

MODERN TECHNOLOGIES OF SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE PREVENTION

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***Annotation.** The article describes the main directions of prevention with drug-addicted teenagers. Two main types of prevention are considered: nonspecific prevention and specific prevention. The research was performed with drug-addicted teenagers in the counseling center “Dialogue”, and on the basis of the national Association of rehabilitation center’s.*

***Keywords:** prevention of addictions, prevention technologies, social and psychological prevention, dependency.*

Drug addiction has become a tragedy and a threat to the national safety of the country [15]. The main danger of drug addiction is its influence on teenagers and youth [6].

Teenagers do not have life skills firm enough to deal by themselves with stressful situations, occurring in the modern society [7]. They are not ready yet to resist the social pressure [3]. As a result, teenagers use self-destructive ways of handling stress [2]: consuming alcohol, taking drugs and other psychoactive substances.

One of the basic measures of fighting against drug addiction is its prevention [4]. The goal of preventive work in this direction is not just to [12]:

- raise the level of social and psychological competence of teenagers [13];
- form the skills, necessary to analyze and critically evaluate the information about drugs, and to teach ability to take right decisions [10].

But also:

- to form a harmonic personality, able to handle life problems by oneself [1];
- to give an alternative for narcotization; in our case it is the orientation for positive image [14, 5].

The goal for the present research is to study and prevent drug addiction by helping teenagers to create an optimal image of themselves [11]. The suggested program is a method of mediated prevention of consuming psychoactive substances and can be applied both for safe and unsafe audience. In case of unsafe audience it is reasonable to supplement the suggested method with exercises, oriented for specific prevention, listed in the second part of the article.

In the course of the correction and development work on the present topic, a preventive program on drug addiction was tested (authors R.Kozyakov and L.Chupkina, 2006) [9], on the basis of Centre for Psychological Support “Dialogue”. The methodical materials of the program were published in the journal “Youth and Society”. A total number of 35 people took part in the research.

The goals of the program are: to help recognize the duties and responsibilities for oneself and the others; to give reliable information on drug substances, consequences of consuming and their influence on the spheres of human life; to help understand the true motives of drug addiction, find healthy and accessible alternatives.

Forms of organizing classes: discussions, games, talks, role playing, questionnaire, training elements.

Requirements: the classes are designed for teenagers aged from 11 to 14.

Group size: the previous experience showed preventive work is efficient when applied with groups from 10 to 30 people [8].

Each class takes 75-90 minutes (it depends on the amount of the participants). The classes do not promote over-fatigue, because they contain games aimed at release of psychological strain.

Frequency: once a week. Teenagers are not overloaded, on one hand, and on the other hand, they do not forget to apply the acquired skills and they are still interested in the class.

The present classes were held on the basis of “Dialogue, Centre of Help for teenagers and youth”, in the lecture hall. To hold the classes at school, the conference hall can be used or a classroom with the smallest amount of furniture. As the participants are sitting in the circle, it is very important. Besides, a few physically active games are included in the course.

What is necessary for the class: A1 or A2 sheets of paper, felt-tip pens, name cards, A4 sheets, dense paper or cardboard.

Facilitator: the facilitator can be a teacher, a psychologist, or a social care teacher.

Main condition: the ability of the facilitator to earn teenagers’ trust and respect. It is preferable that the facilitator knows the details of teenage subculture, knows the peculiarities of the audience, its icons, values, ideals, etc.

Class 1.

Aims:

- to introduce the participants of the group;

- to explain why the problem is currently important among the youth.

Challenges:

- to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, to create the working atmosphere in the group;
- to develop the rules of the group and have them accepted;
- to find out the expectations of participants from the classes.

Plan of the class:

- introduction of the facilitator;
- choosing and accepting the rules of the group;
- pendulum discussion of taking drugs;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 2.

Aims:

- to form the intention for constructive interaction with people, regardless of the multiple variants of their individual self-expression;
- to strengthen the positive attitude towards one’s individual features;
- to teach the technology of building one’s own image, its main stages of developing;
- to base ethics of communication and create image of personality.

Challenges:

- to form the intention of understanding other people’s difference;
- to help understand the value, uniqueness and individuality of oneself and other people;
- to reveal the meaning of self-presentation in creating one’s own image.

Plan of the class:

- greeting “Attention! I’m here”;
- exercise “I am the Sun”;
- pendulum discussion: the issue of personal image, the meaning of self-presentation in creating personal image; the problems of ethics and their role in making an attractive image;
- game “Inhabited island”;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 3.

Aims:

- to form personal self-esteem;
- to raise the interest in oneself regarding peculiarities of the personality;
- to realize the ability to form an adequate self-esteem;
- to form favourable behaviour motives.

Challenges:

- to strengthen the positive self-esteem of the students;
- to reveal the negative influence of drugs on positive self-esteem;

Plan of the class:

- Motto of my life;
- pendulum discussion “Positive self-esteem as means to raise the efficiency in creating of image”;
- “A letter to my darling me”;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 4.

Aims:

- to define the notion and reasons for stress;
- to form the variants of optimal behaviour in stressful situations and of handling acute negative emotions.

Challenges:

- to form the beliefs about being able to adjust in difficult life situations;
- to give information about influence of stress on human body;
- to train the skills of resisting stress.

Plan of the class:

- greeting “An Odd City”;
- pendulum discussion;
- test “Can you handle stress?”;
- “Idea market”;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 5.

Aims:

- to realize one’s own demand and ability to communicate;
- to solve some problems in communication;
- to use elements of rhetoric, non-verbal communication and its efficiency in forming the image.

Challenges:

- to give the idea of different types of communication;
- to give the opportunity to train non-verbal means of self-expression.

Plan of the class:

- game “Speaking with hands”;
- discussion “Types of communication”;
- talk on importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in forming the image;
- game “Speaking through the glass”;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 6.

Aims:

- forming the belief that consuming of psychoactive substances is an illusionary way to solve life problems;

- forming skills to refuse consuming psychoactive substances.

Challenges:

- to form the belief that refusing to take psychoactive substances is a sign of mature behaviour;

- to teach the ways to refuse taking psychoactive substances.

Plan of the class:

- game “A Forbidden Movement”;
- exercise “A String Puppet”;
- brainstorming;
- pendulum discussion;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

Class 7.

Aims:

- to discuss the results of collective work;
- to summarize the course.

Challenges:

- to support the intention for further collective work.

Plan of the class:

- greeting “Weather forecast”;
- game “Air balloon”;
- A message to the human race;
- game “Wishes”;
- summary of the class: “Good, bad, interesting”.

In the unsafe audience, beside classes on forming positive image of teenagers, it is reasonable to hold classes on following topics:

1. What is addiction?
2. Smoking and alcohol.
3. Contributory factors.
4. Responsible behaviour, life goals, resources for their achievement.

Main principles and effective techniques of specific prevention

The listed below are the techniques and principles that work successfully with 8-11th grade students:

1. Each action should follow a certain purpose. Meanwhile, this purpose should not be imposed upon students, but they should be guided through discussion and leading questions.

To form a conscious attitude to psychoactive substances with children, they can be asked, why they think people start consuming substances that alter their state of consciousness.

It is also necessary to tell and ask: “You understand very well that most people don’t think too much before doing it. Now I have another question: why do you think it is so difficult to get rid of this habit? Statistically, best rehabilitation centers result only

in 30% of remission, every tenth person reaches a rehabilitation centre, so only one person in a hundred has a chance to survive.”

Thus, you have a dialogue with teenagers, in which their opinion is valued, and they are invited to think and reflect. As a rule, children react vividly to such a format of the class.

However, before asking any question on the topic, it is necessary to understand, what goal we are going to reach. When building a discussion, one should lead children to awareness that addiction to psychoactive substances is a really hard disease that often leads to fatal consequences.

2. Teenage implies certain peculiarities of perception. Teenagers often have imaginary thinking more developed than abstract or logical thinking. That is why the techniques that affect imaginary thinking and emotions of a teenager are most weighty arguments.

Exercise “House”.

You have a pile of books that symbolize our society – this is a house in which every person is a brick and performs his or her function. A lot of teenagers think that they can decide what they should do and how to live, and that they have a right to “fall out” from the society.

If you get any book from under the pile, the whole pile will fall apart. It is the same with the society: if one person falls out, the whole community around him suffers: the family and friendship ties are destroyed, such a person cannot study or work effectively. But it is not just him who suffers, but his friends and family do as well. This is the way how each person contributes to the development of the whole society. He is responsible for the house and the society around him.

Exercise “Get in and Get out of the Circle”.

Another metaphor to understand the phenomenon of addiction can be another game exercise, in which all participants of the group stand in the circle, hand in hand. The task of the volunteer is to get inside, or get out of the circle. After the class it is possible to give interpretation of this game. The circle is a symbol of addiction, which is held by the person who is trapped in its net. On the other hand, the circle is also a symbol of society, which is not ready to take the addict back, if he has decided to give up consuming psychoactive substances.

Another metaphor to understand how addiction can change a person’s behaviour is the following exercise.

Exercise “String Puppet and the Puppet Master”.

In this game the group is divided in pairs, each one in turn becomes a puppet master who shows the movements to the “string doll”. Then they change the roles. After finishing the game part it is necessary to summarize that an addict is a string doll for his or her addiction, which subdues the whole person’s life.

A good way to actualize and form the “right” feelings towards psychoactive substances is association game. It is a diagnostic exercise as well, because it reveals

most troublesome teenagers. The exercise consists of two parts – it is necessary to give a felt-tip or a ball pen to the school student at the front desk, which he passes over to the next person who passes it further on after doing the task.

- In the first part the children are offered to speak out their associations for such words as “drug”, “junk”. Most children give such associations as: “sickness”, “death”, “addiction”, etc. Some schoolchildren may speak out such associations as “disco”, “kife”, “cool”, “good”, etc.

- In the second part of the exercise it is offered to read the associations which belong to addicts themselves: sickness, death, withdrawals, etc.

As a rule, after reading the second part the boisterous emotions of flaunting children quickly change.

An important question is: how much theory should it be there at the class of psychoactive substances prevention?

There should not be much theory, but it should reflect the hardships and consequences of consuming the psychoactive substances. It is best to give theory in the language, understandable for a teenager.

It is reasonable to cover the following topics in the discussion:

- Addiction and how it is different from the life needs. It is necessary to emphasize that needs are something a person cannot live without, but addiction does not bring any good to a person, only harm. Besides, the person is enslaved and cannot imagine his further life without the subject of his addiction.

There are two types of addiction: psychological and physical, and it is psychological addiction which is the most harmful, that is why it is so difficult to cure this disease with medical means only.

- Getting used to and tolerance to the subject of addiction. With each new dose of psychoactive substances a person gets used to the substance and it is impossible to cheat one's body forever, with the course of time it stops reacting to the stimulators. That is why when one starts consuming psychoactive substances and alcohol, it is necessary to take a bigger dose each time, otherwise there will be no effect. Thus, more and more money is spent to get psychoactive substances, and the effect is smaller and smaller each time.

- Withdrawal syndrome – the body gets used to the psychoactive substances, because it becomes a part of the metabolic processes, and if the supply is stopped abruptly, unpleasant and painful sensations emerge, which are called withdrawals.

It is also necessary to speak about the consequences of psychoactive substances. This can be also done in the interactive form.

Exercise “Spider Net”.

It is necessary to draw a point in the middle of the board and lines spreading from it, and at the end of each line to write the consequences of developing addiction: for mental and physical health, relationship with friends, with family, for results at school, career and relationship with the society as a whole. It is necessary to draw special

attention of teenagers to the fact, that first of all addiction weakens the person's will, ability to control actions. Together with the will, the person loses freedom and his man's face, that is why this loss is the most painful. It is also necessary to emphasize that negative consequences, as a rule, reveal themselves in all the spheres of human life at the same time. That is why a person is trapped in addiction, like a fly in the spider net.

Myth No. 1. There are Light and Heavy drugs.

When you mention the harm for physical and mental health, you can inform the students about the consequences of consuming so called "light" drugs: cannaboids, oxybutirate natrium, etc.

At the prevention class it is necessary to break down the myths about psychoactive substances and addiction: scientific research has shown that even so called "light" drugs have a negative effect on physical and mental health of a person.

Myth No. 2. There is no harm if you try just once.

In response to this myth you can give the scheme how drugs affect a person's body and mind.

To do this it is necessary to draw a scheme on the blackboard, where the horizontal line shows time, and the vertical line shows emotions: negative – at the bottom (with “-“ sign), and positive (with “+“ sign) – at the top of the line.

Normally a person has both negative and positive emotions. For example, a teenager gets an excellent mark in physics, his mood goes up, then he has a quarrel with a friend, and the mood goes down, then he made up with him – it goes up again (we draw a curve on the blackboard). And it is like that all the time – either raise of emotions, or fall. However, usually these emotions do not go over the top, and they do not go beyond the middle level. So once a young man or a woman thinks that it is not enough to have ordinary emotions, and they take “a pill”. What happens to the emotions? Right, they go up, and much higher than when a person is just in a good mood. The emotions reach their peak. What happens next? Within a period of time, positive emotions change to negative ones, and a person has also stronger negative emotions than usual. Why? Because the body has lost a lot of energy when the emotions went up so quickly, and now it needs to restore, so here comes the physiological decline.

But this person already remembers and knows how it feels to be “high”, and it is the moment of emotional decline when it comes to his mind that it felt so good a short time ago. What does he do next? He takes another “pill”, but the paradox is that it will never feel like the first time, because the process of addiction has already started, and every next time it will bring less and less pleasure, or the person will need to increase the dose.

Meanwhile, emotional declines become more apparent each time, and emotional rises become less. Finally, the addicted person takes the drug to shift from deep emotional decline to a neutral “zero” state. We understand that physical addiction does not appear immediately, each one is an individual, but there is also a mental addiction, which is much stronger than physical one. When does it appear? Right, at the moment of

the first strong emotional peak the person remembers the emotion, and further on he wants to get the same emotion by taking the psychoactive substance. There is even a saying made by addicts themselves: “One time is sometimes too much, and then a thousand times are too little”. Thus, psychological addiction, the heaviest one, appears during first times of taking drugs, that is why a belief that one time will bring no harm, is a myth.

Then you can ask the children, why they think psychoactive substances are offered for free, although they cost very much.

Also it is useful to speak to an unsafe audience about situations when children can be offered drugs: at the disco, in the company of friends, etc. Some narcologists also recommend not to take open drinks at discos and parties, so that psychoactive substances are not added to the drinks.

It is useful to train the skill of saying “No” in the situations when psychoactive substances are offered. There are a lot of ways to reply to the offer to take a drug. The most original, in our opinion, is “It’s not my style”, or “it’s out of fashion”.

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