

USAGE OF PSYCHOTRAINING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE SYSTEM OF THE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE

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Abstract. The article deals with the disclosure of the issue of using of modern, innovative technologies in providing psychological assistance to the specialists of the Rescue Service during a post-accident period. It is noted that during the years 2006-2017 special psychosocial training programs were developed by experts of the Research Laboratory of extreme and crisis psychology of the research center of the National University of Civil Protection of Ukraine. Training programs were widely validated while training specialists to perform their duties in an emergency, as well as during the recovery period after a traumatic event. The content of psycho-training programs used during the recovery period with firefighters and pyrotechnics who served in the emergency cell obtained uncovered.

Key words: psycho-training technologies, recovery period, risk-occupational specialists, the rescuer.

Introduction. Unfortunately, for the last years we could observe that numbers of emergency situations have increased. It is a fact, that to the liquidation of negative effects of emergency situations, what is caused by the different types of factors (anthropogenic, natural disasters or military), are involved specialists from The State Emergency Service of Ukraine. Specificity of their duties connected with high-level risking during performing of their professional activities. Also to the specificity belongs actioning in an uncertain and unpredictable situation, the lack of the time and high responsibility for the results.³⁰

Performing the tasks in the emergency conditions from psychological perspective have negative, dangerous impacts at the human mind.³¹ Specialists who work in the area of emergency situation have not only threats to their physical health, but also their have greater chances to get mental disorders, psychic disadaptation and stress.³²

Our experience shows us that in epicenter of emergency situation, the most vulnerable category of peoples are rescuers because usually they are in the blind area of psychologists.

While rescuer are performing professional duties and tasks, they have no possibilities and opportunities to work through their negative feelings. Usually these

³⁰ Асоцький В. В. (2013): Психологічний аналіз професійних завдань начальника караулу оперативно-рятувальної служби цивільного захисту Державної служби України з надзвичайних ситуацій, с. 361.

³¹ Магомед-Эминов М. Ш. (2015): Посттравматический рост как модель реагирования на геополитический кризис, с. 23.

³² Тімченко О. В. (2007): Екстремальна психологія : підручник, с. 9.

feelings accumulate and cause negative effects, as we already said, at mental health of The State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists.

Consequently, there appear a necessity to develop the complex of methods for overcoming stress statements of The State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists.

Methodology. Significant meaning for our study have had the works of national scientists. These works was directed on issues of the staff selection system, the organizing extreme psychological and professional trainings, the organizing psychological work with rescuers during rescue operations, the negative psychological statements that emerge after emergency situations (Asotskyi V. V., Mironets S. M., Lebedev D. V., Prikhodko Yu. O., Timchenko O. V., Khristenko V. E. etc).

For solving the problem of recovering psychological and physical resources after performing professional duties we refer to works of national scientists (Kraynyuk V. M., Ovsyannikova Ya. O., Timchenko O. V. etc) and foreign scientists (Tedeschi R. G., Calhoun L. G., Joseph S., Linley P. A., M. Sh. Mahomed-Eminov)

The goal of article is acquaintance with the developments that have been created by the specialists of the Laboratory of crisis and disaster psychology of the National University of Social Defence. The developments was created within solving problem of recovering physical and psychological resources of The State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists.

Since 2006 specialists of the Laboratory of crisis and disaster psychology have conducted large-scale studies what was devoted to the features of personal behavior in emergency situations, professional activity of the dangerous professions. As well as the specialist of this laboratory have created psychograms and professiograms, analyzed character of error actions, have studied individual and typological features, have examined psychological mechanisms of compensation and protection of person who is in traumatic situation. On the basis of these studies was created the programs of special social and psychological trainings. These trainings were being approved during 2006-2017 years. Approbation was conducted during training for performing professional duties in emergency situations and during recovering after traumatic event.

We have developed following trainings:

- Social and psychological training “Strength of spirit”;
- Social and psychological training “Successful manager”;
- Social and psychological training “Psychology of safety for Euro 2012”;
- Social and psychological training “First psychological aid”;
- Social and psychological training “Healing after grief”;
- Social and psychological training “Anti-stress training”;
- Social and psychological training “Survive and save”;
- Social and psychological training “Through trials to growth”.

All trainings can be divided into two big categories:

1. Trainings what is oriented to work with staff of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine.
2. Training what is oriented to work with population who was affected by the emergency situation.

Within this article we will focus on the trainings from the first category of trainings. Especially, on the trainings what is used for psychological work with firefighters, rescuers and pyrotechnics after performing professional tasks.

Results of study. In the context of this article we consider in details scientific researches of recovering mental health of dangerous professions specialists. Because the problem of mental health recovering is very actual, as we already said.

After performing different professional tasks that connected with liquidation consequences of emergency situation, each specialist of dangerous profession, especially rescuer, needs some time for recovering his physical and mental health.

Recently, in Ukrainian power institutions, including the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, such period when specialists recover their energy was called “rehabilitation”. Usually, term “rehabilitation” means that this recovering will have medical support with using some medicines. In the traditional approach, psychological rehabilitation is a part of rehabilitation, what included at the process of medical treatment. But most of specialists of dangerous professions don’t need medical treatment and use other ways to recover their statement after emergency situation.

We think that such period of recovering resources after emergency situation should be called not “rehabilitation”, but “period of recovering”.

For saving the mental health of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists, increasing their stress tolerance, fortitude, learning the methods of constructive solving of stressful, traumatic situation etc., the specialists of the Laboratory of crisis and disaster psychology of the National University of Civil Defense of Ukraine have created a number of social and psychological trainings.

For instance, we have implemented successfully the social and psychological training “*Survive and Save*”. This training is aimed at psycho-correction and is being provided during post-catastrophic period with rescuers, who took participation in liquidation consequences of emergency situation.

We think that social and psychological trainings within recovering period are the most efficient methods of working with rescuers.

Today we know different forms and methods of psychological work with specialist of dangerous professions during recovering period. These methods and forms have some restriction in their using, so it leads to increasing their efficiency.

Their usage can be possible if rescuer or affected person will go to psychologist voluntarily and deliberately.

But, as usual, rescuer doesn’t go to psychologists for recovering his or her mental statement after liquidation of consequences of emergency situation. Usually, rescuer stays alone with his or her memories about emergency situation, and alone with his or her problems that emerge.

All these cause such situation when rescuers during 2 months after traumatic situation are trying to cope with negative effects of this situation by themselves with using hidden and unconscious resources of their mind.

In such situation, we think, that rescuers’ needs for psychologist are especially strong. The main duty of psychologist in this situation is providing psychological help to rescuers for recovering their mental statement with all available tools.

So, in the context of the recovering approach, we, who call ourselves psychologists, should be initiators of psychological help to rescuers, who returned after liquidation consequences of emergency situation.

Full recovering psychological resistance of specialists after performing professional duties is occurring during long period of time.

This period depends on individual and psychological features of concrete specialist, his or her professional and life experience, actual mental statement during performing his or her professional duties and other factors.

Psychological impact at rescuer in the first days after rescue operation is the most important and the most effective. In this time psychological help is the most necessary.

As our experience shows, the social and psychological training has higher efficiency at this stage.

We want to emphasize that the social and psychological training “Survive and save” isn’t directed on learning, as most of trainings, but aimed at recovering psychological statement of personality.

So, we can say that the goal of training connected with recovering the mental statement of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists, after performing professional duties in epicenter of emergency situation. Recovering training has been developed considering those specific tasks what is typical for dangerous professions. This training doesn’t connected with deep process of personality. Influence at psychological statement occurs very correctly. It can be possible because training consists special role-playing games and discussions etc., what were created for this training.

Before training we should organize debriefing for indication negative emotional statements and readiness of group’s members to take participation in this training.

Training should be conducted not earlier than a few days after rescue operation and not later than 2,5 weeks after this operation. Conducting this training in other period of time isn’t recommended, because its efficiency is decreased.

The duration of training is intended for 3 full days. But with taking into account the task load of the specialists of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, it can be conducted in 2 days, but not less. If this training is conducted in less of 2 days, its efficiency will decrease and we will lose its sense.

Usually the training is conducted by two psychologists who get special education.

We want to emphasize those features what connected with forming training groups. Optimal number of members is no less and no more than 15 persons. Efficiency of the training depends immediately from the number of members.

Participants of the training group should have equal status. In the training isn’t allowed participation of superior and understaffers simultaneously. For superiors the program of training has some differences, as well as the program for rescuers.

As to clothes, participants during the training can wear uniform.

Also, a significant factor is organizing the evening leisure. It has influence at the efficiency of training.

Training program should consist some cultural program what helps informal communication within group, and also at the level of group consolidation.

It is important to give an opportunity to the participants for resting after intellectual loadings and realizing their tension what they accumulated during a day. So, we recommend to participants take some physical loadings: visit the pool, go to the gym or play in some command games, take a lesson of dance etc.

Program of training consists 4 blocks.

First block. Recovering communicational competence of rescuers.

Second block. Behavior and actions.

Third block. Emotional.

Fourth block. Resources of rescuers.

In each block we have minimum theory, what is clear and understandable for rescuers.

So, first block. Recovering competence of rescuers.

The *goal* is indicating problems in communication sphere, what have appeared after liquidation of the emergency situation and finding ways to cope with these problems.

Second block. Behavior and actions.

The goal: forming skills of cooperation during performing rescuers' duties in extreme conditions. Also this block directed on developing an ability to "feel the group" and other members, increasing awareness of typical and specific in professional activity of one or another specialist, including sense of consolidation, forming skills of bodily cooperation, preparing to hard life situations in future and changing behavior.

Third block. Emotional.

The goal: this block aimed at ability to cope with stressful situation, activation deep positive feeling of rescuers, as well as this block helps rescuers to realize possible professional and psychological problems and how to deal with them.

Fourth block. Resources of rescuers.

The goal: forming skills of positive thinking, development positive self-attitude; forming skills of awareness and empathic abilities as well as realizing by rescuers that they belong to some group; understanding obstacles what participant have on their professional way and how to overcome them; training how to treat with irrational thoughts about life and professional situations.

Each block consists several exercises. Some of these exercises just doing by participants without discussing, if they don't want to.

We want to emphasize that from duration of the training we can regulate how many exercises will be included in each block. But blocks can't be changed or removed, because these blocks are connected with each other. So, if somebody removes one of the blocks, then the structure of training will be broken, consequently, efficiency of training also will decrease.

Sequence and deepness of considering for each topic depend from the interests of group, the features of participants' problems and personal creativity of the psychologists who conduct this training.

As we already said, this training doesn't touch personality's deep process. But it allows to affect at mind of rescuers softly, because each game or exercise aimed to indirect influence on mind with using humor and metaphors.

In addition to above-mentioned training, within recovering period for the staff of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, what performing their duties in area of military conflict, the specialists of the Laboratory of crisis and disaster psychology have developed the social and psychological training “*Through trials to growth*”. This training aimed to optimization of using inner resources of participants of antiterrorist operation. With this training they can overcome their traumatic experience, successfully readapt to life as a person and a professional.³³

This training has some features. As first, this training shall be conducted with specialists who have features of post-traumatic growing.

Analysis of scientific works has shown that the other side of post-traumatic stress disorder is post-traumatic growing.³⁴ This term was used firstly by doctor Richard Tedeschi and doctor Lawrence Calhoun and defines the potential and alternative result of trauma overcoming.

Post-traumatic growing – it is experiencing positive changes what happened with the person after she or he had faced with hard life crisis.³⁵

Scientists determine 5 spheres of human life in which post-traumatic growing are possible: (1) finding new possibilities in their life; (2) the feeling of increasing their self-power; (3) great closeness and gratitude to other people; (4) realizing the life’s value; (5) the interest to the spiritual life.³⁶ Some of these spheres includes common feelings: “I have realized how important to live today and now and appreciate each day of my life”, “I have started empathizing to other people , have become more opened”, “I have learned how to take help from other people”, “Now I can do such things, what before I have never thought”.

Also, there are three ways of positive changing that took place after life crisis. *The first way* is mobilization of hidden inner possibilities that change self-attitude and make person more tough in front of actual and future life drams. *The second way of changes* is strengthening actual significant relationships. And the *third one* – is changes what connected with life philosophy, we may call this way – existential, because it changes actual and future priorities etc.^{37 38}

As second, at the stage of preparation, before forming the group, we should analyze personal record of each participant. We should focus on materials about their participation in liquidation of emergency situation. We need it for recognizing the level of rescuers’ traumatization.

As third, into the group we should include only equal participants, so before forming we should select peoples who have equal rank.

As fourth, we should test future participants with special questionnaire.

As fifth, we should select participants according to results of testing, Participants, who have the highest results, should be included to the training group. Optimal number of participant is 12-18 persons.

³³ Крайнюк В. М. Психологія стресостійкості особистості: монографія, с. 125.

³⁴ Tedeschi R. G. Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence, p. 2.

³⁵ Tedeschi R. G. Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence, p. 11.

³⁶ Joseph S. Growth following adversity: Theoretical perspectives and implications for clinical practice, p. 1047.

³⁷ Магомед-Эминов М. Ш. (2015): Посттравматический рост как модель реагирования на геополитический кризис, с. 17.

³⁸ Joseph S. Growth following adversity: Theoretical perspectives and implications for clinical practice, p. 1050.

We want to emphasize that the proposed training should be conducted not earlier than month after returning from the ATO area, but not later than 2 months.

Thematic program of training includes 3 blocks:

1. Values of personality.
2. Strength of self.
3. Resources of personality.

Before the training we should organize introducing and meeting of participants, without taking account of their possible acquaintance. For group-consolidation we recommend to use some exercise before beginning, it should be some “warming-up” exercises or games.

Block 1. “Values of personality”. The goal of this block is indicating and analysis of values and priorities of participants who analyze them and choose changes what they want for their actual statement. Also they discuss their personal qualities what can help them to gain their goals.

Block 3. “Strength of self”. The goal of this block is indicating actual possibilities and opportunities what they need to achieve their goals, but don’t have but don’t have right now. Also in this block participants can improve their goal-setting and planning skills.

Block 4. “Resources of personality” aimed on indicating and actualization inner power of personality, developing skills of solving hard tasks and problems what happen in their personal and professional life. With this block rescuers can get new experience in problem-solving, improve sureness of their powers. As well as they can aware values and meanings that common to all mankind.

Training post-traumatic growth allows to change rescuers’ meanings, who was performing their duties in the military area, These meanings were ignored by the rescuers. Also they can actualize their positive need for changing in the nearest future, build the plan of their activity for short-time period according to their powers and possibilities. So, in other words, rescuers start understanding the best constructive way to their psychological statement development after experiencing traumatic event.

Results. Understand the necessity and the importance of providing psychological help to the staff of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, the specialists of the Laboratory of crisis and disaster psychology of National University of Civil Defense have created the complex of social and psychological trainings. This complex have been approved in conditions of preparation for performing duties in epicenter of emergency situations, and also during recovering after traumatic events.

Within recovering mental health of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine specialists after performing professional duties in the epicenter of emergency situation was created and approved special social and psychological trainings:

➤ Social and psychological training “Survive and save”, what aimed on recovering psychological statement of the staff of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, including rescuers-firefighters after performing professional duties in emergency situation.

➤ Social and psychological training “Through trials to growth”, what aimed on optimization of using inner resources of participants of antiterrorist operation for

overcoming traumatic experience and for successful personal and professional readaptation.

We want to emphasize that from fullness and quality of psycho-rehabilitation depend not only professional readiness, but also it improve social self-attitude of staff of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, their families, level of moral and psychological statement, prevent self-destructive behavior, crimes and events what in most cases are consequences of professional statement and post-traumatic stress disorders.

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