



SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY IN THE MODERN SOCIETY

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Annotation. *The problems of the elderly in modern society are usually considered as a consequence of industrialization and urbanization. In turn, it is necessary to consider the following cultural and social factors that determine, firstly, the specifics of the aging process, and secondly, the place of the elderly in society: ownership of property and income, strategic knowledge, work capacity, co-dependence, traditions and religion, loss of roles and role ambiguity, loss of the future.*

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Introduction.

In the mass consciousness, the role of a pensioner, a widower or just an elderly person is unclear and there are no corresponding role expectations in society. When a person gets old, society and family, as social units, do not make any demands on him, they reject him, thereby depriving him of a certain role, changing his status.

Role ambiguity demoralizes the elderly. It deprives them of social identity and often has a negative impact on psychological stability. After all, the daily routine of the elderly is not considered as a role performance. In addition, situations that are unstructured at a late age cause depression and anxiety, since the elderly experience a vacuum of social expectations and lack of standards established for them. Old age is a stage in the life cycle, where people experience systematic social losses and no gains.

Presenting main material.

The main life tasks have been completed, responsibility decreases, dependence on others increases. These losses are associated with possible illnesses and physical malaise. These losses together with dependence, isolation and demoralization increase progressively at a late age. They clearly show an elderly person a decrease in participation in social life and an increase in his marginality.

Loss of roles. The ethical system of modern Western Civilization prefers youth, energy, enthusiasm and innovation as the antipodes of passive, backward and old-fashioned old age.

All these values, together with faith in one's own strengths, autonomy and independence, are transmitted to new generations during socialization. At this time, those new generations learn age-related stereotypes along with the internalization of new role functions. From this point of view old age is presented as the loss of social roles.

After being retired, a person loses one of his main roles: he is no longer a breadwinner in the family and a worker in the social sense. In modern society, professional activity performs a number of functions. It not only provides a person with a means of subsistence, gives a certain status, but also realizes the social activity of the individual.

At the level of personality, it is considered as the ability to have conscious self-identification and take his / her place in the system of social relations and self-



realization. Social activity is a measure of social activity, and its goal is to realize the interests of society and a person as a member of a given social community. For any person, his professional activity is a prerequisite for his full-fledged, interesting life and creative activity. Therefore, work is also necessary for elderly people, as their sphere of personal interests is significantly limited and narrowed.

Reaching the age of 45-50, people often become victims of discrimination concerning employment and status. Moreover, an elderly person's life becomes less valuable than a young or mature person's. Thus, an elderly person is not vulnerable to losses that are inevitable only (such as his partner's or friend's death).

It is necessary to understand and study the psychological characteristics of the elderly and the social conditions accompanying their lives. Thus, E. Erickson, discussing the problem of the meaning of life passed, singled out the following conditions of aging: physical, psychological, cultural, and social.

The society where we live dictates new ideals: appearance, level of education and income, lifestyle, and sexual behavior. This leads to the development of new complexes, in particular, age-related ones. Along with the inferiority complex connected with dissatisfaction with one's body image (Photoshop Complex) and seeking, cosmetic surgery which is also connected with physical appearance dissatisfaction (Cosmetic Surgery with Psychological Consequences), the complex about aging is also developing.

In modern society, it is increasingly valued not so much professional experience but success, which is associated with youth and activity. In these conditions, age is felt especially painfully.

Old age is perceived as an inevitable misfortune or a crime for which they are punished with exclusion from society. It is believed that men experience aging no less acutely than women; they often compensate for the feeling of their "inferiority" with infantile (irresponsible) behavior. A direct consequence of the impossible requirement to stay young is the "Peter Pan Complex" (Jean-David Nasio). The changes occurring to a woman and her status take place against the background of contradictory requirements: to develop femininity and be successful in work.

Depending on one's psycho type, a person perceives his aging and lives it in different ways: the degree of his concern about the external signs of age can be both zero and excessive.

As a result of a sociological study conducted by the cosmetic brand Chanel, five groups of women were identified.

1. The first group perceives aging as a natural process: the inner personality for them is more important than outer appearance.

2. The second group is sure that manifestations of age can be controlled if they keep themselves in good physical shape.

3. For the third group, age is inseparable from their social role ("If you become a grandmother, then you should look accordingly").

4. The fourth group has a narcissistic character and in their opinion, appearance is the key to social success, and they perceive age-related changes as personal drama.

5. And women of the fifth group, who are anxious, passive, and dependent, believe that the aging process is frightening because it is associated with death [1].



One of the first changes in life that make you think about your old age is retirement. Moreover, the legal retirement age often does not correspond to the real retirement age. And the termination due to retirement for the majority is a great stress. But a person does not just become a pensioner; he is more likely to get sick. And in the public consciousness, an elderly person is often associated with a disabled one.

Due to regular visits to medical institutions, they gain a new social circle, which is limited and often does not have any positive atmosphere of communication. Moreover, the former social circle is narrowing down. Elderly people are often in conditions of social solitude, even if they live in a large family with grandchildren and children.

The psychological feature of old age is rigidity of thinking. Cognitive processes are slowed down, which leads to difficulties in social adjustment. And in this case, an important role is played by the lack of motivation for self-development and personal growth. The elderly convince everyone and themselves that life has already passed.

Elderly people in modern society are characterized by the fact that they take their diseases too seriously and pay too much attention to them. Such behavior leads to negative emotions and depression (about 60% of people aged 55 and above suffer from depression), accompanied with a feeling of uselessness and solitude [2].

Solitude as a psychological phenomenon is associated with peculiarities of thinking. Family members from different generations have different ideas of various spheres of life, corresponding to each age. But it is more difficult for the elderly to be guided by the ideas of children and grandchildren; it is more difficult to find mutual understanding; and a number of friends is becoming smaller and smaller. With no like-minded people around, elderly people cannot express all their thoughts and feelings, and even if they can, they often remain those who are misunderstood [3].

Thus, the main dangers of old age are solitude, apathy, self-pity, hopelessness, social exclusion, which means the destruction of social ties.

In accordance with the general age characteristics of the elderly, it seems possible for researchers to distinguish several types of old age: old age on the physical level where aging and weakening of the body, various diseases mostly common for the elderly are observed; old age on the social level is characterized by retirement, social circle narrowing down, loss of friends-peers or wife/husband; old age on the psychological level has the following features - refusal to self-develop and gaining new knowledge, lack of interest in the world surrounded and other people's lives, inability to adjust to changes in the own lives [4].

Unfortunately, old age on the physical level cannot be prevented. But it is possible to stay young at social and psychological level.

More types of aging could also be distinguished:

1. Passive aging.

2. Aggressive aging.

3. Protective aging.

4. Constructive aging. This type is characterized by good emotional sphere (lack of fears, anxiety), tolerance, independence in solving problems, adequate self-esteem, having a life plan [5].



Constructive aging involves active old age. Active old age means aging when a person is an active part of social life (social inclusion). An elderly person shares his experience and knowledge; he feels he is needed. This behavior eliminates the feeling of solitude and gives them independence.

The following factors influence the social activity of an elderly person:

1. Belonging to a social class.
2. Sex (gender in particular). Gender instability at a late age implies that women live longer than men, according to the general statistics.
3. Ethnicity.

The main question that needs to be answered is how to turn the period of old age into a period of active life.

In social work, there are traditionally two strategies applied in social work with the elderly: caring and stimulating strategies. Each has its own abilities.

1. *Guardianship (paternalism)* includes responsibility of the state (government) for the elderly person. The activity of an elderly person is minimal, they are helpless and dependent. If an elderly person is active, then it is considered to be a "difficult person".

2. *The stimulation* is implemented in two directions: preparation of the elderly for old age (awareness of changes in profession, development of cognitive flexibility, moulding a positive attitude towards the new) and providing the elderly with situations to engage them in an active social life. Being a part of this strategy, an elderly person performs the functions of an educator, coach, adult friend, counselor or agent, mutual aid organizer, mediator, adviser.

For the best results, both strategies should complement each other.

Psychological support includes group work and individual consulting. The main goals of the group work with the elderly are coping with loss, instillation of hope, social isolation reducing, and psychological support and fighting fears.

Loss of spouses, loneliness, family relationships, psychological dependence on those who have passed away, neurosis are the main goals of individual psychological consulting. It must be taken into account that an elderly person lives in the past and ceases to develop as a personality. When dealing with such problems, it is recommended to use the following methods of consulting: future mapping; strengthening resources; positive use of the situation; identification with family and grandchildren.

In addition to such traditional methods of psychological assistance, there is a method of self-help. We highlight 6 stages of self-help:

1. Collection of information about an elderly client.
2. Analysis of the information collected.
3. Formulation of the elderly person's main problem.
4. The purpose of the self- work.
5. Actions that an elderly client can acquire.
6. Evaluation of the actions done effectiveness.

Conclusions.

Thus, the retirement age paradoxically becomes the age of opportunity: you can travel, begin to study, live another life. But it also has a limit. Then comes the "second"



old age, when everything slows down and the horizon narrows. Having lost autonomy and the opportunity to develop, a person risks to lose himself.

Therefore, old age is not a disease, and you should not think that it is enough to have just care and treatment. An elderly person shouldn't be alone - this is a difficult but important task of society. Today, age is not a social role, but often an existential crisis. And in each such crisis, a person needs to be helped to reflect on and bring a structure to his life in a new way.

The basic principles of psychological work with elderly people and those who are almost of the retirement age are the following: expand the social circle; provide conditions for the social activity of an elderly person (hobby, dream fulfillment); cognitive development such as: reading, solving crossword puzzles, etc.

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