

**T. Salnikova***National University of Civil Defense of Ukraine, Cherkasy, Ukraine.***PSYCHO-CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM OF PROFESSIONAL "SELF-CONCEPT" OF MILITARY PERSONNEL-COMBATANTS**

*Introduction.* The professional activity of military personnel (especially in war conditions) is associated with a constant significant stressful psycho-emotional overload and the impact of various psychophysical factors when in sharply extreme conditions, which provokes significant risks of developing socio-psychological maladjustment.

*Purpose of the study.* Development and testing of a comprehensive program of psychocorrection of the professional "Self-concept" of military personnel who participated in combat operations.

*Materials and methods.* Data from official sources of statistical information of Ukraine (State Institution "Center for Medical Statistics of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine") were used.

*The results.* A program of psycho-correction of the professional "Self-concept" of military personnel-combatants was developed, which consisted of relevant trainings held twice a week for 2 weeks (4 sessions), each session lasted 3 hours. All sessions took place strictly on a pre-determined day and time and place to build trusting relationships. Each member of the group had approximately equal time to express their thoughts and feelings and impressions. Each specific lesson was aimed at a particular construct of the professional "Self-concept" (cognitive, emotional-evaluative, motivational, behavioral, or spiritual-value). In order to better understand the individual constructs of the professional self-concept and its holistic perception, the military personnel who performed their professional duties in the war were provided with relevant theoretical and methodological information through short messages, followed by various psychotherapeutic techniques or group thematic discussions.

*Conclusions.* Based on the results of the confirmatory experiment, a program of psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel participating in combat operations was developed, which consisted of a wide range of relevant trainings conducted twice a week for 2 weeks (4 sessions).

**Key words:** professional "Self-concept", military personnel, combatants, psychocorrection program.

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**ПСИХОКОРЕКЦІЙНА ПРОГРАМА ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ «Я-КОНЦЕПЦІЇ» ВІЙСЬКОВОСЛУЖБОВЦІВ-УЧАСНИКІВ БОЙОВИХ ДІЙ**

*Вступ.* Професійна діяльність військовослужбовців (особливо в умовах війни) пов'язана з постійним значним стресогенним психоемоційним перенавантаженням та дією різноманітних психофізичних чинників при перебуванні в різко екстремальних умовах, що провокує значні ризики розвитку соціально-психологічної дезадаптованості.

*Мета дослідження.* Розробка та апробація комплексної програми психокорекції професійної «Я-концепції» військовослужбовців – учасників бойових дій.

*Матеріали та методи.* Досліджено 129 військовослужбовців – учасників бойових дій, які проходили курс психореабілітації на базі ДП «Клінічний санаторій «Роша» ПРАТ «Укрпрофоздоровниця». На основі отриманих результатів психодіагностичного дослідження розроблено програму психокорекції професійної «Я-концепції» військовослужбовців – учасників бойових дій.

*Отримані результати.* Було розроблено програму психокорекції професійної «Я-концепції» військовослужбовців – учасників бойових дій, яка складалася з відповідних тренінгів, що проводились два рази на тиждень протягом 2 тижнів (4 зайняття), кожне із занять тривало по 3 год. Усі заняття відбувалися суворо в раніш визначений день та час і місці задля формування довірливих стосунків. Кожен із учасників групи мав приблизно однаковий час для висловлення своїх думок і почуттів та вражень. Кожне конкретне заняття спрямовувалося на якийсь окремий конструкт професійної «Я-концепції» (когнітивний, емоційно-оцінний, мотиваційний, поведінковий чи духовно-ціннісний). Військовослужбовцям, що виконували свої професійні обов'язки в умовах війни задля більш чіткого розуміння окремих конструктів професійної «Я-концепції» та її цілісного сприйняття надавалася відповідна теоретична та методична інформація шляхом коротеньких повідомлень, після чого реалізовувалися різноманітні психотерапевтичні техніки або групові тематичні дискусії.

*Висновки.* За отриманими результатами констатувального експерименту було розроблено програму психокорекції професійної «Я-концепції» військовослужбовців – учасників бойових дій, яка складалася з широкого спектру відповідних тренінгів, що проводились два рази на тиждень протягом 2 тижнів (4 зайняття).

**Ключові слова:** професійна «Я-концепція», військовослужбовці, учасники бойових дій, програма психокорекції.

**Introduction.** Recently, our country has been going through extremely difficult times. Due to the ongoing military aggression, the national present is saturated with excessive stressful and psycho-emotional influences. This situation is associated with a significant number of military emergencies of a rather high stressor activity and intensity [1], which causes negative consequences in personal daily life and behavior.

Due to active hostilities, virtually the entire population of Ukraine is exposed to significant psychoemotional and psychophysiological overload [2]. A significant part of the residents of our country had to urgently leave their homes, lose their property and jobs, stay in the area of active hostilities, etc. Among a large contingent of such persons, there is a rather massive cohort (military personnel) who are constantly faced with psychophysiological and psycho-emotional overload in the current war and are exposed to significant psychotraumatic stress and need constant psychological support in war.

The professional activity of military personnel (especially in wartime) is associated with a constant significant stressful psycho-emotional overload and the impact of various psychophysical factors when in extreme conditions, which provokes significant risks of developing socio-psychological maladjustment, which is primarily manifested by communicative maladjustment due to the need for self-determination and self-realization in the surrounding "communicative circle", which causes certain significant "difficulties" and "fears" for the serviceman.

Servicemen (especially in wartime) are constantly under the influence of the destructive impact on the psycho-emotional sphere of various significant stressors and "experiencing" a whole "spectrum" of specific psychophysical and psycho-emotional extreme overloads that provoke the

development of certain specific personal psychological attitudes [3], which are accompanied by psychophysical and socio-behavioral maladjustment up to the development of irreversible disorders and shifts (nervous breakdowns, psychotraumatic and neurotic and stress disorders, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mental and behavioral shifts, etc.), which requires appropriate psychological support and psychocorrectional work [4].

These processes provoke certain "distortions" of certain constructs of the professional "self-concept" and cause complete disharmony of the personal "self-concept" model, which is quite typical for military personnel who often have to "step over" their moral and ethical principles and moral values in the course of performing their professional duties (especially in war conditions), which can cause significant "moral damage" (especially in times of war) have to "step over" their moral and ethical principles and moral values, which can cause significant "moral damage" (a term describing a violation of the personal moral code that has attracted the attention of researchers due to the high suicide rate among military personnel [5], which occurs when military personnel experience morally harmful events that contradict their values and beliefs [6].

The impact of such moral experiences [7], which arise in the course of military service (especially in wartime), causes significant moral and spiritual anxiety [8]. This experience alone cannot be justified and leveled by the personal and moral beliefs of the serviceman and can lead to certain attempts to reconcile the "irreconcilable" discrepancies between their life, social and professional experience and the need to perform certain actions given the specifics of their professional tasks and workload [9]. This can lead to serious psychological problems, such as PTSD and moral trauma, which can cause servicemen and

women to experience intrusive and suicidal thoughts, impulsivity, sleep disorders, or the need to use psychoactive and alcohol-containing substances, avoidance of certain triggers, and may react sharply with uncharacteristic maladaptive overbearing, aggressive, self-harming, self-destructive, or demoralizing behavior [10–20], which determines the need for psychological support and psychocorrectional work.

**Purpose of the study.** Development and testing of a comprehensive program of psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel who participated in combat operations.

**Materials and methods.** The study involved 129 military personnel - combatants who underwent a course of psychological rehabilitation at the Clinical Sanatorium "Roshcha" of PJSC "Ukrprofozdorovnytsia". Based on the results of the psychodiagnostic study, a program of psychocorrection of the professional "Self-concept" of military personnel - combatants was developed.

**Results and discussion.** Development and practical implementation of a program for psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel – participants in combat operations—were grounded in the core general-practice principles of psychocorrectional work:

- Voluntariness – indicates the client's independent decision-making, as they themselves are motivated to change;

- Informedness – requires prior informing of the client about all procedures to be conducted and the situations to be "worked through" during psychocorrectional work;

- Unity of psychocorrection and psychodiagnosics – determined the need to align the vector of psychocorrectional intervention by defining key tasks and

selecting appropriate psychocorrectional means to actualize the client's "problem areas" This principle entails an initial individual interview to collect core psychoanamnestic data and assess readiness for psychocorrectional intervention (individual or group), with selection of optimal methods before engaging the client in individual or group sessions and trainings;

- Person-centeredness – directs the psychocorrectional intervention toward preserving personal integrity and supporting humanitarian measures that foster personal self-development and self-actualization while maintaining existing personal qualities;

- Causality – focuses the intervention on deep problem areas of deviations from normal mental development rather than on their outward manifestations. This phenomenon is understood through the specificity of mental processes as the result of active interaction and opposition of mental influences of genetic nature. In this sense, the realization of a mental phenomenon is viewed as a process that can be analyzed in terms of its development, avenues for improvement, and possible regression;

- Normativity and sequentiality of developmental processes – presupposes the sequential realization of ontogenetic stages and, in implementing psychocorrectional measures, takes into account features of personal social development, the level of psychological personal maturity, and existing mechanisms of self-development and self-improvement. Here, the sequential processes of age-related development correlate with the determination of "psychological age" which, according to L. Vygotsky, is defined as an individual type of activity that characterizes personal consciousness and its interdependence with the surrounding society, as well as the overall state of psychological development at

a given period;

- Complexity of psychocorrectional intervention – treats psychocorrection as one component of psychorehabilitation within an individual comprehensive psychorehabilitation program, with due consideration of all possible corrective and rehabilitative factors: psycho-pedagogical, medico-social, technical-technological, etc.;

- Activity-based principle – emphasizes the active personal engagement of service members in implementing the program, thereby creating conditions for personal orientation in complex life situations and for achieving positive psychological personal change. The psychocorrectional impact is carried out within certain professional activity boundaries;

- Systemicity and synergy – formulated by A. Shevtsov, this principle asserts the primary necessity of defining a system of psychocorrectional work and developing an integrative psychocorrective model with structural-logical expression, specific constructs and functional interdependencies, conditions of implementation, and alignment with the main directions and goals of psychocorrectional intervention in their interconnections with types of psychological rehabilitation. Implementing this principle promotes the development of adaptive client psychological strategies and mechanisms aimed at overcoming the influence of disadaptational formations;

- Modeling and design – underscores the need for the artificial formation of psychosocial adaptability (which has not yet been developed in the inner world of service members) and for the harmonization of the existing professional "self-concept" of service members;

- "Here and now" – stresses the necessity of the earliest possible psychocorrectional intervention to prevent the development of negative irreversible personal psychological shifts;

- Emotionality and empathy – highlights the importance of prioritizing the emotional aspects and feelings of the service member rather than their intellectual abilities and judgments;

- Client-directedness – in implementing psychocorrectional work, primary initiative belongs to the client; they are the central figure in the interaction with the psychotherapist, possessing aspirations for self-development and self-improvement, while the psychologist merely guides these aspirations.

In addition, when developing the program for psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel–participants in combat operations—we took into account the need for continuous supervision of cases in practical work and in the professional training of psychotherapists in accordance with existing European standards. Supervision is an effective and necessary form of professional development; its main forms include individual and group supervision, as well as intervision (group supervision in which the primary subject of analysis is one of the group's participants). The principal effect of supervision lies not only in improving a psychologist's methodological and practical level, but also in shaping the specifics of personal communications between the psychologist and the client.

Taking into account the defined theoretical and methodological foundations of group psychocorrectional work with service members, we developed and practically implemented a program for psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel–participants in combat operations. The program's goal was to improve the harmonization of the professional "self-concept" of service members and to raise the levels of its individual constructs.

According to this goal, the main tasks of

psychocorrectional work with service members were identified:

1. Through the use and implementation of appropriate psychocorrectional means, improve the levels of individual constructs of the professional "self-concept" of service members–participants in combat operations, and harmonize its interdependent constructs.

2. Using psychocorrectional trainings and methods, determine the individual personal capacities for psychological recovery of service members–participants in combat operations, prepare them for returning to their professional environment, and adapt them to the effects of disorganizing psychotraumatic external and internal influences.

3. Facilitate early active identification of individuals with pronounced disharmonization of the professional "self-concept" and promote the personal professional growth and development of service members–participants in combat operations.

4. By means of group psychocorrection, optimize the social and professional interaction and activity of service members–participants in combat operations.

5. Contribute to achieving the maximum possible psychophysical capabilities and psychophysiological characteristics, and ensure the maintenance of this state throughout their professional activities.

Overall, the developed program for psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of service members–participants in combat operations–was focused on mitigating the signs of disharmonization of the professional "self-concept" identified during the empirical study, and was guided by the core regularities of the psychocorrectional model of socio-psychological disadaptation of JFO (Joint Forces Operation) participants developed by T. M. Kochubynska.

According to the implementation plan for

the program, its realization proceeded in several stages consistent with the aims, tasks, and defined psychocorrectional principles:

- First–empirical research: psychodiagnostic assessment made it possible to identify features of the professional "self-concept" of service members–participants in combat operations. The results revealed certain disharmonies in specific components of their professional "self-concept" which subsequently became the targets of psychocorrectional influence.

- Second–preparatory: through interviews, individual counseling was conducted with service members–participants in combat operations; individualized psychocorrectional programs were formed and a set of psychotherapeutic interventions was developed.

- Third–group formation: service members were grouped according to similar disturbances in specific constructs of the professional "self-concept" to implement the corresponding psychocorrection program.

- Fourth–group psychotherapy: group therapy was conducted with the implementation of psychocorrectional measures.

- Fifth–program effectiveness assessment: to verify effectiveness, a cluster sampling method was used to select a certain percentage of service-member respondents for repeat experimental assessment, and statistically significant differences were identified in the dynamics of specific psychometric indicators.

Within the program's implementation, a psychocorrectional training was developed for a group of 15 service members. Group formation for the program observed the principle of homogeneity and was based on the following principles:

- relatively comfortable feelings within the group for all participants;

- relatively similar psychological maturity and emotional stability of all group members;

- largely similar capacity to express and regulate one's feelings and emotions and a comparable "immersion" in one's own problems and experiences;

- similar capacity for compassion and openness to empathy.

The implementation of psychocorrectional mechanisms followed the structure of the counseling process defined by K. Gelso, R. Kocjūnas, et al. and included the following measures at corresponding stages:

- establishing contact with the service member and achieving a high degree of trust (empathizing with the respondent, attentive communication to surface problem issues, demonstrating sincerity and empathy, nonverbal behavior, etc.);

- applying a two-dimensional approach to the problems of service members (achieving an almost identical understanding of the problems by both the psychologist and the service member);

- determining alternative solutions to service members' problems (discussion and identification of possible alternatives using open questions without the psychotherapist's "imposition" of their own view);

- critical evaluation and thorough processing of alternative solutions (assessing the effectiveness of alternatives and forming an appropriate plan with defined time frames and consideration of psycho-emotional and psychophysiological capacities);

- consistent implementation of the formed plan to solve service members' problems with the direct involvement of the psychotherapist (mandatory consideration of possible setbacks and the need to adjust the program);

- continuous evaluation of the results achieved and feedback (the service member

and the psychotherapist jointly assess the level of outcomes of the psychotherapeutic intervention—the degree of problem resolution—and summarize the results, with the option, if necessary, to return to previous counseling stages or to use other psychocorrectional approaches).

The program we developed for psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of service members—participants in combat operations—was entirely directed at personal levels of specific psychological mechanisms:

- Communicative level – identification of the specifics of interpersonal professional relationships and communication; development of skills for sincere and free interaction within the professional team; targeting the causes of conflicts;

- Motivational-volitional level – establishing personal motives and aspirations regarding professional activity; determining self-attitude and attitudes toward others in the professional collective; fostering realism and constructiveness in performing professional duties;

- Behavioral level – identification of inadequate personal professional behavioral stereotypes and development of mechanisms to counteract maladaptive forms of professional behavior by engaging strategies of cooperation, as well as a degree of autonomy and responsibility;

- Cognitive level – establishing the connection between psychogenic factors and the development of personal problems; developing mechanisms for adequately recognizing threatening situations in professional activity (which provoke fear, anxiety, apprehension), as well as appropriate personal behavior and emotional response;

- Emotional level – aimed at emotional support from group members and at identifying one's personal "professional value" increasing manifestations of "sincerity" and verbalization of personal

experiences, and conducting emotional psychocorrection of professional relationships and emotional professional responding.

The program of psycho-correction of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel consisted of relevant trainings that were held twice a week for 2 weeks (4 sessions), each session lasted 3 hours.

At the first session, the participants got to know the group and worked out the rules of working in the group. The work was aimed at developing the skills of understanding inner feelings and reflection, empathic feeling of other group members.

Also, the first session was aimed at working out personal attitudes towards participation in hostilities. Active work was conducted with the traumatic experience gained at the mental level (the construct "I-psycho").

The second lesson was about working with the consequences of previous traumatic experiences on the physical level ("Self-physical" construct) and working on family relationships ("Self-family" construct).

The third lesson is the development of personal motivational professional orientation and self-determination with the possibility of professional self-improvement and their emotional and evaluative component ("Self-professional" and "Self-student").

The fourth lesson is to work with the personal characteristics of servicemen who performed their professional duties in war conditions and to search for internal resources for professional and personal development with intrapersonal harmonization of the professional "self-concept" ("Self-spiritual" construct and integral professional "self-concept"). Building personal strategies of life and professional activity, active "awareness" of oneself as a serviceman and consolidation of the acquired skills, knowledge and abilities.

Each of the sessions had a specific structure:

- determination of the effectiveness of the previous session with the expression of their own feelings and emotions (ensuring the continuity of training);

- determination of the topic of the upcoming training – all group members freely express their thoughts and wishes regarding their expectations from the session;

- the main part – the psychotherapist sets the topic of a certain role-play or thematic situation, which is directly aimed at first identifying the problem situation, and then - at attempts to overcome them and group experiments to solve the problem situation in a constructive way;

- expressing thoughts and feelings (sharing) – is a certain "space" for developing feedback mechanisms that is basic in nature in relation to generalizing the group experience in solving certain problem situations.

All sessions took place strictly on a pre-determined day and time and place to build trusting relationships. Each group member had approximately equal time to express their thoughts, feelings, and impressions. An important prerequisite for the formation of trusting relationships was active participation in the discussion and expressing their opinions. Thus, the initial stage of the training included thoroughly informing all group members about the purpose and objectives of the training, personal motivation of all group members to actively cooperate; relieving emotional stress of group members; forming the prerequisites and a sense of "security" for each group member.

Thus, first of all, at the beginning of each session, servicemen who performed their professional duties in the conditions of war were provided with thorough information about the individual professional "self-concept" and its importance for the effective realization of oneself as a professional and the formation of a social and professional

personality; providing certain guidelines and attitudes for active participation in the training; introducing group members to each other and the psychotherapist; creating a positive emotional dialogue between all group members; defining the basic rules and responsibilities of the group members.

After these preparatory stages and the achievement of emotional cohesion, the main theoretical and practical part of the training was conducted, which included the presentation of theoretical material on specific topics, group discussions and role-playing games, reenactment of certain professional and life situations, implementation of psychodramatic and other techniques, creative tasks, etc. At the end of each training session, active work was conducted with the participation of all group members using a peer-to-peer process, where each participant expressed their thoughts and shared their feelings and impressions of the work done. At this stage, all group members identified certain unresolved issues and ambiguities or unexpressed desires, or, conversely, stated

personal achievements and understanding of the thematic issue and formed further prospects for group work.

In general, each specific lesson was aimed at a particular construct of the professional "Self-concept" (cognitive, emotional-evaluative, motivational, behavioral, or spiritual-value).

**Conclusions.** Based on the results of the confirmatory experiment, a program of psychocorrection of the professional "self-concept" of military personnel participating in combat operations was developed, which consisted of a wide range of relevant trainings conducted twice a week for 2 weeks (4 sessions).

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**Publication ethics.** Patients were included in the study after obtaining informed consent. The study complied with international ethical standards for biometric research.

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