**5. Innovations in social work: philosophy, psychology, sociology**

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**Social Psychological Techniques IN Work With Battered Women and Intervention strategies for offenders: experiences in Ukraine**

Current socio-political and everyday reality demonstrates the growth of violence in all its types and manifestations both at the level of the country and an individual. Especially acute problem today is violence in a family, which is recognized by the world community as one of the most widely occurring form of the human rights violations.

Domestic violence cannot be explained by economic turmoil, poverty or alcoholism only. These factors enhance the aggressive behavior of domestic offenders, although do not constitute its main cause. In fact, family violence as a social phenomenon has been for many years happening all over the world, regardless of ethnical, racial, class, religious and economical specifics of countries. In Ukraine, it is growing to a larger scale, as evidenced by official crime statistics and the recent scientific research findings. Thus, according to Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, currently more than 93 thousand persons in Ukraine are registered by police departments of the Ministry of Interior as the perpetrators of domestic violence [1]. Every hour at least 15 women suffer from their abusive spouses or partners. Overall, statistics says that 68% of all women in Ukraine are the victims of family violence. They suffer from violence in their homes more often than from robberies, rapes or car accidents combined. Out of all women who get hospitalized because of bodily injuries 35-50% are the victims of home tyranny [1]. However, one should remember that official statistics does not reflect the real picture of how family violence is widespread in the society because state data collection and data analysis system for incidents of domestic abuse is still virtually nonexistent in Ukraine. The departmental statistics, provided by the Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of Interior, is being formed from different sources and does not distinguish cases of different types of violence that are specified in the Law of Ukraine “On Domestic Violence Prevention” and approved by the Parliament in 2001 [2].

The desire to understand the origins and the nature of family violence unites the psychologists, social workers, police officers, clinicians and other specialists in their search for effective preventing measures, intervention strategies and treatment models for the victims. Realization that violent behavior leads to devastating consequences proposes an alternative policy of non-violence as the way to the dialogue, compromise, consensus, harmony both at the level of society and each family. It is this that intensifies the interest to the research and implementation of the various intervention techniques aimed at the treatment and support to the victims of family violence on the one hand, and intervention programs for the batterers – on the other. Thus, the **goal of this article** is to analyze the main social psychological techniques of work with battered women and with men who commit domestic violence or are at risk for doing it.

**Results of theoretical research.**Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon caused by the range of social, psychological and economic factors. These factors include economic instability, socially acceptable and approved stereotypes, leveling of the existing moral and spiritual values, human rights violations, recognized stereotypes of the typical male and female role in society, feeling of all-permissiveness and impunity due to imperfect and corrupt judicial system, social problems and social vulnerability, personal problems (unfulfilled self-determination, mismatch between the life scenario and the reality, inconsistency in level of aspirations and available capacities), educational ideals not corresponding to the realities of modern life, negative influence of the mass media and informational technologies. Violence that occurs in family has a wide spectrum of physical, mental and social effects for all family members, and especially of its victims and perpetrators. These effects cause specific needs of the women. The proper social psychological techniques, forms and methods of work with this group of clients should be used in order to meet these needs.

The main needs of the battered women are: a need for protection and safe place for her and her children; a need for a housing separately from the batterer; possibility to raise children and participate in rehabilitation programs; a need for trainings to get the skills for job hunting; a need to restore mental health, to get emotional support; to overcome dependency or codependency; a need for psychological counseling and treatment etc. [3]. In addressing these problems the women who suffer from domestic violence need professional help, including social psychological that can be provided in the form of group or individual therapy.

Individual work with battered women can be arranged as the counseling, diagnostics or correction work. Among others, very important direction of professional support within the abovementioned techniques is social psychological work with codependency. Individual psychological counseling for victims of domestic violence can have different focuses: crisis, informational, individual-supporting, motivational, harmonization of the personality etc. Any counseling session involves establishing of rapport and partnership, identifying the violent situation in the family and considering mental and emotional state of the client. The problem is being clarified by collecting facts, talking about woman’s feelings and her attitude to what has happened. The psychologist can give his/her opinion on the client’s problem and provide her with the information on what can be done immediately. Then the intervention possibilities are discussed. During the first counseling session a special attention is put on the emotional condition of the woman. Offended women feel extremely anxious at the first meeting. They worry about what and how to say. The counselor should create comforting and trusting atmosphere, to convince the woman that she does not have to tell everything at once. The woman has to feel that a psychologist is unbiased, non-judgmental, and will keep everything in confidentiality [4].

Many women reveal a number of emotional responses during the counseling session, including fear, anger, guilt, and even doubts about their own mental health. The counselor should encourage the victim to vent the emotions out. Only later the victim will be able to deal with them. Further help should be aimed at helping the woman to look at the situation objectively from different perspectives. One of the important aspects of the counseling is focusing on the positive qualities of the victim. She needs help in identifying her own positive characteristics. At the same time, it is important to put attention at present because the woman may feel as if trapped and cannot see the way out.

Crisis intervention in most cases is performed by the psychologist, and only when necessary (in case there are serious personality disorders) a psychiatrist can be involved too. Crisis counseling can also prevent the development of posttraumatic stress syndrome. The main principles of individual work with the victim of violence are: friendly attention during the counseling session; caution and prudence of conclusions; no condemning; neutral position; explanation and verification; honesty (if the counselor does not know the answer, he or she must honestly say it); empathy; no support to illusions of the client [5].

Correcting work with a woman begins after individual and motivational counseling and diagnostics. It can be done in the form of individual or group social psychological rehabilitation (depending on woman’s motivation to participate in the group therapy). A psychological contract should be made with the woman; the main idea herewith is taking the responsibility by the client for the results of her work with the psychologist. Basically, all psycho-corrective work is aimed at restoring psycho-emotional equilibrium by the woman, reducing the anxiety and intensity of emotional shock, chronical stress; identifying intrapersonal conflicts and their realization; identification and realization of her own feelings, an ability to talk about them and manage them; realization of and coping with the psychological developmental traumas, replacement of destructive and maladaptive behavior patterns with effective ones, which will meet the new life conditions, forming the skills of efficient psychological defence, creating positive self-esteem and confidence in own ability to cope with difficulties; overcoming fears, learning how to say “no” and how to set goals; developing positive openness towards herself and the others; identifying and recognition of family myths etc. [6].

Apart of individual work with domestic violence victims, group work is another effective intervention method. Group training programs is a very effective form of organizing the therapeutic process for overcoming the consequences of family violence. The main goal of such programs is to gain the knowledge of self through the mutual research. Traditionally, the training is used to develop the skills of self-understanding, self-analysis, change the attitude towards self and the others, develop the skills of self-regulation, develop emotional flexibility, improve social adaptation of the participants, to deepen the experience of psychological interpretation of the other people. The training can be seen as a way to re-program the behavioral model of the person.

An example of community care aimed at providing assistance to victims of domestic violence is a crisis center. Crisis center activity is based on the model of complex professional help which includes such services as shelter, 24h crisis hotline, crisis counseling, lawyer’s advice, case management, advocacy, support groups, preventive work. The main objective of the crisis center is to empower the woman, to minimize the negative effects caused by the trauma, to show the ways out of the crisis and to help take the decision regarding her future. In their work the specialists of crisis center follow the principles and standards of confidentiality, professionalism, respect to the client’s choice, unconditional positive attitude and responsibility distribution [7].

Ukrainian experience in helping the victims of domestic violence includes all the social psychological techniques discussed above. In our country one of the best practices in this field are represented by the project “Freedom from violence: broadening the rights and opportunities of girls and women in difficult life circumstances” which was implemented by international charitable fund “Ukrainian Fund of Public Health” in 2013-2014 with the support of UN agency on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. A complex program for women and girls who are the victims of violence or belong to risk group was developed and tested within the scope of this project. The program consists of four blocks: diagnostics, individual work, motivational counseling and group work. During the diagnostics stage the needs of the client and their specifics are identified. Based on the diagnostics results and after the motivational counseling, it is decided whether the woman is motivated to take part in group training sessions or individual therapy.

However, the project authors point out that such program is not the only way to solve the problem of domestic violence. It should be used during the case management of the victim or the person in a risk group [6]. We are also convinced that psychological support to the victims alone cannot effectively prevent or end family violence. The intervention aimed at the offenders must be an essential element of this process. Generally, batterers’ intervention program is a psycho-educational group led by trained professional facilitators. Batterers learn to identify abusive behaviors and are taught to react non-abusively and instead communicate with their partner. Such programs have been already introduced in Ukraine.

Today, in Ukraine on request of the government the OSCE Project Coordinator provides assistance in implementation violence prevention programs. One of the directions of this activity is the work with the batterers or those men who are at risk of perpetrating family violence. The program developed within the project includes complex with offenders is based on the cognitive-behavioral approach, which is widely used with a chosen target group. Complexity means a combination of diagnostic, motivational and technological blocks (the latter includes individual and group work). The goal of the program is to change the aggressive behavior, to develop new socially accepted norms and values, non-violent behavior and humanistic values. People with various addictions (e.g. alcohol or drug addiction) are not allowed to participate in the program.

Intervention program for batterers can be implemented in open group, which can be changed throughout the program and can last for unrestricted period of time, or closed group, in which membership cannot be changed. In case of open group the therapist may also be changed, but the objective of the program cannot. General duration of the program is 56-68 hours. The optimal number of group members is 7-8 persons. It is recommended to have one session per week lasting for 1,5-2 hours. Along with these sessions it is possible to conduct self-help groups. All together it will have much stronger effect for shaping the model of non-violent behavior.

After finishing the intervention program for batterers, its participants will be able to understand the consequences of their violent deeds and bear the responsibility for own behavior. They will learn how to identify triggers that lead to aggression and understand their own feelings and feelings of other people in a conflict situation, to analyze their own deeds in the situation of family violence and to define their possibilities to live without violence, to control aggression and anger towards others, to analyze conflict situation and solve them, to understand own borders and needs of close people, to define perspective goal for future, to make life plans, to implement own plans in a socially approved way. Intervention work will be more effective if the participant will receive the social services at the same time, which will help him in coping with difficult life circumstances or other factors that increase the risk of violent behavior. The success of intervention program depends largely on professionalism of specialists working with the batterers, their qualification, understanding the needs of the client, using interactive methods and creative approaches at work.

The evidence of the importance of intervention work with the men is the attention that is paid to this issue at the national level. Thus, on May 8, 2014 the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine approved the Guidelines for organization of intervention programs for family batterers [8]. Generally, effectiveness of such intervention programs for men is quite a disputable question; moreover, there are many methodological difficulties for assessment of their effectiveness. However, research findings confirm their obvious usefulness for both spouses. Certainly, the best results are achieved when the family seeks for help voluntarily. At the same time, there are some problems, such as wide understanding of what “successful” means, short follow-up periods, difficulties in distinguishing between the program effect and the effect of the personal life circumstances of the participant etc. [9].

**Conclusions**. Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon caused by the range of social, psychological, and economic factors. The effects of domestic violence are very harmful for all the family members exposed to it and especially for the victims who seek assistance from psychologist, social worker, and other specialists to cope with the consequences of the abuse. Women who have experienced domestic violence have multiple traumas with various effects on the mind and body. Therefore, they need both social and psychological support which can be provided in different forms using various technologies. The intervention aimed at the perpetrators of abuse must be an essential element and a necessary measure in overcoming domestic violence. Batterers learn to identify abusive behaviors and are taught to react non-abusively and instead communicate with their partner. Such programs have been already introduced in Ukraine. Further research and practical work is needed to improve these programs both for men and women.

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