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Features of Emotional Burnout of Teachers Working in Inclusive Classes

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Abstract

The relevance of the study of this problem is due to the fact that the teacher's work is one of the most stressful types of work emotionally. According to the degree of tension, the teacher's load is on average more than most of those who work directly with people. In this regard, this article is devoted to analyze the main problems of emotional burnout among teachers working in inclusive classes, also to reveal the relationship of symptoms of emotional burnout and coping strategies of teachers. The main researching methods of this problem are such theoretic methods as analysis of the subject of research based on the study of scientific and pedagogical literature and empirical methods: test, mathematical processing of empirical data. 30 teachers with different lengths of professional experience working in inclusive classes took part in the research. It should be noted that not a single teacher was identified whose symptoms of burnout syndrome were not formed or were not in the stage of formation. That is to say all teachers working in inclusive classes have symptoms of burnout syndrome either formed or are in the process of formation. The research showed that working in inclusive classes teachers have prevailing coping strategies such as "positive reassessment", "self-control", "problem solving planning", but at the same time, they also often use strategies such as "flight - avoidance", "the search for social support" and "distance". Presented in the article materials could help to carry out preventive work to reduce the level of emotional burnout of teachers working in inclusive classes

Keywords: teacher, emotional burnout, inclusion, coping strategy, prevention, burnout prevention.

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Introduction

Burnout syndrome is a “toxic” reaction to professional work stresses, including both psychological, psychophysiological, and behavioral elements (Bazhukova, 2013). The main reasons that cause the teacher to burn out are daily work, emotional stress, role uncertainty, social assessment, the need for frequent and intensive communication, lack of time, work with various social groups, etc. (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2016).

It is also worth noting that such additional factors for the development of burnout syndrome as lack of confidence in own abilities and knowledge in working with children with special educational needs; unwillingness to work with mental and behavioral disorders of students, including deviant behavior; lack of awareness of the teaching staff and parents of neurotypic students about the characteristics of diseases and the need to adapt the educational process for students with special educational needs, as well as conflicts on this basis; increased requirements from the legislative base played a main role in the adopting of the law on inclusive education.

According to Ovcharova (2006) and Guan (2020) it can also include daily stressful conditions arising in the process of educational activity.

In that the teacher’s professional activity contains a lot of stressful circumstances, it is obvious that quite serious requirements are made to the education staff member for example stress resistance.

As Lazarus (2006) noted, there is a relationship between such aspects as normal stress tolerance and the search for resources to overcome the consequences of stressful situations.

One of the teacher’s global tasks is to educate a diversified and educated person who is ready for independent creative development of the cultural heritage and heritage of society (Razumova, Sadykova, & Yarullin, 2017). To realize this task, the teacher needs to resolve the contradiction - on the one hand, there is a need to transfer the experience of previous generations, culture, to teach a teenager to build their activities and behavior on their basis, but on the other hand, it is necessary enrich, develop and improve this experience without destroying. This contradiction has always taken a place in the teacher's work. But with the development of inclusive education, this issue becomes even more acute. Children with special educational needs often appear in classes.

Each teacher must comply with a professional standard. It creates tension for the employee and creates a feeling of emotional experience, anxiety and feelings of inferiority.

Nowadays the existing complex of economic and socio-psychological problems, among which are non-competitive pay, poor technical equipment of classrooms and other spaces of the school, as well as the low level of authority of the profession “teacher” make the work of a teacher in Russia emotionally stressful.

The requirements for the emotional component of the personality of an education worker are very polar. So on the one hand, the teacher must have a high level of empathy, but on the other hand, he must remain emotionally stable, even in unpredictable and critical situations. Because both excessive exposure to emotions and some “inhibition” become a problem in working with adolescents, especially with adolescents whose behavior is contrary to generally accepted norms (Mitchell, 2011).

It would seem that some features of the personality of the teacher should make him immune to the development of burnout syndrome to some extent. But it is known that one of the models of the process of emotional burnout at the first stage has such a characteristic as “idealistic enthusiasm” (Fiorilli et al, 2019; Lanners, 2020). It is well known that a specialist who is fiercely committed to his work is most vulnerable to "emotional burnout." Such employees have idealistic rather than real expectations from the work done, unwillingness to give up work, additional workloads and increased dedication.

Burnout is the result of prolonged professional stress (Grabe, 2008; Yan & Deng, 2019), therefore it can be assumed that the development of symptoms of burnout syndrome depends on coping with stress.

The term “coping behavior” is derived from the English concept of “to cope”, which means “to overcome,” “to control”. This term denote behavior which aimed at adapting to a stressful situation. In fact, coping behavior is the readiness of an individual to solve life circumstances. Masloy writes (2018) that coping behavior is a form of behavior that involves the developed ability to use certain means to get rid of emotional stress (Lazarus, Kanner, & Folkman, 1980).

Coping processes are described by supporters of the psychodynamic direction of psychology as ego processes aimed at adapting a person in difficult, stressful situations (Akçamete & Gökbulut, 2017; Beath, Jones, & Fitness, 2015). From the point of view of humanistic psychology, coping is understood as a form of behavior testifying to a person’s internal readiness to solve problems that arise in his life (Maslow, 2018). Researchers (Isaeva, 2009) and Lazarus (2006) study the cognitive direction of coping and stress. They define coping behavior as a person’s focus on maintaining a certain balance between environmental conditions and the availability of resources that meet such conditions.

According to Borisova (2005), the success of coping behavior is assessed using the following indicators:

- prevention of distress;

- ridding a person of mental exhaustion;
- the possibility of restoring the activity that took place before stress;
- reduction of psychological manifestations of tension;
- elimination of physiological manifestations of tension (Vodopyanova, 2011).

Researchers suggest various ways to structure and describe strategies for coping with stress, but today there is no single classification of coping.

Methodology

The purpose of the study is to analyze the main problems of burnout among teachers working in inclusive classes, and also to study the relationship between symptoms of burnout and copying strategies of teachers.

Theoretical methods of data analysis are used in the work: analysis and study of scientific and psychological literature, scientific publications, monographs and periodicals. The theoretical basis of the study is the works of:

- Kitaev-Smik (2007), Boyko (2005), Vodopyanova (2011), Starchenkova (2010) devoting to burnout syndrome;
- Isaeva (2009), Lazarus (2006) studying coping strategies.

Empirical methods of analysis: test, mathematical processing of empirical data. To study the relationship of coping behavior (coping strategies) and manifestations of emotional burnout among teachers, the following methods were used:

- Methods of diagnosing the level of emotional burnout (Boyko, 2005).
- Diagnosis of professional burnout (Fetiskin, Kozlov, & Manuilov, 2002).
- Questionnaire "Methods of coping behavior" (Lazarus, 2006).

An empirical study was conducted on the basis of Lyceum No. 110 and Gymnasium No. 10 of the city of Kazan. 30 teachers with different lengths of professional experience working in inclusive classes took part in the test.

The study took place in three stages. During the first stage, research methods were selected. At the second stage, the selected techniques were used in practice. At the third stage, a correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between burnout syndrome and coping strategy.

Results

In the public opinion and in the special scientific literature, the main emphasis of professional activity, which involves working with people (medical specialists, psychologists, teachers, workers in other social fields), is directed to positive aspects. But it is absolutely obvious that professional activities in the social sphere entail a high level of stress, which is associated with great demands on personal responsibility and workloads.

During an empirical study on the problems of burnout of teachers working in inclusive classes, the method of diagnosing the level of burnout Boyko was used (2005).

This technique defines the general picture of the "Emotional Burnout" syndrome. This technique defines the general picture of the "Emotional Burnout" syndrome. The technique helps to identify symptoms of the syndrome for each phase of stress formation, as well as in which phase their greater number is distributed.

When analyzing the results of the survey, indicators of phases of the development of stress - "stress", "resistance", "exhaustion" were separately considered. To measure the degree of formation of phases, a rating is set in the range of 0-120 points. But the comparison of scores in each phase is not entirely correct, since it does not reflect their relative contribution to the development of burnout syndrome. This is because the events measured using the questionnaire vary greatly depending on the state of the nervous system, psychological defense methods, and internal and external stimulus.

Quantitative data reflect the degree of formation of all phases, and also allows you to determine which phase appears more or less.

- from 61 points - the phase is fully formed;
- from 37 till 60 points - phase is at the formation stage;
- less than 36 points - the phase is not formed.

Using the semantic content and quantitative indicators, it is possible to recreate the volumetric characteristic of an individual personality, to develop individual methods for the prevention and correction of the syndrome.

Using the Boyko method of diagnosing the level of emotional burnout, we identified employees with a different degree of formation of symptoms and phases of the syndrome of emotional burnout.

Most teachers do not have symptoms of the “stress” phase. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that there are employees who already have symptoms of this phase.

Teachers who work in inclusive classes have less symptoms of the development such as “caged”, “self-dissatisfaction”.

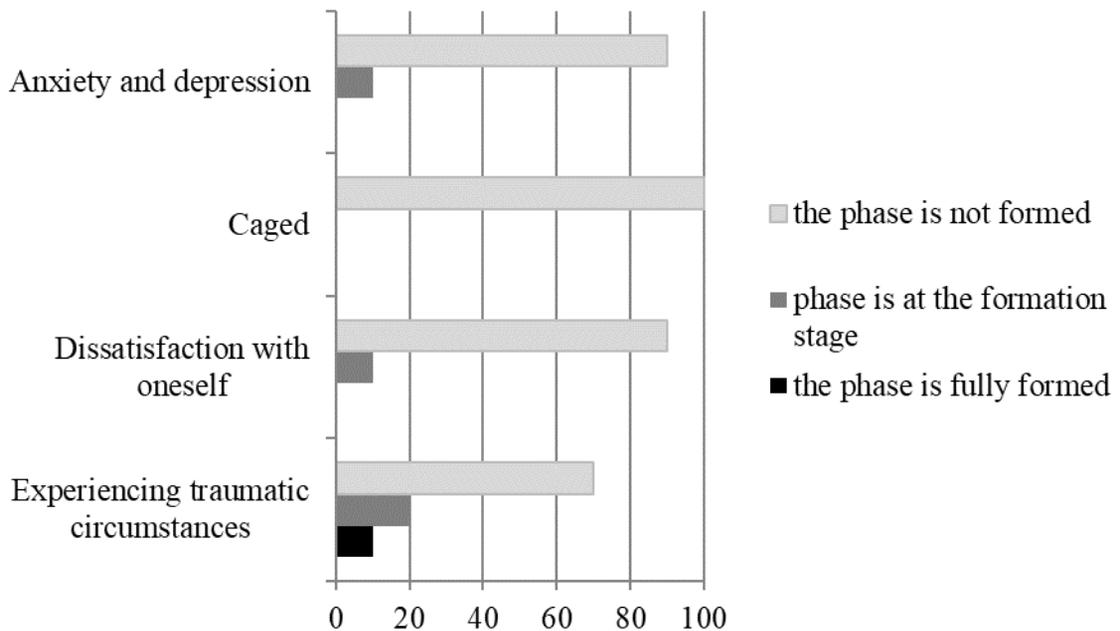


Figure 1. The ratio of teachers with varying degrees of formation of the symptoms of the phase “Stress”.

The symptom “experiencing psycho-traumatic circumstances” was formed in 10% of respondents and is in the formation stage in 20% of the sample. These are employees who are aware that their professional activities, or rather some of its aspects, cause them negative states, feelings (such as anger, irritation, confusion, despair, resentment, etc.), and such aspects are perceived as difficult or not unrecoverable.

The symptom "anxiety and depression" develops in 10% of teachers. It manifests itself in a depressed mood, a pessimistic view of one’s life, professional activity, internal stress, etc.

Symptoms of the “Resistance” phase are formed or are in the process of formation in most educators (Figure 2). It can be assumed that this is due to the aspects of interaction and relations with children with special educational needs, with the negative experiences, conditions that these relations and interaction cause. Teachers “internal defense mechanisms are worked out” – symptoms are formed that “turn off” the emotional sphere of employees.

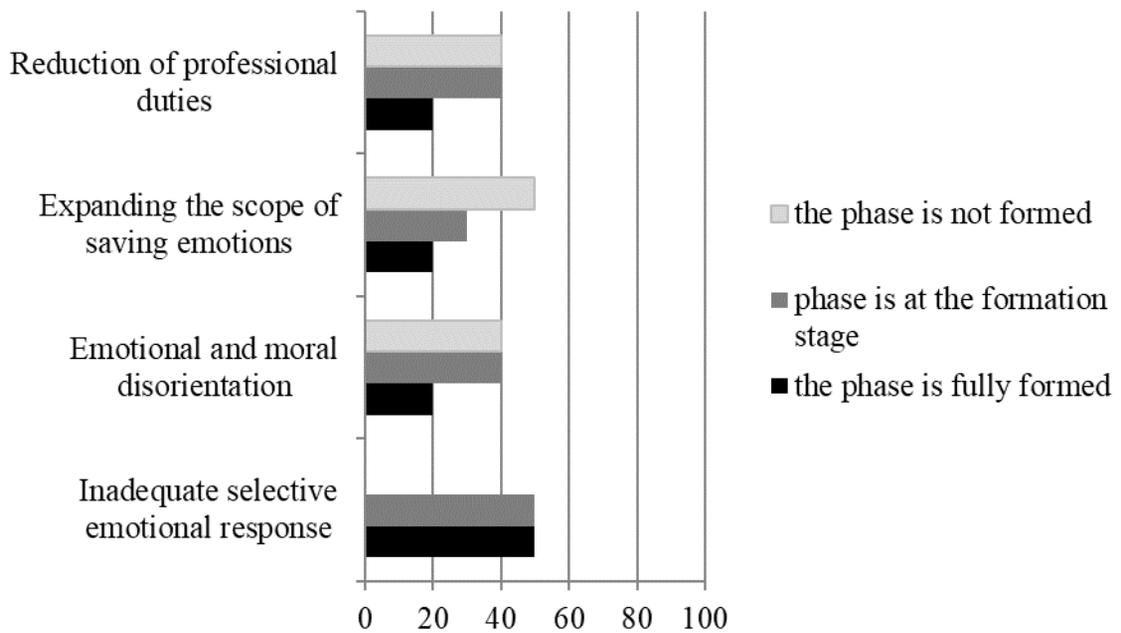


Figure 2. Correlation of teachers with varying degrees of formation of symptoms of the phase “Resistance”.

The symptom “inadequate selective emotional response” was formed in half of the teachers (50%) and is formed in 50% of the sample.

Teachers incurred to the development of this symptom unnecessarily “save” on the manifestation of emotions, restrain the “emotional return”, using selective response in the course of interaction with children. Symptoms of the “inadequate selective emotional response” symptom are emotional callousness, disrespect, indifference, and disrespect for the personality of the child.

The symptom “reduction of professional duties” is subject to the formation of 60% of educators (in 20% of respondents this symptom is formed, and in 40% of employees it is formed). These employees are trying to alleviate or reduce their responsibilities, which require them to spend emotionally. This does not mean that they teach their subject poorly. Teachers minimize communication with students, “deprive” them of attention. But this is exactly what “difficult” children wait for, and teachers are “afraid” of this communication.

The symptom of "emotional and moral disorientation" is manifested in self-justification. Not paying proper emotional attitude to students, teachers protect their behavior and moreover, they justify it. Teachers divide their students into “bad” and “good”, which indicates their emotional and moral disorientation.

This symptom is at the stage of formation in 40% and is already formed in 20% of employees, i.e. more than half of the tested employees (60% of the sample) are subordinate to the development of the symptom of “emotional-moral disorientation”. The symptom of "expanding the sphere of saving emotions" is formed in 20% and is in the formation stage in 30% of employees. This symptom is a form of protection that manifests itself already outside the scope of professional activity, in communication with relatives, friends and acquaintances. This symptom develops in teachers who at work get tired of communicating with children with special educational needs and other students. As a result, they experience negative emotions, so teachers no longer want to communicate with their family, relatives; they lock themselves up at home or “break down” into spouses, parents and children. Boyko considers the symptom “expanding the sphere of saving emotions” is a manifestation of “satiety with human contacts”, he also calls it a symptom of “poisoning by people”. (2005)

Symptoms of the “exhaustion” phase, in contrast to the symptoms of the “resistance” phase, are formed in a smaller number of educators (Figure 3).

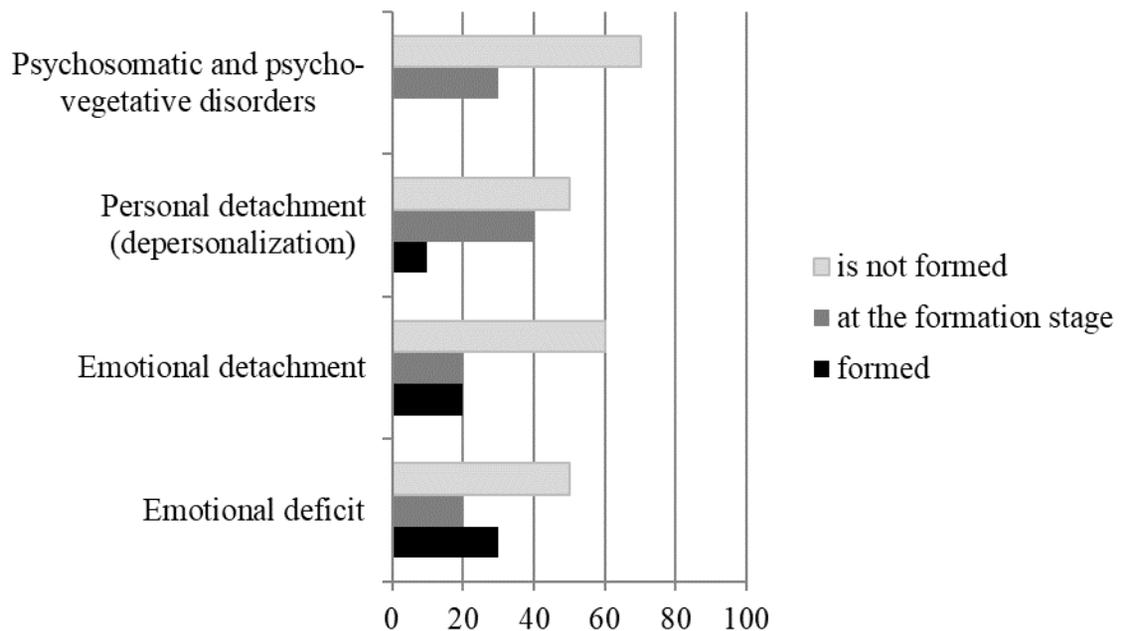


Figure 3. Correlation of teachers with varying degrees of formation of symptoms of the phase "exhaustion".

The development of the "emotional deficit" symptom is affected by 50% of teachers (in 20% the symptom is formed, and in 30% of the respondents it is formed). The manifestation of this symptom begins with the feeling that emotionally the teacher can no longer help children with special educational needs: he cannot enter into the position of others, empathize and sympathize with them. Such a teacher cannot respond to events that theoretically should enhance moral, volitional and intellectual returns, stimulate action and excite.

Emotional detachment is developed in 20% and is formed in 20% of teachers. This symptom is manifested in the complete exclusion by employees of emotions from the sphere of professional activity. Educators who are incured to this symptom gain emotional protection. It makes them less sensitive and responsive. Over time, the specialist begins to work "on the machine," like a robot.

Emotional response is the clearest symptom of emotional burnout. This is obvious evidence of the teacher's professional deformation, damaging not only the employee himself, but also students who experience indifference to them. The symptom of "personal detachment" affects 50% of teachers (40% have a symptom, 10% have already formed). This symptom is manifested in the loss of interest in a person in full

or in part - the subject of labor action, i.e. to the students. Such teachers perceive their students as an inanimate subject.

A symptom of “psycho-vegetative and psychosomatic disorders” are developed about 30 percent of specialists. This symptom manifests itself at the level of the psychophysiological state. In connection with chronic stresses associated with the professional activities of educational personnel, deviations in the mental and somatic state occur. According to Boyko even the very thought about situations that arise in communicating with colleagues, management, students and in professional activities in general, spoils the mood, creates negative associations, anxiety, a sense of fear, and problems with sleep. Chronic diseases may aggravate, discomfort may occur in the heart region (2005). During the transition of reactions from the emotional to the psychosomatic level, we can say that emotional protection (emotional burnout) is not able to overcome the load.

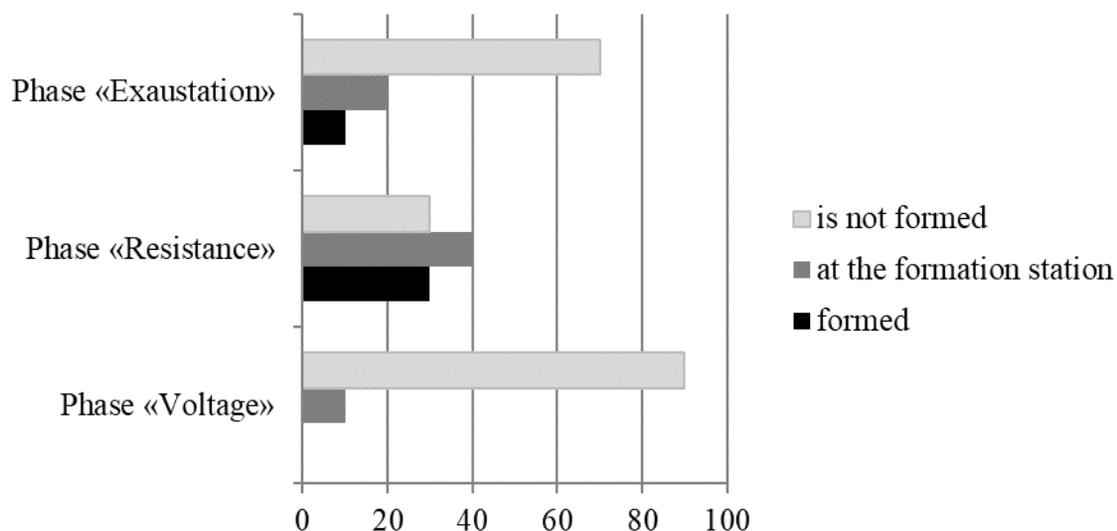


Figure 4. The ratio of teachers with varying degrees of formation of phases of the syndrome of emotional burnout.

Comparison of the results of the study of the formation of burnout syndrome phases among teachers showed that the largest number of teachers was incurred to the development of the “Resistance” phase - 70% of the sample (40% are formed, 30% are already formed), which consists in “turning off the emotional

sphere” as a protective a mechanism to reduce the pressure of external circumstances and restore psychological comfort. On the phase "Exhaustation"it is 30%, on the phase "Voltage" it is 10%.

It should be noted that not a single teacher was identified whose symptoms of burnout syndrome were not formed or were not in the stage of formation. That means all teachers working in inclusive classes have symptoms of burnout syndrome either formed or are in the process of formation. This indicates the need for immediate preventive measures and correction at the emotional and mental level.

The methodology for determining mental "burnout" (Fetiskin, Kozlov, & Manuilov).

The selected method is aimed at the integrated diagnosis of "emotional burnout" and includes several personality substructures. It includes seventy-two statements with four possible answers each, the test subject is asked to choose one answer.

This technique provides for the use of such scales:

- Scale of professional motivation (PM scale).
- The scale of personal distance (PD scale).
- Scale of psychoemotional exhaustion (PE scale).

Using the first scale, the level of professional motivation and altruistic enthusiasm in work is determined. Measurement of the status of the motivational sphere is carried out on the basis of such signs: self-assessment of professional competence; interest and optimistic attitude to work; labor productivity; self-assessment of the degree of success in working with other people.

Using the second scale, a specific form of professional social maladaptation of people working in the "person-to-person" field, as well as of workers of "helping" professions, can be determined. Personal estrangement can be expressed in the following: in a negative attitude to other people; intolerance in communication; increased irritability; narrowing the circle of contacts and the number of contacts.

The third scale facilitates to determine the process of spending energy, physical and emotional resources of a specialist, the work of which involves constant communication and interaction with people. This type of exhaustion manifests itself in the form of irritability, indifference, chronic physical and emotional overwork, detachment towards others, depression.

Personality substructures	level of emotional burnout				
	very low	low	middle	high	very high
PE (psychoemotional exhaustion)	1. 10	2. 10	3. 60	4. 20	5. 0
PD (personal distance)	6. 10	7. 0	8. 50	9. 30	10. 10
PM (professional motivation)	11. 10	12. 0	13. 0	14. 0	90

Table 1. The number of teachers with different levels of emotional burnout syndrome symptoms (%)

According to the results of the study, the highest level of mental burnout is observed in the “professional motivation” substructure. This type of manifestation of burnout is formed in 90% of respondents. This shows that employees are most likely not satisfied with the work, attitude in the team. On a personal level, such employees have low self-esteem, are not satisfied with themselves, as specialists. Often there is a feeling of low return and professional effectiveness. At a motivational level, educational staff are less likely to need achievements.

Burnout is formed in the form of "personal distance" in about 40% of educators. At a motivational level, this is manifested in the form of indifference to a career, a decrease in the involvement in the work and affairs of colleagues and students. On a personal level, burnout is manifested in a critical attitude towards others and in uncriticality in assessing oneself. At the interpersonal level, burnout is expressed in a negative attitude towards students, cynicism and a lack of desire to interact with others

About 20% of teachers who participated in the survey have psycho-emotional exhaustion. At an interpersonal level, exhaustion is expressed in increased sensitivity to others' ratings, aggression and irritability.

It should be noted that on a personal level, burnout can manifest itself in the form of a high level of anxiety and low emotional tolerance. At a motivational level, burnout is manifested, as a rule, in the form of a desire to leave work faster or a lack of desire to come to the workplace.

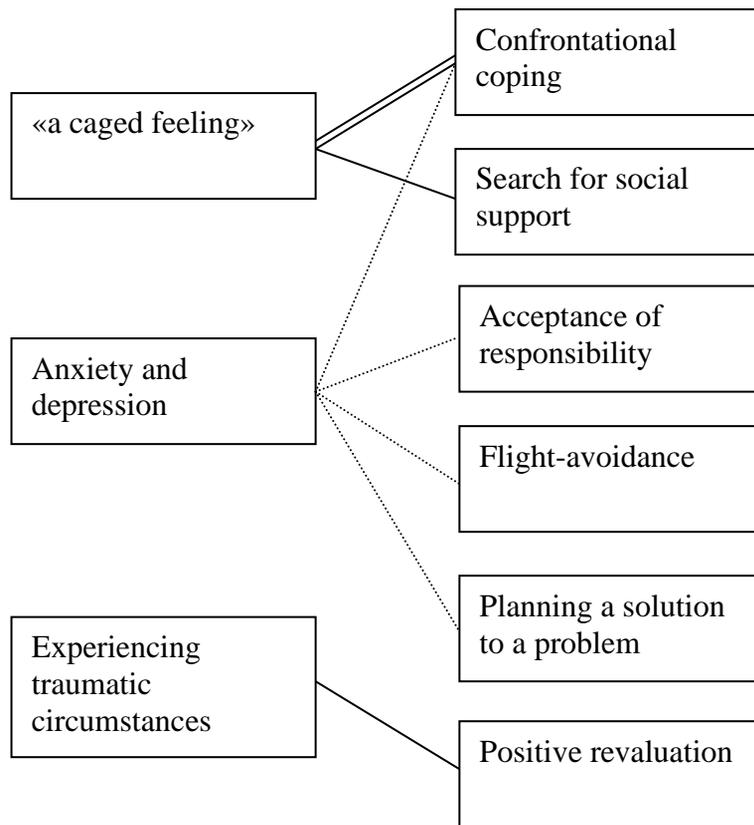
Again, we see that all teachers working in inclusive classes have symptoms of burnout syndrome either formed or are in the process of formation.

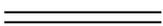
Using the methods "Coping Behavior" by Lazarus (2006) showed that among teachers working with adolescent carriers of deviant behavior, prevailing coping strategies are dominated such as "positive reassessment", "self-control", "problem-solving planning". But at the same time, they also often use strategies such as "escape - avoidance", "seeking social support" and "distance".

In most stressful events, teachers assess the problem situation from the perspective of its positive aspects and treat it as just one of the episodes of their personal life experience; plan the main actions in relation to this event, seek support, help and advice from relatives and colleagues; take active steps to eliminate the source of stress.

To identify the relationship of the syndrome of emotional burnout of teachers with coping strategies, a linear correlation coefficient according to Pearson was used. The relationship was measured for each symptom of emotional burnout individually and for the phases of emotional burnout in general.

The more a teacher who interacts with children with special educational needs resorts to coping strategies such as distance, flight-avoidance, or confrontational coping in stressful situations, the more symptoms of burnout will manifest themselves. Among the main symptoms, depersonalization (personal detachment), inadequate selective emotional response, emotional and moral disorientation, a feeling caged should be highlighted (Figure 5, 6).



direct  connection (noticeable)

direct  connection (moderate)

 feedback (moderate)

feedback (noticeable)

Figure 5. The relationship of the symptoms of the phase "Stress" and coping strategies of teachers.

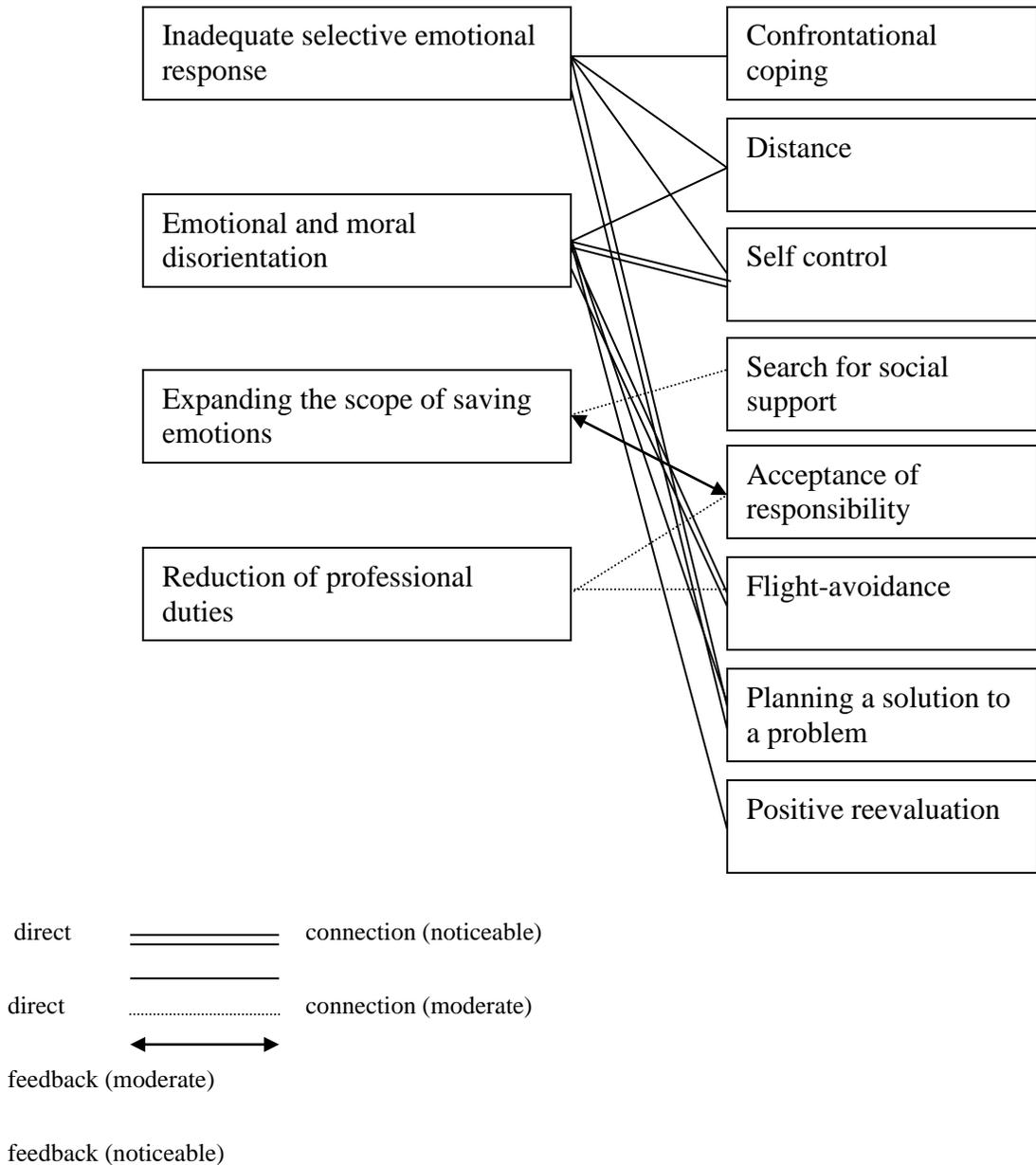


Figure 6. The relationship of the symptoms of the phase “Resistance” and the coping strategies of teachers.

The analyze of the relationship between the symptoms of the phase “Exhaustion” and the coping strategies of teachers shows that emotional detachment has a direct (moderate) connection with confrontational coping, taking responsibility and planning a solution to a problem. Personal responsibility (depersonalization) has a direct (noticeable) connection with confrontational coping, distance, self-control, flight-avoidance, planning a solution to a problem, positive re-evaluation and a

direct (moderate) connection with the search for social support. Emotional deficiency is inversely related to positive reevaluation.

In addition, the use of non-adaptive coping strategies contributes to the development of several symptoms at the same time and, as a result, accelerates the formation of phases of the burnout syndrome, and the syndrome as a whole.

Correlation of phases of burnout syndrome and teacher's coping strategies: the "Exhaustion" phase has a direct (moderate) relationship with confrontational coping, distance, flight-avoidance, planning a solution to a problem and self-control; the "resistance" phase has a direct (moderate) relationship with acceptance of responsibility

At the same time, the results of the study showed that the use of coping strategies such as acceptance of responsibility, the search for social support, and positive reassessment reduce the susceptibility to the formation of individual symptoms ("expanding the scope of saving emotions", "emotional deficiency"), but also burnout syndrome in general. It follows that in order to reduce the level of emotional burnout syndrome formation, it is necessary to use those adaptive coping strategies that are most emotional and related to the attitude towards adolescents - carriers of deviant behavior, to the very specifics of work and problems.

Discussion

Internal resources will be required to reduce the effects of symptoms of teacher's burnout who work in inclusive classes. These resources must involve activity (behavioral and cognitive) in solving the problems that have arisen. Therefore, it is necessary to cope with problems, begin to control them, if possible, mitigate, accept or try to avoid.

The very attitude of a person to a stressful situation is also important. The most effective emotional strategies are those of a "positive reassessment" and a "take responsibility" strategy. We highlight the factors that contribute to reducing the effects of symptoms of emotional burnout - the development of emotionally active adaptive coping strategies; developing skills for their positive interpretation; ability to accept stressful situations

To do this, coping behavior should be focused on extinguishing and mastering the stressful effects of the situation. Russian researcher Rasskazova (2013) maintains this point of view.

Conclusion

Based on the studied scientific works and the obtained results during empirical research, it becomes clear that research is required to continue in this area. Because the specifics of work in the educational system are aimed at an individualized approach to each student and with the development of inclusive education variety of problems is increasing. That is why it is necessary to develop preventive measures on the problem of “burnout” syndrome for teachers working in inclusive classes.

A program for the prevention of burnout should be developed. It must be aimed at deepening knowledge and ideas about effective ways to overcome difficulties and problem situations; personal behavioral and emotional responses to stress situations, about a tolerant attitude to the behavior of children in stressful situations.

Acknowledgments

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