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## **WORKING WITH AGGRESSIVE SOCIALLY NEGLECTED ADOLESCENTS: METHODOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTEXT**

*The article summarizes and systematizes scientific information about aggression and social neglect as scientific categories. The essence of the scientific terms “aggressive adolescent behavior” and “social neglect of adolescents” has been revealed. The features of adolescent aggression and social neglect have been established. By summarizing the views of scientists the author presents the main causes of social neglect and manifestation of aggression. The main attention is focused on the characteristics of methodological and practical aspects of working with the above-mentioned category of adolescents. The content of socio-pedagogical work with teenagers has also been presented in the paper.*

**Key words:** aggression, adolescent aggression, social neglect, social support, innovative methods of work

**Introduction.** During the significant changes that take place in Ukraine due to the Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022, socio-pedagogical work with children is an extremely important aspect of establishing Ukraine’s independence. In this context it is necessary, first of all, to organize effective social support for adolescents who belong to the category of socially neglected and have a high level of aggression. From a methodological point of view, a specialist in the social sphere (social worker, social pedagogue, practical psychologist), facing many pain points of modern Ukrainian society, is called to take on the mission of educating an active, enterprising Ukrainian citizen who is an educated and cultured person. In the professional context of the specialist’s professional activity the category of adolescents who are socially neglected and display a high level of aggression should have the role of customers.

**Analysis of relevant research.** Professional activity of social workers, social pedagogues and practical psychologists is quite multifaceted and directly related to the prevention of such antisocial phenomena as violence, aggression, neglect, begging, addictive behavior. Normative documents of national importance (Laws of Ukraine “On bodies and services for minors and special institutions for minors” (1995), “On the protection of childhood” (2001), “On social work with children and youth” (2001), “On the basic principles of youth policy” (2021)) emphasize the need to provide qualified assistance to children belonging to the

category of socially neglected children. Currently, each united territorial community has practically oriented regional programs for the prevention of social orphanhood, overcoming of child homelessness and neglect for a rather long period (the 2021-2025 years). Of course, the war has made significant adjustments to the implementation of these programs. However, these issues are still a priority when working with children.

Quite often it is socially neglected adolescents who manifest increased aggressiveness. That is why we consider it appropriate to study these two categories of children (“socially neglected” and “children with a high level of aggression”) together and focus on age gradation, namely adolescence. Also, we believe that one of the main factors of solving the problems of socially neglected and aggressive adolescents is improving the quality of professional support from social service specialists.

We should note that methodological and practical issues of working with socially neglected children were studied by N. Kubyak (Kubyak, 2010), T. Logvynenko (Logvinenko, Yaroshko, 2010), M. Fitsula (Fitsula, 2002), M. Yaroshko (Yaroshko, 2008) et al. The research of promising forms and methods of work with aggressive teenagers was the focus of attention of O. Drozdov (Drozdov, O., Skok, M., 2009), O. Kononko (2016), V. Oliynyk (2017), T. Chervonnoi (Diagnosis and correction of aggression in children, 2014), S. Shebanova (Shebanova, 2002).

Thus, on the basis of the generalization of the scientists’ findings, we found out that the scientific definition of “social neglect” is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon which is connected by numerous cause-and-effect relationships and considered in close ties with the processes of socialization, education and upbringing. Social neglect in the psychological and pedagogical context involves a teen’s lack of social feelings, interests, abilities and skills; non-compliance with age-related social roles.

As practice shows, quite frequently socially neglected adolescents display aggressive behavior. Aggressiveness is considered by scientists as emotional state and character trait of the child which implies unjustified anger, rage and a desire, which is accompanied by actual actions, to cause physical or moral trauma to their opponent. Given the growing number of socially neglected children and an increase in the level of aggression in adolescent environment, there has emerged a need for a thorough methodological research and coverage of practical aspects of working with these categories of adolescents.

**Research methods.** The study employed theoretical methods: scientific literature review, analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization of scientific information. We searched for information in the electronic database Google Scholar, on the Ukrainian and foreign websites. Scientific research involved: 1) theoretical and methodological analysis of the content of scientific definitions “adolescent aggression”, “social neglect”; 2) revealing the ways of improvement of socio-pedagogical work with socially neglected adolescents who display a high level of aggression.

**The research aim** is to generalize information about the content and causes of adolescent aggression and social neglect as well as to analyze practical work with this category of adolescents.

**Results.** We share the position that social neglect is a type of deviant behavior as a general concept that implies negative, antisocial manifestations in behavior. Social neglect is characterized by many negative manifestations in the formation of cognitive, moral, emotional, volitional qualities of minors, their attitudes towards others and society. In the context of our study, we should note that socially neglected adolescents have such typical traits as: laziness, rudeness, being undisciplined, combativeness, embitterment. Quite frequently they display unreasonable aggression towards peers as well as younger children or even elders. Based on the findings of Ukrainian scientists-practitioners, it has been found that adolescents who display a high level of aggression tend to conflict in communication and have a low level of self-control. (Nastyuk, 2011).

Thus, socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggression often lag behind their peers due to underdeveloped memory, thinking, volitional and emotional qualities, impaired self-esteem and lack of self-control skills. They are characterized by an immoral stereotype in communication; social maladaptation, lack of awareness of their place and role in society; alienation from society, family, peers.

From a methodological point of view, socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggression have the following psychological and pedagogical characteristics and common features:

- 1) low level of general, social and ethical knowledge;
- 2) delay in general development (physical, mental, personal);
- 3) inadequate attitude towards oneself and others;
- 4) non-compliance of behavior, abilities and skills with social norms which are accepted in society.

In our understanding, the main manifestations of social neglect in aggressive adolescents involve underdeveloped social and communicative qualities, difficulties in mastering appropriate social roles, inadequate behavioral reactions to conflict situations that arise during communication.

It should be noted that teenagers do not immediately become socially neglected and they do not immediately develop aggression. Thus, scientists single out four stages of development of social neglect, which causes the emergence of aggressive behavior:

- the first stage (preschool age) occurs as a result of improper upbringing in the family (excess or lack of parental attention, constant destructive conflicts, lack of positive communication);

- the second stage (primary school) is the result of insufficient psychological and pedagogical readiness of the child to study at school; initial forms of negative attitude towards the surrounding life (childish negativism) as well as embitterment appear;

- the third stage (young adolescence), when teenagers begin to manifest antisocial behavior and tendency to deviant behavior, they use psychological pressure and physical aggression;

- the fourth stage (older adolescence) assumes that antisocial forms are fixed in the adolescent's mind and can transfer to systematic manifestations of aggressive behavior and become entrenched in offenses and crimes (deviant and delinquent behavior) (Fitsula, 2002; Yaroshko, 2008).

In the course of the study of the publication of I. Parfanovich (Parfanovich, 2006) we singled out individual, family and social factors that cause the development of social neglect in adolescents and, in our view, can provoke manifestations of aggression in their behavior. In particular, personal factors include:

- peculiarities of the physiological constitution;
- genotypic traits, type of temperament and its characteristics;
- character accentuations.

Family factors involve:

- qualitative and quantitative composition of the family;
- low level of provision of material goods;
- unsatisfactory level of pedagogical education of family members;
- type of parent-child relationship and parenting style;
- moral norms and traditions that dominate in the family;
- intra-family conflicts and ways of resolving these conflicts.

The most important social factors are:

- informal relationships with the closest peers, younger or older friends;
- random social contacts that have a negative anti-social aspect;
- destructive social conflicts.

It has been established that a key role in the organization of practical activities with aggressive pedagogically neglected teenagers in a general education institution is given to a practical psychologist and a social pedagogue. Their professional responsibilities consist in: observing the process of formation and development of each pupil in the conditions of a micro-society (a family and a class); ensuring the conditions for the realization of the child's rights, including social rights protection; creating the necessary conditions for the social adaptation of each schoolchild, and, if necessary, for corrections and re-education; taking preventive measures aimed at the prevention of deviations in psychological and social development of the child, their behavior, health, as well as in the organization of their leisure time; active use of pedagogical technologies for prevention of the influence of negative factors of the social environment on personality formation.

We should emphasize that to realize the content of social support of socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggression it is significant to comply with the principles of target orientation. Thus, during the organization of practical activities a social pedagogue, social worker or practical psychologist must adhere to the principles of systematicity, scientificity, practical orientation and personally oriented approach. It should be noted that we consider the above-mentioned principles as guiding provisions of all social work with socially neglected adolescents who display a high level of aggression in their behavior.

It is important to dwell on the practical mechanisms of social sphere specialists' work with socially neglected adolescents who manifest aggression. Thus, we should pay due attention to the systematic use of specific educational methods which are considered as ways and means of cooperation of a specialist and a teenager, aimed at achieving the educational goal, solving the problem of social neglect and reducing manifestations of aggression in behavior.

We distinguish the following groups of methods:

- methods of consciousness formation (the most effective methods of this group, in our view, include example, conversation, dispute);

– methods of the organization of activities (the most effective methods of this group are public opinion, exercise, demand, organization of socially useful activity, use of creative game);

– methods of activity stimulation (the most effective methods of this group include incentives, punishments, and the “explosion” method).

As our experience shows, a great positive effect in working with socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggression is achieved by:

1) organizing collective activity based on the use of interactive forms of work;

2) organizing individual work;

3) involving adolescents in interesting and creative socially useful activities;

4) purposeful use of the incentive system;

5) conducting explanatory work in the form of individual conversations for preventive and corrective purposes.

The fundamental methodological role in overcoming social neglect of adolescents with a high level of aggression is given to the idea of “child-centeredness”. We consider this idea as a leading one in working with children. It is based on such values as cooperation, equality, trust, mutual assistance, tolerance, understanding, empathy and support. From a practical point of view, while organizing activities with aggressive socially neglected adolescents we took into account S. Kharchenko’s position that there should be: “priority of children’s interests, equality of all children, integration of efforts of social institutions, centralization in the development of a personality, combination of help with self-help, systematicity, dialogicity, collectivity, democracy, conformity with nature, cultural conformity, humanity” (Kharchenko, 2006. 347). Considering the given arguments, during the organization of practical work with aggressive socially neglected adolescents we paid great attention to establishing the system of positive values in their minds and developing their inner desire for positive changes in their outlook and behavior.

The content of practical work with socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggressive behavior involves measures which provide them with information about the negative consequences of their illegal actions, their contempt for healthy lifestyle, refusal of cultural leisure activities. In order to prevent social neglect, specialists (social workers, practical psychologists and social pedagogues) should involve teenagers in active sports and technical creativity, participation in art self-activity. In

addition, the development of various preventive and corrective classes, trainings, socio-pedagogical actions is also very effective in working with socially neglected adolescents who often display aggression.

As practice shows, systematic and purposeful use of school mediation is an effective way of resolving the conflicts in which aggressive adolescents are involved. We share the position of scientists that school mediation helps to effectively resolve disputes on condition that not only a practical psychologist, social pedagogue or classroom teacher but also authoritative senior students are involved in its work (Polyanichko, 2015). School mediation service should actively work towards reconciliation and elimination of causes of aggression and social neglect of schoolchildren, as well as prevention of manifestations of deviant behavior.

From a practical point of view, it is expedient to organize the following activities for aggressive socially neglected adolescents: sports competitions, relays ("The most agile and the strongest", "A sound mind in a sound body"); sports and entertainment games, quizzes, contests ("My Own Self", "Special personality", "Social responsibility", "Swing", "Tram", "Leader", "Self-control", "Statuette"), educational classes with mini-lectures. Special attention was paid to conducting individual and group discussions which were aimed at correcting adolescents' erroneous views and beliefs ("Responsibility for your actions", "Your rights and responsibilities", "Social values and priorities").

We should highlight one more positive factor in working with socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggression. It is the organization of game-based activities. We suggest that game-based activities with this category of teenagers should be built so that it provides social learning in a casual way. As experience shows, the use of games in socio-pedagogical practice has a positive impact on the development of an aggressive socially neglected adolescent without changing their individuality. It is the casual game-based activity that provides the opportunity to "live through" the situations that concern adolescents, develop their social skills and help them accept positive changes.

It should be emphasized that an important element of social support of aggressive socially neglected adolescents is the organization of balanced and purposeful work with their parents based on the improvement of pedagogical culture. Expansion of parents' psychological and pedagogical knowledge is achieved by their participation in trainings, pedagogical lectures and round tables.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** At the time of large-scale military actions, there is a need to improve social work that would correspond to the European requirements. To improve the quality of social services in general and to provide social support for adolescents is an important task of Ukrainian specialists of the social sphere (social pedagogues, social workers, practical psychologists). We believe that systematically organized practical activities aimed at providing social support for socially neglected adolescents with a high level of aggressive behavior contributed to specific positive changes. The most significant changes are that adolescents became more responsible and self-directed; they learned how to control their feelings and actions and developed a sense of control over their words and actions; they believed in their own strength.

In the future, we intend to investigate the impact of training methods on the improvement of social status of adolescents and analyze the influence of group therapy on reducing adolescent aggressiveness and overcoming problems of social neglect.

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

**Калаур Світлана.** Робота з агресивними соціально занедбаним підлітками: методичний та практичний контекст.

*Головна мета статті – узагальнити інформацію щодо змісту та причин виникнення підліткової агресії та соціальної занедбаності, а також здійснити аналіз практичної роботи з цією категорією підлітків.*

*У статті застосовувалися теоретичні методи: вивчення наукової літератури, аналіз, синтез, порівняння, узагальнення наукової інформації; здійснено пошук інформації в електронній базі даних Google Scholar, українських і зарубіжних веб-сайтах. Науковий пошук охоплював: 1) теоретико-методологічний аналіз змісту наукових дефініцій «підліткова агресія», «соціальна занедбаність»; 2) висвітлення шляхів вдосконалення соціально-педагогічної роботи з соціально занедбаними підлітками, які мають підвищений рівень агресії.*

*Узагальнено і систематизовано наукову інформацію про агресію та соціальну занедбаність як наукові категорії. Представлено сутність наукових термінів «агресивна підліткова поведінка» та «соціальна занедбаність підлітків». Встановлено, що соціально занедбані підлітки доволі часто проявляють агресію. Шляхом узагальнення поглядів науковців представлено основні риси агресивних соціально занедбаних підлітків. Так, у них низький рівень загальноосвітніх, соціально-етичних знань; спостерігається відставання у загальному розвитку; їм притаманне неадекватне ставлення до себе та навколишніх; можна спостерігати невідповідність їхньої поведінки тим соціальним нормам, які прийняті у суспільстві. Розкрито основні стадії розвитку соціальної занедбаності, яка спричиняє появу у підлітків прояви агресивної поведінки.*

*Головна увага у статті зосереджена на характеристиці методичних і практичних аспектів роботи з категорією підлітків для яких властивий підвищений рівень агресії. Представлено перелік принципів, а також методів (формування свідомості, організації діяльності, стимулювання діяльності), яких повинні дотримуватися соціальні фахівці (соціальні педагоги, практичні психологи та соціальні працівники) у роботі з агресивними соціально занедбанними підлітками. Доведено, що основоположну методологічну роль у подоланні соціальної занедбаності підлітків з підвищеним рівнем агресії відіграє ідея «дитиноцентризму». Розкрито зміст соціально-педагогічної роботи з підлітками, що мають підвищений рівень агресії, а саме розглянуто практичні аспекти організації спортивних змагань, естафет, групових бесід, роботи з батьками, ігрової діяльності. Чільне місце у роботі з агресивними підлітками відводимо шкільній медіації.*

**Ключові слова:** агресія, підліткова агресія, соціальна занедбаність, соціальна підтримка, інноваційні методи роботи.