

PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF MAINTAINING A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP IN CONDITIONS OF MILITARY CONFLICT

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On the basis of the theoretical analysis the main strategies of maintaining family interaction in conditions of a military conflict were defined. They are complete separation, partial interaction, confrontation, adaptation, domination, and acceptance of different positions. The factors influencing the selection of appropriate strategies to maintain family relationships, as well as to facilitate maintenance of internal balance and adaptation to crisis conditions were analyzed. It was proved that family cannot always perform supportive and psychotherapeutic functions. The main indicators of successful adaptation to the conditions and consequences of a military conflict in the process of family interaction were determined. The indicators are positive family identity, constructive interaction between family members, positive images of “we” and “they”, inclusion of family members in joint activities, and positive social attitudes.

Key words: family interaction, strategies of family interaction, family as a resource, military conflict.

The issue of family interaction is not new for psychology. It was studied by M. Alekseeva, J. Alyoshin, T. Andreeva, T. Bulenko, R. Bandler, D. Vinnikot, T. Hovorun, J. Hrinder, O. Klyapets, S. Kovalyov, V. Kravets, I. Kovalyova, Yu. Lyubimova, N. Peseschkian, V. Pultavska, V. Satir, B. Hellinger, B. Khersonskiy, O. Shinkarenko.

But the review of scientific literature shows that a lot of works, both domestic and foreign, concern psychological problems in the nuclear family. The vast majority of researches are focused on the issues of harmonization of marital relationships, child-parent relationship, and readiness of a couple of young people for the marriage as a factor in building constructive relationship in future. The researches of cross-generational interaction occur quite seldom. However, it is not in the social and psychological features of family interaction in a broad sense, including in terms of armed conflict.

The aim of the article is to analyze the main strategies of maintaining relationships in conditions of a military conflict, and determine their impact on the processes of community's adaptation.

In contrast to many nations, the “family” concept is different in its semantic contents in Ukrainian language. The first is when the family consists of husband, wife, and their children. The second content is broader, and we understand family as a social formation, community of native and related people who are partially or fully involved in the joint field of activities. They have common economic, domestic, moral, and psychological ways, mutual responsibility, and

the way of parenting. That is to include all family relatives, who support active communication links in life, and all the relatives who directly (through interaction) or indirectly (through frequent appealing to them in a positive or negative context) are present in the psychological space of the family [2, p. 206-208].

In a joint time, spatial and social environment family members interact with each other, creating not only personal and social contacts. They interact as separate elements of the electromagnetic system. That family is an integrated system consisting of individual members located in space in a certain way. In the process of interaction between participants, depending on the stage of the family system development there is a path from chaos to clarity and from functionality back to disintegration in some cases.

The new imbalance in the family system is caused by emotionally bright events (both positive and negative) or changes in the number of family members or community.

All the inhibitory processes in the life of a person in one way or another are related to the parental family or its own perception of the family image. Based on the question of person's ability to overcome the crisis and psychotrauma, the consideration of the peculiarities of interaction between family members is actualized.

We define family-related interaction as a process of direct or indirect influence of family members on each other, where every action is caused by the previous one and the expected outcomes from the other members. At least, two actors are involved in any interaction. An important component of family interaction (in fact, as social interaction, in general) is the predictability of mutual expectations and hence mutual understanding between the parties. So, if the actors "speak different languages", seek mutually exclusive aims and have uncoordinated or opposite interests, the result of this interaction will hardly be positive.

The main forms of interaction are cooperation, competition, and conflict. Interaction includes three components, such as cognitive, behavioral and affective ones. This is an exchange of ideas (any ideas, knowledge, beliefs, opinions), actions and impulses (participants coordinate their actions), and feelings (emotional attitudes towards facts, people, events).

Armed events in Eastern Ukraine have complex psychological consequences for all the segments of population. These effects are reflected not only in psychological problems of ATO's members and their families, and internally displaced persons, but also in ones of those citizens who only watch the events in the east of Ukraine. Researchers of armed conflicts indicate their destructive impact on individual and community, and their effective functioning (Korobka, 2016, Pashko, 2016, Betancourt, 2015, Feldman, 2013).

Psychological assistance to ATO's members, veterans, and their families has become widespread among practical psychologists. It has been found a

number of methodologies and advisers on military support of a family [79]. Typically, these works are focused on practicing psychologists or created for the families of soldiers and children who witnessed military operations, and so on. The practical techniques and methods are represented in quite simple terms. They are designed to help people to understand their conditions and status of their relatives better. Psychologists advise how to discuss emotions in understandable language and regulate negative feelings that affect interpersonal relationships.

Psychological characteristics of military families are quite investigated both in native and foreign science. Men, officers and their wives give priority to parental and educational functions of the family; emotionally therapeutic function is in the second place, and social activity is in the third. Thus, there is a fairly high consistency of family values of men and women. For male soldiers the role of father is important in their parent-child relationship. Family house they perceive as a medium, which helps to defuse and contributes to psychological stabilization, as a “psychological refuge” – a place where they can receive moral and emotional support, approval, and therefore, appreciate it [3].

However, the specificity of the military conflict in Ukraine is that a lot of the ATO’s members are not professional military men, and therefore neither they, nor their family members were prepared for such changes in their lives. This fact alone makes it difficult to adapt as one and the other.

Children make another sensitive group in this context. Researchers point to the post-stress disorder of children who have witnessed the military actions, and give advice to parents and teachers about working with children of all ages to help them to cope with emotional outbursts and overcome the effects of traumatic events (Betancourt, 2008, 2015, Dybdahi, 2001, Feldman, 2013, Masten, 2015, Murthy, 2015).

The specificity and uniqueness of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine is that it has arisen between close states, peoples, and people who have been a part of one state for a long time. Ukrainian and Russian people are not perceived as a “whole”, but as “brothers” or “good neighbors”. Our languages are closely related that enhances compatible identification. Transformation or collapse of established attitudes and ideas took place in conditions of a military conflict. In one moment “friend” turned into “enemy” and we faced the need to clarify their positions, values and priorities. This process was extremely uncomfortable and painful for some people.

But the complexity of the situation lies in the fact that there were many families, friends, and colleagues on the other side of the barricades. They were either citizens of the country-aggressor, or people who supported the opposite camp in a different way. On this basis, a person is redefining its own position about the situation that was exacerbated by the need to maintain its position and beliefs. As a result we have the complications in interpersonal communication

and interaction between family members and relatives. Moreover, the closer the relationship, the more difficult it is to take the opposite position.

In practice, the family often breaks on the basis of inconsistency in political and ideological differences between family members. They often turn to psychologists about separate families or their representatives who are experiencing family conflicts, misunderstandings and complete break of family relationships due to different views and political and ideological preferences.

Such misunderstandings affected almost every family in one way or another. Some people have relatives in the country-aggressor. Some people forcibly migrated from dangerous areas, and their families and friends stayed at home. And some people just at home in the kitchen cannot come to an agreement on the subject of political situation in the country, economic development, feasibility of ATO, and so on.

When family relationship occurs, we understand that all kinship ties or kinship relations are not based on kinship, parenthood, or marriage. A. Kasarkina, T. Solovyov and D. Bistyaykina recognize the key performance indicators of family-related protection of socio-psychological and emotional support, the possibility of setting up family and family relationships [4].

Traditionally, family is an environment, which provides comfort and psychological adaptation of people to stressful situations. Here people can get support and help in a difficult situation. This family assistance, protection and support are expected by most people. But instead, the family often destabilizes during the war. This is the place, where the most important events happen, including the negative ones.

Family relationships are the source of internal, moral and emotional support; they are significant information channel helping adaptation and socialization of family members, a source of personal services (assistance in caring for children, sick and elderly people, etc.); they are the channel of transmission of the family life experience that is necessary for leisure.

If people do not care about how a situation is perceived by strangers, then it's twice as painful for them, when it seemed close to the people, who had much in common, but factually they had radically different views on these important issues. The family relationships are the most sensitive to the social-and-economic, political, ideological, and other differences.

K. Kolomasova proves that the system of family and family relations is not only a supportive environment, but also an important means of reproduction relationship's help and support, transmission of spiritual values and mutual experience from generation to generation. It stresses the need for the development and improvement of family-related mutuality [5, p. 12].

Of course, every family has its own unique history. However, we tried to find out what the real cause of aggravation of internal family relations was, and

what kind of family was more prone to such misunderstandings and to break ties.

Increased proneness to conflict with family members is one of the manifestations of post traumatic behavioral response [9]. Distancing from the family of “different” position is a kind of defence mechanism of isolation. Images of “we” and “they” are formed on this basis. In this way “we” usually has a positive connotation, and “they” has a negative one or neutral at best.

Factors of choosing different strategies to maintain relationships in conditions of military conflict

Among these factors are the following:

Conflicts and misunderstandings in the family before the military conflict. Practice shows that families with lots of contradictions and misunderstandings, which were a usual thing before the armed conflict, are more likely to have complications in the relationship. Such conflicts only exacerbated these conditions and radically polarized positions.

The degree of kinship relationships. Scientists argue that the proximity of the residence is a prerequisite for the intensification of relationships, but not a guarantee [5, p. 20]. O. Medvedskaya proposes the concept of psychological distance. It is not so much the territorial distancing as a sense of power relations. The author stresses the need to determine the level of psychological closeness / distance of a person in the relation to the members of a large family on the basis of the length measure of psychological distance and detecting the type of relationship between the person and the members of a large family [6].

Rebuilding of identification matrix. According to our previous studies and our colleague’s studies, family identity is one of the most pressing components in the structure of social identity. Awareness and acceptance of one’s family roles is one of the most significant and important things for the person. And vice versa, political, ethnic, territorial, and state identity is perhaps the least formed. In the situation of an armed conflict and constant information pressure, re-identification matrix is the response to a threat to their identity.

The researchers recorded the shift in the structure of identity, which lies in state updating, ethnic, territorial and political identity, and in contrast fading family identity. Aggravation of conflict in the family is on the background of geopolitical conflict’s updating, as opposed to fading family identity.

So, the question is why in conditions of war situation defending one’s political positions, values and attitudes becomes more important for the person, than maintaining peace and tranquility in the family.

Agreement on values, social and psychological well-being of the family. According to V. Vasiutynskyi, values are the basis of significant social conflicts rather than valuable misunderstanding between the actors of the conflict. He identifies agreement of values as “mutual process of detection, comparison,

awareness, and recognition of values; it is the state of mutual understanding and acceptance of them as essential and indispensable fact of coexistence correction of attitudes to them during their carriers meaningful interaction” [1].

Conflicts and disputes between family members often occur on the basis of value misunderstanding, which is based on opposite political and ideological views and beliefs.

The degree of involvement of family members in hostilities. If one or more family members are so-called active participants of the events taking place in the east of Ukraine (military, volunteers, internally displaced persons), every debate on this subject is seen particularly acute as a personal insult. The level of severity and depth of the conflict is directly proportional to the degree of involvement of its participants. They may experience acuteness or conflict, or on the contrary may unite on this basis, but clearly do not remain indifferent to such controversial issues.

Personal characteristics. Individual psychological traits of each individual have a significant impact on his choice of a certain style of behavior and a way of maintaining family interaction.

The main strategies of maintaining family interaction in conditions of an armed conflict

Structures “We” and “They” can interact in different ways at different stages and form different configurations.

1. *Full separation.* Family members with opposing views completely break their relations and reject any interaction. They show a categorical rejection of other positions.

2. *Partial interaction.* Communication takes place only within clearly defined themes and consciously avoids discussion on the subject of war and conflict. The duration of an intercourse drops significantly, and narrows the subject.

3. *Confrontation.* There is an apparent confrontation between two or more opposing positions. Communication is usually destructive and emotionally it's colored negatively. Any discussing topic comes to matters of war and confusion.

4. *Adaptation.* Hiding one's own position and external acceptance of another's one for the sake of unity in the family. There is one's own position and it's clearly perceived, but hidden from others. In such situation person accepts a dominance of another position without giving up his own attitudes.

5. *Dominance.* It is characterized by recognition of one's own position as a major. Minor and other views are not important. They are far away and not very important for person. Contacts are almost fully supported. The peculiarity and difference from the first version lies in less dramatic and traumatic experience of the situation.

6. *Adoption of a variety of positions.* It is described as recognition of one's own position as the basic one, but adopting the possible existence of many other opinions and positions. Person connects with some people and doesn't contact with others.

Obviously, the most effective and therapeutic strategy is a partial interaction, when the media of deliberately diametrically opposed views agree not to touch the topic of conflict for the sake of peace and peace in the family.

The choice of a strategy to maintain family ties leads to adaptation or maladjustment of community to the conditions and consequences of a military conflict.

Indicators of successful adaptation to community conditions and consequences of military conflict in the family interaction are: positive family identity, constructive interaction between family members, positive images of "we" and "they", the inclusion of family members in joint activities, positive social attitude.

Conclusion. The main strategies to maintain relationships in terms of military conflict are: complete separation, partial interaction, confrontation, accessories, domination, taking a variety of positions. Each of the aforementioned strategies in varying degrees brings a person to adaptation or maladjustment in crisis, which in fact is an event in the east of Ukraine.

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Губеладзе І. Г. Психологічні особливості підтримання родинної взаємодії в умовах воєнного конфлікту

На основі теоретичного аналізу визначено основні стратегії підтримання родинної взаємодії в умовах воєнного конфлікту: повна сепарація, часткова взаємодія, конфронтація, пристосування, домінування, прийняття різноманітності позицій. Проаналізовано фактори, що впливають на вибір відповідних стратегій підтримання родинних зв'язків та сприяють збереженню внутрішнього балансу й адаптації до кризових умов. Обґрунтовано думку, що сім'я і родина не завжди можуть виконувати підтримувальну і психотерапевтичну функцію. Визначено, що основними показниками успішної адаптації спільноти до умов та наслідків воєнного конфлікту в процесі сімейної взаємодії є: позитивна сімейна ідентичність, конструктивна взаємодія між членами родини, позитивні образи "Ми" і "Вони", включеність членів родини в спільну діяльність, позитивне соціальне самопочуття.

Ключові слова: родинна взаємодія, стратегії родинної взаємодії, сім'я як ресурс, воєнний конфлікт.

Губеладзе І. Г. Психологические особенности поддержания семейного взаимодействия в условиях военного конфликта

На основе теоретического анализа определены основные стратегии поддержания семейного взаимодействия в условиях военного конфликта: полная сепарация, частичное взаимодействие, конфронтация, приспособление, доминирование, принятие разнообразия позиций. Проанализированы факторы, влияющие на выбор соответствующих стратегий поддержания родственных связей и способствующие сохранению внутреннего баланса и адаптации к кризисным условиям. Обосновано мнение, что семья не всегда может выполнять поддерживающую и психотерапевтическую функцию. Определено, что основными показателями успешной адаптации сообщества к условиям и последствиям военного конфликта в процессе семейного взаимодействия являются: положительная семейная идентичность, конструктивное взаимодействие между членами семьи, положительные образы "Мы" и "Они", включенность членов семьи в совместную деятельность, положительное социальное самочувствие.

Ключевые слова: семейное взаимодействие, стратегии семейного взаимодействия, семья как ресурс, военный конфликт.