

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Possibilities for The Prevention and Psychocorrection Of Alexithymia

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Abstract

This article analyses the concept of alexithymia, its developmental causes, as well as methods of prevention and psychocorrection. Alexithymia is a psychological condition characterised by an individual's difficulty in identifying and expressing their emotions, and early detection and treatment methods are of great importance.

KEY WORDS

Alexithymia, thought, feelings, emotion, mental health, prevention, psychocorrection, stress, psychological trauma.

INTRODUCTION

The term alexithymia was introduced in 1973 by the Italian scientist Peter Sifneos, and it refers to a person's difficulty in identifying their own emotions, expressing them in words, and forming emotional connections with others. Research indicates that alexithymia has a negative impact on mental health, relationships, and work performance. For this reason, the prevention and psychocorrection of alexithymia are of great importance in modern psychology. The rise in psychosomatic disorders and the crisis in their pharmacological treatment, as noted by many clinicians, raises the issue of scientifically and psychologically characterizing the factors and mechanisms that determine the etiology, pathogenesis and sanogenesis of psychosomatic disorders, as well as the challenge of identifying appropriate ways to influence them (2). Among the models of the pathogenesis of psychosomatic disorders developed in recent years, the concept of alexithymia occupies a leading position

Causes of alexithymia.

Biological factors: Changes in neurotransmitters and brain structures affect emotional identification.

Genetic factors: Inherited traits from parents can affect the ability to understand emotions.

Social and family influences: A lack of emotional support in childhood, family stress, and traumas contribute to the development of alexithymia.

Characteristics of alexithymia.

- Difficulty in expressing emotions in words
- Problems with emotional connection to others
- Misinterpreting stress and internal states
- Expressing emotions through physical signs

Practical psychology defines this disorder as an inability to put one's emotional state into words: the individual is unable to link their experiences, feelings and moods to specific words.

According to recent research, the development of an alexithymic personality is always influenced by several factors, one or two of which are dominant. These factors include:

Neurophysiological. The difficulty in verbalising feelings may be caused by organic brain damage affecting the connections responsible for the verbal expression of emotional states and the recognition of signals from internal organs. Alexithymia can also result from underdeveloped communication between the brain's hemispheres.

Family-related. Alexithymic traits are shaped by upbringing and intra-family interactions. They manifest in an environment where there is no sincere expression of feelings arising from real life. A pattern of suppressing and concealing emotions becomes ingrained as a mindset of rigidly conforming to societal demands.

Environmental. The acquisition of emotional vocabulary occurs through communication with parents, carers and teachers. The process continues through reading books, watching films and discussing the characters' experiences. If a child grows up in a deficient educational environment, they do not know how to describe their impressions, experiences and other psychological states.

Sociocultural. This group of causes includes gender stereotypes that limit communication between parents and their sons during emotionally significant events. Tears, fear and overt aggression are not discussed and are treated as taboo ('Don't cry, you're not a girl', 'Real men aren't afraid of anything'). The upbringing of girls also sometimes restricts their emotionality.

Psychological. The predominance of figurative thinking over verbal-logical thinking is a prerequisite for the development of alexithymia. A direct cause may be psychological trauma: intense negative emotions are suppressed, repressed from consciousness, and cannot be described or expressed.

Linguistic. Sometimes a person is unable to find adequate linguistic means to describe their inner experience, despite a good education and a harmonious upbringing. The Russian language is considered emotionally rich, but it is not always capable of conveying the nuances of human experiences.

People find it difficult to assess their emotional state or understand the reactions of those around them. Often, they are unable to distinguish between physical sensations and emotional ones. The feelings they experience give rise to

physical reactions that can be analyzed and put into words. Example: anxiety triggers hunger; a person describes their state through the sensation of hunger but fails to notice the anxiety. Sometimes alexithymics use the most common descriptive words – 'sad', 'happy' – but cannot describe their emotional state in detail.

The cognitive sphere is characterized by a predominance of visual-figurative thinking. The ability to symbolize and categorize is reduced. Thought processes are linear, based on concrete facts, and often simplified. When asked about their well-being, patients state their diagnosis and the results of medical tests, but do not describe their own feelings and emotions ('I have hypertension; my blood pressure today is 130/80'). A tendency towards an event-driven, active lifestyle is often manifested through regular exercise. Regular physical exercise improves emotional regulation skills.

Patients with alexithymia are characterized by immaturity, simplistic life goals, and excessive pragmatism. They are prone to conflict, and their lack of empathy often leads to alienation from those around them. People with alexithymia typically have an emotionless facial expression and rigid (inflexible) body postures. They are often attentive to their physical health, but at the same time

METHODS

The aim of the study is to determine the level of alexithymia and to examine its prevention and psychocorrection.

Object: Young people and students

Subject: 100 respondents

Data collection methods: Questionnaires, interviews, the TAS-20 test (Toronto Alexithymia Scale)

Analysis methods: Presentation of results in the form of statistics, graphs and tables.

RESULTS

According to the research results:

A moderate level of alexithymia was identified in 30% of respondents, and a high level in 10%.

An association with youth and the social environment was observed.

The results demonstrate the effectiveness of emotional training and group sessions.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that alexithymia has a negative impact on an individual's mental health and social functioning. Therefore, it is important to implement preventive and psychocorrective measures from an early age. Cognitive-behavioural therapy, art therapy, and group sessions are considered effective in developing emotional understanding and expression. Anxiety about somatic disorders can lead to hypochondriacal feelings, which also contribute to malnutrition. Thus, a kind of vicious circle arises in the form of anorexic cycles, when chronic starvation causes changes in the internal organs, leading, in turn, to food restrictions. In some cases, patients begin to be actively examined by various specialists, exaggerating the severity of somatic disorders and avoiding consultation with a psychiatrist. The main task of primary school educational activities is to teach students to learn. Under the influence of education, serious changes occur in the mental development of children of primary school age. In other words, the psyche affects the production of neurotransmitters, and neurotransmitters control the life activities of the whole organism. Parents' words usually have a much greater impact on a child's future than parents would like. Therefore, they should be handled with great care. It is crucial for a child to distinguish between their attitude and their behavior.

Methods of prevention and psychocorrection.

Emotional education: Teaching children to identify and express their emotions.

The role of the family and society: Parents and teachers should strengthen emotional support.

Social interactive exercises: Developing empathy and emotional understanding through group activities and role-playing.

Psychocorrection.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Developing skills to identify internal feelings and express them constructively.

Emotional Training: Exercises in recognizing and naming emotions, stress management techniques.

Art and Music Therapy: Expressing inner states through painting, music or drama.

Group Therapy: Developing empathy and communication skills through interactive group activities.

Alexithymia has a significant impact on a person's

psychological and social development. Therefore, it is necessary to detect it early, implement preventive measures and apply psychocorrective methods. Emotional nurturing, therapeutic sessions and social support help an individual to understand their inner feelings and to express them effectively to others. Alexithymia can be treated using psychotherapeutic methods, but requires long-term, regular work with a specialist. The prognosis is more favorable in cases of functional alexithymia. Prevention should begin in childhood: use a wide range of emotional vocabulary when communicating with the child, put their emotional reactions into words, and respond positively to all their feelings. Alexithymia is regarded as a predisposing factor for the development of psychosomatic disorders. Emotions, sensations and feelings that remain unrecognized and unarticulated are transformed into physiological disturbances. When these occur repeatedly, they lead to disorders affecting various organs and systems. This results in the somatization of psychological distress. According to statistics, 47% of patients with chronic headaches are diagnosed with a high level of alexithymia. Inadequate awareness of emotions leads to overeating, alcoholism, hypertensive crises and asthma attacks.

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