

AGGRESSION OF DRUG USERS AGAINST THE OTHERS AND THE NEED FOR PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CRISIS/PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION (CASE STUDY)

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Key words: drug users, aggression, Gestalt psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention, case analysis, narrative.

Summary

Divergent (deviant) behaviour is a natural reaction to the situation, caused by rising conflicts between the individual target pursuit and social norms. Deviant behaviour and normative behaviour are equally important components of social behaviour [1]. Since the emergence of norms of social behaviour, society has always tried to ensure safety and to eliminate unwanted forms of human activities [2]. The results of the sociological researches show that the main causes and motives of drug use are desire for pleasure and wish to experience a sense of euphoria. Since in many cases drug users are young people, these motives are supported by social immaturity, carelessness and frivolity. Most of the drug users under research (77.1 % of the respondents) have been involved into this quagmire by others, mostly their friends, acquaintances or representatives of hedonistic philosophy [3]. The need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who often demonstrate breakthroughs of aggressive behaviour against the others, can be considered as a complex research problem. Goal: to reveal the need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who demonstrate aggressive behaviour against the others. Objective: to analyse the need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, by applying a case study. Methods. Qualitative research method: a case study (psychotherapy with drug users, who demonstrate aggression against the others). The psychotherapeutic sessions provided within the first ten days after

the first meeting with the drug user have been analysed.

Results. The results of the case study have shown that the psychotherapeutic relationship without evaluation and accusation creates a sufficiently safe contact, during which the addicted person starts talking about his criminal experiences and the situations and circumstances that had led him to commit the crimes. In the process of sharing the feelings of shame and guilt are felt and experienced. Appearance of these feelings and ability to experience them suggest that it is important for individuals suffering from addiction to comply with social norms and to be accepted, but the "desperation" of the situation and inability to see further force them to behave recklessly. The psychotherapeutic process has allowed the person to feel accepted, regardless of the actions, arising desires, thoughts and feelings; it has enabled the person to view the actual circumstances as if "from the distance" and to evaluate both the situation itself and the consequences of the selected actions in a more objective way.

Conclusions. The need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who demonstrate aggression against the others is significant due to the following reasons: 1) when faced with a critical situation (e.g., need for a dose), a drug user is prone to violate social norms, by demonstrating aggressive behaviour against the others; 2) an addicted person, who experiences social acceptance, is more prone to maintain the behaviour compliant with social norms; 3) acknowledgement of deviant behaviour (talking openly) allows better understanding of both the behaviour itself and its destructive impact on the person and those around him/her; 4) the analysis of the crisis helps to see it as not so critical

and look for the socially acceptable ways of overcoming it.

Introduction

Addiction or inclination to consume psychoactive substances is one of the most complex mental health problems. According to the data provided by the State Mental Health Centre, the prevalence of drug use amounted to 199.2 cases per 100 thousand population in 2014 [4]. Consumption of psychoactive substances affects mind, causes neurological problems, and encourages aggression and violence. Injecting drug users are at higher risk of developing hepatitis and HIV, sexual intercourse under the influence of drugs creates the risk of unintended pregnancy and the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Addiction treatment is a difficult process. Modern help for addicted persons should be provided in a complex way, by combining the efforts of psychiatrists, experts on addiction, psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers.

This article focuses on the drug-addicted persons, who demonstrate aggression against the others in society. Divergent (deviant) behaviour is a natural reaction to the situation, caused by rising conflicts between the individual target pursuit and social norms. Deviant behaviour and normative behaviour are equally important components of social behaviour [1]. In the process of development of drug addiction a drug user is over time becoming incompatible with the norms of society. Historically, society has always tried to ensure safety and to eliminate unwanted forms of human activities [2]. The results of the sociological researches show that the main causes and motives of drug use are desire for pleasure and wish to experience a sense of euphoria. Since in many cases drug users are young people, these motives are supported by social immaturity, carelessness and frivolity. Most of the drug users under research (77.1 % of the respondents) have been involved into this quagmire by others, mostly their friends, acquaintances or representatives of "hedonistic philosophy" [3]. In order to help drug-addicted persons, both conventional medical and psychotherapeutic methods and non-traditional (alternative behavioural medicine) methods are applied. The case analysis dealing with the issues of drug-addiction and psychological problems of men has shown that various conventional and non-traditional methods can be useful in recognition and release of emotions [5]. One of the psychotherapy directions that effectively help drug-addicted persons is Gestalt psychotherapy. It is said that the human journey from consumption to addiction often depends on the person's ability to develop and maintain interactions with others and his/her ability to endure and tolerate frustration,

anger, or fear [6]. Gestalt psychotherapy views and accepts an addicted person in a non-stigmatizing way, but rather as a person who is in the process of drug-addiction, thus allowing for creation of a deeper supportive relationship between a therapist and a client, as well as helping to easier overcome the resistance that arises from uncontrolled change [7]. Psychotherapists working with drug-addicted persons shall be aware of the fact that the therapy has its limits. They shall be aware of the limitation of psychotherapy. Not all drug addicted persons can be saved or aided.

Goal of the Research. The question is what could help the person who consumes drugs and, who is apt to violate the generally accepted norms of conduct, and who chooses a certain form of the deviant behaviour due to the above-mentioned reasons, to return to "normal" way of living compliant with the social norms, and how the psychotherapeutic process could influence this. The **goal** of the research is to reveal the need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who demonstrate aggressive behaviour against the others.

To achieve this goal the objective has been set to analyse the need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, by applying a case study.

Research Problem

The need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who often demonstrate breakthroughs of aggressive behaviour against the others, can be considered as a complex research problem.

The use of drugs in modern society is spreading at high speed. Drug abuse is one of the most threatening negative social phenomena in Lithuania. The word "drug-addict" most often evokes thoughts about a stoned, degraded and dangerous man, who could do everything for drugs. Drug addicts are avoided; they are condemned as people out of bounds of society, worthless individuals. We all want society without drug users and thus without the challenges caused by the consumption, such as crimes, suicides and deaths [8].

A negative and repulsive attitude of society towards the addicted people is so deeply ingrained, that even the drug-addicts themselves draw the line between the addicted and "normal" people, which they do not dear to cross. In this way, society in a way splits into particular groups, having their own rules, norms and values, and the identification with a specific group promotes the development of the identity corresponding with the subculture of the group. Thus society "rewards" an addicted person with the stigma "addict", and the latter reinforces the divide, by calling others "normal" and assigning himself/herself to the "other abnormal". The person's Self reflects his/her environment:

stereotypes, norms, rules and lifestyle. The person starts to behave according to certain selected roles and those roles become its new nature. In this way, the actions of other individuals may make him/her abandon own intents and purposes and encourage reviewing and overstating thereof. Conduct adjustment, depending on the specific circumstances, is considered as a positive factor in forming the appropriate behaviour [1].

An important factor covering the research topic is the disease features of drug-addiction. The International Classification of Diseases defines the dependence syndrome as being a cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of a substance or a class of substances takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value. A central descriptive characteristic of the dependence syndrome is the desire to take the psychoactive drugs [9]. Once the drugs are being used on a regular basis, the body becomes very resistant to them. The same condition requires ever larger doses. After several years this resistance decreases. Drug-induced euphoria is getting shorter. Euphoric effects disappear over time and drug use only improves a bad mood, but not for a long time. A person cannot live without drugs any more. Abstinence causes dysfunction of the body activities and strong physiological and psychological discomfort. Such a state of health is hardly bearable; it often evokes the idea of aggression or suicide. A drug-addict is usually very afraid of this condition, therefore he/she is ready to do anything to obtain drugs [10].

Research on interactions of drug addiction and criminality reveals the relationship between drug use and aggressive behaviour against oneself and the others. Drug use encourages criminal activity due to pharmacological drug properties and economic motivation stemming from the need to obtain drugs. Intoxication caused by the constant use of psychoactive substances determines an inadequate evaluation of the surrounding environment and neurochemical changes that influence disorders of cognition, awareness, personality, etc.; whereas the need to maintain drug use leads to the demand to get money for drugs at any price. Being unable to find another way-out, a drug-addict may resort to deception, lies, theft and other aggressive crimes [11].

Material and Method of the Research

The qualitative research method, namely a case study has been selected for the research. The case study is a qualitative research method analysing a social phenomenon through an individual case. This method allows focusing on the specificity of the problem and enables an intensive analysis of a number of details that are simply skipped,

when using other methods [12, 13]. The research analyses the case of the drug user, who demonstrates aggressive behaviour against the others, and who is involved in psychotherapy. The research data have been collected during the psychotherapeutic sessions that had been provided within the first ten days after the meeting with the drug user. Gestalt psychotherapy has been applied as the psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who demonstrate aggression against the others. The psychotherapeutic sessions have been analysed, which had been provided within the first ten days after the meeting with the drug user. The narrative strategy has been chosen for the data collection, by recording the individual's narration about the chronologically related life events, feelings, opinions and evaluations, as well as the analysis of observing the psychotherapy process and the therapeutic relationship.

Results. Case Study (Narrative)

The person under research is a 34 years old single man, having a secondary education, working as a builder, living in a big city. He started to use drugs when he was fifteen; before that he occasionally drank alcohol and smoked. He has actively consumed alcohol and drug substances for fifteen years. Currently he does not take any psychoactive substances. He maintains his sobriety with the help of the "Twelve Steps" program of recovery from addiction, individual psychotherapy and attendance of groups of Drug Addicts Anonymous. The individual psychotherapy sessions were started approximately three years ago. At first the meetings were held once per week. Afterwards the intensity of psychotherapy was decreased up to one time per two weeks. The psychotherapy is continued so far.

Rimas (name changed) grew up in the family, where the mother took care of the welfare of the family home, and the father spent his evenings watching television. He used to drink alcohol quite often. None of the parents hardly paid attention to Rimas's daily routine – how he is doing at school, what he does in his free time, who he communicates with; they were not very concerned about his needs, desires and aspirations. Rimas's friends in the local town were older than he. They often spent their pastime drinking alcohol, some of them used drugs. Rimas felt himself small and weak; therefore he was glad to be accepted in their crowd. It was very important for Rimas to belong and not to stand out among friends; therefore they offered him drugs, he did not say no. At first he did not enjoy, but he could not refuse them and thus resist.

The behaviour of Rimas's friends was often criminal, the whole town were afraid of them. He was very much impressed of this fact. Rimas was afraid of them too. It made

him feel awed by them and he wished to be the same as them. He considered fear as respect: "if they are afraid, it means they respect". Rimas considers himself as a coward. However his wish to be accepted by this group made him behave in spite of himself: he was frightened, but if his friends told him to beat someone up, he did it, if they told him to steal, he used to steal. He was praised for this and felt worthy.

The pastime with the friends often was spiced up with drug use. At first he used to smoke weed, afterwards he started using more powerful drugs. Rimas's drug addiction was increasing and over the time drug use became more important than his friends. On the other hand, he, with his problems and constant "drug hunger" lost his attraction and has become obsolete. Rimas needed more and more drugs, as well as the money for the drugs. He tried to work, but the effort was enough for only a few days. Although he was very afraid of the consequences, the drug hunger made him cheat, steal and loot. Rimas's criminal behaviour was no longer encouraged by his friends, it was his own choice.

At that time the relations with friends were already broken, the family members tried to get him put an end to drug use. Rimas remembered the situation, when his parents attached him to the heater with a chain, so that he would not leave the house and to buy drugs... He perceived such behaviour of his parents as aggression and hostile bias against him, where the parents were just being malicious towards him. Rimas felt orphaned, having nothing. Having no one to talk to, he began writing his feelings in a notebook.

By summarizing the narrative results of the research, it can be noted that Rimas's family paid more attention to meeting his physiological needs, whereas the demands of safety, social and respect were not satisfied sufficiently. Unfulfilled needs encouraged him to look for opportunities to get them satisfied – friends accepted Rimas into their crowd, they respected, trusted and valued him, giving him a sense of security. Rimas adapted himself and adopted the deviant norms of behaviour of the group, although he realized that such behaviour did not meet social norms and was punishable.

Due to his increasing addiction Rimas became an "unworthy" member of the group, and the group rejected him. Rimas's criminal behaviour became more frequent and took more severe and aggressive forms: when faced with crisis situations, which were caused by demand for drugs, he was determined to commit crimes, demonstrating aggressive behaviour against the others. After the crime there arose feelings, such as remorse, shame, guilt and self-condemnation. He felt a growing lack of confidence in him and others. All social relations with the outside world were cut.

Apparently, even during active drug use, the desire to share with someone about his feelings remained strong. When trying to meet social connections, Rimas "communicated" with the notebook, expressing his thoughts and feelings.

The observation data show that during Gestalt psychotherapy sessions the favourable therapeutic relationship allowed for creation of a safe environment, thus encouraging the customer to open up, to talk about his experiences and feelings. Non-evaluating "presence" of the psychotherapist in the client's "shame" has developed the confidence and the willingness to share, and the attentive stay in Rimas's past or present experiences has changed the value of his experiences, has reassured him, helping him to find the diverse responses and expand his limits of attention and awareness. The psychotherapist's concern has raised Rimas's interest and desire to identify with the psychotherapist, to follow his example. The psychotherapist's respect towards the client's personality and lacking support of the deviant behaviour has promoted overestimation of the principles of such behaviour and incentive to change.

Discussion

The results of the research have shown that the psychotherapeutic relationship without evaluation and accusation creates a sufficiently safe contact, during which the addicted person starts talking about his criminal experiences and the situations and circumstances that had led him to commit the crimes.

In the process of sharing the feelings of shame and guilt are felt and experienced. Appearance of these feelings and ability to experience them suggest that it is important for individuals suffering from addiction to comply with social norms and to be accepted, but the "desperation" of the situation and inability to see further, force them to behave recklessly. The psychotherapeutic process has allowed the person to feel accepted, regardless of the actions, arising desires, thoughts and feelings; it has enabled the person to view the actual circumstances as if "from the distance" and to evaluate both the situation itself and the consequences of the selected actions in a more objective way.

Application of Gestalt psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention has allowed effectively isolating and demonstrating to the drug user his interactions in the "past" (his life story, connections with his parents and other significant people), showing him also how he has managed to endure frustration, anger and fears. He has been further on able to reveal his presence in the process of drug use (interactions with the others, aspects of enduring frustration, anger and fears). He has managed to become anew aware of his present situation (changes, resistance to frustration,

anger and fears), decreasing aggression and increasing openness to the world.

This article deals with the results of one case study; however application of the psychotherapy to other drug users has led to the similar psychotherapeutic effect.

Conclusions

The need for psychotherapeutic crisis/preventive intervention for drug users, who demonstrate aggression against the others is significant due to the following reasons: 1) when faced with a critical situation (e.g., need for a dose), a drug user is prone to violate social norms, by demonstrating aggressive behaviour against the others; 2) an addicted person, who experiences social acceptance, is more prone to maintain the behaviour compliant with social norms; 3) acknowledgement of deviant behaviour (talking openly) allows better understanding of both the behaviour itself and its destructive impact on the person and those around him/her; 4) the analysis of the crisis helps to see it as not so critical and look for the socially acceptable ways of overcoming it.

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NARKOTIKUS VARTOJANČIŲ AGRESIJA PRIEŠ KITUS IR PSICHOTERAPINĖS-KRIZINĖS/ PREVENCINĖS INTERVENCIJOS POREIKIS (ATVEJO ANALIZĖ)

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Raktažodžiai: narkotikus vartojantys asmenys, agresija, geštalo psichoterapinė-krizinė/prevencinė intervencija, atvejo analizė, naratyvas.

Santrauka

Nukrypstantis (deviacinis) elgesys – tai natūrali reakcija į situaciją, susidaranti dėl kylančių prieštaravimų tarp individualaus tikslo siekimo ir socialinių normų. Deviacinis ir normatyvinis elgesys – tai lygiavertiškai reikšmingi socialinio elgesio komponentai [1]. Atsiradus socialinio elgesio normoms, visais laikais visuomenė bandė užsitikrinti saugumą ir šalinti nepageidaujamas žmonių veiklos formas [2]. Sociologinių tyrimų rezultatai rodo, kad pagrindinės narkotikų vartojimo priežastys ir motyvai – malonumo troškimas, noras patirti euforijos pojūtį. Kadangi daugelyje atvejų narkotikus vartoja jauni žmonės, šiuos motyvus stiprina socialinis nebrandumas, nerūpestingumas, lengvabūdiškumas. Dauguma apklaustųjų narkotikų vartotojų (77,1% respondentų) buvo įtraukti į šį liūną kitų asmenų, daugiausia draugų, pažįstamų ar hedonistinės filosofijos atstovų [3]. Kaip kompleksinę tyrimo problemą galime įžvelgti psichoterapinės-krizinės/prevencinės intervencijos poreikį narkotikus vartojantiems, kuriems dažnai pasireiškia agresyvaus elgesio su kitais proveržiai. Tikslas. Atskleisti psichoterapinės-krizinės/prevencinės intervencijos poreikį narkotikus vartojantiems, kurie agresyviai elgiasi su kitais. Uždavinys – iširti psichoterapinės-krizinės/prevencinės intervencijos poreikį, taikant atvejo analizę. Metodas. Kokybiniai tyrimo metodai: atvejo analizė (psichoterapija su agresyviai prieš kitus besielgiančiais narkotikų vartotojais). Buvo nagrinėjamos psichoterapinės sesijos, teiktos per pirmąsias dešimt dienų nuo susitikimo su narkotikų vartotoju. Rezultatai.

Atvejo analizės rezultatai parodė, kad psichoterapinis santykis, be vertinimo ir kaltinimo, sukuria pakankamai saugų kontaktą, kurio metu priklausomybe sergantis asmuo pradeda pasakoti apie savo nusikaltimų patyrimus ir situacijas bei aplinkybes, kurios paskatino juos padaryti. Pasidalinimo metu jaučiami ir išgyvenami gėdos ir kaltės jausmai. Šių jausmų pasirodymas ir gebėjimas juos išgyventi leidžia daryti prielaidą, kad priklausomybe sergantiems asmenims svarbu atitikti socialines normas ir būti priimtiems, tačiau situacijos „kritiškumas“ ir negebėjimas matyti plačiau verčia elgtis neapgalvotai. Psichoterapijos procesas leido pasijaušti priimtam, neatsižvelgiant į poelgius, kylančius norus, mintis bei jausmus; suteikė galimybę į iškilusias situacijas pasižiūrėti „iš šono“ ir objektyviau įvertinti tiek pačią situaciją, tiek pasirinktų veiksmų pasekmes. Išvados. Psichoterapinės-krizinės/prevencinės intervencijos poreikis narkotikus vartojantiems, agresyviai besielgiantiems su kitais yra

žymus dėl šių priežasčių: 1) susidūrus su krizine situacija (pvz., dozės poreikiu), narkotikus vartojantis žmogus yra linkęs pažeisti socialines normas, demonstruodamas agresyvų elgesį prieš kitus; 2) priklausomybe sergantis žmogus, patiriantis socialinį priėmimą, yra labiau linkęs išlaikyti socialines normas atitinkantį elgesį; 3) deviacinio elgesio pripažinimas (išsipasakojimas) leidžia geriau suprasti tiek patį elgesį, tiek jo destrukcinį poveikį sau ir aplinkiniams; 4) krizinės situacijos analizė padeda pamatyti ją ne tokią kritišką ir ieškoti socialiai priimtinių jos įveikimo būdų.

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