

PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS AS AN AREA OF DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract:

the article considers psychological fitness as a direction for the development of psychological practice, and draws conclusions and methods for improvement.

Keywords: fitness practices, involvement, motivational factors, corporeality, satisfaction with one's own appearance.

Introduction

“Psychofitness” (from the English fitness - “compliance”, “keeping fit”) is understood as maintaining mental form in an optimal state.

The practice of psychofitness is considered both an independent direction of psychological practice and as a psychological enrichment of group training programs in fitness clubs and health centers, development and training centers, etc.

Psychofitness technologies represent an algorithm for solving problems of maintaining mental shape using psychological methods. Specific conditions and goals set a certain algorithm of actions - training, i.e. sequence and combination of appropriate methods, techniques and psychotechnics.

Psychotechnologies are aimed at optimizing brain function and the functioning of mental processes (cognitive, functional, emotional, motivational); to update the psychological resources of effective thinking and behavior to improve the quality of life and maintain psychological health; targeted at a specific target audience based on its needs.

The main goal is psychological support for the optimal functioning of the human psyche in the conditions of modern ecology, understood as the state of the environment and the interaction of living organisms with it.

Methodology

The novelty of the approach lies in: systematization and integration of classical and modern methods of mental hygiene, mental regulation and non-clinical psychotherapy techniques, as well as methods of developing and maintaining brain functions; development and adaptation of psychological training programs (psychofitness technologies) for use in everyday life and activities.



Basic requirements for psychological methods: psychological safety [1]; effectiveness based on scientific research and practical application; simplicity of techniques, including the possibility of independent use; optimal time expenditures for modern life dynamics (frequency and duration); lack of specific requirements for space design; possibility of individual and group application in online and offline mode; saturation with energy due to positive emotions; strengthening motivation for self-development and a healthy lifestyle.

The effectiveness of psychofitness technologies is justified by the use of a systematic approach to understanding the mental organization of a person; theoretical studies of the action of psychological mechanisms (activity in its various forms, self-regulation, human development and personal growth); as well as a new area of scientific research in the field of health psychology.

The conditions for effectiveness are the frequency of classes, motivational and organizational support from the trainer's psychologist ("Psychofitness Coach").

Results

We consider the following as the main areas of psychofitness.

1. Psychofitness of the brain for the purpose of preventing strokes and adapting to the modern dynamics of environmental changes includes: training the "muscle" of the brain (flexibility, plasticity, speed of neurogenesis); "updating" thinking by overcoming mental stereotypes, irrational judgments and limiting beliefs; development of creativity. This direction is based on the practice-oriented technologies of D. Amen - "brain fitness"; T. Buzan - "super thinking for the body"; J. Norman - "brain plasticity"; A. Dolls are "mental stereotypes"; A. Ellis - "irrational judgments" (ABC model of judgments); L.P. Grimaka - reserves of the human psyche, etc.

2. Psychofitness of cognitive processes with the aim of: a) increasing the effectiveness of cognitive tools for educational and professional activities; b) prevention of senile dementia. Includes training: attention and memory (ESHKO school; theater school techniques; classical methods of memorization, etc.); techniques for organizing thinking (mental maps, T. and L. Buzan; logical diagrams, A.P. Egides, etc.); increasing the efficiency of thinking through the use of submodalities (R. Bandler); development of perception (for example, the "here and now" approach of Gestalt therapy), etc.

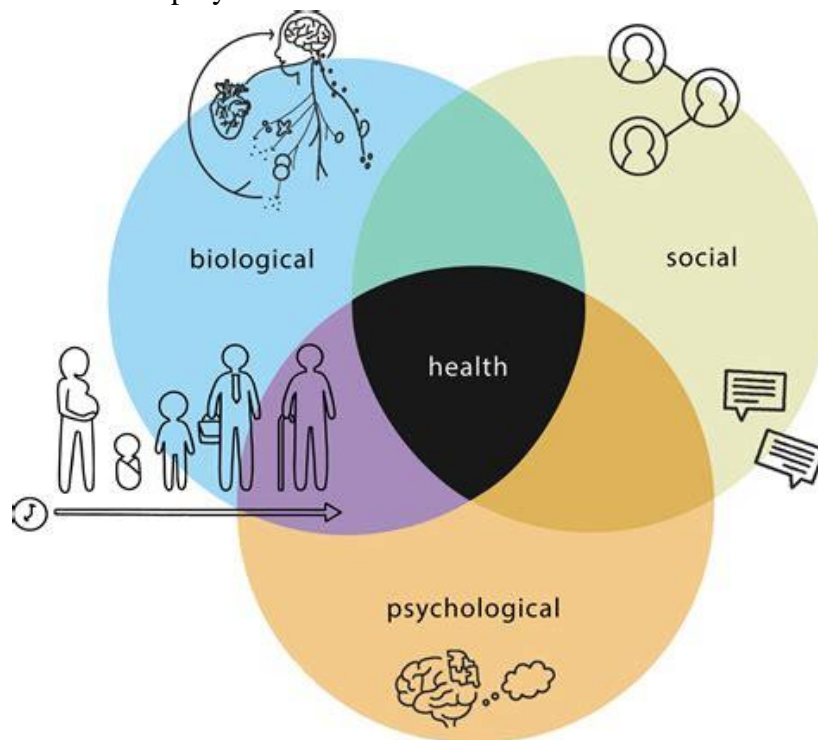
3. Psychofitness of functional states for the purpose of restoring performance includes classical and modern techniques of various types of relaxation (muscle, imagery, etc.) and energization (body, emotions, etc.): meditation (as in the method of concentrating attention on any object to eliminate emotional "extremes" and significantly reduce reactivity), progressive muscle relaxation (E. Jacobson), autogenic training (I. Schultz), emotionally figurative therapy (transformation of images based on its bodily localization, N. D. Linde), techniques for energizing body-oriented therapy (for example, "primary control pose", F. M. Alexander; "arch", A. Lowen), breathing techniques, etc.

4. Psychofitness of quality of life includes the formation of healthy lifestyle attitudes, training in effective behavior and thinking, mastering methods of self-regulation of mental states: 1) training in methods of self-regulation of emotional mental states: visualization of a calming



attitude; muscle relaxation; fixation on breathing; identification with the symbolic carrier of the optimal state; self-hypnosis [1], etc.; 2) optimization of general states - reduction of "internally oriented trance" (self-absorption) (for example, "three circles of attention"); development of alertness ("operational rest of the pike" according to A.A. Ukhtomsky) (for example, trainings by N.I. Kozlov); activation of intuitive thinking against the background of bodily relaxation and elevated mood (meditation); work with mental aura and anti-motivation (psycho-energy aurotherapy, Zh. Slavinsky); 3) elimination of pain of a psychogenic type (for example, back pain as a consequence of the automatic reflex of muscle spasm during stress [4]; headaches using the EOT method [2]; 4) use of mental reserves of self-development and self-healing (L.P. Grimak, E M. Kastrubin, V.V. Kozlov, etc.); 5) psychological support for personal development and training in effective behavior and thinking: personal effectiveness coaching method; techniques for updating and developing achievement motivation; self-motivation training (for example, the use of affirmations, NLP techniques, etc.); identifying thinking errors (A. Adler, A. Kukla, A. Ellis) and teaching positive thinking (D. ALeontyev, N.V. Samoukina, etc.); optimization of communicative behavior (for example, the interactive side of communication using the transaction method of E. Berne); increasing the assessment of self-efficacy through teaching methods of de-centering and meditation (one of the sources of A. Bandura (1986) calls the absence of tension and emotional calm), etc.

5. Psychofitness of work quality in order to increase the effectiveness of professional activity includes targeted programs taking into account specific conditions and specifics of activity (for example, in socionomic professions for the prevention of emotional burnout - "psychofitness in the teacher's room"). In this direction, it is possible to develop and apply psychofitness programs both in the business environment and in budgetary organizations as part of the social package of workers and employees.



The development of a professional's personality, especially in an era of change and the frantic dynamics of the modern world, requires leaving the "comfort zone", a field of psychological safety, where stereotypes of thinking and behavior, habitual patterns of perception and emotional response that do not ensure successful adaptation should remain. Any changes, including learning and mastering new forms of professional activity are always accompanied by increased anxiety and mental stress, i.e. stress.

Stress is a state of adaptation of the body in a situation of any change - negative or positive. This condition is energy-consuming and if a person spends his energy optimally, then stress contributes to its development and raises the quality of life to a new level. But adaptation resources are not limitless. With prolonged stress (distress), "delayed stress," there is an overexpenditure of mental energy, which leads to a decrease in performance, the occurrence of various diseases, and the aging of the body. The stress of "fruitless efforts" ("The mountain gave birth to a mouse") is especially terrible. Long-term stress quietly leads to depression.

Mental energy is the energy of our emotions, which determine the significance of events and all incoming information for a person, regulate his activity, either increasing it (positive emotions - joy, excitement, enthusiasm, etc.) or decreasing it (negative emotions - depression, sadness, boredom, fear, guilt, etc.). Emotion arises as a reverse reaction of our body to a change in the external environment, i.e. this is the response of the unconscious part of the psyche to the degree of coincidence of what was expected with what was achieved.

The work of a teacher requires contact with the emotional field of other people, i.e. involves large emotional costs; restraining both one's emotions and feelings and resisting the influence of others' emotions and feelings. Therefore, the most common professional deformation of educators as representatives of the socio-economic profession is "emotional burnout syndrome," which develops according to the classical pattern of the body's stress reaction.

Violation of the emotional sphere of the individual begins with the appearance of a bad mood, dissatisfaction with oneself, and anxiety (the "tension" stage of stress). The transition of a normal emotional response to a stress reaction most often occurs at the next stage - "resistance", when it is impossible to compensate for energy costs and it is necessary to spend the "shagreen skin" of adaptive energy. Here, inadequate aggressiveness and conflict in behavior appear, which is replaced by economy of emotions, indifference, and loss of interest in work. Lack of interest in any events, including pleasure, warns of the onset of depression.

Negative emotions accelerate the onset of the last stage - "exhaustion", which symbolizes old age and is expressed in depersonalization, i.e. a person's personal detachment from what he does, in cynicism towards others. According to G. Selye, aging is the result of all stress during a person's life.

Maintaining mental shape in an optimal state (psychofitness) includes, firstly, methods and psychotechniques for the prevention of stressful conditions, in particular "emotional burnout," and secondly, the organization of the procedures themselves to maintain mental shape.

There is a wide variety of classical and modern psychological methods that have an active impact on the emotional sphere of the individual: meditation, visualization, body-oriented therapy (BOT), emotionally figurative therapy (EOT), imago-therapy, muscle relaxation,



autogenic training, etc. They are based on the mechanism regulation (including self-regulation) of the psyche through figurative representations, trance states, breathing rhythm, etc.

In the case of psychofitness for teachers at school, the criteria for selecting psychotechniques were the following: short duration and simplicity of the procedure, accessibility to non-specialists, lack of specific requirements for space design, possibility of individual and group form, focus on maintaining and restoring emotional balance and performance, quick effect.

It is optimal to use several different sets of programs (emotional fitness training), which can be changed so that satiety and boredom do not occur when repeating procedures and exercises.

The venue may be the teacher's room if there are no other possibilities in the educational institution. Ideally, it is possible to equip a relaxation room for psychological relief, which can be visited both during breaks and if there are "windows" in the class schedule for individual relaxation. The most effective impact of psychotechnics is in a group under the guidance of a "leader". Working with a leader disciplines, structures sequence and time, sets a goal vector (focus on a specific object of study in connection with the current work situation).

Due to the action of the mechanisms of emotional contagion in a group of people, the leveling of the general emotional state and the interchange of missing (non-actualized) mental resources more effectively occurs, which strengthens the individual state of everyone. The teachers themselves can take turns acting as the facilitator, which further motivates everyone to be involved in psycho-fitness training. The facilitator's tasks are: choosing a program (object of prevention, set of exercises and their sequence, compliance with time restrictions), carrying out the procedure. The optimal frequency of group psychofitness training is once or twice a week and at least three times a month, the interval between classes is at least two days. Particular attention should be paid to the peaks of accumulation of fatigue and peaks of greatest stress in the educational process - the approaching end of semesters and the academic year, the period of recertification of teachers, etc.

After gaining initial experience and getting used to psychofitness in a group, you can move on to independent training. Individual exercises can be carried out daily (psycho-gymnastics) according to the wishes and needs of a person, both at work and at home. It is advisable for each person to master express practices of mental self-regulation for use in business and interpersonal situations, improving the quality of relationships and mental health in general (equalizing the emotional state, relieving emotional tension, energizing the state). Each teacher can acquire psychofitness skills independently, relying on relevant psychological sources, or as a result of special training under the guidance of a practicing psychologist.

Let us present a brief overview of methods and psychotechniques that can be used in the field of education to prevent emotional burnout among teachers ("emofitness"). Detailed descriptions of the techniques can be found in the literature cited for this article. These methods are considered in connection with the main objects of influence, i.e. mental states, the specifics of which are determined by the vector of mental form training. "Here-and-now." The usual state for an ordinary person is the so-called "internally oriented trance", when there is constantly an internal dialogue and the person thinks mainly about himself, about his problems. A person is so busy with his thoughts and experiences that he often does not notice what is happening in the world around him. People don't realize how much time they spend thinking.



The feeling of direct being “here-and-now”, living the present allows you to refresh your perception of life, frees you from the patterns of past experience and anxiety of the future, and also helps restore optimal performance. (Techniques: “3 circles of attention (sensations)”, etc.) The problem of emotional self-expression (repression of emotions) is most closely associated with severe health problems. Blocking the expression of emotions leads to them being “stuck” at the bodily level and causing muscle tension (“muscle armor”). Excessive chronic muscle tension causes pain (especially in the back and neck muscles). Moreover, when we limit negative emotions, positive ones disappear with them, i.e. the possibility of emotional self-expression disappears, which reduces the psychological well-being of the individual. Techniques of emotional self-expression: humor, singing, positive communication, creativity, etc. A feeling of emotional stability, inner peace (a state of peace when perceiving what is happening) allows you to simply be present and simply see what is in front of you; what is happening does not touch the observer mentally, but is perceived by him as a sequence of facts that can simply be stated. When faced with emotional situations, inner calm allows a person to be independent from the mood of others, from other people’s negative emotions, manipulations, various kinds of provocations of conflicts, and helps to act effectively in unusual and stressful work situations. (Techniques: “open door”, “aikido”, practice of “conscious peace” (N.I. Kozlov), “inner lake” (S.V. Petrushin), “Float in the ocean”; pose “primary control” (F.M. Alexander) and others). Activation of the body, saturation with energy, to invigorate fatigue, lethargy, depression, apathy, laziness: muscle extension exercises, because with a general decrease in tone, the extensor muscles always have a tonic advantage; as a result, it increases the tone of the flexors (Lowen’s Arch pose; “release the butterfly” - unclench your fingers, as if we want to release a caught butterfly, etc.).

Liberation from negative emotions. Negative emotions sharply reduce the release of endorphins, which is accompanied by increased blood pressure, increased breathing, muscle tension, and increased blood clotting. Liberation from negative emotions and restoration of an optimal state (emotional and functional) is achieved through various methods of relaxation: meditative techniques, muscle relaxation, work with images. Let us dwell in more detail on the listed relaxation methods as the most universal and effective ways to prevent various negative conditions. In the psychological aspect, meditation (concentrating attention on an object of concentration, for example, on the rhythm of breathing) involves the elimination of emotional “extremes” and a significant reduction in automatic, stereotypical reactions. A state of deep concentration is characterized by bodily relaxation, emotional elation and some detachment from external and internal experiences. The effectiveness of the technique has been proven by many thousands of years of practice, and its popularity continues to grow.

Conclusion

Emotional-imaginative self-regulation (N.D. Linde method) is a mental influence (for example, contemplation or dialogue) on the imagined image of one’s state, which can be of a different nature - sound, smell, visual picture. The essence of the method is as follows. The autonomic nervous system is not controlled by consciousness, therefore direct awareness of a negative state (pain, discomfort) does not produce an effect, but it is possible to create a reflection of



this state in the subjective world of the individual. The image is more plastic than the state and careful observation of the negative qualities of the image leads to its change. Following the change in image, the condition itself begins to succumb to unconscious correction.

Thus, modern practical psychology has developed a large arsenal of means of maintaining the mental health of educators in their professional activities.

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