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IDENTITY ISSUES OF COMBATANTS WITH PTSD SYMPTOMS: DIAGNOSTICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRECTION

У статті представлено аналіз проблеми порушення ідентифікаційних процесів в учасників бойових дій, які мають симптоми післятравматичних стресових розладів. Такі розлади накладають істотний відбиток на перебіг психічної діяльності носія. До важливої симптоматики післятравматичних стресових розладів можна віднести укорочення життєвої перспективи, постійну активізацію бойового стресу. Післятравматичні стресові розлади спричиняють особистісні зміни, найважливішими проявами яких стають агресивність і конфліктність. Ці зміни є причиною соціальної дезадаптації та порушень соціальної та особистісної ідентичності. Післятравматичні стресові розлади у багатьох випадках передують асоціальній і девіантній поведінці осіб, включаючи суїцидальні спроби. Вони є не тільки особистою проблемою ветеранів, але і суспільним питанням, оскільки багато в чому його прояви породжуються громадською думкою і ставленням населення до учасників бойових дій.

З'ясовано, що психотравмуючі обставини екстремальної ситуації, до якої безперечно належать бойові дії, негативно впливають на психічні стани особистості, зокрема викликаючи соціальну відчуженість, як наслідок порушення соціальної та особистісної ідентичності. Для подолання негативних наслідків слід застосовувати різноманітні психологічні впливи, в тому числі й психокорекційні. Запропонована психокорекційна програма для оптимізації ідентифікаційних процесів осіб, травмованих унаслідок участі в бойових діях, показала достатню ефективність. Вона спрямована на переосмислення і прийняття психотравмуючої ситуації для її інтеграції до структури особистості і відновлення ідентичності. Завдяки її використанню певною мірою були гармонізовані як соціальна, так і особистісна ідентичність цієї категорії учасників.

Ключові слова: ідентичність, відчуженість, посттравматичний стресовий розлад, учасники бойових дій, психокорекція.

Challenge problem. The problem of health and working capacity maintaining of people in extreme situations attracts attention of a large number of researchers (Yu. A. Aleksandrovskiy, S. P. Vasilev, A. I. Vorobiev, G. S. Dunin, M. E. Zelenova, I. O. Kothenev, A. G. Maklakov, S. V. Chermyanin and others), whose work shows that working or staying in extreme conditions people show often signs of psychosomatic diseases and boundary neuro-psychic disorders.

Substantial scientific contributions to research on a course and mechanisms of post-traumatic stress disorders were made by such researchers as A. G. Karayani, E. O. Lazebna, M. E. Zelenova, Ya. V. Podlyak, N. V. Tarabrin, B. Badmaev, A. Stolyarenko and others.

The underdevelopment of the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder influence on identity of combatants has let us to the decision to perform the research in this field.

Analysis of recent research and publications. One of the significant consequences of engaging in hostilities is disturbance of social and personal identity, which is manifested in alienation of an individual.

Psychological approach to an individual's alienation was developed by M. Seeman. He considered alienation as an individual's specific experience and revealed its five different modalities:

1) powerlessness – an individual believes that his/her own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he/she seeks;

2) meaninglessness – an individual does not understand significance of events he/she participates, he/she does not know what he/she should believe, why it is necessary to do so and not otherwise;

3) normlessness – a situation when an individual meets with contradictory role expectations and forced to socially unapproved behaviours to achieve given goals;

4) isolation – alienation of an individual from the prevailing goals and values, the discrepancy between an individual and society as for evaluation of meaningful purposes and beliefs;

5) self-estrangement – alienation of an individual from him/herself, the sense of him/herself and his/her abilities as something alien, as a means or an instrument [6].

In developmental psychology, alienation is seen as the opposite to social identification; here, identification is understood as the process of an individual's emotional self-identification with another person, a group. Separation means a mechanism for defending by an individual of his/her human nature.

Identification and separation are considered as dialectically related mechanisms. Identification serves as a mechanism for «acquisition» by an

individual of his/his human nature and his/her socialization. And separation acts as a mechanism of individualization [1].

The performed analysis of basic approaches to research on identity structure has revealed different views on identity types. In particular, «psychosocial», «positive» and «negative» identity are distinguished by E. Erickson; different identity models are proposed, such as «diffusion», «moratorium», «achieved identity», by A. S. Waterman, J. Marcia; «conscious» and «unconscious» identity is studied by G. Mead; as well as «actual» and «virtual» (T. Hoffman, L. Putilova), «real», «ideal», «negative» and «proposed» identity (R. Fogelson), «individual» and «group» identity (B. Schaefer, B. Schleder), «personal» and «social» identity (G. Breakwell, R. Jenkins, W. Doise, J. Habermas, H. Tajfel, J. Turner, M. Yaromovits), «psychophysiological», «social» and «personal» (V. Ageev, N. Ivanova, I. Kon, V. Pavlenko), «prospective identity» (S. Minyurova, L. Plekhanov).

The main characteristics of social and personal identity (perceived individual characteristics) form a single cognitive system – Self-concept [3]. In order to adapt to different situations, Self-concept regulates human behaviour, making more pronounced awareness of either social or personal identity. Greater self-awareness on social identity entails transition from interpersonal behaviour to intergroup one. The main feature of the latter is that the perception by an individual of him/herself and others takes place from the point of view of belonging to social categories. Once social identity of Self-concept comes to the fore, the individual begins to perceive him/herself and the other members of his/her group as having common, typical characteristics that define the group as a whole. This leads to accentuation on similarity within the group and differences of those who belong to other groups [4].

People are always characterized by the desire to maintain a positive social identity and to preserve the harmony of social, personal and professional self-images. In this case, the world is perceived as balanced. If there is a disharmony of self-image and the surrounding world, an individual's behaviour in this world becomes inadequate, and the very image of the social world begins to collapse. Thus, in a situation of radical social transformations and instability of society, associated with them, a crisis of identity can take place.

Development, socialization, personalization, life cycle are the coordinates of identity; the consequences of identity changes, crisis moments, and identity development are fixed in them. Identity development is nonlinear, it passes through overcoming the various identity crises that E. Erickson understands as «turning points, moments of choice between progress and regression, integration or delay» [5]. Identity crisis is the period when there is a conflict between identity configuration and changes in a biological or

social existential situation. To overcome such crisis, an individual must make some effort to find and accept new values and activities.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the effects of psychological correction on disturbed identity of combatants having symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders.

Main material. Disturbances, developed after an experienced psychological trauma, affect all levels of human functioning (physiological, personal, the level of interpersonal and social interaction), lead to persistent personal changes.

Post-traumatic reactions lead to personal disorders, deprive an individual of productive communications with other people, and violate social, professional or other meaningful activity. Similar phenomena are associated with disturbance of psychological adaptation, disruption of professional abilities, identity, and deterioration of life quality in general.

Social alienation is also known to traumatic stress victims: many of them suffer from loneliness, difficulty or even impossibility to establish close relationships with other people. Their experiences are so unique that other people simply cannot understand it. So, people around them begin to seem boring, ignorant of life. That is why people who have experienced traumatic events attract one another. In their opinion, only a person who has experienced something similar can understand them.

The effects of a traumatic event can also be experienced in a different way. Thus, at stressful situations (in particular, during and after hostilities), persons with good psychological hardiness are looking for support and assistance of their nearest and dearest and are ready to answer in the same way; they think that it is better to remain involved in the situation and in contacts with their loved ones; they know, when they can influence event outcomes and influence actually, believing that changes and stresses are natural and that they create conditions for growth, development, and a deeper understanding of life.

Relaxation and removal of anxiety, accompanied by a feeling of neuromuscular stress, is a necessary component for rethinking and accepting a traumatic situation for its integration into a personality structure and identity restoration. Thus, wide use of different psychological correction methods is justified.

The research on peculiarities of identity of combatants having signs of post-traumatic stress disorders has showed significant disturbances of both social and personality identity, which we associate with the experienced traumatic events. It should be noted that combatants without signs of post-traumatic stress disorders has also manifested some disturbances of identity, but less pronounced. This gave us the basis for creating

a psychological corrective program for this category of people with the purpose to optimize an individual's identity.

Based on the obtained results, we have developed the psychological corrective program to optimize identity of combatants with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders.

After a psychological corrective work with people having symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders, the psychological diagnostic procedure was repeated within one month, the results of which have determined effectiveness of the proposed program for psychological correction. The used methods: Twenty-Self Statement-Test (M. Kuhn, T. McPartland modified by T. V. Rumyantseva), Personal and Social Identity Questionnaire (A. A. Urbanovich). The obtained results are presented in the tables 1, 2, 3.

Analysis of the substantive characteristics of the respondent's identity after the performed psychological correction shows that the reflection indexes significantly changed ($p \leq 0.05$ by Fischer criterion) and the positive identity polarity increased ($p \leq 0.05$). Other indicators changed as trends, but did not reached the significance level. The general tendency to harmonization of social and personal identity should be noted.

After the psychological correction, there were no significant changes in the identity characteristics of the combatants, but the observed trend is generally positive and indicates the respondent's identity optimization as a result of the psychological correction.

After the psychological correction, the indexes of the following scales significantly changed: «Education» ($p \leq 0.05$), «Family» ($p \leq 0.05$), «My future» ($p \leq 0.01$), «Me and society» ($P \leq 0.05$). That is, the problem areas of identity changed significantly, and the problematic areas were optimized.

In general, the results of repeated psychological diagnostics have shown effectiveness of the psychological corrective program developed by us and allowed us to recommend it for use for psychological support of combatants with signs of post-traumatic stress disorders or problematic identity.

Conclusions. Post-traumatic stress disorders are developed at people after traumatic events and influence significantly on the course of their mental activity. The important symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders are the shortening of life perspective and constant actuation of combat stresses. Post-traumatic stress disorders cause personality changes, the most important manifestations of which are aggression and conflicts. They also cause social maladaptation and disturbances of social and personal identity. Post-traumatic stress disorders in many cases precede antisocial and deviant behaviour, including suicidal attempts. They are not only a personal problem of combat veterans, but also the social issue, since they manifestations

Table 1

Substantive characteristics of identity of the combatants before and after psychological correction (%)

Characteristics		Before	After	Φ	p
Self-esteem	Too high	25,7	21,4	0,35	–
	Understated	33,9	27,6	0,52	–
	Unstable	40,4	51,0	0,87	–
Personality type	Emotionally polar	48,6	34,4	1,16	–
	Balanced	20,4	30,5	0,83	–
	With doubts	31,0	35,1	0,34	–
Gender identity	Present	89,6	91,3	0,14	–
	Missing	10,4	9,7	0,06	–
Reflection	Present	32,5	54,8	1,83	0,05
	Missing	67,5	45,2	1,83	0,05
Time aspect of identity	Past	39,4	31,5	0,65	–
	Present	23,6	28,6	0,41	–
	Future	37,0	39,9	0,24	–
Ratio of social roles and individual characteristics	Harmonious	22,6	38,2	1,28	–
	Mainly social	59,0	44,3	1,21	–
	Mainly individual	18,4	17,5	0,07	–
Areas of life where the characteristics are represented	Family	31,9	30,5	0,11	–
	Work	31,7	25,2	0,53	–
	Education	2,8	4,6	0,15	–
	Leisure	11,3	16,7	0,44	–
	Personality relations	16,8	18,4	0,13	–
	Vacation	5,5	4,6	0,07	–
Physical identity	Present	13,4	27,6	1,16	–
	Missing	86,6	72,4	1,16	–
Psycholinguistic characteristics	< Nouns	63,1	55,3	0,64	–
	< Adjectives	22,7	26,2	0,29	–
	< Verbs	13,2	18,5	0,43	–
Identity polarity	Negative	31,6	20,7	0,89	–
	Neutral	36,8	28,4	0,69	–
	Positive	10,2	30,8	1,69	0,05
	Exaggerated	21,4	20,1	0,11	–

Table 2

Identity indexes of the combatants before and after psychological correction (%)

Characteristics	Before	After	Φ	p
Social Self	51,6	43,7	0,65	–
Communicative Self	22,3	28,4	0,50	–
Material Self	11,2	13,5	0,19	–
Physical Self	13,4	16,3	0,24	–
Active Self	3,7	15,5	0,97	–
Perspective Self	19,8	34,2	1,18	–
Reflexive self	27,3	32,8	0,45	–
Problematic identity	36,8	21,6	1,25	–
Contextual state	21,5	19,1	0,19	–

are quite often generated by public opinion and general public attitude towards combatants.

In addition to the psychological problems influenced by post-traumatic stress disorders, returning from the combat zone people acquire certain features, such as profound changes in world outlook of the combatants, which, in turn, can contribute to difficulties of re-adaptation.

Psychological correction, psychological therapy, any kind of psychological help are a necessary condition for rethinking and accepting a traumatic situation, for its integration into the structure of a personality and identity restoration.

Table 3

Indicators of social and personal aspects of identity before and after psychological correction (in marks)

Scales	Before	After	T	p
Education	5,6±1,4	7,2±1,5	2,3	0,05
Material situation	5,9±1,3	6,9±1,7	1,3	–
Inner world	6,8±2,1	7,3±1,4	0,7	–
Family	9,3±2,5	7,1±1,3	2,2	0,05
Relationships with others	6,3±1,4	8,0±1,8	1,8	–
My future	4,2±0,8	7,6±1,5	2,7	0,01
Me and society where I live	6,4±1,5	8,3±1,9	2,2	0,05

The psychological corrective program aimed at optimization of identity of combatants having symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders or problematic identity has been developed and tested. The results of repeated psychological diagnostics indicate effectiveness of the developed psychological corrective program.

Prospects for further research. In the further research, it is planned to develop a complex of psychological corrective measures for veterans with problems of rehabilitation.

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IDENTITY ISSUES OF COMBATANTS WITH PTSD SYMPTOMS: DIAGNOSTICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRECTION

The article analyses the problem of identity disturbances of combat operation participants having symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders. Such disorders influence significantly on a combatants' mental activity. An important symptom of post-traumatic stress disorders is the shortening of a person's life perspective, constant actuations of combat stresses. Post-traumatic stress disorders lead to personality changes; aggression and conflicts are the most important manifestations of them. These changes cause social maladaptation and disturbances of social and personal identity. Post traumatic stress disorders often precede antisocial and deviant behaviour, including suicidal attempts. They are not only a personal problem of combat veterans, but also the social issue, since they manifestations are quite often generated by public opinion and general public attitude towards combatants.

The article show that psychologically traumatic circumstances of an extreme situation, hostilities is undoubtedly such a situation, influence negatively on a person's psychological states, causing, in particular, social exclusion as a result of disturbances of social and personal identity. To overcome negative consequences, various psychological influences, including psychological corrective ones, should be used. The proposed psychological corrective program optimizing identification processes of persons traumatized because of combat activities has shown sufficient effectiveness. The program is aimed at rethinking and accepting the traumatic situation and its integration into a personality structure for identity restoration. The social and personal identities of this category of participants were harmonized, to a certain extent, thanks to its use.

Key words: *identity, alienation, post-traumatic stress disorder, participants in military operations, psychological correction.*