

TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE SPECIFIC FOR ELDERLY PERSONS LIVING IN GERONTOLOGY CENTER

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The research results of various mechanisms of the psychological defense characteristic of elderly people are presented. Peculiarities of accommodation of these people in specialized institutions of stationary type are described. The role of psychological defense in behavioural and emotional spheres of the elderly person is analyzed.

Introduction. The problem of psychological defense is developed well enough and is the subject of F.B. Bassina, Y.V. Vlasova, F.E. Vasilyuk, V.V. Nalchajyan, E.R. Isaeva, E.I. Kirshbaum, A.I. Eremeeva, R.R. Nabiullina, I.V. Tokhtarova., I.M. Nikolskaya, V. A. Stroo, etc. However, concepts based on the consideration of mechanisms of psychological defense in the period of gerontogenesis, their characteristics, connection with the specifics of the place of residence is clearly not enough. In the last decade the term "psychological defense" is often introduced in the context of a variety of both scientific and popular scientific works on medical, social, developmental and educational psychology, neuropsychology, pedagogy, legal psychology [1].

The issue of substantial characteristics of psychological defense is differently resolved by representatives of various schools. At least in the domestic scientific literature, the absence of developed and structured the concept of defense mechanisms is recognized by almost all researchers.

One of the most generalized definitions is given of I. Y. Stoyanova: «psychological defense – an oriented system of adaptive unconscious mental processes aimed at minimizing internal discomfort and anxiety caused by internal and external conflicts, as well as to preserve the integrity of the "I"» [2]. It is considered as one of levels of an adaptive and protective complex.

Some authors consider that a psychological defense is a normal by far, widely detectable mechanism; others see the need to distinguish a normal, constantly operating in our daily life defense, which performs a preventive function, and the defense of pathological as an inadequate form of adaptation.

Task formulation. The aim of our study was to identify the types of psychological defense, characteristic of elderly people living in geriatric centre for a long time (over 2 years).

In accordance with the purpose of the research for the study of psychological defense's mechanisms was used questionnaire of Plutchik R. - H. Kellermann - G. Conte (adaptation techniques in the laboratory of Clinical Psychology and Department of psychiatry of The St. Petersburg Psychoneurological Research Institute bearing today the name of V.M. Bekhterev, under the leadership of doctor of professor L. I. Wasserman).

Methods of research. In accordance with the purpose of the study to study the mechanisms of psychological protection used a questionnaire Plutchik R. – H. Kellerman, Conte [3]. To obtain additional information has been organized conversation with each of the participants in the study, including the issues of clarifying.

Results, their discussion and perspectives. The study was conducted on the basis of CO GBSSU GPVI "Volgograd Regional Gerontology Centre". The study involved people aged 66 to 72 years, residing in the inpatient specialized facility. The total sample size was 53 people. The study identified various combinations of types of psychological defenses that are typical of elderly people living in the specialized institution. The most common types of psychological defenses in the group of respondents were: repression, substitution, projection, compensation (Figure)

Such a mechanism of psychological defense as "repression", as it turned out, is used by the elderly people living in the gerontological center, most often. On the basis of the received result in combination with answers of each respondent during the individual conversation, the assumption has been taken out that this mechanism allows the elderly person to exclude the unpleasant, injuring information connected with a situation of change of the residence, placement in a specialized institution from perception and memory. This protection allows to avoid the internal conflict by active switching off from consciousness not of information about the incident as a whole, but only true, however, unacceptable motive of the behavior. So, many respondents who identified this mechanism as the dominant, recalling the causes of own stay in the gerontological centre, during the conversation in detail told about the "undue" relation of their relatives, the behavior of people around, wrong from their point of view, etc. However, the characteristics of own behavior in the described situation were extremely scarce.

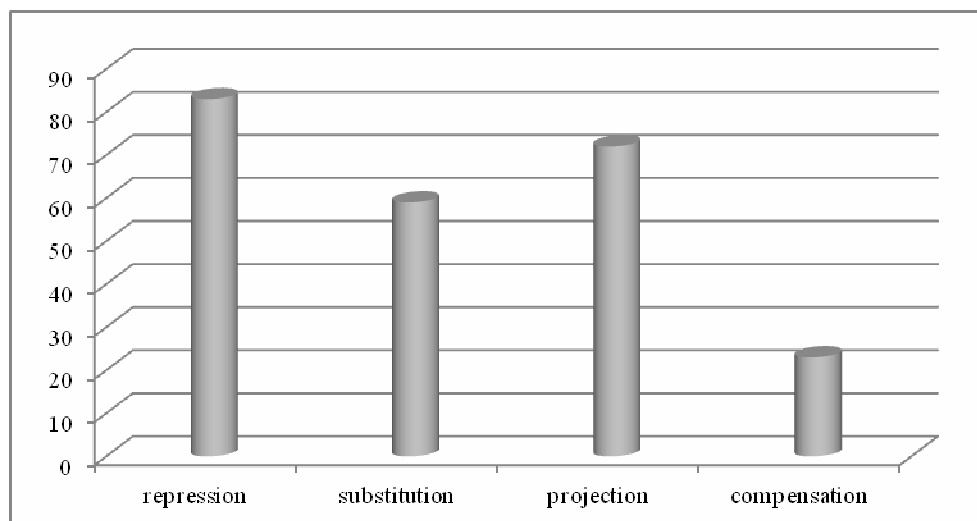


Fig. The frequency of types of psychological defenses (in percentage terms)

One more type of psychological defense, which is resorted by the representatives of this contingent of people, such as «projection», allows to explain unconscious transfer of own unacceptable or unpleasant feelings, motives, desires on the other person – attributing to others their own motives, in which to himself the elderly person can't or doesn't want to admit. It is obvious that projective nature for examinees of advanced age has the following behavior: accusation of others in aggression, malignance, sexual dissoluteness, insolvency, etc.

The most part of sample (59%) has found another mechanism of psychological defense – «substitution».

The substitution can be traced in the responses and emotional reactions in case of a conversation about various situations of interaction with the medical staff of the institution, with other residents of the gerontological centre, when on the basis of dissatisfaction with the current state, there have been unjustified accusations against others. The discontent with «gray weekdays» (the expression of one of the respondents) and also, in the opinion of the elderly, the lack of adequate household attributes etc. were forwarded on the other people directly.

«Compensation» as a psychological mechanism has a place for those elderly people, who are most actively engaged in the creative amateur clubs (this fact has also been identified with the help of additional questions). A relatively small part of the total surveyed sample size attends choral singing, and some – art therapy group in this institution. It is among these persons the compensation mechanism was detected as pronounced in comparison with other psychological defenses.

Conclusion. The views on the importance and the role of psychological defense mechanisms in the scientific literature are not unambiguous, however on the basis of the obtained data it is possible to conclude that as the most "convenient" material within possible psycho-correctional work can be identified such psychological defense mechanisms as a «substitution» (if it is reoriented and is approximate to «sublimation»), and in particular, «compensation» as the orientation of the elderly to study new activities, creative development, the emergence of a new hobby and all forms of creativity.

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