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## FAMILY AS A SPACE FOR RECOVERING FROM TRAUMAS

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**Abstract.**

*This article is dedicated to the research of therapeutic potential of the family as a factor that defines overcoming traumatic events as a family. Therapeutic potential of the family is defined as an integral characteristic of a family, which is represented in effectiveness of performing its` therapeutic function. Here main points of families` therapeutic function, its` main aspects and ways of its` realization are described.*

**Keywords:** *traumatic events, therapeutic potential of the family, family resources, a psychotherapy function of the family.*

Ukraine nowadays experiences tough events. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their home, job, friends, to change their life. Lots of them lost their relatives, staff, work, witnessed destruction and death. Yet millions of others experience these traumatic events non-personally by sympathizing their friends, families or simply citizens, who appeared to stand in the epicenter of military actions. An epidemic of uncertainty in future, worry, fear for our lives, loss of safety and protection spreads through Ukraine. In addition to this, our society lacks specialists, who can provide high-quality psychological help to people, who suffered from traumatic events. We appeared to be not ready for the war.

Family life unavoidable undergoes changed, even if one family member suffers from traumatic events. All family members are injured because of events, taking place on the East of Ukraine: not only military one, who, for the first time in his life uses weapon rather than a computer 'mouse' but also his wife, children, mother and father, who are scared for his life; not only parents, who appeared to live on occupied territory but also their adult children that live in peaceful Ukrainian town. After solving the problem (returning back home or moving to a safer place) traumatic experience doesn't go away and family remains alone with night horrors, feeling of helplessness, irritation, surges of hatred and other consequences.

Overcoming consequences of experiencing traumatic events as a family is related to its` *therapeutic potential* – integral family characteristic, based on family members` resources and defines as their potential for cooperation, dedicated to overcoming obstacles and restoring psychological harmony. A developed therapeutic potential of the family is represented in an effectiveness of performing its` psychotherapeutic function.

The psychotherapeutic function of the family is consider by scientists to be relatively new [L.B. Shneyder, 2000]. Certainly, it isn't new: family always acted as an important resource for overcoming different stresses that people experience, as a "fortress" that helped in passing life tests, niche, where a person feels protected, accepted regardless of its` status, appearance, life principles, financial state and other. This function, together with other (reproductive, educative, sexual, economical, recreational, regulative), explains an important value, family provides to the personality and society as a whole.

Let us state that psychology does not have the unambiguous understanding of psychotherapeutic functions` meaning. One researchers include her separate aspects into other family functions. For example, R.M. MacIver distinguishes the biological (sexual, reproductive and educative functions enter) and psychological (the main point of which is satisfaction needs in psychological safety, liking, personality development) functions of the family [R.M. MacIver, 1962]. Other scientists do not distinguish a psychotherapeutic function in general but they mention emotional function of the family and by that, they mean satisfaction of needs of every family

member in love, acceptance, respect, support, emotional heat and mutual understanding, psychological defense. It is said that this function emotionally stabilizes family members, actively assists in maintaining their psychological health, therefore, if family failed in performing it, family members might have emotional and behavioral problems [T.M. Kuzmenko, 2010]. A recreational function is sometimes considered as a consequent of psychotherapeutic function, which means enjoying the communication of family members with each other, supervising activity of each other, joining to common activities, in planning and realization of entertainment, due to what community experiences what "we" is [O.Y. Klyapets, 2004].

Summarizing opinions of different researchers, it is possible to conclude that a *psychotherapeutic function* defines as a support of psychological health of family members, maintenance of their psychological prosperity and in assisting in their personal development. Its` basic aspects are, firstly, the emotional stabilizing of family members is and, secondly, providing psychological support and help of family members to each other.

The emotional stabilizing of family members happens because of granting an emotional support to each other, creation of friendly emotional climate in a family with the aim of recovery in psychical and physical resources of family members, used in different stressful situations. Due to realization of this aspect of psychotherapeutic function, psychologically safe family space building becomes possible. Feeling yourself as you are at home means feeling yourself safety. Thus, under psychological safety we, firstly, mean, confidence of family members in families` resistance to external pressure, and, secondly, confidence of family members in safety of manifestation of any kinds of emotions in a family.

It is important to understand that nobody has an obligation of sharing personal experience but every family member is welcomed do it at any time. At home, more than everywhere, it is possible not to inhibit feelings and strong emotions and be certain that you accepted and loved deeply how you are. Let us point out that family space has to be safe for all, as combination of sharing emotions and injuring someone (physically or psychologically) cannot be allowed. Therefore, necessary pre-condition for constructing psychologically safe family space is environmental friendliness of mutual relations, that appears in an orientation on non-damaging a single family member.

*Family members psychologically supporting and helping each other.* Receiving psychological support and help from relatives increases possibilities for solving different types of life problems and difficulties because, on one hand, it gives resources other people can use, and on the other hand, becomes the factor of self-recovery of its own resources. Besides, due to family members psychologically supporting each other, their needs of joy, respect, and acceptance are satisfied, a psychological comfort sets in the family, personality growth of family members and their self-realization comes true [O.Y. Klyapets, 2004].

Psychological support includes, firstly, emotional support (ability of family members to sympathize, empathize problems and difficulties of each other, assist in their solving) and, secondly, intellectual support (helping in analyzing and practical solving of consequences of experiencing traumatic events).

Emotional support is an essential component of experiencing what «we» is in family, without it, imagining what close relations is, is difficult. Experience caused by an absence of understanding each other is, maybe, one of the harshest consequences of psychological trauma. Certainly, the other person might never were in a similar situation and cannot even to imagine how it feels. However, attempt of sympathizing, sharing pain, decreases the burden of bad memories.

Intellectual support can show up in discussion and planning of general points of post-traumatic future, in drafting strategies of overcoming the consequences of experiencing traumatic events, designing tactics of their realization, and also in searching and bringing in external resources of psychological help (friends, relatives, specialist, etc.).

Both aspects of psychotherapeutic function are realized during "*spontaneous therapeutic sessions*" - acts of interfamily communication (verbal and un verbal) between family members, dedicated to creating mutual understanding between them. Certainly, they are settled down if necessary without any timetables and "formats". Basic practices of realization of these sessions are

"caress" (gentleness and care to each other) and "resonating" (empathizing, sympathizing, understanding and helping each other in evaluation of ideas and point of view about important questions, maintenance in self-realization and personality increase).

The role of families` psychotherapist is not hardly bounded to sex (although, in our society, they are, mainly, women): conducting activities dedicated to solving personality problems of others and psychological supporting can be done by both male and female. Methods of its realization can vary but responsibility for creation of family House - place, where it is possible to renew inner forces, to construct trustful relations, to be yourselves, to give a rest to your psychological mechanisms, to relax, to restore yourself - lies on all.

Let us mark that in studies of European and American scientists [G. Vattimo, 2004; H. Christopher, 1983; S. McCornack, 2010] the question is not about spontaneous family psychotherapeutic sessions. Possible explanation of this can be the fact that in their homelands the system of high-quality psychological help is well-developed as well as high psychological culture of the entire society that predetermines the orientation of population in case of necessity of visiting the specialist. Ukrainians mostly consider conversation on a kitchen with wife or husband, mother or father, or with a friend as a psychotherapy, therefore overcoming the consequences of the traumatic events often becomes purely a family task.

*Thus*, family is a space of meaningful mutual relations; therefore, it can act as a resource for recovery of the psychological resources of family members, overcoming different obstacles and difficult life circumstances. The important factor of overcoming the consequences of experiencing traumatic events inside the family is its` therapeutic potential that is considered to be an integral characteristic of the family, which is based on personal resources of family members and determined by the ability of family members for co-operation of their efforts, partnership with the aim of recovery of the psychological prosperity of the family.

The reflection of therapeutic potential of the family is an efficiency of realization its` psychotherapeutic function that is implemented in "spontaneous therapeutic sessions", having the aim of emotional stabilizing of family members and granting psychological support and help to each other.

Let us mark in the end that in modern Ukrainian realities, a significance of therapeutic potential of family is difficult to revalue. The future of Ukrainian nation depends on its` development. Therefore, the organization of moves, dedicated to the development of families` therapeutic potential and creation of the developed system of high-quality psychological help to not only for the psychological trauma victims but also members of their families, becomes an important and actual task.

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