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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF VICTIMIZATION OF PERSONALITY OF A WOMAN IN CHILDHOOD

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the mechanisms of victimization of women-victims of domestic violence. The determination of the factors of learned helplessness in childhood and the factors derived from the adult experience of beating is theoretically substantiated. The examples of negative emotional experience known by women during an act of domestic violence are given.

KEYWORDS

victimization, victim, fear, depression, suicidal risk

Introduction

The relevance of the investigation is determined by the importance of the in-depth study of personal and behavioral characteristics of women suffering from violence. Negative experiences of parent-child relationships contribute to the victimization of a woman's personality. The peculiarities of this victimization are related to the type of offense experienced and the gender of the offender.

Gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls, is rapidly becoming a shadow pandemic during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the WHO, typical for women suffering from the family offense, there are such mental health problems as depression, anxiety, isolation, fears, suicidal thoughts and attempts, various disorders caused by the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Main results

Patriarchal attitudes (Dobach R., 1979), cultural norms and values (Wolfgang M., Ferracuti F., 1982), peculiarities of a social and economic situation in a society (Panok B., 1998), specific personality traits of the offender and the victim (Steele B., 1987), children's traumatic experience (Rosenbaum A., 1981; Kalmuss D., 1984; Bandura A., 1983) are considered as conditions defining the probability of occurrence of offenses in the family. The problems of upbringing and forming a child as a personality in the family circle, the possibilities of providing psychological assistance to solve problems arising in this process are of interest to a large number of researchers. The works of such scientists as I. S. Kon (1987, 1989), M. Claix (1991), L. I. Antsyferova (1992), A. O. Rean (1995, 1999), G. Craig (2000), Ph. Rice (2000) and some others are widely known.

No one can avoid harm when there is violence and offense in the family. The first victim is, of course, the member of the spouse who is being beaten or terrorized, but regardless of age, are children living under the same roof with such a married couple, they are also victims. In the end, the offender himself/herself will suffer damage by insulting the loved ones and, as a rule, the dear ones. Because of this, it can be assumed that all those who are involved in violence in any way become victims in one way or another. As it has been noted above, many offenders have been victims or witnesses of parental offenses during their childhood. But still, the most frequent victim of spousal violence, as shown by statistics, is a woman [4].

M. Pagelow considers the experience of fear, helplessness, embarrassment, isolation, depression, humiliation, guilt, and failure to be a characteristic feature of women suffering from marital violence [2]. Such emotional responses to violence and offenses often lead to somatic illnesses and can lead to life-threatening disorders [4, 5]. This is primarily depression and suicidal risk. According to the Russian researchers, among the consequences of domestic violence among women, depression ranks the first place, fears – the second place, and suicidal thoughts and attempts – the third one. According to more accurate data from the foreign researchers, Stark E. and Flitcraft H. claim that the beating itself causes one among four suicidal attempts. They have found that almost half of the beaten women studied have thought about suicide. Many victims admit to having made at least one attempt during their violent relationship [4]. Clinical studies have found that 12% of women at risk of violence have been treated for suicidal attempts.

To explain cognitive, emotional, and behavioural changes that result from the offense, the term “learned helplessness process” was proposed by Walker L. in 1979. Learned helplessness is a woman's inability to anticipate the possible consequences of her actions [6]. This term is used to systematize the reaction of beaten women (or in their absence) in the event of the repeated physical, sexual, or psychological violence. It should be analysed the main psychological mechanisms of learned helplessness.

The essence of the phenomenon of learned helplessness is as follows. At the psychological level, the offended woman suffers from a constant feeling of lack of self-confidence and a simultaneous experience of fear and embarrassment. The offender reinforces the loss of self-confidence due to verbal slanders, which he inflicts on his partner. The woman gradually accepts negative information. This information becomes

part of her image due to a lack of positive reinforcement from others. This process of accepting the judgments of the partner-offender and assimilating his thoughts into her own Self-image is a manifestation of the neurotic mechanism of introjection. Introjection, according to F. Perls, indicates inadequately established boundaries between the Self and the outside world, namely: the transfer of boundaries between the Self and the environment inside the Self [10]. As a result of psychological or verbal insults, a woman who has the prerequisites for the use of neurotic defence mechanisms violates the boundaries of her Ego. If such a woman does not receive outside support or is accused of being in a situation of violence, she gradually develops a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. The data show that two of the three beaten women see no way out. Walker's idea of the phenomenon of "learned helplessness" is that fear gradually immobilizes a woman; she no longer believes that she has a choice and therefore remains in the same situation, dealing with it as she can. This gradual process, which causes helplessness and hopelessness, is one of the main reasons why a woman remains in abusive relationships.

The studies of beaten women have revealed the fact that the most common reason why women remain with their offenders after repeated beatings is fear. Such women fear not only for their own safety but also for the safety of their children. Sometimes they fear for the health and well-being of the offenders themselves, worrying that they will "sink to the bottom" or commit suicide if the woman leaves them. Researchers note that the fear of such women may be exaggerated and caused more by a state of hysteria than by the objective reality.

When a victim fails to reduce the level of violence, she can minimize the negative effects of violence by rethinking the negative signals in a distorted, unrealistic way. Using the concept by F. Perls, it can be said that the process of awareness "here and now" is deteriorated in women. Awareness involves self-regulation. Deterioration of self-regulation neurotises the personality and fixes the learned helplessness of women.

Numerous studies indicate that women have more preconditions for the development of learned helplessness than men. Studies show that a gender-role setting that encourages a woman to be passive and dependent increases the tendency to helplessness. According to Walker L., beaten women perceive their parents (fathers) more as strict, with too conservative settings about gender roles, and when girls, they have been used to being passive and dependent, to obeying their husbands. Their childhood experiences have led them to believe that submission is an integral part of a woman's life and that in close relationships; the best thing to hope for is less harmful. It is believed that the gender-role setting assimilated by women to be weaker makes them easy targets for being victims.

As a result of various studies, the 5 factors of learned helplessness in childhood and the 6 factors derived from the adult experience of being beaten have been identified. These factors are used abroad to measure the level of learned helplessness in beaten women. The presence or absence of these factors in the experience of beaten women gives a general assessment of whether the learned helplessness is due to the personality's childhood, or her relationships in adulthood.

The factors that lead to the learned helplessness are:

I. The childhood factors:

1. Domestic beatings.
2. Sexual assaults or harassment.
3. Psycho-traumatic periods of lack of control (relocation, loss of one parent due to his/her death or divorce, alcoholism of at least one parent, illness of a sibling, problems at school).
4. Tough or strict family traditions.
5. Health problems.

II. The factors of relationships in adulthood:

1. Peculiarities of the abuser-victim interaction (the cyclic three-phase model, frequency and cruelty of violence, duration of the relationships in time).
2. Pathological jealousy and isolation.
3. Sexual assaults, strange sexual demands, and acts of an abuser.
4. Threats of murder (including previous use of weapons by the abuser).
5. Psychological tortures (as defined by the International Amnesty): isolation; caused weakness due to loss of food and sleep; monopolization of perception (restriction of access to information, its selection); language degradation (calling, humiliation); hypnosis; drugs; murder threats; specific actions and deeds.
6. Correlates of cruelty (cruel and malicious acts against other people, violence against children, sexual child abuse, cruelty to animals, and inanimate objects).

A detailed analysis of the characteristics of parent-child relationships and their role in the formation of learned helplessness in women is really important and necessary for a better understanding of the psychological characteristics of the women-victims.

In the study of O. O. Bantyshev, it is noted that for the first time the term "victim behaviour" appears in the field of criminal victimology. Being interpreted, it means "the doctrine of the sacrifice". This is a general theory, the subject of which is studying victims of any origin, both criminal and non-criminal: victims of accidents, natural and man-caused disasters, epidemics, wars and other armed conflicts, political confrontations, as well as various types of violence, including sexual, and addictive behaviour.

The basic concepts of victimology include victimhood or victimogenicity –acquired physical, mental, and social traits and characteristics that can make man prone to becoming a victim of various circumstances, groups of individuals, organizations, etc., and victimization – the process of acquiring victimhood [1].

Recent studies have shown that child victimization is not only limited to physical violence, incest, or extreme forms of verbal offense that are easily classified. No less destructive there are emotional offenses from the loved people, and their influence is more individual-conditioned [8].

As Vakulich T. M. notes, according to A. Adler, a child inevitably endures from early childhood a feeling of helplessness, which can be exacerbated by the negative emotional experience gained in the family. The strengthening of this experience is due to the formation of apperceptive schemes. By experimenting with ways and patterns of behaviour, the child unconsciously classifies them as successful or unsuccessful. Because the child's thinking process is imperfect, he/she can form erroneous apperceptive patterns based on the incorrect analysis of his/her behaviour and the actions of others. False apperceptive schemes function as axioms and support maladaptive and ineffective patterns of behaviour [3].

Thus, in addition to corporal punishment, the negative emotional experiences are:

1. Lack of unconditional positive acceptance from parents. The desire to receive warmth and love from parents is one of the strongest needs of a child. According to Fromm, the attitude to the child along with the concern for the satisfaction of his/her physical needs are the two main directions of influence of parents on the life of the child, which determine his/her love of life [4].

2. Strict upbringing. When solving any issues, the child is always told the "right", without his/her choosing a solution. Very strict restrictions and excessive rules do not allow the child to learn to express his/her individuality or find alternative solutions.

3. Boycott. Termination of communication is used by parents as a punishment or measure to maintain order in the family. Parents stop communicating with the child. He/she has got an apperceptive scheme "They do not love me anymore, as they do not even want to talk to me".

4. Atmosphere of unpredictability. The child is forced to anticipate and adapt to the frequent mood swings of parents who are sometimes in high spirits, then fall into depression for no apparent reason. He/she has got approximately the following apperceptive scheme "I must be very attentive to the mood of others to understand in time what they want and avoid their irritation" [3].

5. Prohibition to openly express feelings. In dysfunctional families, parents themselves have difficulty and problems expressing their feelings, especially feelings such as fear, anger, frustration, etc. There is a model when a child learns to develop feelings by imitating the reactions and behaviour of people from a significant environment. Such children in adulthood may know exactly what they should feel and even how to react to it, but in reality, they themselves do not feel it in the full sense of the word. Over time, they become shut-ins, lose contact with their inner world, and may even lose the physiological reactions that automatically occur when experiencing these feelings becomes the norm. As a result of this model – in adulthood, a woman can understand other suffering people and even help them, but she is unable to cope with her own experiences [3].

6. Ignoring mental sufferings. When a child is depressed or sad, parents are not interested in what has happened. The child is allowed to isolate himself/herself, but in reality, he/she is encouraged not to embarrass his/her parents with his/her problems. In the family living in terms of constant stress (violence, alcoholism, constant conflicts), the child develops an apperceptive scheme "If I do not take care of myself, no one will take care of me" [3].

7. Threats of beatings, threats of abandonment, or other cruel punishments that may never come true, but that keep children in constant fear of what might happen if they do not obey the requirements. The child develops an apperceptive pattern "The only way I can protect myself from violence is to completely obey the demands".

8. Upbringing that does not correspond to age. In a dysfunctional family (for example, due to the father's alcoholism) or due to certain circumstances (in the absence of the mother and the inability of the father to take responsibility for the family), parents often do not cope with their responsibilities. In this situation, the child, often a girl

is often forced to take on some of the responsibilities of the parents. She/he has got something like an apperceptive pattern "Dad is having a hard time right now, but he trusts me, so I have to take care of him and the whole family" [3].

Conclusions

Thus, it is not only actions such as physical violence or sexual harassment that are traumatic for a girl's personality. A significant place among the victimizing circumstances is occupied by actions, the damage from which is indirect. According to Walkner, the existing conservative models of gender-role settings in society complicate these destructive processes in women [4].

It logically follows from this that an important task when working with women-victims of domestic violence is to assess and then search for internal and external resources that would allow a woman to move from the position of a helpless victim, which has been firmly anchored by the aggressor in relationships of violence, to the position of an activist that can independently control her life and take responsibility for it. This requires, among other things, identifying barriers that hinder a woman, which is not enough for her to use her reserve effectively. These may be circumstances in which she herself as a child witnessed domestic violence and lives with a basic sense of guilt [9].

On the part of the state institutions, the primary action to combat gender-based violence was to strengthen the legislation. Adoption in December 2017 of the Laws of Ukraine "On Prevention and Counteraction to Domestic Violence" and "On Amendments to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Ukraine to Implement the Provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" strengthens the country's capacity to respond to the manifestations of gender-based violence.

Since February 2018, the interdepartmental working group has been operating under the Ministry of Social Policy on implementing the Law of Ukraine on Countering Domestic Violence. This group includes representatives of most of the central executive authorities, and it operates under the leadership of the Deputy Minister of Social Policy for European Integration, Serhii Nizhynskyi.

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SPOŁECZNO-PSYCHOLOGICZNE WŁAŚCIWOŚCI WIKTYMIZACJI OSOBOWOŚCI KOBIECY W DZIECIŃSTWIE

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł analizuje mechanizmy wiktymizacji kobiet-ofiar przemocy domowej. Określenie czynników wyuczonej bezradności w dzieciństwie oraz czynników wywodzących się z doświadczenia bicia dorosłych jest uzasadnione teoretycznie. Podano przykłady negatywnych przeżyć emocjonalnych znanych kobietom podczas aktu przemocy w rodzinie.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

wiktymizacja, ofiara, strach, depresja, ryzyko samobójstwa