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The Dynamics of Tolerance to the Emotional Burnout Syndrome
Among Teachers of the System of Special Education
in the Process of Preventive Work

The article deals with the main approaches to revealing and developing tolerance to the emotional burnout syndrome among teachers of the system of special education. The author has worked out methods of diagnostics and prevention of this psychological phenomenon. The mechanism of the development of the emotional burnout syndrome and the psychological structure of the person tolerant to it are offered. The dynamics of personal features in the process of the organized preventive work is analyzed.

Keywords: *personality, emotional burnout syndrome, special teacher, psychological prevention.*

Emotional burnout is a result of interaction of personal and situational factors which results in discrepancy between personality, its resource base and requirements of professional activity and professional environment which was formed in a concrete work collective. In our opinion, this contradiction is a starting point of the development of the emotional burnout syndrome; it starts the mechanism of its formation. Analyzing it, we find that one of the main sources of discussed discrepancies are initially incorrect (or their loss) ideas of the individual of self, his/her own potential and his/her role in professional activity; another important source of discussed discrepancies are incorrect (idealistic) expectations of personality concerning the process of work, results of their professional activity and their appraisal from the social environment [1].

The emotional burnout syndrome of the professional is a dynamic state of the personality of a working person which is characterized by a combination of negative psychological, behavioural and physiological traits (symptoms) pointing out psychoemotional exhaustion, development of dysfunctional professional attitudes and professional behavior.

The mechanism of the emotional burnout syndrome is that this psychological state arises in a situation of a high emotional tension against a chronic stress (frustration of expectations), bringing to disarrangement of autoidentification of personality, merging with to environmental influences on the basis of emotional involvement which, in its turn, intensifies psychological defenses of personality functioning at a extramental level [5].

Therefore, the person inclined to the emotional burnout syndrome has difficulties of orientation in his/her own intraindividual space and prerequisites to it at the level of psychoconstitutional features and the subjective-personal relation to professional activity.

The essence of prevention of emotional burnout is reduced to formation of the person's ability to overcome difficulties and stressful influences connecting poten-



tial means for emotional stability on the basis of self-control and choosing a constructive strategy of coping behavior. In this context we pay our attention to the general concept characterizing a new state of the personality based on actualization of its resources and promoting achievement of social success – autopsychological competence. According to authors of the concept of autopsychological competence (A. A. Derkach, A. P. Sitnikov, L. A. Stepnova, I. V. Elshina), it plays an important role in development of the person's identity, enabling actualization of the person's internal psychological potential, which promotes formation of an individual style of professional activity, creativity development, formation of an effective strategy of career and life development that, in its turn, plays a great role in the maintenance of psychological health of personality and struggle against the emotional burnout syndrome [2, 4].

The study of conditions of prevention of emotional burnout of teachers of the system of special education has presupposed a stage-by-stage work.

At the first (organizational) stage we have defined purposes, experimental aims, and carried out the development of a technique of research and methods for complex studying of professional motivation, diagnostics of personal features promoting burnout, the degree of formation of emotional burnout; the development of the forming program for its prevention among teachers of the system of special education.

At the second (experimental) stage the complex of psychological conditions of prevention of emotional burnout of teachers of the system of special education within specially developed program was implemented. The organization of systematic work with teachers, directed on increasing stress tolerance of an organism when internal resources of the teacher promote painless adaptation to changing conditions of the environment became an essence of this stage.

At the third (analytical) stage we have carried out the comparative analysis of results of ascertaining and control stages of researches; we have defined the most effective psychological conditions of prevention of emotional burnout of teachers of the system of special education.

At the fourth (final) stage we have analyzed, compared and generalized the data obtained during theoretical and empirical research phases; we have formulated the main conclusions which have made it possible to prove the necessity of creation of psychological conditions for prevention of emotional burnout of teachers of the system of special education.

The experimental research on prevention of the emotional burnout syndrome among teachers of the system of special education was carried out on the basis of special (correctional) educational institutions of Stavropol (Public educational institution comprehensive school no. 36, Public educational institution comprehensive school no. 33, Municipal Preschool Educational Institution Kindergarten no. 29, Municipal Preschool Educational Institution Kindergarten no. 39) in 2009–2013.



184 teachers of special (correctional) educational institutions with 5–15 years experience took part in the flight (preliminary) research. V. V. Boyko's technique of diagnostics of emotional burnout of personality was applied as a diagnostic method.

The results of diagnostics have shown that nearly a half of examined teachers of the system of special education is subject to emotional burnout (47,8 %). Thus the "Exhaustion" phase is the least developed, while the "Tension" and "Resistance" phases are more expressed among teachers. The analysis of symptoms has shown that the "Resistance" phase is the most developed for all the indices; this allows to speak about resistance to emotional burnout, existence of potential for its overcoming and prevention. Considering that it was impossible to reveal the regularity of interrelation of working life and the expressiveness of the emotional burnout syndrome, we have continued searching personal determinants of this state among teachers of the system of special education [5].

As research parameters we have studied the following indices of psychoconstitutional features: emotional stability, orientation of personality, emotional self-control, empathy, reflection, level of subjective control, stress resistance, psychological defences; subjectively personal relation: self-appraisal, value relation to the world, autonomy, spontaneity, communication, motivation of professional activity, satisfaction with work.

The diagnostic methods were presented by the following complex of techniques: G. Eysenck's test questionnaire, the technique of the assessment of emotional intelligence of N. Hall, J. Rotter's technique the "Level of Subjective Control", the technique of Holmes and Rahe of determination of resistance to stress and social adaptation, the "Life style index" questionnaire of R. Plutchik, H. Kellerman, and H. R. Conte, diagnostics of self-actualization of personality of A. V. Lazukin in N. F. Kalin's adaptation, motivation of professional activity of K. Zamfir in A. A. Rean's modification, the integrated satisfaction with work [3].

In the aggregate of the listed parameters and methods of their measurement we have obtained 44 variables characterizing a personal zone of risk of emotional burnout. We have used the correlation analysis as the main method of further scientific search.

Carrying out intersystem correlation within which we compared personal features with symptoms and phases of the emotional burnout syndrome was the first step of our work. Figure 1 presents the scheme of the correlation galaxy.

On the basis of the analysis of the correlation analysis we have obtained the mechanism of formation of the emotional burnout syndrome on the basis of personal features. It consists in the fact that having certain psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal prerequisites the person does not know his/her intraindividual space and does not know how to cope with his/her own dynamic properties therefore loses control over his/her own emotional reactions, spending for their experience all the psychological resources, remaining exhausted and powerless for performance of over(extra) situational professional tasks and satisfaction in the obtained results of work.

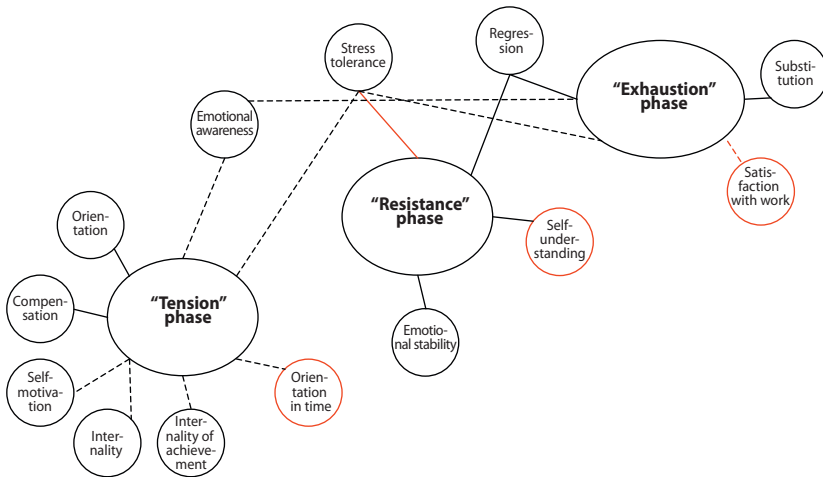


Fig. 1. The correlation galaxy of interrelation of personal features and phases of the emotional burnout syndrome

Further we have carried out the intrasystem correlation within which we have compared psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal features. Figure 2 offers the scheme of the correlation galaxy.

Thus, we have revealed a psychological structure of personality resistant to the emotional burnout syndrome: this is a person having an ambivalent orientation, understanding his/her emotional experience, possessing emotional flexibility, internal locus of control, focused on the present and the future, paying a little attention to external attributes of activity, realizing that not everything is in his/her power, not suffering from perfectionism. Consequently he/she has a high stress tolerance. He/she is characterized by voluntary control over emotions; he/she is sensitive to his/her needs and therefore is free from psychological defenses; he/she is open for communication and adoption of a new experience. Besides he/she is satisfied with achievements in work since he/she has only himself/herself to depend on; he/she knows that has achieved everything by himself/herself, and is focused on a successful prospect of the future.

Comparing the components of autopsychological competence and personal features (cognitive-sense: orientation of personality, level of subjective control, autonomy, spontaneity; emotional-value: empathy, self-appraisal, value relation to the world, satisfaction with work; reflexive-regulatory: emotional stability, emotional self-control, reflection, stress tolerance; projective: psychological protection, communication, motivation of professional activity) studied in the process of experiment has enabled



us to draw conclusions concerning the level of development this psychological construct among representatives of the experimental sample.

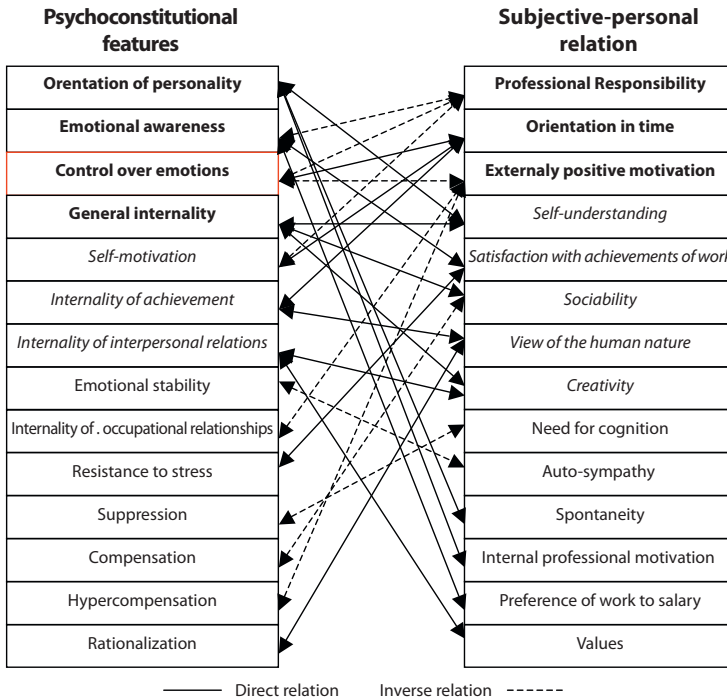


Fig. 2. The correlation galaxy of a personal zone of risk of the emotional burnout syndrome (taking into account the frequency of correlation communications)

On this basis we have distinguished levels of autopsychological competence: a high level which is generally characterized by low expressiveness of psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal prerequisites to emotional burnout, the person's knowledge of his/her own intraindividual space and the ability to control his/her own dynamic properties, and also possession of skills of replenishment of psychological resources by establishment of positive contacts with the world around and disclosures of own potentials, i.e. self-development; an average level which is characterized by either low psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal prerequisites to emotional burnout, but lack of abilities of orientation and control of his/her own intraindividual space, and also skills of replenishment of psychological resources, or existence of psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal prerequisites at intuitive or developed ability to control the intraindividual space to a greater or lesser extent, showing resistance



to loads, and to replenish psychological resources; a low level which is characterized, on the one hand, by the expressiveness of psychoconstitutional and subjective-personal prerequisites to emotional burnout, and on the other hand, lack of abilities of orientation and control of his/her own intraindividual space, and also skills of replenishment of psychological resources (table. 1).

Table 1

Distribution of special teachers according to levels of development of autopsychological competence (an ascertaining stage)

| Components / groups (n=40) | Levels (%) | | | | | | Value of c2 – criterion |
|------------------------------|------------|----|---------|------|------|------|-------------------------|
| | High | | Average | | Low | | |
| | CG | EG | CG | EG | CG | EG | |
| Cognitive-sense | 37,5 | – | 57,5 | 35 | 5 | 65 | 21,485 |
| Emotional-value | 47,5 | – | 52,5 | 47,5 | – | 52,5 | 14,937 |
| Reflexive-regulatory | 35 | – | 65 | 30 | – | 70 | 21,556 |
| Projective | 15 | – | 72,5 | 27,5 | 12,5 | 72,5 | 15,682 |
| Autopsychological competence | 32,5 | – | 62,5 | 35 | 5 | 65 | 18,497 |

From table 1 it is obvious visible that the teachers of the control group have the most formed autopsychological competence. The high level is a prevailing one; we haven't revealed the low level. In the experimental group there is a tendency to decrease in the level of formation of autopsychological competence in all the components in comparison with the control group.

The work carried out in the process of psychological prevention was directed on formation and development of personal features which have made the content of components of autopsychological competence of special teachers, and also formation of knowledge, skills of orientation of control over intraindividual space of personality, i.e. on realization of interpsychological and intrapsychological conditions. We have systemically offered factors, areas of work, purposes and actions for each aspect of a solved problem. The work was carried out according to blocks: information and practical. The main forms and methods of work were educational and training lessons.

At the control stage of experiment our attention was concentrated on revealing the dynamics of components of autopsychological competence.

The positive dynamics of the cognitive-sense component was that special teachers, having acquired information about themselves, being guided by their own potential, being ready for various reactions, having learned to analyze their own actions and their consequences, became more self-assured, independent of the opinion of people around, events and circumstances.

By the second emotional-value component we have noted that ordering of the depth and manifestations of negative feelings concerning self and the world around



has made it possible to level vulnerability and mistrustfulness, inspire with feeling of safety, openness in relation to surrounding people, and in combination with the increased level of internality satisfaction with work has increased because there has appeared more adequate appraisal of their own efforts and results in work with children with health problems; the tendency to perfectionism was reduced.

The reflexive-regulatory component has also positively changed. We note that attention towards self, his/her own feelings and experiences, their understanding on the basis of introspection and their control by means of effective and useful ways of self-control enabled teachers to become less dependent and led in respect of emotional reactions from external stimuli, to see circumstances and his/her role in their development more adequately and not to have unrealistic expectations and to be frustrated more seldom.

The analysis of the projective component has showed that participants of the experimental group have learned to build more constructive relations with surrounding people, to see partners in them, to find personal sense in professional activity, to be guided by the process of usefulness of their own actions, and to perceive the result of work not so much in standard indices, as in satisfaction of communication partners, therefore, they have mastered means of replenishing psychological resources.

In a generalized view the quantitative analysis of the level of development of components of autopsychological competence of special teachers is offered in table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of special teachers according to levels of development of autopsychological competence (a control stage)

| Components /groups (n=40) | Levels (%) | | | | | | | | | Value of c^2 – criterion |
|---------------------------------|------------|------|--------|---------|------|--------|------|------|--------|----------------------------------|
| | High | | | Average | | | High | | | |
| | CG | EG 1 | | CG | EG 1 | | CG | EG 1 | | |
| | | test | retest | | test | retest | | test | retest | |
| Cognitive-sense | 32,5 | – | 50 | 62,5 | 35 | 50 | 5 | 65 | – | 12,968 |
| Emotional-value | 45 | – | 55 | 47,5 | 47,5 | 45 | 7,5 | 52,5 | – | 13,655 |
| Reflexive-regulatory | 32,5 | – | 40 | 60,5 | 30 | 57,5 | 7,5 | 70 | 2,5 | 15,977 |
| Projective | 12,5 | – | 37,5 | 67,5 | 27,5 | 57,5 | 20 | 72,5 | 5 | 14,416 |
| Autopsychological competence | 30 | – | 45 | 60 | 35 | 52,5 | 10 | 65 | 2,5 | 17,147 |

In the experimental group we have noted the maximum increase in the cognitive-sense and emotional-value components. In reflexive-regulatory and, especially, projective components it was rather lower. At the same time the general level of autopsychological competence has considerably increased. It should be noted that the repeated test in the control group has showed decreasing in the level of autopsychological



logical competence on the average by 2,5–5 %. It means that without special training in development of autopsychological competence the resistance to the emotional burnout syndrome decreases.

The statistical analysis by means of χ^2 -criterion has showed the significance of distinctions in distribution of special teachers of the control and experimental groups in levels of development of components of autopsychological competence (empirical value of the criterion surpasses the critical value equal to 7,81 (reliability 0,05)).

Thus, teachers of the system of special education are inclined to development of the emotional burnout syndrome irrespective of the experience of work with children having health problems. Therefore, personal features of persons choosing this profession (the heightened level of empathy, anxiety and self-doubt, psychological defense of personality by a compensation and overcompensation type, the raised level of professional responsibility (perfectionism)) are at the heart of this process.

The emotional burnout syndrome among teachers of the system of special education is formed according to the following mechanism: on the basis of psychoconstitutional and subjectively personal prerequisites the person, not knowing his/her intraindividual space and not controlling his/her dynamic psychological properties, in the emotionally rich communicative environment loses control over emotional reactions, spends psychological resources for their experience, remains exhausted and powerless for performance of professional tasks and satisfaction with the obtained results of work.

The psychological construct of personality of the teacher of the system of the special education which is tolerant towards the emotional burnout syndrome, assumes an ambivert orientation, understanding of his/her own emotions, possession of emotional flexibility, internal locus of control, high stress tolerance, ability to control emotions voluntarily, sensitiveness to feelings and needs, freedom from psychological defences, sociability, openness to communication and adoption of new experience, trust to people and readiness for construction of the sincere interpersonal relations and satisfaction with achievements in work on the basis of personal responsibility for their qualitative level, orientation towards the present and the future, little attention to external attributes of activity, lack of perfectionism.

The complex of psychological characteristics reflecting tolerance towards the emotional burnout syndrome is a basis of autopsychological competence of the personality of the teacher of the system of special education which can be created at a high, average and low level. The level of autopsychological competence of teachers with the developed syndrome of emotional burnout is much lower, than among teachers not having it.

The organization of psychological prevention of the syndrome of emotional burnout is possible by means of the program based on realization of the complex of psychological conditions, to which they attribute: interpsychological (psychologization



of the environment in work collective – longitude psychodiagnostics of those components of personality, which are most vulnerable in the process of emotional burn-out, and psychological support including psychological education and psychological training) and intrapsychological (formation of autopsychological competence among teachers of the system of special education).

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