

МЕДИЧНА ПСИХОЛОГІЯ

UDC 159.964

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EMOTIONAL BURNOUT AS THE CURRENT PROBLEM OF PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The article deals with the problem of emotional burnout of practical psychologists as a kind of professional deformation.

The features (levels and symptoms) of emotional burnout of different groups of psychologists were studied.

Correlation interactions of this phenomenon with such emotional states as anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness, rigidity were defined.

The results of the study of practical psychologists have shown that 10% of workers have emotional burnout, which is actively manifested in their family relationships, attitude to the team and work activities. Such an employee neglects his official duties, tries to avoid tasks, ignores the request of his colleagues, and does not want to help schoolchildren and others who need help in solving their problems or provide poor-quality assistance deliberately.

Emotional burnout at the stage of formation was detected in 22% of the investigated practical psychologists. This indicator suggests that the severity of emotional burnout depends on 2-3 dominant symptoms in the stage of its occurrence. These symptoms may depend on your own professional activity or the circumstances in which a person is at the time of the experiment. The presence of such a percentage does not guarantee that the employee with this indicator will become emotionally burned out. However, we cannot guarantee that people will become psychologically healthy in the absence of the factors that caused these reactions.

The tension stage is the least widespread among practical psychologists ($X_m=1.6$ points). At this stage, nervous tension is a harbinger and "triggers" the mechanism of the formation of emotional burnout. The tension has a dynamic character, due to exhausting constancy or increase in psychological traumatic factors. Resistance ($X_m=1.9$ points) is the stage of emotional burnout, in which the resistance to increasing stress begins with the moment of anxiety. This is natural: a person consciously or unknowingly strives for psychological comfort, to reduce the pressure of external circumstances with the help of available means. Exhaustion ($X_m=1.7$ points) occupies a median place; exhaustion is characterized by a more or less pronounced fall in total energy tone and weakening of the nervous system. Emotional protection in the form of «burnout» becomes an inalienable attribute of the individual.

It was proved that the main factors of emotional burnout of practical psychologists may be: anxiety; frustration; aggressiveness; rigidity. The presence of at least one of these indicators is a risk factor for the emergence of emotional burnout in practical psychologists. The complex of these indicators leads to emotional burnout.

It was emphasized on the necessity of using psycho-correction programs for practical psychologists to reduce the high level of emotional burnout by means of correctional and prophylactic methods, such as: games, relaxation exercises, training, etc. Particular attention was paid to the need for supervision.

Key words: *emotional exhaustion, professional deformation, emotional states, psychologist, professional, disadaptation, destruction, supervisor.*

Formulation of the problem. A psychologist cannot avoid professional deformation, one of which is the emotional burnout, while working in the system of social relations. Emotional burnout is a mental state of emotional exhaustion and fatigue caused by one's own work. It combines emotional emptiness, depersonalization and reduction of professional achievements. [5]. A practical psychologist cannot provide full professional assistance if he is struck by an emotional burnout. Not only his professional duties

are suffering, but also family relationships and relationships with friends. The emotional burnout syndrome can spread to other workers, having arisen in one person. The biggest of the major complications is that an employee who has experienced an emotional burnout cannot be insured in the future from its recurrence. That is why we must study the peculiarities of manifestation of this phenomenon in psychologists of different categories, in order to overcome and prevent emotional burnout [7; 8; 13].

An analysis of recent research and publications, which launched the solution to this problem. The personality of a psychologist is the most important curative means in the process of counseling or psychotherapy, as researchers [6; 8; 13; 15] point out. A successful psychologist from a loser distinguishes the features of his personality. The following features are emphasized: sensitivity, objectivity, flexibility, empathy and lack of own serious problems, openness to one's own feelings, personal responsibility, a desire for development, self-knowledge, the existence of a system of values. A psychologist must have high (general) mental abilities, be penetrating, prudent, scrupulous analyst, experimenter, and have a high level of physical and mental health. Recently, the interest of researchers attracts a specific type of occupational disease of persons working with people – doctors, educators, psychologists, managers, etc. It turned out that the representatives of these professions are prone to symptoms of gradual emotional fatigue and devastation – a syndrome of «emotional burnout» [1; 3; 9; 17; 20]. The study of emotional burnout is devoted to both theoretical and experimental research.

The development of the emotional burnout problem was dealt with by I. Akindova, I. Andruh, A. Bakanova, M. Barabanova, V. Boyko, N. Vodopianova, S. Datsunova, A. Los, K. Maslach, N. Musatenko, V. Orel, A. Pays, G. Roberts, T. Roginska, D. Trunov, T. Formanyuk, H.J. Freidenberg and others. The indicated authors have developed approaches to studying the problem of emotional burnout at different times [2; 4; 8; 9; 12; 14; 16; 18].

The term «emotional burnout» was introduced by the American psychiatrist H.J. Freidenberg in 1974 [cit. for 10] to characterize the psychological state of healthy people who are in intensive communication with clients in an emotionally loaded atmosphere. Nowadays emotional burnout is understood as a mechanism of psychological protection, produced by the individual in the form of a complete or partial exclusion of emotions in response to psycho-traumatic actions. Emotional burnout is an acquired professional behavior that allows a person to economically dosage and spends energy and emotional resources. So, it is very important to prevent the manifestations of the syndrome of «emotional burnout» and the development of mental health for future psychologists [2; 4; 6; 7; 8; 9; 13].

The purpose of the article is to reveal the essence of emotional burnout and to investigate its interconnection with other emotional characteristics of practical psychologists.

Presenting main material. Our research was conducted on the basis of the city association of practical psychologists of Nikolaev. The experiment was

attended by 90 practical psychologists, among them: women – 88, men – 2 people. Age parameters: from 22 to 47 years. The object of the study was the emotional burnout of psychologists, the subject – the features of manifestation of emotional burnout from professionals. We solved the following tasks during the study: to determine the level of emotional burnout of practical psychologists; to diagnose the leading symptoms of «emotional burnout» and to determine to what stage of development of stress they relate; to study such mental states as anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness, rigidity, etc.; to investigate the differences in the manifestation of emotional burnout in various groups of practical psychologists; to determine the correlation of emotional burnout with other characteristics of employees. The following psychodiagnostic methods were used for realization of the tasks: observation, conversation, general questionnaire, methods of mathematical statistics (t-Student's criterion, Pearson's linear correlation). Also, special methods were chosen (Boyka's technique «Diagnosis of emotional burnout», G. Eysenck's «Self-assessment of mental states»), which correspond to the tasks of the experiment. A clear instruction was offered before each task. The use of the above methods allowed us to quantify and qualify such indicators as emotional burnout, anxiety, aggressiveness, etc. The results of the study of practical psychologists by the method of «Diagnosis of emotional burnout» have shown that 10% of workers (henceforth group Gb) have emotional burnout, which is actively manifested in their family relationships, attitude to the team and work activities. Such an employee neglects his official duties, tries to avoid tasks, ignores the request of his colleagues, and does not want to help school-children and others who need help in solving their problems or provide poor-quality assistance deliberately. Emotional burnout at the stage of formation was detected in 22% of the investigated practical psychologists (group Gs). This indicator suggests that the severity of emotional burnout depends on 2-3 dominant symptoms in the stage of its occurrence. These symptoms may depend on your own professional activity or the circumstances in which a person is at the time of the experiment. The presence of such a percentage does not guarantee that the employee with this indicator will become emotionally burned out. However, we cannot guarantee that people will become psychologically healthy in the absence of the factors that caused these reactions.

There is no emotional burnout in 68% of respondents (group Gn). Practical psychologists, who have the given results, carry out their professional activities productively, with pleasure. They are attentive and tolerant in communicating with colleagues and loved ones. In substantiating his views on the problem of emotional burnout, V.V. Boyko expressed that it passes through

a series of stages: tension, resistibility, exhaustion. The tension stage is the least widespread among practical psychologists ($X_m=1.6$ points). At this stage, nervous tension is a harbinger and “triggers” the mechanism of the formation of emotional burnout. The tension has a dynamic character, due to exhausting constancy or increase in psychological traumatic factors. Resistance ($X_m=1.9$ points) is the stage of emotional burnout, in which the resistance to increasing stress begins with the moment of anxiety. This is natural: a per-

son consciously or unknowingly strives for psychological comfort, to reduce the pressure of external circumstances with the help of available means. Exhaustion ($X_m=1.7$ points) occupies a median place; exhaustion is characterized by a more or less pronounced fall in total energy tone and weakening of the nervous system. Emotional protection in the form of “burnout” becomes an inalienable attribute of the individual. A significant difference was found by the method of calculating the average group figures and the t-Student’s criterion.

Table 1

Average normalized indices of emotional burnout stages in psychologists (points)

Scales	Average figures by groups			t-Student’s criterion	Significance of indicators
	Gn	Gs	Gb		
Tension	1,1	1,5	2,3	3,25	$p < 0,01$
Resistibility	1,3	1,8	2,6	3,62	$p < 0,01$
Exhaustion	1,2	1,4	2,5	3,58	$p < 0,01$

The features of the manifestation of emotional burnout in psychologists reflect the domination of the stages of emotional burnout for each individual group. As shown in Table 1, the least stressed ($p < 0.01$) and exhausted ($p < 0.01$) are the studied groups Gn (with a low level of emotional burnout); the maximum specified parameters are expressed in a group with a high level of emotional burnout. Resistance prevails in all groups, and in the Gb group it reaches 2.6 points ($p < 0.01$). That is, the practical

psychologists of this group are tense, resist in communication and quickly deplete.

The application of the methodology “Self-assessment of mental states” (Table 2) makes it possible to state that for the respondents of the groups Gn, Gs and Gb, the distribution of indicators is as follows: in the first group there is a tendency for the manifestations of low-level emotional states, in the second – to the average, and, finally, in the latter – to a high level.

Table 2

Average normed indexes of emotional states in psychologists (points)

Scales	Average figures by groups			t-Student’s criterion	Significance of indicators
	Gn	Gs	Gb		
Anxiety	1,2	1,8	2,5	3,59	$p < 0,01$
Frustration	1,2	1,6	2,4	3,21	$p < 0,01$
Aggressiveness	1,5	1,9	2,6	2,72	$p < 0,01$
Rigidity	1,2	1,8	2,5	2,64	$p < 0,01$

This fact illustrates the Boyka’s theory which says that with the transition from one emotional burnout phase to a higher there are tendency to deformation of emotions, especially to the manifestation of aggressiveness from professionals (!).

Mathematical processing methods were used – r-Pearson’s linear correlation to solve the problems (see Table 3).

Table 3

Indicators of correlation of emotional burnout and other characteristics of psychologists

Indicators	Emotional burnout
Anxiety	0,90****
Frustration	056****
Aggression	0,45****
Rigidity	029**

Note: ** $p \leq 0,05$; **** $p \leq 0,001$

According to the results of the study, the main factors of emotional burnout of practical psychologists may be: anxiety; frustration; aggressiveness; rigidity. The presence of at least one of these indicators is a risk factor for the emergence of emotional burnout in practical psychologists. The complex of these indicators leads to emotional burnout, which has been proven during the mathematical processing.

Psychocorrective program developed for practical psychologists to reduce the high level of emotional burnout by means of correctional and prophylactic methods: games, relaxation exercises, training, etc. [6; 8; 11; 12].

I.V. Ushakova considers the most effective means of preventing and overcoming the emotional burnout by introduction of supervision [19, p. 172–190] into the structure of the activity of the helping professions workers. The supervision can be considered as a sys-

tem of professional support of specialists working in the field of "human-human". It is known that a person who chooses a profession aimed at helping other people should understand and be able to work with his own problems, and also should periodically seek help from his colleagues. A complete understanding of any process requires the presence, participation of another professional; otherwise the specialist falls into a circle of his own thoughts and feelings that can lead to a nervous breakdown or serious mental disorder. Therefore, regular monitoring of stress is important for supervisor relationships. The supervisor must be prepared to openly and honestly work on this problem, have a debriefing technique.

Conclusions. Thus, the study showed that there were significant differences in the manifestation of emotional burnout in practical psychologists of different groups. Pearson coefficients were also found, which at a moderate and strong level are characteristic of psychologists in different situations. And which allow the special work to overcome and prevent emotional burnout from professionals.

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Астремська І. В. Емоційне вигорання як сучасна проблема практичних психологів в системі освіти

У статті розглянуто проблему емоційного вигорання практичних психологів як різновид професійної деформації.

Вивчено особливості (рівні та симптоми) емоційного вигорання різних груп психологів.

Визначено кореляційні взаємозв'язки зазначеного феномену з таким емоційними станами як тривожність, фрустрація, агресивність, ригідність.

Результати дослідження практичних психологів показали, що 10% працівників мають емоційне вигорання, яке активно проявляється в їх сімейних стосунках, ставленні до колективу та трудової діяльності. Такий працівник нехтує своїми службовими обов'язками, намагається уникнути завдань, ігнорує прохання колег, не хоче допомогти школярам та іншим особам, що потребують допомоги у вирішенні їх проблем чи надає неякісну допомогу свідомо.

Емоційне вигорання на стадії формування було виявлено у 22% досліджуваних практичних психологів. Цей показник говорить про те, що вираженість емоційного вигорання залежить від 2-3 домінуючих симптомів у стадії його протікання. Ці симптоми можуть залежати від самої професійної діяльності чи тих обставин, в яких людина перебуває у момент експерименту. Наявність такого відсотка не гарантує, що працівник з цим показником стане емоційно вигорілим, однак ми ї не можемо гарантувати, що за відсутності факторів, які викликали ці реакції, людина стане психологічно здоровою.

Стадія напруження найменш поширена серед практичних психологів ($X_{\text{сеп.}}=1,6$ бал). На цьому етапі нервова напруга є передвісником і «запускає» механізм формування емоційного вигорання. Напруга має динамічний характер, обумовлений виснажливою постійністю або посиленням психотравматичних чинників. Резистенція ($X_{\text{сеп.}}=1,9$ бал) – стадія емоційного вигорання, в якій опір наростаючому стресу починається з моменту появи тривожної напруги. Це природно: людина усвідомлено або несвідомо прагне до психологічного комфорту, знизити тиск зовнішніх обставин за допомогою наявних у його розпорядженні засобів. Виснаження ($X_{\text{сеп.}}=1,7$ бал) займає середнє місце; виснаженість характеризується більш-менш вираженим падінням загального енергетичного тону та ослабленням нервової системи. Емоційний захист у формі «вигорання» стає невіддільним атрибутом особистості.

Доведено, що основними чинниками емоційного вигорання практичних психологів можуть виступати тривожність, фрустрація, агресивність, ригідність. Наявність хоч одного з цих показників є фактором ризику для виникнення емоційного вигорання у практичних психологів. Комплекс цих показників призводить до емоційного вигорання.

Наголошено на необхідності використання для практичних психологів психокорекційних програм зі зниження високого рівня емоційного вигорання за допомогою корекційно-профілактичних методів, таких як: ігри, релаксаційні вправи, тренінг тощо. Особливу увагу приділено необхідності застосування супервізії.

Ключові слова: емоційне виснаження, професійна деформація, емоційні стани, психолог, професіонал, дезадаптація, деструкція, супервізор.