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Psychotherapeutic training session regulating the emotional state of cancer patients

The article describes psychotherapeutic training session devoted to regulating the emotional state of cancer patients. The authors describe and explain the contents of the training session and re-view how the training helps developing the social and life skills, solving problems, establishing mutual relations, training self-control, supporting health, developing individual features, decision-making skills, emotional self-control, interpersonal relationships, self-knowledge, self-support, and the abilities to generalize experience.

Keywords: oncology, psychology, sensations, relaxation, psychocorrection.

Relevance. Cancer patients experience different negative sensations and states since they become aware of their diagnosis. While receiving treatment procedures prescribed by an oncologist, they experience additional negative sensations and states due to algesthesia in the body. Therefore psychotherapeutic training sessions are important in regulating the emotional state of cancer patients.

It is very important to properly conduct the psychotherapeutic training session. After a session properly conducted by an experienced cancer psychologist, cancer patients have a higher intent and confidence in their recovery, get the power to relieve and overcome the pain during treatment and learn the exercises to regulate their emotional state, support their normal condition without deterioration of their well-being.

The terms "train, training" in English mean education, upbringing, exercise, teaching. The scientific definition of training is so multi-valued. Yu.N. Yemelianov defines training as a series of methods to master any complicated types of actions and to develop the learning skills [1].

A training session is aimed to increase the professional knowledge and capabilities of the participants by applying the method of re-formation of long-established behaviour patterns and establishing control over the actions to increase the planned activities. A training is also considered as a way to change social behaviour of a person taking into account the purposes and activity of the organization.

In Russian psychology, training is called an active way of education, or psychosocial training. L.A. Petrovskaya considers a psychosocial training as "a tool aimed to develop the knowledge about mutual relations, social focuses, abilities and experience", "a tool for sufficient development of mutual relations" [2].

B.D. Parygin considers a training as a way of group consultations, teaching of skills of communication in life and in society as a whole. He also defines it as teaching of professionally useful skills and adaptation to the new social role in accordance with self-estimation and self-understanding.

The first training sessions aimed to increase the efficiency of relations were conducted by K. Levin's students in Bethel (USA). They were called T-groups [3]. In their opinion, most of the people live and work in a group but in most cases they are not aware of the level of their own influence on the teamwork in this group and of the influence of the others' behaviour. K. Levin believed that the behaviour and aptitudes of people were developing not in their personal context but inside a group as a whole. Therefore, to understand and change his/her aptitudes and form the advanced behaviour patterns a person should change from shrinking into him/her-self and look at him/her-self from the outside.

The good results achieved by K. Levin's students on intragroup relations have laid the foundation for the US National Training Laboratory that conducted the first training groups.

In T-groups, the executives, managers and political leaders were taught to establish mutually efficient relations, settle group conflicts, they mastered their management skills and strengthened the group unity. Some T-groups focused on defining the values of human life and strengthening the conation for self-perfection. Similar groups were established since 1954 as "sensitive groups."

T-groups and sensitive groups became widespread at the edge of 1960s-70s. Their main purpose was settlement of group conflicts and strengthening of professional relations between employees.

In 1964, 17 years of experience of T-groups were summarized in a book that focused on four main issues:

1. Professional level of the trainer;
2. Modernization of T-groups' methodology;
3. use of lab methods in real life;
4. refining and continuation of theoretical studies.

In 1960s, K. Rogers started to conduct trainings of social/life skills. Those trainings were based on the traditions of humanistic psychology and were directed to improve the professional level of the managers and render them a psychological support.

1. Seven categories of life skills were considered: a) problem solution, b) mutual relations, c) energy level, d)

self-confidence, e) critical thinking, f) ability for self-control, g) development of selfhood;

2. Four categories of life skills being the training purpose were defined: a) interpersonal relationships, b) health support, c) development of personality, d) decision-making and e) problem solution;

3. This type of training comprised: a) emotional self-control, b) interpersonal relationships, c) self-knowledge, d) financial self-sufficiency, e) self-support, f) ability to generalize experience.

The method of the so called psychosocial training was completed in the University of Leipzig and the University of Yale under supervision of M. Vorweg in 1970s. They started using in the trainings the role plays with the elements of dramatization which created the conditions for the formation of skills of efficient relations. The methods used at the trainings contributed to the psychosocial level of industrial managers.

Psychosocial trainings were also popular in Russia. In 1982, L.A. Petrovskaya issued a monography on trainings considering their theoretical and methodical aspects [2].

This method is widely used for children, parents, professional specialists (experts) in social groups, managers of enterprises and companies. The experience of using the method is described in the works of Yu.N. Yemelianova, V.P. Zakharova, G.A. Kovaleva, H. Mikkina, L.A. Petrovskaya, T.S. Yatsenko and others.

The main goal of a psychosocial training is increasing the efficiency of relations, i.e., improvement of behaviour, perceptive capabilities of a person in mandatory relations and the system of personal relations, as well as the determination of different tasks related to mastering knowledge, the formation of abilities and skills defined by personal development. Main focus is on the activity and non-verbal actions of the person.

Any training group reflects real life and real relationships of ordinary people. Still, artificial training sessions differ from real life.

In the field of psychological practice, T-groups teach how to learn. All participants of the group are engaged in self-education. That is why they trust other participants of their group more than their supervisor. The T-group's own experience is more important than the explanations and instructions of the supervisor.

Other distinctive features of T-groups [4]:

- self-presentation;
- feedback;
- experiments.

Influence of group psychology and the influence of group's joint activity on the person were reflected by A. Adler, K. Levin, J. Moreno, G. Pratt, and K. Rogers in their works.

Since early XX century, the direct influence of a training group on the person has been widely used in local practice. In Russia, the scientific and practical interest to the methods of training group works started growing only since 1990s. L.A. Petrovskaya was the first among the Russian scientists to analyse the theoretical and methodical issues of group work. Her monograph was published in 1982 [6].

In new works, she considered training (in particular, psychosocial training) as a certain type of teaching of general knowledge and individual skills in the field of relations. She also analysed the types of personal behaviour correction. These types are divided into two large categories:

1. Directed to the development of special skills;

2. Directed to deepening of analytical experience in the field of relations.

Other directions of training utilize playing methods such as situation role plays, didactic, creative, simulation, business role plays and organized activity. Game can be used as psychotherapeutic method. It is evidently reflected in Gestalt therapy and psychodrama. E. Bern's transactional analysis method is directly related to this gaming method [4].

Many researchers believe that role playing is very efficient in trainings. At the initial stages of group work, role plays eliminate shyness of the participants and release psychological barriers. Role plays show easy solutions of relationship problems and personal psychological problems. They adapt to new behaviour, lead to efficient mutual relations with others and strengthen the skills of entering into verbal-nonverbal mutual relations. The training participant establishes psychological connection with his/her childhood, opens and displays his/her creative talents. Therefore, a game is a psychological tool with a very efficient psychotherapeutic and psychocorrection influence on both children and adults. Such scientists as A.A. Verbitsky, Yu.V. Gromyko, P.G. Chshedrovitsky [5] have discovered role playing techniques in details.

The methods directed to social perception are used together with role playing techniques. This method develops flexibility in perception, understanding and assessment of other people, oneself, group. Special exercises let the participants demonstrate verbally and nonverbally the ways and the level of their perception of other people.

Group psychological training is an active method of practical psychology used for the formation of self-knowledge and self-perfection skills. The authors also use training techniques for the treatment of neuroses, alcoholism and some somatic diseases in the course of clinical psychotherapy [6]. The somatic diseases also include different cancer diseases.

Group psychotherapeutic trainings were conducted in Almaty with the participation of psychologists-consultants and social employees of the Psychosocial Support Department of Kazakh Research Institute of Oncology and Radiology (KazIOR). During the trainings, the participants with malignant tumours of head and brain were getting rid of dizziness, painful perceptions, panic emotions, feeling of despair, state of depression associated with their disease; they experienced lightness, warmth, joyful emotions, the positive feelings as friendliness, sympathy, the state of amorosness.

Table 1 presents the results of a psychotherapeutic training "Rising the self-assessment and strengthening of relationship skills" conducted in the Head and Neck Center of KazIOR:

Table 1 - Results of the psychotherapeutical training conducted on 13.03.2017 in the Center for Head and Neck

Department: Center for Head and Neck Date of training – 13.03.17					
Patient	Before training			After training	
	Sensations	Type of sensation	Scale	Type of sensation	Scale
1.A.A.	perception	chill; burning	1,3	i feel some llightness	5
	emotion	fear	1	joy	3
	feeling	sadness	2	sympathy	3
	state	depression	1	amorousness	5
2.B.R.	perception	i feel some llightness	3	i feel some llightness	3
	emotion	amazement	3	amazement	3
	feeling	commiseration	5	friendliness	3
	state	frustration	3	amorousness	3
3.B.K.	perception	as if something presses, squeezes, burning, stabs here, feeling of weight	5	i feel warmth, burn-ing; i feel some llight-ness.	2,5
	emotion	fear	1	joy	
	sensation	sympathy	2	sympathy, friendliness	2,5
	state	apathetic	3	amorousness	3,5
4.A.Zh.	perception	llightness	5	llightness	5
	emotion	anxiety	2	anxiety	3
	sensation	sympathy	3	sympathy	5
	state	amorousness	5	amorousness	5
5.A.U.	perception	chill	1	i feel some llightness	5
	emotion	joy	5	joy	5
	sensation	friendliness	5	unfriendliness	5
	state	amorousness	4	amorousness	5
6.Zh.U.	perception		4		3
	emotion		5		1
	sensation		1		1
	state		3		3
7.Ch.O.	perception	pressure	3		
	emotion	trouble, despair	3		
	sensation	grievance	3		
	state	apathetic	3		
8.D.M.	perception		1		
	emotion		1		
	sensation		1		
	state		1		
9.G.M.	perception		1		
	emotion	fear	3		
	sensation		1		
	state	depression	2		
10.K.G.	perception	tingling	3	i feel some llightness	5
	emotion	fear	4	joy	5
	sensation	commiseration	5	friendliness	5
	state			amorousness	4
11.K.U.	perception	i feel some llightness	1	i feel some llightness	5
	emotion	joy	5	joy	5
	sensation	friendliness	5	commiseration	4
	state	amorousness	5	amorousness	5
12.K.Z.	perception		4	additionally: warmth	7
	emotion		4		1
	sensation		4		4
	state		2		3
13.T.A.	perception		1		
	emotion		2		
	sensation		1		
	state		1		
14.D.S.	perception		2		
	emotion		2		
	sensation		2		
	state		1		

Some patients from Table 1 did not want to or forgot to scale the level of influence when they categorized the perception, emotions, sensations and states before and sometimes after the training. Some patients scales the level of influence but at the same time did not want to or forgot to categorize their feelings (perceptions, emotions, sensations and states).

Meditative techniques were mostly used during the psychotherapeutic trainings to teach physical and emotional relaxation, rehabilitation after psychic traumas, getting rid of stress state. As a result, the patients mastered the methods of autosuggestion and self-regulation skills.

Mood of the persons with different malignant tumours participating in the training, their sensations and perceptions were defined before applying meditative techniques. The results obtained after a multiple repetition to themselves in suggestive form of the instructions full of pleasant emotions and words were the following results: the participants who had low or unchanging mood, experienced the sensations of despair, fear, anxiety and perceived the feelings of painfulness and weight, were in a better mood, their feelings of despair, fear, anxiety have disappeared, and their perception has enlightened due to epy meditative techniques [6].

Regardless of the type of training, joint activity in the group begins with increased efficiency. Its main goal is reaching the state which makes it possible to switch to the contents of work, which establishes warm atmosphere in the group. This stage corresponds to the stage of establishing connections in initiating a joint activity. The pre-requisites for establishing warm relations in a training group are emotional freedom, sociability, feeling of partnership, confidence in the trainer and the other members.

Along with the traditional actions fulfilled at this stage of team work, the group participants shall express their sensations of uncertainties and fears when they introduce themselves and get acquainted as well as during various psychological exercises. The main proviso for efficient team work is creating conditions for the start of work and rendering time for decision-making in the group. At the same time, in the first half of the day and after small breaks the group performs different exercises to mobilize their working capacity, increase attention, decrease fatigue, and provide emotional energy.

Teamwork planning shall cover the contents and the supervising aspects. The contents answer the purpose of the training, and the contents may vary depending on the abilities, cognitive structures, types of designations and program of the training. I.e., creative training, a training in cooperation or business negotiations training have different contents.

Customized plan is a group-wide state reflecting the action of the contents and the condition of every group member. Such state and relationships between the group participants might sometimes become the main content of teamwork.

Psychophysical exercises might change the state of the group as a whole or of certain group members. The realization and discussion of sensations in the course of work enriches the contents of teamwork.

Psychophysical exercises can be very different. They can include written and oral, verbal and nonverbal exercises. They can be done in small groups of two-three people or in the group as a whole. Some exercises are related to memory and development of attention. To enrich their sensational capabilities, the group members shall first describe a certain situation in writing or verbally, and then they represent it by actions. Thus their level of sensations increases.

Some psychophysical exercises both change the individual state of group members and promote acquiring the new experience. For example, group members may do physical exercises in case of fatigue or in order to get rid of emotional depression. I.e., such group members are told to stay motionless and then to perform certain action on count "one". Then they shall continue performing it before they all do it simultaneously. Such exercises rise the activity in the group, mitigate fatigue and improve the mood. Besides, the group members come a joint opinion while finding the solutions in their own ways.

Psychophysical trainings require certain planning and specifics. It is important to properly select the exercises, instruct the groups before their performance, to stop timely and discuss the results.

Tables 2 and 3 presents the results of another psychotherapeutic training "Rising the self-assessment and strengthening of relationship skills" conducted in the Head and Neck Center of KazIOR:

Table 2 - Results of the psychotherapeutical training conducted on 03.04.2017 in the Center for Head and Neck

Department: Center for Head and Neck					
Date of training - 03.04.2017					
Patient	Before training			After training	
	Sensations	Type of sensation	Level of influence	Type of sensation	Level of influence
1.T.B.	perception	slackness	medium		
	emotion	indifference, self-restraint	medium	self-restraint	medium
	feeling	friendliness, calm	medium	calm	medium
	state	excitement, anger, fatigue	medium	balanced state, vivacity	medium
2.S.N.	perception	additionally: headache	medium	lighthness, warmth	medium
	emotion	despair	medium	interest	medium
	sensation	additionally: balanced state	medium	self-restraint, confidence	medium
	state	confidence	medium	balanced state, confidence	medium
3.D.N.	perception		medium		high
	emotion	confusion	medium		high
	sensation		medium	calm,	high
	state	excitement	medium	vivacity	high
4.M.O.	perception	additionally: insensibility		warmth	
	emotion	sadness		inspiration	
	sensation	additionally: dullness		self-restraint	
	state	confidence		excitement	

5.K.Z.	perception	slackness	low	comfort	high
	emotion	interest	medium	joy	high
	sensation	calm	medium	sympathy	high
	state	self-restraint	medium	happiness	high
6.Z.M.	perception	slackness	medium	comfort	medium
	emotion	additionally: insensibility		interest	medium
	sensation	calm		sympathy, calm, confidence	medium
	state	confidence, hap-piness, sense of purpose, self-restraint, vivacity	medium	confidence, self-restraint, confidence	medium
7.O.A.	perception	feeling of weight, painfulness	medium	lighthness, self-restraint	high
	emotion	sadness, despair	medium	serenity, inspiration	high
	sensation	indulgence	medium	calm, confidence	high
	state	fatigue, sense of purpose	medium	sense of purpose, vivacity	
8.E.3.	perception	balanced state	medium	comfort	high
	emotion	interest	high	inspiration	high
	sensation			love, sympathy, calm, confidence	high
	state	happiness	medium		high

Table 3 - Results of the psychotherapeutical training conducted on 12.05.2017 in the Center for Head and Neck

Department: Center for Head and Neck Date of training - 12.05.2017					
Patient	Before training			After training	
	Sensations	Type of sensation	Level of influence	Type of sensation	Level of influence
1.R.S.	perception		low	warmth, slackness, comfort	medium
	emotion	sadness, anxiety	medium	sadness	medium
	sensation	self-accusation	medium	self-accusation	medium
	state	excitement, fa-tigue, sense of purpose, self-restraint	medium	fatigue, sense of purpose	medium
2.G.	perception	painfulness			
	emotion	sadness, confusion	medium		
	sensation	irascibility			
	state	confidence, hap-piness, under-standing of sense of purpose, bal-anced state, vi-vacity.	high		
3.B.T.	perception	chill	medium		
	emotion	self-restraint	medium		
	sensation	self-accusation, indulgence to others.	medium		
	state		medium		
4.N.	perception	lighthness		comfort	
	emotion			inspiration	
	sensation			self-confidence	
	state	self-restraint		self-restraint	
5.K.P.	perception	warmth, comfort	medium	lighthness, warmth	medium
	emotion	indifference, joy	medium	indifference, fear	medium
	sensation	self-accusation, calm, self-confidence	medium	self-accusation, calm, self-confidence	medium
	state	self-restraint, vivacity	medium	self-restraint, vivacity	medium
6.B.P.	perception	painfulness	medium	painfulness	
	emotion	sadness	medium	sadness	
	sensation	self-accusation, calm	medium	self-confidence	
	state	fatigue, happiness	medium	happiness	
7.	perception	dizziness, painfulness	low	slackness	medium
	emotion	sadness, anxiety, despair	low	interest	medium
	sensation	self-confidence, indulgence to others	medium	calm, self-confidence, indulgence to others	medium
	state	lack of confidence, fatigue	low	sense of purpose, self-restraint	low
8.A.A.	perception	balanced state	medium	balanced state	medium
	emotion	balanced state	medium	balanced state	medium
	sensation	self-confidence	high	self-confidence	high
	state	confidence	high	confidence	high
9.J.G.	perception	comfort	medium	warmth	high
	emotion	self-restraint	high	self-restraint	medium
	sensation	calm	high	calm	high
	state	excitement	medium	excitement	medium

There are some additional methods which are conditionally divided into the following groups:

1. Warm up. Methods forming the emotional state to motivate the participants for further activity;

2. Refreshing. Methods used to quickly release the tension and remove fatigue.

Today, physical and breathing techniques from the oriental schools of Yoga, Pat Anjali Yoga are used together with the teachings of European researches who emphasize the unity of the psychics and the body, like Wilhelm Reich. According to M. Reich, neurotic and psychosomatic (so called "organic") problems might appear as a result of biological and sexual stagnation. A stagnation turns into a chronic tension that blocks the energy. A person gets a kind of "muscle armour" that results in a decrease of emotional status of the person.

W. Reich names seven main intercrossing segments in the muscle armour that make seven rows of rings:

1. Eyes
2. Mouth
3. Neck
4. Chest
5. Diaphragm
6. Waist
7. Pelvis

Physical therapy by W. Reich includes the release of the "muscle armour" by directing energy through each of the segments making seven intercrossing rings. This goal is achieved using three main techniques:

1. Deep breathing – to accumulate energy;
2. Manual influence – to unlock the "muscle armour" by massage, friction, stroking, training of muscles;
3. Verbal analysis and open discussion – to increase awareness of each emotional block and eliminate it through the awareness.

M. Feldenkrais who was engaged in physical psychotherapy suggested the existence of certain matrices in the nervous muscle system, and said that the emotional states experienced by the person left a distinctive trace on those matrices. He called them chronicle blocks and noted their negative influence on the psychics and the personal self. The resulting changes could turn the personal self into an amorphous and structureless creature. This is why the physical therapy offered by M. Feldenkrais helps strengthening and structuring the own self while extending the awareness and developing the personal capabilities [7].

Physical therapy procedures are efficient in preventing some psychosomatic features in an awareness development training. It also helps to eliminate physical and internal psychic tension and contributes to personal advancement, self-knowledge of a person, activation of hidden psychic reserves and results in a feeling of will and freedom.

S. Jourard and L. Johnson has established a supreme connection between physical satisfaction and spiritual

self-satisfaction. They also add that this connection between physical and spiritual satisfaction is a main psychological mechanism of conscience and behaviour.

A.F. Bondarenko called ethics a substantial core of his semantic space [8]. At the same time, ethics is a main indicator of a psychologist as a specialist. The responsibility for organizing a training is high; a specialist shall be self-disciplined, be able to predict the consequences of after-training therapy results and select proper methods to be included in the training program.

So not every type of teamwork represents a psychological training. It is a special type of teamwork with its possibilities, restrictions, rules, and certain problems. A training is a type of teaching, mastering the new skills, the way to disclose new psychological capacities. A person masters certain skills during his/her whole life through the awareness of own behaviour and personal experience of sensations.

Therefore, a psychotherapeutic training conducted by a psychologist-consultant is a significant support for cancer patients plus to the administration of drugs and chemical therapy, X-ray therapy and other treatment procedures prescribed by oncologist. Cancer patients being ordinary people start feeling such negative sensations as despair, sorrow, confusion, anxiety, fear from the moment they are informed of their diagnosis and during the course of treatment till their discharge. A psychotherapeutic training is very important in such cases. Cancer patients may get rid of negative sensations appearing beyond the place of training or in other situations and regulate their emotional state after they master certain exercises and learn to regulate their emotions and states during a psychotherapeutic training. It is evident that the work of a psychologist-oncologist conducting such psychotherapeutic trainings requires high kind-heartedness and professional level.

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