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**PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THE MIDDLE AGE IN A
CRISIS CONDITION**

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Abstract

There is a need to develop new and improve old technologies of psychological support for adults, taking into account the whole complex of psychological specifics of middle age and its acmeological component. The personal resource base can be conditionally divided into external and internal sources. External sources have specific properties: limitation, competitiveness, impossibility of saturation, acceleration of consumption, dependence, inevitable disappointment. They include food, alcohol, idleness, sex, drugs, shopping, gambling, computer games, social networks and the Internet. Internal resource sources are aimed at the development of internal satisfaction, rather than enjoyment. Internal personal developmental resources have a number of specific properties: infinity, lack of competition, immediate compensation (resource from the process), consumption slowdown, autonomy and unconditionality. They include: creativity, contemplation of beauty and harmony, service and help, care; humor; sport and muscle joy; dreaminess (invention); cognition; faith; love. This article shows a study aimed at developing a program of psychological support during a mid-life crisis. There are 3 stages of the program: diagnostic, supporting and control. A survey aimed at identifying the state of crisis in a middle-aged person is shown. More frequent, but less deep experience is characteristic for women, whereas rarer, but at the same time a deeper experience of a psychological crisis for men is observed.

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Keywords: Crisis, resources, middle age, personal developmental resources, psychological support.



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1. Introduction

1.1. The urgency of developing programs of psychological support for middle-aged people

With the growing number of psychological problems among middle-aged people in the modern world, there is an urgent need to develop new and improve the old technologies of psychological support for adults. In this regard, the issue of developing new programs that take into account the full range of psychological specificity of middle age and its acmeological component is relevant. Due to this principle, it becomes possible to focus on overcoming stressful and depressive manifestations on the strengths of the personality, manifested in a given age period, using Acme - the "peak" of development of the certain qualities and properties inherent only in this period. In particular, the strengths on which it is necessary to focus in the search for resources for overcoming psychological problems can be knowledge and experience, as well as the skills and understanding of life-based principles. Thanks to this "base", a person becomes the most capable of consciously rethinking his place in life and his life-sense landmarks, the philosophical search for Truth. The conscious finding and structuring of objective reality allows to increase the effectiveness of managing subjective reality. The result depends from the level and degree of control. In this case, manifestations of uncontrolled stress, aggression, depression and other non-constructive reactions can serve as an indicator of effectiveness. The return to the full management of their own lives and all its aspects is manifested in the internal psychological balance.

1.2. Resources for the development of middle-aged personality in crisis time

The personal resource base can be conditionally divided into external and internal sources (Tkachenko, 2009; Tkachenko, Kotova, Lisitskaya, & Nedbaeva, 2015). This separation indicates the origin and properties of resource sources. One can also select 2 main concepts of obtaining a resource state. The first one reflects the modern understanding of the use of resources to overcome various psychological crisis situations. It is completely focused on getting something "from the outside." The respect for others, status in the society, material well-being, enjoyment, saturation of natural physiological needs - all this is the main "external" sources of the resource base. Most people from childhood are focused on getting and replenishing these sources. Moreover, around these goals are built and meaningful life benchmarks, and values, and goals. It should be noted that along with obvious and understandable motivation, a relatively simple algorithm for achieving these goals, there is a number of significant shortcomings in the construction of this concept. In particular, the presence of certain resources not only provides energy and motivation for further actions, but also leads to a hard dependence on them. If there is a loss of the "source", then the person immediately suffers from a lack of resources or even becomes so exhausted that it already leads to the threat of death. For example, a person who has lost a prestigious job, loses money, status, "respect", acquires family problems, loses motivation to continue any activity. It often ends with alcohol addiction and complete destruction of the personality. Thus, it can be noted that the external "source" of resources becomes a source of destruction, both when it is lost and when it is used for a long time (that is, for any outcome), and support from the source was carried out only at the level of visibility of "material well-being", and destruction occurs to the level of personality. Thereby, a deep dependence of a person on external resource sources is manifested. Similar examples can be cited with respect to other external sources of the resource state: family, popularity, power, fame, material well-

being, etc. Dependence on these sources is manifested in the fact that a person only partially controls the availability of this source. Management is reduced only to the choice of the proposed options strategies. As a rule, the choice is very limited and often there are situations when it is necessary to choose the “lesser of two evils ...”. For example, a person fulfills his official and family obligations with distinction, but an “economic crisis” comes in and he is dismissed. The wife (husband) shows adultery. As a result, a person is forced to choose from obviously bad strategies for further existence. Dependence on external sources is also manifested by the fact that it forms the basis for various manipulations of a person’s behavior, forcing him to perform actions that benefit those who control the situation. Moreover, the victim of manipulation may not suspect that she has become the object of influence of external forces. In a subsequent analysis of the victim's behavior, it is difficult to explain the reasons for her behavior. However, it can be accurately noted that the behavioral reactions were motivated by external false sources of resources. The negative effects of targeting external resource sources can also include such an effect as “impossibility of saturation”. Receiving a resource condition from an external source, a person gradually comes to a state of “lack of energy”. Despite the fact that the quantity and quality of the source remains at the same level. Source saturation occurs only at the initial stage. After a short time, addiction comes, and then lack, along with the desire to get more. Then, there is a constant process of increasing absorption, which ultimately results in “accelerated motion”. Movement with acceleration cannot occur continuously and indefinitely, sooner or later, any system comes to overvoltage and destruction. Thus, external resource sources initially contain a conditionality related to the lack of these resources and the inherent result of frustration, crisis in a person who addresses them. This conditionality is determined by the fact that external sources have specific properties: limitation, competitiveness, impossibility of saturation, acceleration of consumption, dependence, inevitable disappointment. The external pseudo-resource sources conditionally include the most common and popular things: food, alcohol, idleness, sex, drugs, shopping, gambling, computer games, social networks and the Internet.

Unlike external well-known resource sources, internal personal-developmental resources are not covered by modern science. It should be noted that the internal resource sources are devoid of the above-mentioned disadvantages inherent in external sources and at the same time have a number of undeniable advantages. They are aimed at the development of inner contentment, and not enjoyment, as is the case with external resources. In addition, one of the main prospects for targeting internal personal developmental resources is their autonomy, and therefore ensuring the individual independence from external circumstances and targeted manipulation. This, in turn, ensures the presence of self-control and self-management.

Internal personality-developing resources, as well as external, have a number of specific properties: infinity, lack of competition, immediate compensation (resource from the process), consumption slowdown, autonomy and unconditionality. To such internal personality-developing resources focused on obtaining energy from return can be attributed to nine major sources: creativity, contemplation of beauty and harmony, service and help, care; humor; sport and muscle joy; dreaminess (invention); cognition; faith; love (Tkachenko & Sinyavin, 2018).

2. Problem Statement

Studies of various authors on the subject of psychological support for an individual abound demonstrate various kinds of methods (Semenova, 2008; Tkachenko & Komarova, 2018). They affect different aspects of the personality of adults and are aimed at restoring the functional mental state. However, it can be noted that this direction is not sufficiently studied. In particular, the emphasis is mainly on the creation of “technical” methods that eliminate the symptomatic manifestation of psychological dysfunctions. As a rule, most techniques are reduced to techniques based on various kinds of self-suggestion, psychological replacement of negative emotions, visualization with the purpose of correcting the emotional background and mood. It is quite possible to compare the principle of application of this type of methods with symptomatic treatment in medicine, where symptoms, but not the cause of the disease, are eliminated. In the present study, the principle of psychological support for the individual in middle age is different from most existing methods. In this case, it is proposed to work at the worldview level in order to eliminate the underlying causes of the occurrence of chronic depressive states and negative attitudes. The ideological level is one of the most fundamental bases of behavioral models of a person, his strategic goal-setting and making a choice among many options of actions. This is the level of creation of one or another relationship, this or that “picture of the world”. With the help of the proposed method, it is possible to change a person’s attitude to important basic concepts at the worldview level, which eliminates or minimizes the likelihood of the return of negative mental states, launches new algorithms for creating attitudes to certain life circumstances.

3. Research Questions

Studying the specifics of psychological support for an individual in middle age contributes to the question of what resources are hidden in middle-aged people and which technologies of psychological support for an individual during a crisis will be effective.

4. Purpose of the Study

1. Investigating the features of the crisis in middle-aged people.
2. Studying the sources of development of a middle-aged person during a crisis.
3. Development of technologies of psychological support for middle-aged people in times of crisis.

We believe that psychological support for an individual in middle age is the process of finding and implementing resources for overcoming crisis manifestations, initiating the creation and maintenance of motivation in activities, finding the deeper meaning and establishing a positive life concept that allows to increase the psychological stability of an individual. The difficulties in self-search for resources to overcome crisis situations are often associated with negative experiences already acquired, disappointment, loss of meaning, a sharp decline in interest in life and the level of motivation to achieve goals. It is often quite difficult to return the semantic fullness, confidence and motivation, as the individual already has established beliefs, experience and acquired knowledge. Taking all into

consideration, the search for methods and ways to increase resource availability, taking into account the specificity of the age period, is the main focus of research.

The participants

The survey involved 285 respondents aged 30-40 years old. Out of 285 respondents 216 were women, 69 - men. The study was conducted in 2017-2018.

5. Research Methods

At the stage of diagnosis and analysis of psychological problems in middle-age, a questionnaire was developed (Sinyavin, 2018), which allows to find out and detail the specificity of the psychological state of middle-aged people. This questionnaire allows not only to determine the presence and depth of the crisis, but also to make a selection of gender, age, family and professional characteristics. The survey was conducted using remote technologies and the Internet.

6. Findings

In this study a psychological support program was developed for the mid-life crisis. It was conventionally divided into 3 stages: diagnostic, supporting and control. At the stage of diagnosis and analysis of the psychological problems of middle-aged people a survey was conducted (Sinyavin, 2018), which was aimed at identifying the state of crisis of a middle-aged person. The survey was conducted using remote technologies and the Internet. 285 respondents took part in the survey.

The results of the study showed that an absolute 41% of respondents have an initial stage of crisis and 38% acute stage of a crisis. The number of non-crisis respondents was only 8%. The number of respondents in the chronic and deep crisis stage was 11% and 2% respectively. Most men are in a phase of acute crisis, and most women are in the initial stages of a crisis. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the experience of crisis among men and women is different. For women, a more frequent, but less deep experience is characteristic, whereas for men there are rarer, but at the same time a deeper experience of a psychological crisis.

Participation in the survey-testing of a greater number of women indicates only the specificity of the female psycho-emotional sphere. Women are more curious in the process of self-discovery than men, more open and ready for testing (Tkachenko & Sinyavin, 2018).

The findings suggest that the crisis of the psyche is a real problem in the society. In order to solve it, it is necessary to develop correctional programs that allow to restore the internal psychological balance to any person. These programs should be built according to the universal principle of "activating internal personal developmental resources" (Tkachenko, 2009).

It is advisable to create two stages: 1) Exit from the crisis 2) Activation of internal personal-developing resources. At the first stage it is necessary to stop the development of a crisis situation. There is an old time-tested expression: "If you cannot change circumstances, change your attitude towards them." Indeed, people perceive this or that event in their life, certain circumstances, through the prism of their interpretation of this event or circumstances. It is the interpretations that make the event "bad" or "good", "terrible" or "happy." The same events for different people create different impressions. These

are a kind of “light filters” of consciousness through which people pass the received information. Thus, it turns out that by changing or adjusting these “filters”, one can get some or another interpreted information at the output, both with a “+” sign and with a “–” sign. Attitudes and beliefs of a person form these “filters”.

It is worth noting that changing the beliefs of an adult with stereotypes of thinking that have already been formed for many years is not so easy. However, this is possible if we apply vivid living examples, factual arguments, logically substantiated evidence that, when passing through the prism of a person's mind and life experience, create positive patterns and new beliefs. At the second stage, it is necessary to “activate” internal personal developmental resources, which will later play the role of an “autonomous self-renewing energy source” for positive motivation, pleasure, joy and happiness from the process of activity.

The second stage of the program, which is supportive, implies conducting psychological conversations and bringing in the necessary form information that contributes to rethinking and correcting those behavioral and goal-setting patterns that previously led to destructive results. This is followed by the practical implementation of the principles voiced by the person himself, accompanied by the facilitator. For the implementation of the second, supporting stage of the program, 52 people were selected with the signs of a critical psychological state and they were willing to participate in the program. The supporting stage of the program is aimed at correcting the attitude of the person to the ideological basic concepts. For this, it was necessary and expedient to introduce a new concept - the positive correctional principle (PCP).

PCP is a specific form of communicating information in which logical circuits are formed so that they lead to positive results in the correction process. In this study 2 main PCPs were implemented. The first principle was conventionally designated as “Unusual in the Ordinary” (Figure 01). This PCP allows you to cause a reaction of surprise in the course of the narration, and as you know, the process of surprise is associated with memorization and successful knowledge, as it is of interest. In a simplified form, the implementation of this principle can be represented in the following scheme:

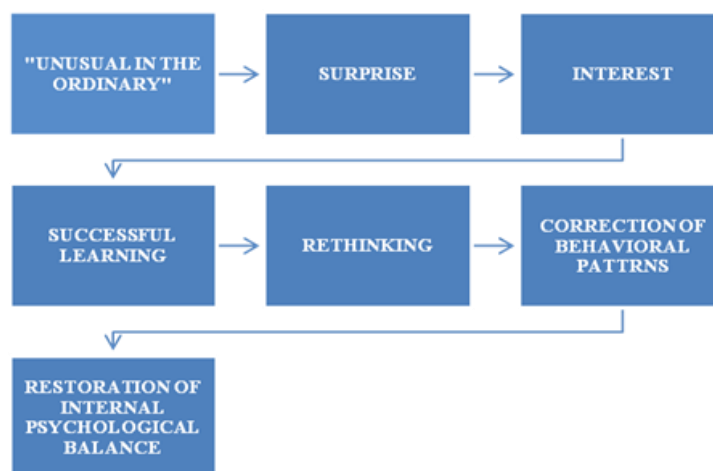


Figure 01. Implementation of PCP "Unusual in the Ordinary" in the process of the supporting program

The second PCP which was implemented in the process of conducting a psychological conversation and providing information using the metaphorical method. This principle should be designated as “Philosophical Attitude”. Changing ideological views is a sphere that is no longer in a purely psychological sphere, but represents an adjacent area between philosophy and psychology, because it inevitably includes discourse on “eternal themes”, a change in attitude towards basic life concepts and categories. The mere change in the attitude of a person to certain extremely important categories and events that led to a powerful and prolonged psychological stress can solve many problems in a split second. At the same time, it is not necessary and not advisable to pronounce repeated “affirmations”, as in methods based on self-suggestion, by setting up new artificial patterns that are highly limited when used in different life situations. Also, there is no need for long-term therapy using a careful analysis of small life situations and everyday turmoil, because a change in attitude towards the fundamental life categories already includes almost everything that happened or can happen. Thus, the dignity and advantage of the “Philosophical Attitude” (Figure 02) PCP – changing the person’s attitude to the fundamental concepts and categories of life in a positive way. The implementation of the PCP “Philosophical Attitude” can be reflected in the following scheme:

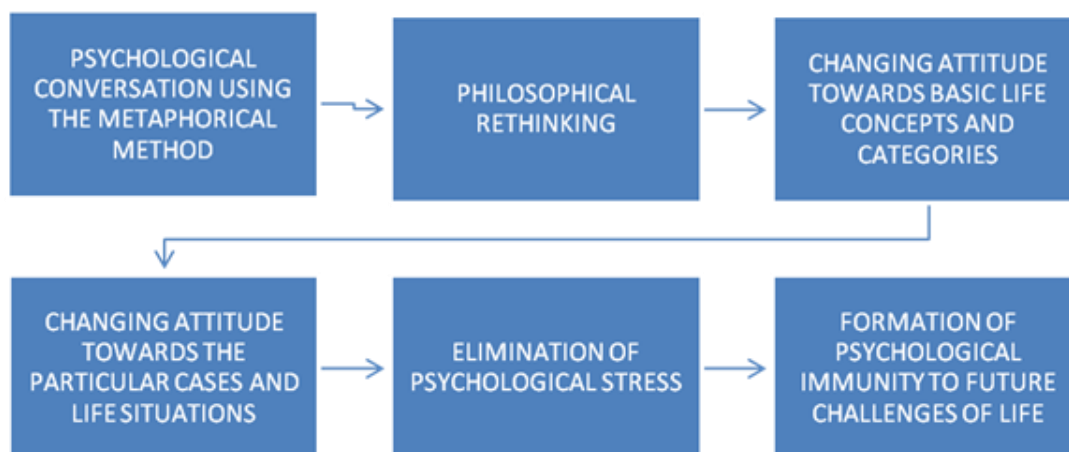


Figure 02. Implementation of PCP “Philosophical Attitude” in a correctional program

Further program allows you to implement these concepts and principles in practice. In particular, each participant through self-analysis and self-selection of one or more personally developing resources from the proposed carries out practical recommendations for its use.

7. Conclusion

Summing up, it can be stated that the way out of the crisis for middle-aged people is possible, in our opinion, one of the proposed ways is the use of internal personality-developing resources. Internal sources of resource status have a number of unique properties: infinity, lack of competition, immediate compensation, consumption slowdown, autonomy and unconditionality. Thanks to these properties, every person who resorts to their use avoids the negative impact of external sources of resources. They are: limitation, competitiveness, impossibility of saturation, acceleration of consumption, dependence, inevitable disappointment. Also, internal sources of personal-developmental resources give a person the

opportunity to use them for an increasing exponent, without causing dependency or painful conditions in him, gradually creating a permanent state of resources that does not depend on external circumstances (the effect of "spring").

In order to overcome critical mental states among middle-aged people, as well as depressive manifestations, it is not necessary to activate all internal sources of personal-developmental resources. When activating at least one source, a resource state appears, often sufficient to overcome most psychological crises. However, it can be noted that the greater number of simultaneously used internal resources contributes to a more rapid restoration of the internal balance.

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