

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF ELDERLY PERSON

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***Annotation.** In this article the authors pay attention to the problems of an elderly person`s psychology in modern conditions of society development. The appeal to the problem seems to be urgent in view of the fact that market conditions and changes in the age structure of society grows the society`s need to increase the level of social protection of elderly people. The study of these issues contributes to the psychosocial work programs that promote self-actualization of an old man.*

***Key words:** aging, elderly person psychology, older age (aging), psychological aging, psychosocial work.*

Currently, an increase in the proportion of elderly people in society is an urgent problem. Therefore, the object of study of modern sciences is the problem of the psychology of the elderly person. This is primarily due to the fact that a change in the age structure of society. The important questions are revealing psychological

characteristics, the structure of personality, mental features of an elderly person. The study of these issues contributes to the psychosocial work aimed at increasing life expectancy and promoting self-realization of an elderly person.

Modern scientific studies of older age and the main constituent elements of the aging process are presented in the works of Russian and foreign authors: B.G.Ananiev, G.Bidder, O.V.Krasnova, M.S.Milman, V.N.Nikitina, A.I.Taschevoy, K.A.Feofanova. In the study of an elderly person's features in domestic science there are identified following theories and concepts: the heterochrony theory (B.G.Ananiev, M.D.Alexandrova, E.F.Rybalko); theory of life's journey, the theory of human subjectivity (K.A.Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, L.I.Antsyferova, S.L.Rubinstein); the concept of "acme" (A.A.Bodalev, A.A.Derkach). B.G Ananiev substantiated a comprehensive approach to aging, developed paradigm of combining biological and social approaches. This paradigm has been used in studies of K.A.Abulkhanova- Slavskaya, L.I.Antsyferova, O.V.Krasnova, G.A.Minnigaleevoy.

In foreign studies the aging process is commonly viewed as a "three-component" process. The first component represents *senescing* (from *senescence* – "aging"), that is the process of biological aging which leads to a decrease in the body's resistance and increase the likelihood of death. At the same time there is a change of social roles, behavior patterns and social status, so the second component is *eldering* (from the *elder* – "the elderly people"). The third component, called *geronting* (from *gerontology* – "doctrine of old age, gerontology"), is the psychological aging, during which selected adaptation methods, decision-making and coping strategies take place" [17]. According to researchers (L.I.Antsyferova, A.G.Liders, V.Frankl, E.H.Erikson, "one of the leading activities of an elderly person is taking his career, interpreted as a special inner work" [9].

It should be mentioned that older age is a long period of development, which is aimed to solving the age-challenges and opportunities for self-actualization. "Older age is a certain period in a person's life and it includes quite different problems, with global significance for the representative of the elderly people, indigenous problems like bio-medical sector, as well as some issues of implementation of social and personal community life and each individual in particular" [5].

Modern gerontology, according to E.A.Sorokoumova, "is based on the following notions of older age and aging:

1. The socio- psychological development of the individual is not limited by any specific periods of its existence, it is realized throughout life.
2. Coming of the older age, a person does not use up all his backup capabilities, the potential of his development.
3. The mental development of a person is so multidimensional, that it is almost impossible to identify all of its manifestations, qualities and features.
4. Personal-psychological development of a man occurs at different speeds and reaches different levels in different areas of social reality" [12].

V.V.Boltenko studied people who live in nursing homes for the elderly. He singled out the following steps of psychological aging, which are independent of chronological age [4].

At the first stage these people preserve the connection to that type of activity, which has been dominant in their life until the retirement. As a rule, this kind of activity was directly related to their profession. This connection can be just like an episodic part in the implementation of previous work and mediating - while reading professional literature, etc. If this connection is dropped immediately after retirement, the person is passing the first stage and enters the second one.

At the second stage the decrease of interests is noticeable, at the expense of loss of professional attachments. In communication with other people conversations on everyday topics, discussion of TV news, family events, the success or failure of children and grandchildren are dominant. In such groups of people it is difficult to distinguish who was an engineer, a doctor, an accountant or a professor.

At the third stage we can see that the main concern is the personal health, and it becomes the most favorite topic of a conversation - about medicines, about the methods of treatment. The most important person in your life becomes the doctor, his professional and personal qualities.

At the fourth stage the meaning of life is to preserve life itself, the social circle is narrowed to the limit: doctor, social worker, those family members who support the personal comfort, neighbors, peers, rare telephone conversations with old friends, mainly to see whether everybody has passed away or if there is still someone left.

And finally, at the fifth stage vital needs are actualized. There is practically no emotionality and communication.

Considering the question of periodization, we should notice that over the years the authors identify different periods of the older age: E.Birr in 1964 proposed to the late period people aged from 50 to 75; E.Erickson, in 1963, said that the late period starts at the age of 65; D.I.Feldstein in 1999 related to the old age people from 60 to 75 years old; A.A.Rean in 2007 considered that the older age starts at the age of 65. The Regional Office gives the following classification of elderly people: these are men aged from 61 to 74, and women aged from 56 to 74. The older age comes at 75. Over 90 years old a period of longevity begins.

E.Erickson described the last stage of human life (from 60 years old until death) as the eighth one, which has positive and negative value. This step completes the psychosocial life cycle and is characterized by summarizing the results of life, integration and evaluation of all previous stages of development "Ego". "A sense of integration Ego arises from the ability of a person to understand his whole life, including marriage, children, grandchildren, career achievements, social relations, and humbly, but firmly say, "I am pleased." The proximity of death is no longer frightens, because these people see their continuation in successors, or in creative achievements.

At the opposite pole there are people who applies to their life as a sequence of unrealized opportunities and mistakes. Lack of integration of such people is manifested in the hidden fear of death, feeling unsuccessful and problems that may occur. E.Erickson identified two prevailing sentiments types of irritated and perturbed of elderly people: the regret is that they cannot live that very life again, and

the denial of their own shortcomings and defects by designing them to the outside world” [16].

“The elderly man's personality changes as the aging depends on the biological factors (constitutional type of personality, temperament, physical health) and the socio-psychological factors (life, family and domestic situation, the presence of wind interests, creative activity)” [15 ]. E.Erickson and J.Erickson compiled a table which shows how people of older age occur neoplasms from previous life-cycle periods (see Table 1) [18].

Table 1

**New formations of all periods of human life and their expression in older age**

<b>Conflict and neoplasm</b>	<b>Manifestation in older age</b>
Integrity - despair, wisdom	Existential identity, a sense of integrity, sufficient to overcome the physical disintegration
Generative - stagnation, concern	Care of others, participation, empathy, compassion
Intimacy - isolation, love	The feeling of ambiguity of interpersonal relationships, the value of tenderness, love and freedom
Identity - confusion of identity, loyalty	Feeling of ambiguity of life, fusion of sensory, logical and aesthetic perception
The sense of achievement - inferiority, competence	Adoption of course of life and not unrealized hopes
Initiative - fault goal setting	Humor, empathy, resilience
Autonomy – shame, freedom Basic trust - confidence, faith	Adopting Life Cycle Awareness of interdependence and connectedness

Development of an elderly person's identity in interaction with the social environment is going on. The researchers say this age segment is “characteristic of older age socialization with quantitative and qualitative contradiction between the objective desocialization (reduction in the number of social roles and structures) and subjective competence and aspirations of an elderly person” [19].

F.Giese in the research describes the following types of the elderly person:

- 1) old-negativist denying at any signs the older age and decrepitude;
- 2) an old extrovert recognizing the onset of older age, but this recognition comes from external influence and by observation of reality, especially in connection with the retirement (observing the grown youth disagreement with her views and interests, the death of relatives and friends, innovations in art and social life, the change of position in the family);

3) introverted type stung by the aging process; stupidity appears in relation with new interests, the revival of memories of the past, interest in metaphysical questions, inactivity, weakening emotion, the desire for peace” [6].

I.S.Kon in his classification of socio-psychological types of an elderly person relied on dependence on the nature of the type of activity. He identified the following types of psychologically strong person:

- 1) active and creative aging;
- 2) aging with good social and psychological adjustment;
- 3) “feminine” type of aging;
- 4) aging in the care of health (“male” type of aging).

Also he pointed out negative types of a person:

- 1) aggressive grumblers;
- 2) disappointed in themselves and in their own lives, lonely and sad losers, deeply unhappy people” [2].

In his studies D.B.Bromley described five types of personality traits of aging:

1) constructive type - people of this type are characterized by such features as: inner balance, a positive emotional state, criticality in relation to themselves, intolerance towards others. Optimistic installation to life persists after the end of the professional activities. Self-assessment of this group of elderly people is quite high, they make plans for the future, rely on the help of others;

2) dependent type - also socially acceptable and well adapted people. It is expressed as a subordinate marital partner or a child, in the absence of the life and professional claims. Emotional balance is maintained by the inclusion in the family environment and hope for outside help;

3) protective type – a person is characterized with exaggerated emotional restraint, a certain directness in actions and habits, the pursuit of “self-reliance”, grudging acceptance of assistance from other people. The motto of the people with a defensive attitude towards the coming of the older age – try to be active in any cases. It is considered as a neurotic type. The older the person is, the more difficult life he has. These people are difficult to communicate:

4) aggressive-defensive type - people with this set of traits tend to “shift” on other people's guilt and responsibility for their own failures, explosive and suspicious. They do not accept their older age, distilled thoughts about retirement, desperately thinks of progressive loss and death, they are hostile to the young, to all “new and alien world”. Their understanding of themselves and the world is qualified as inadequate:

5) self-incriminating type – it is revealed to passivity, resignation in making difficulties; the people tend to depression and fatalism, lack of initiative, feelings of loneliness, abandonment, pessimistic assessment of life in general. Death is perceived as getting rid of an unhappy existence” [7].

Typology of aging, proposed by K.Roschak [11] is based on a typology of aging made by D.B.Bromley. The author identifies the following types of aging:

1. Constructive type. This type of aging is characterized by: the design strategy of advanced human adaptation to the period of the older age; lack of

indicators nervous conditions and the state of fear, anxiety; relationship with other mostly good ones; a realistic assessment of the future, achievements and mistakes, development of a sense of humor; appreciating for their own achievements, self-confidence, the right to express their feelings; planning for the future; the ability to deal with their problems without the others' help; having friends. As a rule, such people had a good childhood. They had a little number of stresses in life. Marriage is a prosperous, attitude to the work is stable. The story of their lives is characterized by constant development, there was no sharp turns or no periods of stagnation.

2. Protective type of adaptation to the older age. This type is less effective than the previous one. They observe: a slight manifestation of neurosis in behavior; enhanced adaptation to the elderly life, independence. As a rule, these people are well adapted to the life, they can carry out their professional duties, actively engaged in public life.

3. Aggressively-active type. These elderly people are characterized by: frequent manifestation of aggression, suspiciousness, propensity to competition, the manifestation of discontent nature of the dialogue with the people; stereotypical view; unrealistic perception of the world and their own capabilities; the perception of aging as a misfortune, but the prospect of aging are associated with the deterioration of physical and mental strength; justification of the different ways of its relationship to the world and misbehavior; experience dramatic state of fear and pessimism; a manifestation of distrust to the people, the desire to preserve its independence; exaggerated attention to some things of their own household; display of emotions - a mixture of resentment and fear because of the threatening disaster, of tragedies; hostility and envy of the young. These people are brought up without family warmth and were highly depended on the father's authority. They had problems with their career. As a rule, workaholics were depended on their superiors, in a family of their children, and men depended on their wives. It is believed that children make excessive demands on their elderly parents.

4. The passive type of aging. As a rule, these people are: passive, not able to take responsibility and secure material resources; depressed, experiencing sadness, self-pity; aggressive, but tend to be aggressive against themselves; they have difficulty in relationships with others, show excessive suspiciousness towards people. They cannot work out an optimistic and constructive setting to life; they exaggerate their physical and mental disabilities; they are experiencing loneliness and uselessness; death is seen as liberation from world's goods; they have exaggerated attend to things of their own goods. As a rule, their lives are a chain of mishaps and misfortunes. Many of them created families very late and marriage, of course, was unsuccessful”.

There are a lot of typologies that are available in the literature and their development continues. A.V.Tolstih notes that “old pattern of measuring personality is full of a diverse set of qualities that are rarely found in one person” [14].

V.I.Slobodchikov, who studies the development objectives of the individual in old age, says “... on the one hand, at the time it is important to realize the need to

work on the completion of what can be accomplished. On the other hand - to feel the limits of the possible and take imperfection as yourself and the surrounding world”.

L.I.Antsyferova said “... only psychological future with its prospects and programs enables to develop the individuals in later period of life and enriches it with new real motivations” [19]. The author believes that the person who was in a situation when it needs to change the way of life, it begins to realize the resources available in other activities. So the process of achieving success in the elderly, according to the author, is capable of updating the fragmented” self-images “that have arisen as a result of testing a person itself in different life roles” [19]. L.I.Antsyferova points out that the new way of life that which was formed in human`s lives can lead to the discovery of new abilities, such as creativity. So A.Maslow describes a case when in one of his elderly patients, forced to develop a new way of life, fine artistic ability suddenly appeared, the existence of which the surrounding people or she had never thought[19].

G.S.Abramova notes that “specific features of the older age are characterological changes due to the gain of features in people`s young age and imparted by the aging process [1]:

1. People with anxious-hypochondriac features become even more mistrust and suspicious, calculating - avaricious, principled and hard - irreconcilable to the views of others, emotionally intemperate - explosive, having loss of control of emotional reactions.

2. The sensitive feeling can develop into persistent feeling of low self-esteem, and is manifested in a depressed mood at sharpening the background, in the experience of prejudice, attitudes and persecution by the type of securities in excess of ideas.

3. Along with these shifts of flawed character, a lot of people of older age are observed with positive changes: tranquility, understanding the basic values, adequate revaluation of their desires and capabilities, smoothing contradictory traits, creative inspiration (while creating autobiographies), etc.

4. Older age period is the time of crisis, and its main goal is the integration of the Ego as a awareness of the value themselves and their way of life. Older age period is characterized with the emergence of the final, solid ideas about a person itself, as opposed to a possible disappointment in life and rising despair”.

In this way, the study of the psychological development of the elderly person is the basis for the development of psychosocial supporting programs. Social work with the elderly people leads to the further development of their individuality; this process allows the elderly person to adapt to the new situation, it promotes an elderly person`s self-realization.

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