

Розділ: Гендерна психологія та психотерапія

УДК 316.36:305

**GENDER THERAPY AS INNOVATION IN CONSULTING OF YOUNG MARRIED
COUPLE****Tamara Hovorun, Oksana Kikinezhdi, Iryna Shulha**

У статті представлено аналіз соціально-психологічних чинників появи гендерної терапії як окремого напрямку психологічної допомоги подружжю, який дає змогу усунути базові конфліктогени на різних стадіях сімейного життя. Досвід застосування різних психотерапевтичних шкіл розглядається з позиції впливу на зміст гендерних ролей з метою забезпечення паритетності їх функціонування в сім'ї.

Ключові слова: гендерна психотерапія, стадії розвитку сім'ї, конфліктогени, економічна ресоціалізація, конфронтація.

The article deals with the analysis of the social and psychological factors of emergence of gender therapy as a separate direction of psychological care to couple, which enables to depose basic conflictogens at different stages of family life. Experience of different psychotherapeutic schools in terms of its influence on content of gender roles in order to ensure parity of functioning of husband and wife in a family is given.

Keywords: gender psychotherapy, stages of family development, conflictogens, economic resocialization, confrontation.

В статье представлен анализ социально-психологических факторов становления гендерной терапии как отдельного направления психологической помощи супружеской паре, который позволяет устранить базовые конфликтогены на разных стадиях семейной жизни. Опыт применения различных психотерапевтических школ рассматривается с точки зрения влияния на содержание гендерных ролей с целью обеспечения паритетности их функционирования в семье.

Ключевые слова: гендерная психотерапия, стадии развития семьи, конфликтогены, экономическая ресоциализация, конфронтация.

Introduction. Psychological science and practice accumulated a vast experience in providing psychological, advisory and psychotherapeutic care for a family in different crisis situations. The choice of psychotherapeutic techniques is determined by the content of request and personal consultant's preferences, his/her work experience in known psychotherapeutic schools, skills of orientation in current crisis situations, which are characteristic for the family functioning. Professor A. Kocharian observes: "... Psychotherapy should focus on revivification, renewal of life streams, increase of intensity of emotional and affective process" (... , p.5).

The modern family, in addition to traditional situations, which are typical for each stage of its development, should react to new challenges of the time, such as: unemployment, polar stratification of the middle class on rich and poor caused by the economic crisis, increasing of a

number of incomplete or concubinage families, interethnic and interracial marriages, etc.

In addition to the modern problems, the average person must overcome traditional problems on the way of her/his development, such as: dependent and co-dependent behaviour of family members from alcohol, drugs, gambling, personal computers, chronic (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, physical disability) and fatal (cancer, AIDS) diseases. Specific problems, which are deepening crisis situations in the realization of family functions are: primitivization of values, caused by psychological pressure of marginalized media, for example, shows “House 1”, “House 2”, “Behind the Glass”, etc., lots of “soap serials” and distancing of marriage couple’s inhabitation due to the inability to find a job, relationship separation of parents and under age children, etc.

All above mentioned factors destroy the basic principles of family functioning, such as monogamy, childcentrism and safety of disabled members of family, old people, obliteration between “We” and “I” and so on.

Despite to enough high indexes of divorces, which unfortunately don’t have the positive dynamics in statistical reports about duration of family life in the countries of United Europe, North and South America or the Post-Soviet countries, scientists don’t approve the conclusion about gradual dying of the family institution. Contrary to, in numerous scientific publications they follow the idea that it is tend to strengthen this institution on a new basis functioning – weakening of the role of external factors, which kept the wholeness of the family for a long time in history, limiting its members, especially women, in right to divorce by church blame, civil law, ethno cultural customs, etc.

Instead, the role of internal factors is increasing, which stabilize a family life (common meanings, values of marriage, deepening of democratic principles of communication between adults and children with keeping of their authoritative and subordinate position in the process of socialization, expanding of the range of domestic and reproductive men’ and women’ roles account of their interchangeability, increasing of level of gender culture and so on).

The **aim** of this theoretical and empirical research is to explain the content of psychological work with a married couple, which aimed to strengthen egalitarian principles and weaken traditional principles of their sex-role behaviour, experience of introducing which is called gender psychotherapy.

Methods and results. We used psychosemantical analysis of gender psychotherapy research and practice, which are represented in American magazines and monographs; standardized survey of Ukrainian psychologists, who have experience in providing psychological and psychotherapy care for family.

Standardized interviews covered 22 experts, who were determining conflictogens areas of family life, which were connected with the violation of gender balance in accomplishment of economic, domestic, educational, tutorial and recreational family roles, their balance in the areas of unpaid work. Experts answered questions such as: “What marital conflicts were constant in different stages of your family development?” “Are you forced to discuss with married couple problems associated with disequilibrium of sexes in the division of domestic obligations, overload in the accomplishment of family and social roles?” “Can any psychotherapeutic technique and qualification change traditional (patriarchal) instructions of someone in a couple, which are the reason of conflict?” “In what way can you achieve mutual understanding in married couple as to decrease the effect of women’ “double employment” or men’ “obtained helplessness” in domestic

self-service?” “Please, determine the most common complaints in married couple from the side of men / women” “Can modern therapist dispense with interference to “gender” aspects of the family functioning?” etc.

The frequency of certain semantic categories, which are related with gender issues, gave a possibility to distinguish a part of gender stipulated conflicts from all the other conflicts, to analyse the most frequently used psychotherapeutic technics in these cases.

Gender approach as a scientific methodology for analysing of psychological aspects of intra- and interpersonal and intergroup relations offers a new way of understanding a reality. The contrasting and “obvious” disparity of male and female traits, manner of thinking, peculiarities of behaviour strengthen the connection between biological sex and achievements in social life. Determinants of gender characteristics of behaviour are: social expectations, roles and conventional requirements to sexual behavioural adequacy. The subject of studying of gender characteristics includes: man’ and woman’ identity and its components: conceptions, stereotypes, attitudes related with sexual differentiation, stratification and hierarchy.

Therefore, the subject of gender therapy is: teaching men and women of productive strategies and behavioural tactics for overcoming traditional gender stereotypes and constructive solutions of gender-role conflicts and problems.

In the most general form, gender therapy solves the following tasks:

- reconstruction, rethinking of image “I” and life scenarios, which are connected with a system of sex-role conceptions;
- acquisition of opportunities to evaluate his own skills and aspirations, determine the prospects of life creation, intensify personal resources for selecting subjective strategies of self-realization and optimizing of relations (Malkyna-Pykh, pp. 198–199).

We analysed particularities of providing psychological care to married couple for overcoming gender caused disagreements and conflicts. The following criterions were used:

1. Psychological education as gender-oriented information concerning the problem of equal rights and opportunities of both sexes;
2. Insight of the couple as to the origins of their own problem, activation of reflection of their own sex-role behaviour and motivation in observance of the principle of balance for interaction on an equal basis;
3. Gender resocialization as an ability to interact on an equal basis in the realization of family functions;
4. Integration of “I – We” as an ability to self-determination and self-control in acquirement of new gender models of organization of family life.

The analysis of psychotherapeutic schools, within which psychologists overcome “gender” caused crisis situations in the family functioning, is represented in our research. We used the scheme, which conditionally divides psychotherapeutic influences into two groups – internally and externally oriented.

Psychotherapeutic schools and techniques of the first group focus on image “I”, conscious and subconscious in the structure of the personality, her / his needs, interests, sense of life, an aspiration for self-knowledge, finding a true oneself, etc.

Types of psychotherapeutic influence defined as externally oriented can teach new behavioural models and communication, show ways of self-control of emotional states such as

aggression, fear, anxiety, depression and so on (See table 1).

Frequency analysis of psychotherapeutic techniques, which is mentioned on the pages of US publications and applied by practice of Ukrainian psychologists, enable to take its cross-cultural comparisons, determine the most effective for eliminating gender conflicts.

Table 1

Psychotherapeutic approaches in a work with family disharmony

Types of psychotherapy			
Internally-oriented		Externally-oriented	
Psychoanalysis: ego-analysis; symbol-drama; psychoanalysis; etc.	Humanistic- existential therapy: client-centred; existential; gestalt; system arrangement; etc.	Behavioural therapy: operant learning; desensitization; counter; aversion; socio-behaviorism; body-oriented; etc.	Cognitive therapy: changing of catastrophic thoughts; following standard (model); cognitive-emotional; transactional analysis; etc.

The results of research.

Ukrainian psychologists, as an expert group, emphasize the role of religious feelings of married couple as the effective basis for existential psychotherapy. Particular attention is paid to the psychotherapy role of Bible, which is the main “home book to read” and helps to intensify the internal family resources in the solving of conflictogen situations with gender character.

We found evidence among the foreign sociological data that children in Christian families are more physically and psychologically protected by their mother and father than children in non-believers family. Religious family spends more time for upbringing of children, conscious accomplishment of domestic obligations. In religious families there are more chaste girls, less abortions, divorces, family conflicts, including conflicts on the basis of marital inequality.

Summarizing domestic and foreign experience of the psychological care, known as gender, it should be pointed out that the main reason of its appearance in the spectrum of new areas is psychological care for families with chronic incurable disease of child or others. The ways of influence on family life, (education of children, psychological violence, etc.), didn't reach its goal without changing of the gender rules of the family functioning or levelling of social and psychological status of husband and wife. Therefore, the first step on the way of eliminating any family dysfunctions is rebalancing of position of both sexes as a result of the introduction of the series of married couple's discussions in triangulation with a psychologist or a group of other couples as to “littering” of marital expectations by gender stereotypes. For example, a woman should be a good hostess, a kind mother, a careful wife, a beautiful woman, she should take care of her relatives, etc., a man should be a financial supplier of the family, who provides its material prosperity and power protection without taken into account state of his own physical health, who always should have supplementary earnings, money for alcohol and relaxation. This stage of psychotherapeutic influence is called disturbance of “unshakable” sex-role attitudes and expectations, liberation from captivity of gender stereotypes, for example: about the inborn

women's mission to dedicate herself to family, husband and children; or about the loss of femininity when woman seeks professional and career growth. Confrontation with collateral cognitive gender schemes is leading in experience as to using of cognitive psychotherapy [7; 10].

Gender approach in psychotherapeutic process envisages the creation of strong individual "I", which doesn't depends on gender. K.-G. Jung mentioned about specific psychotherapeutic method: "Therapist –is not only subject, who acts, but someone who empathizes the process of individual development" [6, p. 13].

Usage of method of unfinished sentences like: "real men must ..." "hide their feelings", "be leaders", "be independent", "be physically fit", "be strong-willed", "be able to make money for the family", "not talk much", "not to be sentimental", "not be "limp" and so on. "Real women must ..." be neat, "patient", "gentle", "wise", "emotional", "prone to gossip", "not indifferent to the gifts", "soft "and so on. "The main thing in man's life is ..."; "The husband is proud of his wife if she ..."; "The wife is proud of her husband, if he ..."; "A woman can cope with such work as ..."; "The best occupations for women are such as ..."; "The best occupations for men are such as..."; "The most responsible occupations for women are..."; "The most responsible occupations for men are...."; "The perfect external characteristics for women should include ..."; etc. It allowed a practicing family therapist to work with automatisms of gender role thinking, built on dominant destructive models of gender behaviour. The task of this phase of work with a pair is to establish doubt about the sustainability of «world order» of things by means of confrontation with established patriarchal guidelines in their minds [5].

Furthermore, it should be noted that educational work which is identical on content and on methods of psychological influence concerning gender guidelines are practiced by Ukrainian psychologists during the educational activities of preparation of young people for marriage and family life. Here is how one of Kyiv registry of civil status psychologist characterized his "war" with the world of sex stereotypes; his scenario is built on the abstracting of the main ideas of leading magazines for men or women ... What is a real man in the modern sense? Firstly, of course, he never cries. Emotion – this is not his element. He is cynical, denies suffering, does not recognize emotions, he laughs on sentiments, spits on the nuances in the relationship. Coward does not play hockey ..." first thing is planes, and girls is the second one..." "... A real man – is a male, which is distinguished by all female. The more number of females he owns, the bigger guarantee of reproduction... Generally, a real man is a theory. "A head of Bill Gates, the body of Mike Tyson, the smile of Tom Cruise ..."

Some of the surveyed therapists indicated that before the phase of direct solving of conflict situations, they offered their customers to read several humoresques by Pavlo Glazovyi, such as: "How Kuzma was taught by his dear wife", where the hero determines a conflict situation in a gender-oriented way:

"I would like to be a husband
Of a nice lady
And you squash tomatoes,
Make noise by colander.
Everything you can see – cherries, plums –
You canned

I can't stand it, do you understand?

It should be noted that the introduction of the concept of gender in the content of marital therapy is appropriate in case when it does not contradict with the basic principles of ethnic and cultural identity.

Psychotherapy of the second phase of work with a couple is related to empathic identification with another gender, since it is impossible to achieve gender transformation of personality without realizing of inner I, clamped within gender stereotypes [5; 8].

Economic inequality of women, according to most psychologists, is the biggest stumbling block. Since the identification with the problems of the opposite sex is able to deepen the reflection of inner I, the couple is suggested “to walk a mile in the shoes of a partner”. So, a husband has to be in a role of wife and experience critics as a bad housewife, bad mother, not attentive to her husband and family and as a person, who has wrinkles on the face, etc...

In addition, the men, who is wearing his wife’s shoes, is proposed to compare «his» earnings and calculate the cost of domestic services (laundry, cooking, caring for young children and elderly parents, cleaning, sorting clothes, washing etc.) in the financial terms of similar types of wage labour.

Since the principle of the psychological impact is validation of both sexes [5]. The wife should also feel “empathy” of identification with the man’s problems.

The exchange of experienced feelings creates psychological ground for the next, re-socializing stage of gender psychotherapy. The conclusion of the second phase is “My and his (her) gender psycho traumas” “What did I lose because of pressure of gender stereotypes”, which promote internal readiness for sex-change. Gestalt therapists emphasize that gender development should be seen from the side of the general ecosystem, realizing that gender role expectations and standards are not universal at all times and that the expansion of their gender card encourages personal transformation [11].

The woman should realize her “real” voice; expand the range of roles of ecosystem, use the possibility to change it on the basis of parity. During this phase of socialization woman learns to “speak loudly” about her needs and aspirations, denies depression because of a sense of economic second role on the psychological and economic dependence. For example, the perception of its financial dimension of economic-household family functions, the problem of “feminization of poverty” in the market of hired labour, etc. encourage woman to find real ways to achieve financial self-sufficiency in the labour market as opposite to the following recommendations placed in women’s magazines under headings “How to fall in love with yourself”, “How to charm”, “How to become sexy”, etc. Here comes the realization – start of manipulation brings the end to authenticity. The woman who is free from stereotypes is sufficient, she is able to be flexible without losing inner I [5; 12]

Such process of “inner gender transformation and changes» is parallel to the one with men. The therapist encourages men to change the psychological levers of gender – from the prevailing of the “male” side of the balance, homeostasis and family life in general. The phase of re-socialization therapy of gender transformations is able to adjust, for example, alexithymia as the inability of men, brought up in a patriarchal manner, to express their feelings, understand and recognize the emotional states of others. It is known that a person with alexithymia reacts in a non-social manner, it prevents somatoform disorders and dependent on alcohol and smoking behaviour of men.

Incidental modifications in gender awareness and behaviour are not achieved immediately and need much time to be fulfilled. US researchers suppose that the whole cycle of gender therapy should continue from at least 10 to 14 months. Subjects of valuing of its effectiveness should be married couples or families, who gave objective evidence concerning how their family life have changed, for example, “he changed his schedule for helping his wife in taking care and teaching of their children while she is busy at work. Children started to study perfectly. But the main thing is that I am satisfied with myself. When my husband turned to me and our children, I was able to realize my dream – to become a driver. Now our family is more mobile, and I have additional tool for earning money in my firm”.

On which psychotherapeutic schools are based psycho techniques of gender therapy? Generalized empirical data shows that the majority of specialists in this area practise eclectic approach – combine different theoretical approaches and psycho techniques. But psychoanalysis doesn't have a place in this diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches. Alfred Adler remarked: “In general, psychological differences between sexes is a result of cultural influences”. He rejected Freud's concept, according to which women' issues are determined as problems of lower beings. He explained psychogenic factors of pathogenic and psychologic development with a fact that a girl is born with the prejudice, which deprives her faith in her own worth, self-confidence; destroys a hope to do something really valuable ever.

According to K. Horney, woman' feeling of her inferiority is based on economic, political, psychological and sociological dependence on man. Girls always were brought up as not independent, with the idea of the prerogative of men.

Women seek to acquire masculine qualities (strength, bravery, independence, success, sexual freedom, a right of choosing a partner) not because they envy about men, but because of special position of men in a society. Role contrasts have especially negative influence on the psychics of woman (when a woman has to choose between the traditional role and her choice of career and other goals). These contrasts evoke anxiety and neurotic problems of women. To be a female or male customer doesn't mean to suit automatically to the most common stereotypes about the appropriate or not appropriate gender behaviour. Gender approach in the consultation process provides gender equality in search of a decision for the difficult situations through individual choice, not just like a man or a woman. It is important to use non-sexist therapy. When psychologist finds out that a client fulfils unexpected family or social roles in a crisis situation (she is a breadwinner of the family, he is on a maternity leave and takes care of a child), it doesn't mean that these circumstances caused emotional crisis. In other words, in a situation where a client from such a family complains that she can't show her resolution, defending her own position at work and that's why she despises herself, psychologist shouldn't say to her: “Don't worry about it so much, because you are a woman”. In this case the best solution is to discuss with a client a situation when she succeeded or failed to detect assertiveness of behaviour and analyse ways of its achievement, differences between passive and aggressive models of reactions.

Gender approach in psychotherapeutic process involves a creation of force of individual “I” regardless of sex. Sexual differentiation of Coping-strategies for overcoming difficult situations in the consultation process (when women are offered cognitive-emotive psycho techniques, which aimed discussion and refutation of irrational thoughts, men are offered behavioural psycho techniques) is a manifestation of sexism.

Conclusions. Gender therapy as a separate direction of assistance of psychological care for married couples is caused by time challenges as to family functioning on a parity basis and inappropriate spreading of inequality of sexes, which causes conflict situations and fixing of abnormal behavioural models.

Traditional family therapy directs its attempts to overcome the external manifestations of conflict situations without its basic, gender stipulated principles, such as: social and economic imbalance of husband's and wife's status, psychological separation of powers, overload of family roles or its deficiency.

Infraction of gender balance is observed in the realisation of economic and domestic areas of family functioning, at different stages of its development – from the “expansion” (birth of children) to the “empty nest”.

Domestic and foreign experience of implementation of gender psychotherapy proved its effectiveness. The main condition is purposeful modification of gender orientations by psycho education, introduction of empathy acceptance of family and social roles of the other sex, conscious acquirement of androgyny as a condition of liberation from the pressure from sexual stereotypes and universalization of behaviour.

The changes of pathological gender ecosystem of family are achieved through the using of different psychotherapeutic approaches, except of psychoanalytical. Most gender-oriented therapists practice eclectic approach of influence on the family system of gender roles, where cognitive-behavioural school is a priority.

The introduction of the concept of gender to the dynamic of family roles enables to align the social and economic statuses of husband and wife through partner repartition of power. Psychotherapists realise influence of gender stereotypes on the emergence of family conflicts. They approve an ideology of equality of rights, obligations and opportunities.

References

1. Бондаренко О. Ф. Психологічна допомога особистості. – Харків : Фоліо, 1996, 239 с.
 2. Дитяча та юнацька психотерапія: теорія і практика в сучасних наукових дослідженнях: колективна монографія / за заг. ред. Г. В. Католик. – Львів: Астролябія, 2012, 312 с.
 3. Малкина-Пых И.Г. Гендерная терапия / И. Г. Малкина-Пых. – М.: Эксмо, 2006, 928 с.
 4. Психотерапия как невербальная практика: коллективная монография / под. ред. А. С. Кочаряна. – Харьков: ХНУ имени В. Н. Каразина, 2014. – 260 с.
 5. Barnett R., Rivers C. Same Difference: How Gender Myths Are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children, and Our Jobs. New York: Basic Books, 2004.
 6. Bergman S., Pollack W., Levant R. Men's psychological development relation perspective // New psychotherapy for men. New York: Wiley, 1995, P. 68–90.
 7. Bohner G., Wänke M. Attitudes and attitude change. UK: Psychology Press, 2002, 295 p.
 8. Levant R., Silverstein L. Gender in neglected by both evidence based practices and “treatments as usual” // Evidence based practice in mental health; ed. Norcross L. Washington DC:
-

APA, 2005, P. 338–345.

9. Mahalik J. *International psychotherapy and counselling with men*. Good-San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005, P. 324–247.

10. Philpot C., Brooks G., Philpot C. *Intergender communication and gender-sensitive family therapy // Integration Family Therapy*; ed. Miksell R., R.Lusterman D., McDaniel S. Washington DC: APA, 2005, P. 303–327.

11. Philpot C., Brooks G., Lusterman D., Nutt R. *Why men and women clash and how therapists can bring them together*. Washington DC: APA, 1997.

12. Smith R., Weber A. *Applying Social Psychology irfeveryday life // Applied Social Psychology*; ed. Schneider F., Gruman J., Contts L. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005, 449 p.

Bibliografy

1. Bondarenko O. F. *Psykhologichna dopomoha osobystosti*. Kharkiv: FolIo, 1996, 239 s.

2. Dytiacha ta yunatska psyhoterapiia: teoriya i praktyka v suchasnykh naukovykh doslidzhenniah : kolektyvna monohrafia / za zah. red. G. V. Katolyk. Lviv: Astroliabii, 2012, 312 s.

3. Malkina-Pyih I. G. *Gendernaya terapiya*. – M.: Eksmo, 2006. – 928 s.

4. *Psyhoterapiya kak neverbalnaya praktika: kollektivnaya monografiya* / pod. red. A. S. Kocharyana. Harkov: HNU imeni V. N. Karazina, 2014, 260 s.

5. Barnett R., Rivers C. *Same Difference: How Gender Myths Are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children, and Our Jobs*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

6. Bergman S., Pollack W., Levant R. *Men’s psychological development relation perspective // New psychotherapy for men*. New York: Wiley, 1995, P. 68–90.

7. Bohner G., Wänke M. *Attitudes and attitude change*. Psychology Press, 2002, 295 p.

8. Levant R., Silverstein L. *Gender in neglected by both evidence based practices and “treatments as usual” // Evidence based practice in mental health*; ed. Norcross L. Washington DC: APA, 2005, P. 338–345.

9. Mahalik J. *International psychotherapy and counselling with men*. Good-San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005, P. 324–247.

10. Philpot C, Brooks G. *Intergender communication and gender-sensitive family therapy // Integration Family Therapy*; ed. Miksell R., R.Lusterman D., McDaniel S. Washington DC: APA, 2005, P. 303–327.

11. Philpot C., Brooks G., Lusterman D., Nutt R. *Why men and women clash and how therapists can bring them together*. Washington DC: APA, 1997.

12. Smith R., Weber A. *Applying Social Psychology in everyday life // Applied Social Psychology*; ed. Schneider F., Gruman J., Contts L. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2005, 449 p.

Надійшла до редакції 27.07.2017