initiative ("the actuator, driver of the psyche")**

If missing any of these cubes, managing emotions is not adequate. The ability of a person to love and to work is reduced.

If the **neutralization** capability is in an inchoate form, a person is guided by their urges and drives (“they lose their minds”). A person gets impulsive, irrational and unarticulated.

If a **“glue of psyche” – object wholeness** is damaged or not fully formed, maintaining the broader picture of reality, Self and object is impossible. The inner world of a person is split off and divided into a black and white clusters, the world of evil and good (a person is untogether, their perspective is either all positive or all negative, they either idealize or hate…).

Without the **object constancy**, i.e. the capability which ensures our emotional stability, people get unstable, codependent, needy and tend to cling onto others.

If **frustration tolerance** is underdeveloped, a person is not psychologically immune to inevitable life frustrations, love and work capabilities are, logically, undeveloped and immature, and such person can easily get extremely stressed out, crashed when under pressure.

If **ambivalence tolerance** is underdeveloped, a person is unable to make decisions and stick to them, is incapable to face antagonistic emotions towards someone of something (or their own Self) and equally incapable of resolution reaching, choosing one between two alternatives, is unable to make up their mind and be determined.

If **will** capability is underdeveloped, a person is lacking energy necessary to continuously support their desires and goals.

If **initiative** is not fully developed, a person is reactive, without the key for their psychological engine. A person with underdeveloped initiative needs someone else to get her move forward.

1. **Prudence and thoughtfulness ("regulator and articulator of the psyche", self-awareness, refleksivity)**/ "**Neutralization and mentalisation"**

If neutralization capability is undeveloped (Hartmann, 1939, 1950, Kris, 1951) a person is enslaved by their urges and drives, unable to “get their head around”. A person gets impulsive, irrational and unarticulated. If mentalization capability (Fonagy, 2001, 2002, 2003) is underdeveloped or unformed, people could not mentally process their impulses and behaviours and are beside themselves as if something horrible is about to happen. People then tend to cork up their feelings as they are incapable of understanding them, as well as they are incapable of recognizing their own mental states and processes. When a person verbalizes their problem, they say something like: “ This is stronger than me”, “ I do not know why, but I cannot control myself as if something has overtook me” or “Something came over me”…

If neutralisation and mentalisation are developed a person is not enslaved bu their needs and emotions, but her Ego rules them. An emotionally mature and competent person must be a prudent person. Her needs and emotions do not rule her, but she rules them. Emotions are not a horse without a rider. Ego of emotionally competent person knows can "ride" on their emotions, determining direction of movement, speed, mode ... She recognizes her emotions, does not suffocate them, but tries to understand them, to mentally process them, to think about why she feels the way she feels, she understands her feelings, motives, needs ... she understands emotions and motives for the behavior of other people. An emotionally mature person uses the power of his emotions, their energy, but manages to balance it, to convert that energy into power accessible to his Ego for solving problems or constructive action.

Numerous techniques have been developed to encourage the development of prudence and ‘mentalization’. The role of a coach is to direct the client towards learning how to process emotions and managing them. The role of coaching in encouraging reflexivity is the core component of executive coaching;  working to increase the client's ability for reflection, especially when it comes to emotions and their impact on rational thinking and behavior.

**2. Realism - wholeness of the experience and perception (“the glue of psyche”)/ "Object wholness"**

If object wholeness (Klein, 1935, 1940) “the glue of psyche” is deficient, an ability to see a broader picture and experience the wholeness of the Self, the others, and the rest of the world is impaired. Hence, the experiences are split off (by the primitive defense mechanism known as *splitting*) and the world is divided into categories of mutually excluded either all good or all bad experiences - “the world of good and evil”. The person is untogether. The basic mental operation in such state of mind is categorization (god or bad, hate or love… mutually excluded polar opposites of feelings, perception and resulting behaviors).

Realism (comprehensiveness of perception and experience) is the ability to see ourselves, other people, the situation as a whole, with good and bad aspects, without overstatement of either positive or negative components. Realism, as the basic function of our psyche when it is confronted with information that carries both positive and negative aspects of reality, uses a complete perception, a comprehensive perception. When we say that someone can "see the bigger picture," that he/she is "realistic person" we are talking exactly about this function, or the emotional competence that his/hers psyche performs. We call this ability "glue of the psyche" because it enables us to have an integrated experience. The lack of this ability makes our emotions unbalanced and unrealistically extreme.

**3. Stability and consistency - constancy of the experience (" stabilizer of psyche")/"Object constancy"**

Object constancy (Hartmann, 1952) is known as a precondition for our psychological stability, hence, if this emotion processing capability is lacking, a person is unstable, codependent, needy, clinging onto others. A person does not possess a stable mental representation of the object and the Self, and is also incapable for Self-regulation.

Some people have this internal stabilizer. They are independent and self-regulating. Others need other people and specific  circumstances to achieve stability, their stabilizers are outside, in the hands of others. Stability is based on the sense of a stable inner connection of a person with the people he/she loves, a job in which he/she is invested, values ​​and ambitions.

A person with built-up stability feels that he/she is not alone even when he/she is alone, because he/she feels supported by herself.

People with developed stability feel self-sufficient, safe and free, so they do not have a desperate need for others. Constancy of experience gives us a clear sense of our own boundaries and the  boundaries of another person.

The essence of the problem for people with underdeveloped consistency of experience is dependence, inability to be alone, to work on their own and insufficient differentiation of their own boundaries, the ability to differ experience of  themselves from the experience of others, or from the experience of the work they deal with. Their identity is diffused. These problems clearly reflect on their capacity to work: they can not work alone, though they could be good workers in the team. Another problem for people with a lack of object consistency is that they can not keep the goal constant, stable mental representation of the goal of work, if there is no immediate satisfaction. They can not delay satisfaction, nor achieve long-term goals that require patience and faith in success through continuous efforts that will, step by step, lead to the goal.

The work of the coach in dealing with clients who have this type of problem is the support in development of independence, clearer boundaries between themselves and others, oneself and the job, the development of the ability to put off, patience, maintain a connection with the long-term goal.

**4. Decisiveness - the ability of mature decision making and clear focus on implementation, commitment and responsibility (the orientation, "router of the psyche")/"Ambivalence tolerance"**

**Ambivalence intolerance** is anxieties connected to decision making and fear of making mistakes (Hartman &Zimberoff, 2003).

Without the capability to tolerate ambivalence, a person is indecisive, incapable to face antagonistic emotions towards someone of something (or their own Self) and equally incapable of decision making, choosing one between two alternatives, is unable to make up their mind and be determined. Mature decision making encounters cost and benefit analysis and genuine dealing with all the antagonistic emotions that one experiences toward the object (Self or the world).

If ambivalence tolerance is underdeveloped, we are met with anxieties related to decision making, loss of control, ambivalent emotions toward the object and fears of possible mistakes.

We are also met with anxieties regarding [responsibility](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/responsibility) taking.

In business, and in life, there are many situations and relationships in which there are strongly opposite emotions, attitudes, evaluations ... in relation to some business situations, relationships, tasks, goals ... Leaders are expected to make very mature decisions very often and to stay clearly focused on their realization. But, what does it mean - ‘ability to make mature decisions’?

Managers are familiar with the "cost/benefit" or similar methods they use in making decisions. However, when deciding real-life decisions, there are many more factors in the game than involving figures that show possible financial results. The decision-making process, to a large extent, is governed by emotions. We are often unaware of their influence on the decision-making process. We make the decisions under the influence of unconscious emotions, and then we ‘rationalize’ our decision - we give some seemingly rational arguments to justify the decision made under the unconscious influence of emotions. As companies have accounting that calculates revenues and expenditures, taxes and profits, so every individual has his/her own "emotional accounting" (which we do mostly unconsciously). Calculations of this, usually hidden from consciousness, "emotional accounting" can influence to a great extent our conscious decisions (or problems with decision making). When a person is a leader, when he leads others, it can have a lot of financial and organizational consequences. (Jovanović, 2013)

In working with clients, Coach is to support a person towards realization of his/hers unconscious emotional calculations and their subsequent rationalizations that intertwine in a conscious decision-making process and diminish his rationality. The ability to rational decision-making is the effect of developing this emotional competence.

**5. Frustration tolerance ("the immunity of the psyche")**

Tolerance to frustration is the ability to tolerate various types of frustration that are part of life, without reacting irrationally with destructive emotions or running away from all situations in which we could feel frustration.

Frustration is like viruses and bacteria that attack our psyche by hindering our desires and needs. As the body builds the immune system to deal with the inevitable bouts of microorganisms, in similar manner our psyche builds resistance to different frustrations, which are also an inevitable temptation. General immunity is developing, as well as special immunities for specific causes of illness, that is dissatisfaction, tension, emotional pain. Everyone has his/hers "Achilles heel"; something that is hard to tolerate, that frustrates him/her more than other frustration. In business life, of course, we can find many ‘frustraters’ that are opposing our needs and desires. However, not all are equally sensitive, "allergic" or "intolerant" to all kinds of frustration. It is good that a person knows and understands his "weak points", what particularly frustrates him and what is particularly intolerant. Intolerance causes intense dysfunctional emotional reactions. Tolerance does not mean that a person does not have emotions for the things that are frustrating, but that, in the face of frustration, we experience functional emotions that we can control, the emotions that are triggering change, solving the problems and do not threaten us.

**6. Will (the "engine" of the psyche)**

It's hard to imagine a successful person without developed will. The desire for success is not enough to achieve success. The relationship between desire and will is complex. People who have a desire without volition will remain at their desires which they do not bring to realization in the process of work. They are fantasizing, wanting to one day achieve something, but they have no power to make efforts to accomplish their tasks. Those who have a strong will without desire,  are workaholics who are ‘toiling without a soul’ .

Will gives guidance and maturity to desire. Will protects the desire, allowing it to survive without too much risk. Without desire, willpower loses vitality and strives to disappear in self-contradiction.

The will, however, is a motor that can "drive" in different directions. A key feature of the mature will is that it drives towards development, adaptive behavior and life on our own expense. The key feature of the immature will is to "drive" in a direction that does not lead to the development of the person (nor the development of others), but is directed towards manipulation of oneself and others, and some form of "parasitism", living on the expense of others. Mature will is directed towards exchange, reciprocity, immature will is directed to exploit, taking from others, with the help of manipulation, without reciprocity or correct and adequate exchange. Volition may be manifested as a driving energy or as an inhibition (a force that stops some behavior). The maturity of the will is not determined by intensity or its strength, but by the purpose of the activity. We can state the same about the capacity to work. Mature work capacity implies a strongly imbedded feeling for the purpose of work. A genuine capacity for work is defined as an activity that is purposeful and focused on really improving what a person is doing. The purpose of the work is not to satisfy the narcissistic needs of the individual, gaining attention, praise, gaining power, status, socializing with colleagues ... The basic function of the work is to improve the living conditions of the person working, people connected with it, the productivity and efficiency of the organization for which a person works and the production of quality goods or services that improve the quality of life or adequately meet the needs of customers.

In working with clients, the task of the coach is to recognize and face the client with the characteristics of his will, or support the client to see the development of this ability within himself.

**7. Initiative ("the driver of the psyche")**

Without the maturity of initiative a person is reactive, without the key for their psychological engine. A person with underdeveloped initiative needs someone else to get her move forward. They are afraid to independently commit themselves to a goal and stand for it.

Initiative is crucial for successful leaders and managers. The initiative is the ability to start, run something independently, the willingness to take the first step, as well as the responsibility for it, to persevere in the beginning of the activity. The initiative is when "I recognize and do what I think should be done before someone asks me" ...

Initiative and entrepreneurship (proactivity) are the most common topics in publications related to business psychology, education of managers, executives.. Employees with mature ability for initiative are real treasure. Unfortunately, this treasure is a rarity. Person with developed initiative will design, plan, initiate and implement (respecting the codes of business dealt with, business ethics, respecting the interests of the organization in which it operates). Mature initiative also include capacity for reciprocity.

The basic virtues or skills involved in the initiative are the sense of purpose and orientation, ability to make decisions, cooperate with others and lead others, the ability to define personal direction and goals, the ability to take initiative and appropriate risks, the ability to take initiative is with a realistic sense of ambition and purposefulness.

The basic orientation of the IPC coach is to recognize, and to help client recognize, how functional are these basic emotional competencies in the client, and to help client develop it to desired level. The techniques that coach will include depend which emotional competence we are working on. IPC coach  adapts its method of work to each client, does not work with all the same methodology, but selects techniques and approaches depending on the client's needs and level of development of each of the mentioned emotional competencies. This makes the IPC a very flexible and widely applicable approach.

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Why does IPC method pay a particular attention to emotive processing? In order to clarify this procedure, computer-human comparison will be offered as a model (people are, of course, much more complex systems than computers are). Nevertheless, when a computer has a bug, a user can notice it on its screen. The screen shows unexpected dots, forms or squares… a user is unable to reada text or see a picture at the computer screen. A user who has some basic IT knowledge does not think that the computer screen is broken. Such user knows that something went wrong with the software (which processes the data and creates what is seen at the screen). Such user may also wonder if there is something wrong with the computer hardware (mechanical part of the computer). When people have problems with the “hardware”, they visit their GP’s, neurologists, surgeons, or other specialist for human hardware (i.e. organs). On the other hand, when people experience problems with their software (the data processing program), they seek psychological help.

The states that people seek help for, are actually – the screen – or “clinical picture” as psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists usually call it. Psychotherapists do not deal with hardware, but with the clients’ capabilities and skills that are underdeveloped. Therefore, we cannot fix someone’s self-esteem or depression or impatience or any other unhealthy or dysfunctional state, nor could we create any of pleasurable states if we first do not fix basic emotion and cognitive processing capabilities, capabilities which are meant to process the psychological data, which then will lead to a positive change of a previously unhealthy state.

People create their states by processing what happens to them. The job of a psychodynamic coach is to help people to develop or unblock the interfering bugs which have created problems in human software. The human software can be seen as an executive emotion processing program. If a software is broken, the psychological problems, previously called “Clinical picture” become evident and manifest.

It is well known that some types of coaching are preferable to some clients, while other people prefer different coaching approaches. What is not totally clear is why does this happen? The answer to this question is much easier when one is introduced with fundamental emotional capabilities and their developmental phases. Each coaching technique is created to help the development of a certain capability. Nevertheless, most often we are met with the techniques but not with their proper background. What is lacking is the “tutorial” for the usage of a technique and explanation of what exactly the technique develops. We are usually met with generalized presumptions such as “how to broaden consciousness” or “how to deal with unaccepted aspects of the self”, or “how to take risks, be more responsible” etc. By defining a technique in this manner, it acquires a status of “general practice technique”. We could compare it to a broad spectrum antibiotic. If a certain coaching technique matches with the developmental need, or a degree to which a specific basic capability is developed, then the antibiotic could heal something and some positive change may happen. If a coach is empathetic, intuitive and able to maintain a good rapport with a client, the usage of techniques can be helpful.

Intuition is, nonetheless, not transferable. Hence, IPC method offers precise technique selection criteria. These criteria are organized and based on recognition of a certain fundamental emotional capability developmental status, on a developmental phase of a certain capability. Hence, the clearer understanding of how, when and why we use a coaching technique is established, as well as what and why it can develop, and in which developmental phase a certain technique is going to be helpful.