

Psychological Support of Teachers with Burnout Syndrome

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Abstract

The personality of a teacher is one of the key factors that ensure the effectiveness of training and education of the younger generation. In this regard, the professional health of teachers is the basis of the effective work of the modern school and its strategic problem. Meanwhile, researchers have noted an increase in the number of professional deformations and in particular emotional burnout. The issues of prevention and correction of burnout syndrome become extremely relevant in this regard. The purpose of the paper is to present the approbation results of the program of support of teachers with emotional burnout syndrome in the system of advanced training. An analysis of materials on the problem of burnout syndrome, its prevention and correction by foreign and Russian psychologists was conducted. In the process of implementing the authors' program of psychological support of teachers testing was used (The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) by C. Maslach and S. Jackson); a survey aimed at actualization of personal experience of emotional burnout among teachers and raising awareness of the causes of burnout was conducted. The authors' program of support of teachers with emotional burnout syndrome in the system of advanced training, which includes four modules ("Syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers", "Factors influencing the occurrence of the syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers", "Psychodiagnostics of emotional burnout syndrome of teachers", "Prevention and psychocorrection of emotional burnout among teachers") revealed its high level of manifestation in 25% of participants, contributed to the formation of ideas about the origin and development of this syndrome, as well as actualization of personal experience of the negative state and identifying key resources for overcoming this professional deformation. The proposed program is effective for prevention of professional burnout among teachers. The importance of the creation and implementation of such programs is argued in the article. The materials of the paper can be used for lectures and practical training in clinical and counseling psychology. The authors' program can be used in the system of additional education, as well as psychological and pedagogical services of educational institutions.

Keywords: advanced training, professional deformation, psychological support, stress, syndrome of emotional burnout, teacher.

INTRODUCTION

The attention of researchers has long been attracted by the emotional burnout phenomenon, which is associated with a sense of inner emotional emptiness, apathy, fatigue, reduced interest in work. Particularly acute this problem is for professionals of the socionomy sphere to which teachers belong.

The authors have to admit that every day the number of negative factors affecting a teacher in the course of his/her professional activities and everyday life only increases. Among them are the changes in the educational system, teaching programs, increasing flow of reports and documentation, difficulties in interaction with a various contingent of students, including "difficult" children, etc. This, in turn, leads to the accumulation of persistent undesirable changes in the personality of a teacher, leading to low productivity and dissatisfaction with work, functional and interpersonal interactions with colleagues. The personality of a teacher is one of the key factors that ensure the effectiveness of training and education of the younger generation. In this regard, the professional health of teachers is the basis of the effective work of the modern school and its strategic problem.

In accordance with the model suggested by C. Maslach and S. Jackson, burnout is considered as a response to the long-term professional stress of interpersonal communications, which includes three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduction in personal achievements [1]. An individual experiencing burnout syndrome is characterized by a number of symptoms: physical, behavioral and psychological [2; 3]. According to C. Maslach, the physical symptoms of burnout include fatigue, the feeling of exhaustion, susceptibility to changes in the external environment, asthenia, frequent headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, excess or lack of weight, shortness of breath, insomnia. Behavioral symptoms of burnout include perception of work as something hard, lack of physical strength, early arrivals at work, staying at the workplace after the end of the workday, reduction of the level of enthusiasm, easily occurring feeling of anger, irritability, suspiciousness, the feeling of omnipotence (power over the fate of a patient), inability to

make decisions, desire to put distance between oneself and patients and colleagues, increased sense of responsibility for patients, growing avoidance of responsibilities and alcohol and/or drug abuse. Psychological symptoms include the feeling of frustration, helplessness and hopelessness, anxiety, boredom, decreased level of enthusiasm, resentment, frustration, uncertainty, guilt, feelings of lack of demand, easily emerging feeling of anger, irritability, suspicion, rigidity, the overall negative fixation on living prospects [3].

As a medical category, burnout is equated to pre-existing disease conditions and is considered as a state of complete exhaustion, which is a combination of psychopathological, psychosomatic, somatic symptoms and signs of social dysfunction.

Despite the keen interest of researchers to the problem of emotional burnout among teachers (the concept of emotional burnout and its structure, the factors causing this phenomenon, the influence of burnout on the indicators of behavior and activity, the genesis of the structural components of burnout and its dynamics in the process of professional development have been defined and investigated), many aspects of this phenomenon haven't been sufficiently studied. Thus, the question of creating complex programs of psychological support of teachers with emotional burnout syndrome is rather poorly developed.

Currently, a significant number of works are devoted to the study of burnout syndrome. Researchers distinguish different models of emotional burnout. A. Pines and E. Aronson propose a one-factor model where the structural component of emotional burnout is mental exhaustion [4]. Two-factor models of burnout structure suggest either the integration of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization into one factor in combination with the reduction of professional achievements or the exclusion of one of the components from the three-factor structure (for example, depersonalization or reduction of professional achievements). For example, P.L. Brill considers burnout as a phenomenon with a two-component structure with dysphoric symptoms and decreased performance at work [5]. The classical model is a three-component burnout model by C. Maslach and S. Jackson, to

which the authors adhere in the study [3]. In Russian psychology, an attempt has also been made to consider emotional burnout as a three-phase process, which includes three stages of development of the classic stress reaction: phase of stress, phase of resistance, phase of exhaustion [6].

Much attention is paid to the study of the features of emotional burnout among teachers. T.V. Formanyuk writes that emotional burnout among teacher is the result of a state of continuous emotional tension [7]. A.A. Rean suggests that it's the result of the stress of professional communication [8]. Numerous empirical studies indicate a high level of emotional burnout among teachers. This state of affairs can be explained by many factors, among which the psychological, socio-demographic and socio-psychological ones can be distinguished. So, A.A. Bayani, H. Bagheri, A. Bayani note that a teacher's self-esteem and climate features in school have a close connection with emotional burnout [9]. M. Kokkinos emphasizes that the individual characteristics of teachers affect the formation and manifestation of burnout syndrome [10]. Z. Merey, M. Piskin, M. Boysan, S. Şehribanoğlu note the impact of sleep quality on the symptoms of emotional burnout [11]. E.N. Skaalvik, S. Skaalvik, as a result of a large-scale study, came to the conclusion that work satisfaction and socio-psychological climate in school are closely associated with emotional burnout [12].

Most scientists pay special attention to the design of various models of preventive and psychocorrective programs of emotional burnout, which are based on the idea of a dynamic complex consisting of psychodiagnosis, audit, preventive measures and psychological intervention for overcoming consequences of burnout [13].

Diagnosis is aimed at determining stress factors and stressful situations, measuring the level of stress and identifying persons experiencing burnout. One of the most recognized and frequently used by researchers methods is Maslach Burnout Inventory by C. Maslach and S. Jackson [3]. It allows for describing this phenomenon, diagnosing the degree of severity of its components such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduction of professional achievements. Then, in some cases, based on the results of psychodiagnostics, a program of stress management and burnout prevention is developed.

N.I. Vlach presents the following model of psychological assistance (exemplified by people of "helping" professions with sub-depressive disorders during emotional burnout). Individual counseling with psychodiagnostics is initially proposed, and then a number of professional groups consisting of 8-12 people are organized. The groups are suggested to use methods such as situational unloading, existential counseling based on the model by Deurzen, Kočiūnas and Yalom, Balint's groups based on the model by V.I. Kabrin, as well as the use of a variety of trainings (antistress management, personal growth, leadership qualities, etc.). The program of psychological assistance to representatives of "helping" professions is developed within the existential-humanistic approach, within the framework of solving the problems of formation and responsibility for one's own personality [14].

A.V. Sukhovshin and E.I. Meshcheryakova offer, in the process of correctional work with persons having emotional burnout syndrome, to use existential counseling in combination with socio-psychological training. They also note that the crucial task of emotional burnout syndrome psychotherapy is to find answers to existential questions [15].

Approaching the development of programs of prevention and correction of emotional burnout among teachers from the point of view of acmeology, E.N. Nesvetailova understands the work with burnout as a process of developing the ability of teachers to make personal sense of their own professional actions, to increase the motivation for effective performance and personal

growth. As a tool for training and development, the researcher offers acmeological training within the program of psychological support of teachers. This training program includes information-stimulating, acmeological, training and practical blocks [16].

I.S. Prokhorova notes that psychological support of teachers should reflect the three main sides of the event (V.I. Slobodchikov), which set the direction of its implementation. These are information support (theoretical courses, scientific and practical seminars, etc.), emotional support (training during counseling), organizational support (a system of workshops with the transfer of technologies for active methods of work in overcoming difficulties) [17].

Thus, researchers considering the problem of psychological support of professionals with emotional burnout, note the need to develop a set of measures to achieve an adequate result.

It is important to note that support of teachers with emotional burnout is possible not only in counseling and psychotherapeutic work but in the system of additional education. As part of this paper, the authors offer a program of prevention of burnout syndrome among teachers as an advanced training program.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Programme for prevention of emotional burnout syndrome among teachers is aimed to form a system of ideas about the condition's origin and development, to familiarize professionals with the stages of development of psychological knowledge in the field of burnout prevention and the basics of its psychological correction. It consists of several modules, including Module 1 "Syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers", Module 2 "Factors influencing of the occurrence of the syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers", Module 3 "Psychodiagnostics of emotional burnout syndrome among teachers", Module 4 "Prevention and psychocorrection of emotional burnout among teachers".

Module 1. Syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers. This block includes the familiarization of professionals with the materials devoted to the history of the term "emotional burnout", the formation of the scientific construct "emotional burnout syndrome", theoretical approaches to its definition in Russian and foreign scientific literature. The features of burnout syndrome in representatives of various professional groups are considered. Particular attention is paid to the issues of burnout syndrome among teachers, in particular, its symptoms and signs, the severity of components, specifics of occurrence and development, the consequences for physical and mental health teachers.

Module 2. Factors influencing the occurrence of the syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers. This module highlights the results of empirical studies devoted to the influence of various factors on burnout. In particular, the influence of socio-demographic factors (gender, age, work experience, marital status, place of work, etc.) on the manifestations of burnout is considered. Attention is paid to the influence of socio-psychological factors on the manifestations of burnout in such features as personality accentuation, psycho-type, locus of control, emotional and social intelligence, emotional orientation, strategies of overcoming behavior, adaptive capacity, communicative qualities of an individual, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-actualization, peculiarities of the value-semantic sphere, attitude to teaching, satisfaction with work, working conditions in the teaching staff, atmosphere in the student team and the attitude to the teacher, involvement in innovative activities, deformation of the social status of teachers. Special attention is paid to the consideration of personal and situational aggression among

teachers as a factor that causes the emergence and development of the syndrome of emotional burnout among teachers.

Module 3. Psychodiagnostics of emotional burnout syndrome among teachers (according to K. Maslach C., S. Jackson [3], N.E. Vodopianova [13], V. E. Orel [18], A.A. Rukavishnikov (<http://docplayer.ru/46409102-Opredeflenie-psihicheskogo-vygoraniya-a-a-rukavishnikov.html>) [19]). In this block, the authors offer the possibility of diagnosing emotional burnout syndrome with the help of various tools developed by Russian and foreign researchers. The obtained information allows teachers to get an idea of the phenomenology of emotional burnout syndrome: manifestations of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduction of professional achievements.

Module 4. Prevention and psychocorrection of emotional burnout among teachers. This module entails group work aimed at actualization of the personal experience of emotional burnout manifestations among teachers and raising awareness of the causes of emotional burnout, in particular, the value system of a teacher, his/her attitude to teaching, professional position, relationship with others, strategies of behavior in pedagogically difficult situations, features of personal and professional life.

This program was tested in 2015 on the basis of Grodno Regional Institute of Educational Development (Grodno). The program was attended by 11 teachers of educational institutions of the Grodno region (women, aged from 27 to 46 years).

RESULTS

Following the results of the program, the teachers noted that various parts of the program were important and valuable for them. On the one hand, the psychosomatic block was useful, allowing learning about the specifics of the development and occurrence of the syndrome of emotional burnout, different perspectives on its nature, and results of existing studies in this field. Despite the seemingly large amount of information on the subject in various educational and popular scientific publications, quite often they are superficial: the publications do not contain a deep analysis of the knowledge existing at the present stage of the development of the concept and are often a tribute to the new fashionable term rather than a result of organized scientific research. On the other hand, the participants of the program highly appreciated the importance of psychocorrectional work in specific cases with specific teachers, as this kind of work is practically significant for the physical and mental health of a teacher.

The results of the work related to the module "Prevention and psychocorrection of emotional burnout among teachers" are of particular interest. It should be noted that as a result of the initial psychodiagnostics the teachers got an idea of the degree of severity of their various manifestations of the syndrome of emotional burnout. At the same time, a high level of burnout syndrome was observed in 25% of teachers, which corresponds to the results of such researchers as T.V. Formanyuk [7], T.I. Ronginskaya [20], J. Bauer, A. Stamm, K. Virnich [21], M.-N. Vercambre, P. Brosselin, F. Gilbert, E. Nerrière, V. Kovess-Masféty [22], etc. The participants stated during the group work that they did not want anything and did not find the strength for anything, that their work ceased to interest them. Some teachers of this group noted the loss of interest in professional activity as the main problem in life. At the same time, some participants pointed out that in life they feel depleted and depressed in ways that go beyond just their professional activities. Thus, the authors can agree with the opinion of some researchers that emotional burnout can be understood as a special form of existential vacuum, as suffering from a sense of emptiness and lack of meaning (https://psy-practice.com/publications/psikhicheskoe-zdorove/emotsionalnoe_vigoranie_cho_tdelat_i_kto_vinovat/)

[23]. It was established that the development of burnout is interrelated with the mismatch in the system of life orientations, dissatisfaction with the process of self-realization, loss of interest in life fulfillment [24].

Further work of the group was aimed at actualization of personal experience of emotional burnout manifestations among teachers and raising awareness of the causes of burnout, in particular, clarifying the system of a teacher's values, attitude to teaching, professional position, relationships with others, strategies of behavior in pedagogically difficult situations, features of professional and personal life.

In the course of work and analysis of specific cases, teachers conducted self-examination with the help of questions offered by the presenter, orienting teachers to search for both lost opportunities and opportunities that still can be lost in professional and personal life: "What do I blame myself for? What do I owe to myself?" The most frequently repeated answers were as follows: spending more time on oneself, paying more attention to one's desires, feelings and emotions, spending more time with one's loved ones that need him/her and who he/she also needs but uses work for dissociating from them, which makes him/her feel miserable and lonely.

The second question proposed for self-examination was "Why not?" (according to M. Boss), which was posed in order to search for unrealized desires, which, being actualized, could be a source of further life development satisfying the teacher or, in other words, a resource for overcoming the state of emotional burnout. Self-examination was aimed at finding the desires that manifested in the group members. It turned out that the participants were previously aware of their desires, but for some reason postponed their realization. For example, the desire to have a third child, which manifested in the process of therapeutic work in the group. A Russian teacher realized with the help of other members of the group that she loves her profession but for some time experiences stagnation in professional development since she has but does not realize her desires associated with writing. The discovery of the desire to write romance novels became an insight for this member of the group, allowing discovering a new direction of life, which is satisfying for her and gives her strength and energy for other spheres of life. One of the members of the group came to understand that for her the resource for the internal comfortable state of fulfillment is embracing her femininity, the feeling of being an attractive woman who devotes a lot of time to herself, her appearance and sometimes unpredictable desires, which men close to her are ready to fulfill for her with pleasure. The important desirable but not experienced aspect of life for this participant was the desire to attend social and cultural events with her husband and son, expand the circle of her acquaintances. The desire to reach a state of a certain balance between different spheres of life was important for all members of the group. Manifestations of burnout syndrome the following questions in front of professionals: "Do I really like the way I live? What don't I experience? What is important for me to experience?" At the same time, the teachers noted that the formal desire for social recognition, love of others, does not bring satisfaction or add physical and mental strength, but on the contrary, requires significant costs, which aggravates the tension.

DISCUSSION

Despite the keen interest in the problems of emotional burnout among teachers, not enough attention has been paid to developing measures for preventing and overcoming this form of professional deformation of an individual. In this regard, the programs developed particularly for this purpose are very popular. The program of prevention of emotional burnout syndrome created in the course of the study and tested by teachers is based

on the idea of the dynamic complex and includes four modules, each of which is important in achieving the final result.

It should be noted that the work started during the program, in the authors' opinion, inevitably leads to the study of all spheres of life and, in particular, to the identification of the ones that are not lived (experienced) by a person, as well as to the realization that if one does what is interesting and important to him/her, if one is happy about it and wants to do it, then burnout does not occur. Fulfillment, despite fatigue, does not lead to burnout. Burnout is the final state that occurs as a result of the continuing creation of something without experiencing it in the aspect of fulfillment. A person who does not feel the value of life comes to self-exploitation. A. Langle notes that a person in the state of fulfillment outlines for himself/herself the goals he/she wants to achieve [23]. The authors clarify that one must first determine his/her desires, based on which the goals can be set. Moreover, this moment is not crucial since a person realizing his/her desire already lives his/her life to the fullest, regardless of whether there is a goal or not. Orientation to living the life in a way one wants, authentically, which itself is difficult in terms of professional pedagogical activity, is the main resource for overcoming emotional burnout.

CONCLUSION

The results are of interest for practical psychologists working in different types of educational institutions, teachers of counseling and clinical psychology. The developed program of prevention of burnout syndrome among teachers can be used both in the system of continuous education on the basis of educational development institutes, as well as in general educational institutions by psychologists of psychological and pedagogical services.

Among possible directions of further research in the field of psychological support of teachers with burnout syndrome can be the introduction of the program proposed by the authors to educational institutions with subsequent clarifications and additions related to both the professional specifics of teachers and their psychological, socio-demographic and socio-psychological characteristics.

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