

2. ПЕДАГОГІЧНИЙ ТА ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИЙ ДОСВІД



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GROUP DEREFLEXION METHOD WHEN WORKING WITH OLDER STUDENTS FOR STABILIZATION OF THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL STATE AND PREVENTION OF NEUROTIC AND PSYCHOTIC SPECTRUM DISEASES

Summary.

State of martial law undoubtedly affects mental processes. Typically, they manifest as a general disharmony in the mental makeup of the personality while preserving abilities and intellect, leading to disruptions in interpersonal relationships and social adaptation.

To gently and effectively support and address these conditions, preventing losses in the realms of mental well-being and intellectual capacities, the authors of the article propose school psychologists or teachers to master and consistently implement the method of group dereflexion on a regular basis. The method of dereflexion was developed by the Austrian psychotherapist Viktor Frankl in the early post-war years as an individual therapy method to address psycho-emotional disorders. The philosophical foundation of the method lies in the fundamental understanding that any negative (and positive) event in a person's life – be it war, loss, illness, suffering, or death – is a specific task that the individual must address. Therefore, the personality needs to decipher this task and choose an instrument to cope with it.

In the article, the authors highlight that the primary goal of dereflexion is to eliminate hyperreflection, a condition that affects almost everyone who spends an extended period in stressful, stress-generating situations. Hyperreflection involves excessive attention and concentration on oneself, one's symptoms, one's attitudes towards life events, and constant analysis. Hyperreflection is often interconnected with hyperintention (excessive striving to achieve a desired outcome): hyperintention fuels hyperreflection, and hyperreflection, in turn, reinforces hyperintention. Dereflexion encourages redirecting attention from self-observation and personal experiences to something that holds meaning in the external world, something that can be embodied in values.

The authors propose for the “school psychologist/teacher – student” interaction format the optimal form of dereflexion – a group work in the form of free conversation. It is effective to conduct dereflexion groups at least once a week, allocating an hour for communication, with the recommended total number of sessions to establish a lasting therapeutic effect being 8-10 meetings. The dereflexion group curator sets the tone for the conversation and establishes rules prohibiting students from delving into their own problems. Instead, each participant learns to listen to others. Together, the group members discuss assigned topics related to joyful and inspiring experiences, learn to celebrate each other's successes, and shift their focus from negative to positive emotions.

According to the article, the term “dereflection” refers to the process of redirecting the individual's focus away from their internal problems towards external tasks, those close to them, and reorienting them towards their specific calling and life mission.

Keywords: logotherapy; existential analysis; Viktor Frankl; dereflection; gyperreflection; dimensional ontology; noetic; education during the war.

Our lives are bigger than the difficulties and challenges we face, and a person is always bigger than his problem.

The prolonged stay in a state of martial law undoubtedly affects mental processes and, in most cases, leads to various degrees of characterological disorders in students. These disorders manifest as a general disharmony in the mental makeup of the personality, while the ability and intellect are preserved, resulting in disruptions in interpersonal relationships and social adaptation.

Such conditions occupy an intermediate position between normalcy and pathology. Each disorder will have its own unique style of decompensation, and the intensity of manifestations can range from near-normal (neurotic) to psychotic. Common to all these states is the emotional inability to cope with one's emotions: impulsivity, an inability to understand what is felt, impulsive behavior due to difficulty in dealing with emotions, and sometimes self-harm or self-destructive behavior. There may be disturbances in the organizing role of intellect over affect (the dominance of affect over intellect). Undoubtedly, this is primarily observed in relationships with other people – both with older individuals and peers. It manifests as capitulation, hypercompensation, difficulty in demonstrating self-transcendence, empathy, and an inability to put oneself in another's place.

To gently and effectively support and address such states, and to prevent losses in the realm of mental well-being and intellectual capacities, school psychologists or teachers are suggested to master and consistently implement the method of group dereflexion.

The dereflexion method was developed by the Austrian psychotherapist Viktor Frankl in the early post-war years as an individual therapy method to address psycho-emotional disorders. Subsequently, within the framework of group work, this method has proven itself as an effective mechanism for preventing psycho-emotional deformations. It is also recognized as one of the therapeutic methods applicable in a broad context (from school to family) as well as in specialized settings (individual sessions, psychological and pedagogical counseling, etc.).

The philosophical basis of the method consists in the fundamental understanding that any negative (and positive) event in a person's life – be it war, loss, illness, suffering, or death – is a certain task that a person must solve. Therefore, the individual must solve this task and choose a tool to cope with it.

Logotherapy literally means “healing through sense”, and the term comes from the Greek language. In psychology, it is associated with humanism, and

its foundation lies in the assertion that personality develops through the search for life's sense. When a person is devoid of a sense of existence or feels constantly under the threat of loss, disorders and neuroses can occur. Logotherapy is an ongoing pursuit to find new dimensions in daily life, to restore lost meaning, and to overcome existential voids. Having its roots in the concentration camps of Auschwitz during the Second World War, logotherapy possesses effective tools that enable individuals, even in the face of such critical challenges as war, to take responsibility for every moment of their existence. It also contributes to unlocking the pursuit of sense and the ability to feel it in any situation and under any circumstances. To achieve this, work on deepening existential awareness, assisting individuals in the ability to listen to inner voice, formulating questions about the meaning of life and the significance of specific moments, ultimately leading to an understanding of the meaningfulness of one's own life, are necessary. Viktor Frankl considered the ability of an individual to engage in self-transcendence and self-distancing as essential skills that help in this process. Through self-distancing, a person is capable of not identifying himself with own experiences and can observe them from a distant perspective. Through self-transcendence, an individual directs his focus toward something or someone beyond own existence, withdrawing himself from the center of own reality and placing something or someone else in its stead.

“A person becomes a person only when he gives himself to another”, these words of K. Jaspers V. Frankl often cited when talking about the method of dereflection. He also called dereflection a treatment by forgetting oneself. With dereflection, attention switches from the symptom to a new goal. According to E. Lucas, dereflection helps a person to neutralize excessive closure on himself, symptoms and problems by focusing on life tasks, on positive aspects of existence, on someone else. The goal of this is to achieve a healthy component. We do not focus on the sick part of our perception or the painful reality of this world, we highlight the healthy aspects of our existence and the whole and beautiful aspects of reality.

Dereflection groups are very effective. Participants acquire the skills to share positive experiences; talk about problems in terms of their solutions; to think primarily about the good and joyful; to notice what is valuable and inspiring. As E. Lucas noted: “Why to stand in the garden of your life and water weeds instead

of flowers?” [15; 113]. And this seemingly simple truth may be partly inaccessible to a person alone.

The task of dereflection is to make a person feel the power of his own will. Personality is always free because it can make choices. And any choice is necessarily associated with responsibility. And if we choose something, we will respond to the task set by life. The task of a person is always that he can do the best now, at the moment, from the assortment of what he is capable of in a specific situation. But this does not exclude mistakes. And dereflection helps to live mistakes with gratitude.

The method of dereflection appeals directly to the resources of the individual, seeking and asking how the individual can best answer the current question from life, and this answer is always individual. The effort that a person makes when choosing the only possibility, the most acceptable from a million options, is the meaning. We cannot grasp the meaning of our entire being, because during our life we are able to make choices and actions that change this meaning, but we can be aware of the meaning of individual moments, this or that situation.

And if it is typical for adults to fuss around the question of the meaning of life, then children have a natural ability to fully experience the meaning of each moment, sometimes much more acutely than in adulthood. For small children, any event reaches the dimension of a grandiose discovery: whether to conquer an ice slide, or to run after a bright butterfly. In adulthood, we are often not surprised by what the world offers us, and even a trip to Africa does not seem amazing to us, because we can assume what it will be like, imagine how it looks. And for a child, everything new is a mystery that he wants to discover on his own, and not be satisfied with guessing. Children are very involved in reality, their lives are very full. It is important to accompany them in this process, so that the traumatic events of growing up do not lead to identification with the traumatic experience. After all, our life is much bigger than the difficulties and challenges we face, and a person is always bigger than his problem. And in this sense, dereflection helps to form a vision of the situation not from the position of the victim, building a distance between us and our experience.

Dereflection develops self-transcendence, which is the essence of being. A person realizes himself only when he is directed to something outside himself. In addition, since a person is characterized by compulsive self-observation arising from the fear of losing control, dereflection helps to get rid of this fear and replace control with trust in the world.

Another of the main goals of dereflection is the elimination of hyperreflection, which is common to almost everyone who spends a long time in intense stressful situations. Hyperreflection is excessive attention, excessive concentration (more than makes sense) on oneself, one's symptoms, one's attitude to what is happening in life, on analysis. Often, hyper-

reflection is interconnected with hyper-intention (a strong desire to get what you want): hyper-intention fuels hyper-reflection, hyper-reflection encourages hyper-intention. Dereflexion encourages a shift of attention from self-observation and one's own experiences to something that makes sense in the external world, which can be embodied in values.

For the “school psychologist/teacher – student” format of interaction, the optimal form of work on dereflection is group work in the form of free conversation. It is effective to conduct dereflection groups at least once a week, allocating an hour of communication for this, and the total recommended number, which will form a permanent therapeutic effect, is 8–10 meetings. The moderator of the dereflection group sets the tone of the conversation and the rules, according to which students are not allowed to delve into their own problems, but instead each learns to listen to the other. Together, the group members discuss the given topics about something joyful and inspiring, learn to rejoice in the successes of others, switch attention from negative to positive experiences. At the same time, if someone from the group has some personal problems during the work, the curator offers to hold an individual meeting dedicated to the problematic issue.

E. Lucas formulated the main goal of the dereflection method as follows: *“Helping to neutralize excessive self-inclusion, symptoms and problems by focusing on life tasks, on positive aspects of existence”* [15; 27]. At the same time, we do not find out negative problems, which are generally reduced to the list: *“I'm not sure, I can't, I don't understand, I don't know what to do, I don't have it, I can't manage it myself”*. In the group, emphasis is placed on the healthy component of the personality and the surrounding reality, so that he believes in himself and formulates life tasks. For this, it is important that everyone in the group understands and follows the rules.

Group rules:

1. We discover the joy of communication.
2. If we talk about problems, then only from the point of view of how the problem helped to become stronger and reveal one's own positive sides.
3. We share a joyful experience, a good mood.
4. We discuss successful strategies.
5. We look for and find our opportunities.
6. We understand each other's wishes.
7. We define our real goals.

The advantages of group dereflection meetings:

1. In a group, you can feel how others react to our positive traits.
2. The group provides a sense of security and support.
3. New information received in the group is transferred to the daily life of the participant.
4. Group therapy is often more effective than individual sessions with a psychologist. The therapy process in the group is much more intense.

5. Group classes give strength to the individual. He feels the support of others and gains the courage to be himself.

6. The group helps the individual to discover those treasures in himself, the existence of which he could not believe before.

The first meeting of the dereflection group begins with an introduction to the method and rules. The curator asks the group simple questions, and each participant speaks in turn.

Examples of questions for the first meeting:

First question: *What good thing happened to you during the day (week)?*

Second question: *What did you like about your friends' stories about their day/week?*

Third question: *Which of the things you heard would you like to do in your life during the next week?*

In the process of answering questions and exchanging opinions, it is important for the curator to block hyper-reflection and hyper-intention, gently returning to the main issues of the discussion, concentrating on the positive and gradually shifting attention from one's own experiences to the ability to listen, empathize with others, note their needs and find in oneself desire to answer them.

Fourth question: *What would you give to the person sitting to your right or left after you have heard his/her story?*

Fifth question: *Who would you like to thank (parents, friend, Armed Forces of Ukraine, teacher, etc.) for the good that happened to you during the day/week? Would you like to express your gratitude to this person in some way? (come up and talk about it, draw a picture, give flowers, etc.).*

With the help of such questions and such a manner of conducting a conversation, students acquire the skill of healthy self-forgetfulness. The best way for a person to come to his senses is to start forgetting himself, to get out of the circle of concentration on his own problems, needs, and emotions into the space of another.

Thus, the group inculcates the basic principles of the logotherapeutic outlook. First, it is about refocusing attention from oneself to others. A person learns self-transcendence and self-distancing (because the leader sets the rules to follow the framework, which requires control, which in turn is possible through the skills of self-distancing). While leading the group, the curator must constantly shift the attention of each student in the process of his representation from the problem to the bright and joyful things that are present in his life, from the past to the future, from failures and difficulties to dreams and passions. Thus, the approach is to help a person find something new that reduces the significance of the old, to overcome egocentrism by addressing significant people and causes, to look for meaning beyond the existing situation, to eliminate inevitable suffering through self-transcendence, to motivate commitment to one's tasks.

In the process of leading a group, the curator can additionally apply the attitude modification method, conducting the conversation in such a way as to strengthen the following worldview positions in the individual:

- Alternatives are always possible.
- Behavior patterns can be changed.
- You can find meaning in all situations.
- Life has meaning under any circumstances.
- Something positive can be found in all situations.
- Opportunities can be found even in mistakes, failures, illnesses, losses.

Modification of attitudes redirects attention to new thoughts and insights, to positive, psychologically healthy attitudes. This is mostly achieved through Socratic dialogue.

In fact, there is nothing specific in the work of the dereflection group and it is nothing more than a model of healthy communication, where each of the participants learns to refocus from their own emotional states to others, to discover new alternative views on the situation, to channel their emotions ecologically. But, unfortunately, this kind of communication is lacking both in the original family model of the child and in other models of communication.

Below are exercises used in dereflection groups.

Exercise 1. Each participant gives a short compliment to the other members of the group.

Participants do not immediately find the words; some find it difficult to overcome closedness. But the effect of this exercise is impressive. After this exercise, when the participants are convinced of the power of the positive word, it is possible to note the positive and negative view of the environment. And how one or another view of the world changes the general condition of a person.

Exercise 2. "I am happy when...". It is necessary to continue this phrase (and in a positive way).

Exercise 3. Positive perception of oneself and others. The curator reads the words of Max Frye: "You must love and praise yourself. Do not entrust such a responsible matter to other people". Group task: everyone should praise himself for something (the list of reasons for praise is not limited). After each member has praised himself, each member of the group adds a "praise to the other" by saying, "and I think you also..." It should be a bright and positive characteristic by feeling.

Exercise 4. What I am grateful for in life. Each participant talks about his gratitude for something in his life.

Exercise 5. Each member of the group talks about the pleasant impression (event) they received (experienced) that day.

Exercise 7. We learn to understand each other. Group members walk around the room, each in his own rhythm. Stop signal. They stop in front of the one who turned out to be closer to him. It is

necessary to look at a person in a very short time (facial expressions, breathing, eye expression, the whole appearance) and feel his emotional state. You need to feel your own condition. Then the partners share their impressions (briefly).

Final questions:

– Did you manage to understand your partner’s emotional state? And to what extent did it work?

– Why is it important to learn to understand another person’s condition?

Exercise 9. “In my opinion, you need to...”.

One of the members says to the other members of the group, “I think you need to realize how beautiful you are,” etc. Recommendations are only positive, respectful, emphasizing exclusively the positive features of the partner.

Everyone performs the exercise in turn.

Exercise 10. Each participant begins his speech with the words: “I would really like to (become, do, accomplish)”;

“I will succeed because ... (listing personal qualities that can contribute to the realization of the plan).” Other participants add: “And it will work out, because you...” (it is enough to cite one positive characteristic).

Exercise 11. “Am I special? It’s good!” Each member of the group tells how he feels he is different from other people. It can be anything – name, date of birth, travel list, etc. You need to list as many of your features as possible. All other members complement.

Exercise 12. The story of my success. Each participant talks about any luck in his life.

Exercise 13. The story of my victory. A story about how at least once in your life you managed to overcome something in yourself (or under the circumstances).

Exercise 14. My possible tasks (things that can be done easily) and my proper tasks, and what effort it will take to do them.

Exercise 15. “I have so much!”. Each participant talks about what – from what he already has – can be used in the future.

Exercise 16. We give each participant a “beautiful name” (it can be a flower, a precious stone – anything, in a positive way).

Exercise 17. The participants take a Whatman sheet and draw a group portrait, discussing with each other which symbol can be used to mark this or that participant (and the presenter as well). It can be anything – a bunny, a ladybug, a high mountain, an astronaut, a tree. Discussion of who to place and where. Photo of the finished painting.

For high school students, after 3 months of group meetings on dereflection and consolidating the skills of self-transcendence and self-distancing, meditation groups can be offered. Meditation groups unfold around a theme set by the curator, which has a value orientation and relates to a wide range of human experience: choosing a profession, a sense of duty, remorse, the value of life, the power of gratitude, etc.

As a rule, the meeting begins with an introduction to the material of the topic (a parable, a short video, a presentation, etc.). Presentation of the topic lasts 15 minutes, 10 minutes are given to the participants for silence and thinking about the topic. And then there is an exchange – in the same mood and according to the same rules, in which dereflection groups are held.

In the language of logotherapists, a person should be “de-reflected” from his problems to external tasks close to him, reoriented to his specific vocation and life mission. This becomes possible only if a person has determined the meaning of his existence. Thus, Frankl points out, the vicious circle can be broken not by the self-preoccupation of the neurotic, who feels pity or contempt for himself, but only by means of self-realization. “*By shifting the focus of striving from internal conflict to selfless goals, a person’s life becomes an order of magnitude more whole and healthy, even if the symptoms of neurosis are not completely eliminated,*” notes H. Allport.

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МЕТОД ГРУПОВОЇ ДЕРЕФЛЕКСІЇ ПІД ЧАС РОБОТИ ЗІ СТАРШИМИ УЧНЯМИ ДЛЯ СТАБІЛІЗАЦІЇ ПСИХОЕМОЦІЙНОГО СТАНУ ТА ПРОФІЛАКТИКИ РОЗДАЛІВ НЕВРОТИЧНОГО ТА ПСИХОТИЧНОГО СПЕКТРІВ

Анотація.

Тривале перебування на території воєнного стану, безсумнівно, позначається на психічних процесах і в більшості випадків призводить до різного ступеня тяжкості характерологічних розладів учнів, що виявляються загальною дисгармонічністю психічного складу особистості при збереженні здібності та інтелекту, які призводять до порушень міжособистісних відносин та соціальної адаптації.

Такі стани займають проміжне положення між нормою та патологією. Кожен розлад буде мати свій власний стиль декомпенсації та інтенсивність проявів – близькі до норми (невротичні) чи психотичні. Однак властивою для всіх станів є емоційна неможливість упоратися з власними емоціями: імпульсивність, нездатність розуміти те, що відчувається, імпульсивна поведінка через складність впоратися зі своїми емоціями, іноді селфхарм, само-

руйнівна поведінка. Може спостерігатися порушення організуючої ролі інтелекту над афектом (влада афекту над інтелектом). Безумовно, це насамперед спостерігається у відносинах з іншими людьми – як старшими, так й однолітками: капітуляція, гіперкомпенсація, складність у проявах самотрансценденції, емпатії, неможливість поставити себе на місце іншого.

Щоб м'яко та дієво супроводжувати та коригувати такі стани і запобігти втратам у царині і психічного добробуту, й інтелектуальних потужностей, автори статті пропонують шкільним психологам або вчителям опанувати та запровадити на постійній основі метод групової дерефлексії.

Метод дерефлексії було розроблено австрійським психотерапевтом В. Франклом ще в ранні повоснні роки як метод індивідуальної терапії для усунення порушення психоемоційних розладів. У подальшому цей метод у рамках групової роботи широко зарекомендував себе і як дієвий механізм профілактики психоемоційних деформацій, і як один із методів терапії, принагідний для застосування як у широкому колі (від шкільного до родинного), так і спеціалізованому. У статті детально описано філософське підґрунтя методу, правила та прийоми ведення груп дерефлексії, а також надано практичні поради й конкретні вправи для проведення груп, які, на думку авторів, на регулярній основі здатні закріпити терапевтичний ефект, «дерефлексуватися» від власних проблем до зовнішніх завдань, переорієнтуватися з невротичних проявів на специфічне покликання та життєву місію.

Ключові слова: логотерапія; екзистенціальний аналіз; Віктор Франкл; дерефлексія; гіперрефлексія; дименціональна онтологія; ноетичний; освіта під час війни.

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