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Features of Joint Work of Family and School in Maintaining Children's Mental Health in War Conditions

Introduction

The current situation in Ukraine requires a single basis for the formation of strategies from political, socio-economic to cultural and patriotic development of the country, based on ensuring the full health of the nation and future generations.

Mental health is one of the most important problems of today, recognized as the most important component of a high level of quality of life, which allows a person to consider his life full and meaningful, to be active and creative members of society.

The World Health Organization documents, the Constitution of Ukraine, the Fundamentals of Health Legislation state that society and government are responsible for preserving the gene pool, the physical well-being of their citizens, the level of health, including mental¹.

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¹ World Health Organization, *Quality Rights. Tool Kit. Assessing and improving quality and human rights in mental health and social care facilities*, http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70927/3/9789241548410_eng.pdf (20.08.2021).

The World Health Organization is calling for the protection of children in armed conflict. According to her, ten percent of people who survive a traumatic event will later have symptoms of psychological trauma, and another ten percent will show behavioral changes or psychological disorders that will hinder full participation in everyday life (the most common disorders are anxiety disorders, depression and depression). Smith notes that the most important factors that determine the degree of impact of war on children's mental health are: lack of basic resources (such as shelter, water, food, education, health care, etc.); severance of family relations (due to loss, separation or relocation); stigmatization and discrimination (have a significant impact on identity); pessimistic outlook on life (constant feeling of loss and grief, inability to imagine a bright future) and the normalization of violence.

Mental health problems have been relevant in recent years and are being studied from different angles. The history of this issue was considered, for example, by Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Oleksandr Stepanov, Borys Bratus, Iosiv Gurvich, Olga Vasilieva, Philip Filatov, Victor Pachalyan, etc., philosophy – Borys Yudin, Vadym Rozin, Vladimir Dimov, Andrei Brushlinsky and others. Thoroughly studied the phenomenon of mental health Roksolana Sirko, Inna Tolkunova, Georgi Lozhkin and others.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the current possibilities of art therapy in psychological assistance to children in war.

Objectives of the research. To describe the main areas of art therapy that will help protect the mental health of children in war.

Research methods. Methods of theoretical analysis are used: analysis and systematization of psychological-pedagogical and scientific-methodical literature, method of terminological analysis.

Presentation of the main theses

The interaction of teachers and parents is important at all stages of learning and development of the child, but it is especially important in war.

We define the interaction of the family and the school as a mutually coordinated activity of these social institutions, aimed at establishing productive partnerships for the development, education and upbringing of the child's personality. The formation of pedagogical culture of parents is possible with positive-oriented interaction between family and school, equality of

relations between teachers and parents, optimization of subject-subject cooperation.

Researchers have expressed differing views on the productivity of school and family work. Based on the scientific substantiation of the problem of interaction between family and school by domestic and foreign researchers, we distinguish three main approaches to solving this problem:

- the school has a decisive influence on the upbringing of the child;
- education and upbringing of children at school is a logical continuation of family upbringing, which depends on the psychological and pedagogical culture of parents;
- the family and the school are equal in their influence on the development of children and only in interaction can they preserve the psychological health of children in conditions of war.

Recent psychological research shows that, despite inhumane conditions, children have a huge potential for vitality (Joop de Jong², Chandi Fernando and Michel Ferrari³, Lynne Jones⁴), which allows them to grow and become full-fledged individuals despite psychological trauma. Researchers have identified several defense mechanisms, the most important of which are effective coping strategies, a positive belief system, healthy family relationships and friendships.

The extent of the consequences of the war also depends on post-war events, in particular on whether the country's post-war reconstruction has been successful and whether the socio-economic situation has improved. It is also important to bring to justice those who have committed war crimes, to acknowledge the parties' responsibility for their atrocities and to implement local reconciliation mechanisms. A key step towards successful conflict resolution and reconciliation with the past is the inclusion of conflict resolution techniques in the educational program⁵.

² *Trauma, war, and violence: Public mental health in socio-cultural context*, ed. J. de Jong, New York 2002.

³ C. Fernando, M. Ferrari, *Handbook of Resilience in Children of War*, New York, Heidelberg, Dordrecht, London 2013.

⁴ L. Jones, *Then They Started Shooting: Children of the Bosnian War and the Adults They Become*, New York 2013.

⁵ K. E. Dupuy, K. Peters, *War and Children. A Reference Handbook*, Santa Barbara 2010.

The complexity of the impact of war on children and adolescents and the diversity of their life experiences can only be grasped through oral testimony in the form of life stories or drawings⁶.

Considering the possibilities of art therapy in psychological assistance to children, we will dwell in more detail on the technique that activates tactile receptors. Touching objects, activates the process of associations, memories, feelings. In the process of discussing these feelings, associative pictures, memories, new life goals and perspectives are formed.

To reduce the emotional tension of the individual, you can offer an exercise “Memories”. Containers with different fillings (sand, starch, earth, various cereals, cotton wool, etc.) are placed on the table, a container with water and clean napkins for wiping hands are in the center of the table. The task is to immerse your fingers in each of the containers (alternately wiping your fingers after each immersion) and focus on the feelings, associations, memories that arise. After experimenting with the last tank – the second stage of the exercise (discussion of what happened during the immersion of the fingers). The first impressions of the exercise are associated with childhood memories, pleasant, positive, unpleasant, negative. Gradually decreases emotional tension, anxiety, there is a trusting attitude to the therapist, the opportunity to discuss more important, traumatic memories. Associations, memories, the most difficult, traumatic events are gradually discussed. At the moment of touching the fingertips activation of sensations, which encourages the construction of new associations, fantasies, memories. This method is used to translate these experiences of the client into the history of his biography. The technique is based on the mechanism of restoring the timeline through the creation of a new history, a narrative of events. Through the reconstruction of life events that have traumatized the client, experiences are spoken, and the time perspective of life changes is realized. The readiness of the individual for therapeutic interventions becomes important. A detailed description of events activates the mechanism of combining individual memories, awareness of the whole picture. This tool is aimed at the mechanism of the integrity of the perception of events. Experiencing traumas through feelings, feelings, story about them, dialogue activates the restoration of the image of the Self, its integrity. Replaced feelings (aggression, anger, rage, confusion) of the individual, causing imbalance, mosaic of memories, can go from subconscious to conscious. Actualizing

⁶ L. Jones , *Then They Started Shooting...*, op. cit.

the need to release blocked emotions helps in dealing with post-traumatic personality disorder. Building new goals changes the meaning of life orientations of the individual. The orientation of the individual to new life goals, the construction of new life prospects, the meaning of life forms a sense of well-being. If a person has a high overall coefficient of meaningfulness of life, it increases the sense of his well-being.

We will describe the main directions of art therapy that will help protect the mental health of children in wartime.

Isotherapy, as an art-therapeutic method, is a creative, spontaneous or thematic drawing. Drawing is an effective tool, because thanks to it, a person can freely express their thoughts, feelings and experiences through the language of images, symbols and colors, as well as free themselves from negative experiences and "paint" their attitude to reality.

Given the concept of Carl G. Jung, it should be remembered that the unconscious in the picture, reflected through images and symbols, is a pointer to the interpretation of a current situation, event or personal problem. Therefore, all isoproductions are "direct messages of the unconscious, which can not be as easily camouflaged as in verbal communication". Any picture and image in it, in a way, act as a psychological protection, in which a person accumulates his traumatic and negative experiences. Each image and symbol performs the function of containerization, not allowing "exit", but on the contrary, distances the subject's experience through the mechanism of projection. Symbols or images in a picture can contain complex experiences until they are realized, verbalized, and accepted.

In the process of applying isotherapy, it is advisable to pay attention to the techniques of "zentanglement" and "doodling". Their value is manifested in the ability to relax and enjoy the process of drawing and rapid psycho-corrective effect. Doodling (from "doodle" – unconscious drawing) – is drawing with simple elements (circles, hooks, diamonds, dots, sticks, etc.), from which you can form complex compositions. This technique of unconscious drawing (doodle) allows simple elements, combining into complex constructs, to impress the imagination.

Zentangle (from "zen" – balance, calm and "rectangle" – rectangle) is a kind of isotherapy technique, which is a combination of meditation and drawing. It is usually associated with the creation of patterns that do not have a semantic load, but are combined into a single image. Squares of 9 × 9 cm are usually used for zentangles, which are divided into segments

that are filled with different elements of the same type (dots, circles, rhombuses, etc.). Both of the above techniques improve memory, stimulate creativity, elevate mood, reduce stress and even reduce anger.

Sand therapy is a type of art therapy that involves the use of natural materials: water, sand, stones, shells, plants. It involves in-depth work with the feelings and experiences of the client, gives the opportunity to comprehend and model behavioral strategies and work out repressed emotions, experiences.

The process of creating sand compositions reflects the cyclical nature of life and the dynamics of mental changes in the individual, and their content – different levels of mental life of the individual, which together allow access to the deepest layers of the psyche. The main goal of sand therapy is to achieve the effect of self-healing through spontaneous creative self-expression of the personal and collective unconscious, its translation to the conscious level of the psyche, strengthening the “ego” and strengthening human capacity for self-determination and self-development. This method is effective for:

- “working out” traumatic situations on a symbolic level;
- response to negative emotional experiences in the process of creative self-expression;
- expansion of internal experience through awareness of the deep levels of the psyche;
- change of attitude to oneself, one’s own past, present and future and significant life events;
- building trust in the world around and acquiring effective skills of interaction with it.

Clay therapy – is a field of art therapy, which involves working with plastic materials (clay). Psycho-corrective potential of working with clay is aimed at developing the emotional intelligence of the client, the formation of new experiences, overcoming traumatic experiences and awareness of their own emotional states.

Clay is an ideal mediator in the communication of the individual with their own experiences, as well as in the client’s awareness of their own problem, helps to develop skills of managing their own time and actions. This material is sensitive to emotions and feelings, so it effectively helps to respond to anger, aggression, fear, anxiety and more. Working with clay is an

“ambulance” in establishing contact with the body and awareness of their physicality.

Fairy tale therapy is a method that uses metaphor to make connections between fairy tale events and behavior in real life. Thanks to fairy tale therapy there is an awareness of the inner essence, uniqueness, harmony between oneself and the world, integration of personality, expansion of consciousness and improvement of interaction.

Carl Gustav Jung saw an important function of fairy tale therapy in activating resources and revealing the potential of the individual, Eric Bern considered it (fairy tale therapy) to reveal the inner and outer world, comprehension of the past, modeling the future.

The use of fairy tale therapy can take place in various ways, among the most popular are the following:

- discussion of fairy tales;
- independent creation of a fairy tale by a child (children's fairy tale);
- staging and dramatization of a written fairy tale;
- work with the main motives of the fairy tale⁷.

It should be noted that the driving forces of fairy tale therapy are fasting, exchange, metaphORIZATION and visualization, which allows through indirect actions, metaphors and objects – to gain a healing effect on the child's psyche.

Collage as an art-therapeutic technique is the creation of images through the use of photographs, clippings from newspapers and magazines, fabrics, colored paper, as well as wood, wire, ropes and more. The main objectives of the collage are:

- solving intrapersonal and interpersonal problems;
- manifestation of creative abilities, originality and uniqueness;
- expression of feelings and thoughts through visual images, pictures;
- output of negative emotions;
- building plans and working with the motivational sphere;
- awareness of patterns of behavior, social roles and attitudes;
- planning the image of the future;

⁷ Herman N. I., Gorobets T. V., *Fairy tale therapy as one of the methods of practical activity of a psychologist: Methodical manual on the subject "Practice of psychological influence in clinical psychology" for students of the Faculty of Psychology full-time specialty 6.030102 – psychology, 6.030103 – practical psychology, Cherkasy 2015, p. 142.*

- structuring and prioritizing one's own life;
- streamlining the sensory experience of the individual.

The collage technique should be used in both individual and group work.

A holistic picture of the inner world of the individual with the help of collage consists of an analysis of the past, present and future, current experiences of the present, sensual and rational.

In general, collage, despite the simplicity and ease of implementation, significantly focuses on key personality issues, hidden desires, the contradiction between goals and strategies, expands the possibilities of self-awareness and self-understanding.

Drama therapy is a field of art therapy that involves the use of dramatization techniques to act out certain plots. The effectiveness of drama therapy lies in the use of play potential by means of dramatization in conditions of disunity of consciousness due to suffering to heal the individual. One of the founders of the method is Jacob L. Moreno, who created the theater of spontaneity and therapeutic theater. The use of this method requires special training of the presenter and, as a rule, includes the use of music, dance, make-up, drawing, etc.

The ultimate goal of drama therapy is to combine the physical and the spiritual. To achieve this result, you can choose improvisation, role-playing games, ritual games, the use of masks. Role-plays and improvisation help to increase the level of adaptability in different life situations, provide prediction of behavior in the context of life experience and awareness, contributing to a constructive experience of negative experiences. Writing and playing a play helps to explore and solve complex and deep problems, experiences.

Music therapy is a psychological practice of using melodies and sounds to improve a person's psychophysical condition and restore emotional balance. Music therapy has been recognized as an official method of treatment since 2003. Medical academies with music rehabilitation departments can always be found, where music is used to restore physical and mental health.

Conclusions

As a result, we will formulate advice for teachers and parents on working with children in wartime.

1. Make allegories with favorite fairy tales.

When gathering a child in a shelter, explain that each fairy tale character is tested for courage and the ability to endure something unpleasant. Remember your child's favorite fairy tales and what trials there were.

This will help children understand the uniqueness of the situation, will help to start the mechanisms of adaptation.

2. Invent new fantastic characters.

Of course, underground in basements and shelters is cold or hot, crowded, dark and scary. But we have imagination! Play a game with your child "Now let's invent something colorful, something strange, something with ears, etc." – a personal totem-protector, like Patronus in "Harry Potter".

So we can reduce the impact of deprivation from confined space.

3. Tell about the angels who protect.

When explosions and shots are heard, but you are in a safe place and protected, you and your child can imagine the great wings of Angels defending our soldiers and helping them to protect us.

This way we will help the kids feel safe.

4. Drawings for defenders.

When a child has questions about what we can do to help, draw support pictures with your child and feel free to post them on social media.

This way the child will see and feel that she is also doing something important.

5. Physical games, breathing exercises, learning according to plan, learning a foreign language.

In this way we help stabilize the body's mental system after disorganization by martial law.

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Abstract

The article highlights the importance of the concept of “mental health” and the “interaction between family and school”. Possibilities of art therapy in psychological help to children in the conditions of war are considered. The main directions of art therapy that help protect the mental health of children during the war are described: isotherapy, sand therapy, clay therapy, fairy tale therapy, magic, drama therapy, music therapy. Tips for teachers and parents are outlined on working with children in wartime.

keywords: mental health, interaction of family and school, art therapy, war and children

Streszczenie

Funkcje wspólnej pracy rodziny i szkoły w utrzymaniu zdrowia psychicznego dzieci w warunkach wojny

W artykule zwrócono uwagę na istotę pojęcia „zdrowie psychiczne”, „współdziałanie rodziny i szkoły”. Rozważane są możliwości zastosowania arteterapii w pomocy psychologicznej dzieciom w warunkach wojny. Opisano główne kierunki arteterapii, które pomagają chronić zdrowie psychiczne dzieci w czasie wojny: izoterapia, terapia piaskiem, terapia gliną, bajkoterapia, magia, drama, muzykoterapia. Podano wskazówki dla nauczycieli i rodziców dotyczące pracy z dziećmi w czasie wojny.

słowa kluczowe: zdrowie psychiczne, interakcja rodziny i szkoły, arteterapia, wojna i dzieci