

# Psychological Correction of Individual Neurotic Problems

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**Abstract:** *The article conducts a theoretical analysis of the features of the neurotic response to uncertain situations as an important component and trigger of individual problems. In this regard, the issue of psychological correction of individual neurotic problems in uncertain situations at the theoretical, methodological and practical levels has been studied in the article. The neurotic experience of psychotraumatic events is due to internal conflicts. Effective methods of corrective work with neurotic reactions as prevention of persistent neurotic states are indicated here too. The neuropsychological content of psychotherapeutic techniques that can prevent neurotic development of an individual is revealed. It is presented the model of psychological correction of individual neurotic problems, which is capable to carry out effective corrective influence of the personal sphere on emotional, cognitive, motivational and behavioral levels. Important principles and conditions are noted regarding the psychological correction of such neurotic nature. The neuropsychological content of the body-oriented model of psychological correction of an individual in combination with psychotherapeutic methods is considered in detail.*

**Keywords:** *Neuropsychocorrection, internal conflicts, anxiety, neurotic reactions, neurotic experience, stressful situations, neurotic states, psychotherapeutic methods.*

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## Introduction

The social space of modern man is presented to the world through the media as unstable, constantly moving, changing, and recently is presented even as unreliable in health care due to long-term quarantine deprivation of social needs and long-term feelings of anxiety with pandemics, which has become one of the significant individual problems in the life of almost every individual. Mental health at work, in family life and in the social environment can be a trigger for acute depression, phobias and panic attacks. Neurotic personality development can be associated with feelings of despair, brokenness, weakness, fatigue, hypochondriac thoughts, and negative emotional states.

Asthenodepressive states may be (individually or) with the neurotic development of psychopathic disorders at the personal level, which are diagnosed by behavioral disorders, pathopsychological type of character depending on the neurotic nature characteristics and stage of neurotic personality development under stressful situation. At the cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral levels, an individuals' neurotic responses to adversity gradually acquire an anxiety-depressive, hysterical, or hypochondriac symptom complex. Of course, somatovegetative, psychosomatic, personal, behavioral disorders in the neurotic development of personality require neuropsychocorrection (Demchenko et al., 2021; Prots et al., 2021; Kosholap et al., 2021).

Neurotic reactions and states are accompanied by awareness avoidance, decision making avoidance and contact interaction. Such behavioral disorders are associated with inadequate emotional response. It is emotions that give person energy, their excess provides a physical response to a difficult life situation, and its decrease provides a mental response. Restraining of muscle expression leads to anxiety, emotional coldness, numbness, chronic anxiety as a result – the inability to realize their reactions, their body, or the situation and ways to solve it. Lack of awareness of the real individual problem is the basis for the neurosis emergence and emergence of one of the individual neurotic conditions.

Psychological correction of individual neurotic problems is associated with the activation of the client's internal resources, personal self-development and subjective transformation of those conditions that can cause mental disorders of the neurotic level. The subjective potential of the individual is able to provide the adaptive capacity of man in solving situational neurotic problems. However, given the critical social situation, psychopathological characteristics and the intensity of stressors cannot

always cope with excessive neurotic experiences, and cannot realize cognitive dissonance in relation to significant events or people and make the right decision in such uncertain conditions. The study of the application of psychocorrectional technologies of an individual, which arose within the theories of personality and are designed to ensure harmonious personal development against the social conditions of the individual neuroticism, is extremely relevant for practical psychology.

The purpose of the article is to theoretically analyze the features of neurotic response to uncertain situations as a trigger and an important component of individual problems, to describe the tasks and content of psycho-correctional work with them. The novelty and practical significance of the article is to identify effective methods of corrective work with neurotic reactions as a prevention of persistent neurotic states. The presented material of the article on the features of neurotic reactions related to individual problems can be used in the clinical practice of medical rehabilitation and neuropsychological centers to provide psychological and psychotherapeutic care to clients with neurotic reactions to difficult life situations for psychoprophylactic purposes.

### **Theoretical analysis of the neurotic response features to uncertain situations as a trigger and a significant component of individual problems**

Individual neurotic problems are always associated with maladaptive emotional response to psychotraumatic events, specifically individual and phenomenologically diverse reactions, which at a deep level are often not realized and so create the basis for personal dissonances, persistent neurotic states. The neuroticism of experiencing psychotraumatic events is due to internal conflicts, which are accompanied by fear of aggression, independence, intimacy, trust and submission. Under conditions of uncertainty, fear of trust is fundamental to the emergence of neurotic states, as disruption of habitual security conditions or complete frustration with the need for security can lead to inadequate emotional response. Given this, in the structure of individual neurotic problems it is advisable to consider in detail the neurotic reactions to a complex situation of uncertainty as one of their main components and trigger. In conditions of pandemics, combat stress, activities of employees of extreme professions is not always possible to prevent personal disorders of people with neurotic states, despite all the efforts of neuropsychologists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists who develop psychoprophylactic programs and select successful methods of

psychocorrection. Unfortunately, in national practice this area of medical and psychological work is not developed, which can be considered as a condition for increasing the number of people with neuroses, post-traumatic stress disorders and persistent personality disorders of neurotic level, which may require not only psychotherapy but also psychiatric intervention.

Neurotic reactions include hyper excitability, lethargy, aggression, emotional instability or lethargy, apathy, moodiness, poor sleep, fears, and more. If you do not notice the neurotic manifestation in time, and you will not identify it and take measures to eliminate its causes in a timely manner, then chronic nervous tension can cause neurosis. Neurosis is a functional neuropsychiatric disorder that occurs and develops as a result of prolonged exposure to significant psycho-traumatic factors, emotional or mental overload. This disorder does not occur suddenly, but it develops over a long period of time. The cause of neurosis is psychogeny – emotionally acute, significant for a person experiences that cannot be dealt with. At the same time, mental stress increases, and when does not find a way out, it accumulates, leading to neurosis (Kuzikova, 2020).

Widiger & Oltmanns (2017) claims that neurotic people do not deal well with stress and they consider neuroticism as a fundamental personality trait characterized by anxiety, fears, emotions, emotional instability, depression, and so on. High levels of neuroticism will contribute to low productivity due to emotional anxiety, exhaustion and distraction, a wide range of psychopathological and physical health problems and is recognized as a personality disorder and a characteristic of psychopathology in general.

Aldinger et al. (2014) considered various forms of neuroticism development from toddlers to adolescents, associated with differences in depression, anxiety, and daily emotional distress. Researchers have shown that the level of neuroticism may decrease throughout life, but not evenly, the highest for people aged 20 years. This age reflects an important stage of development associated with experiences that potentially lead to the growth of neurotic experiences, as moving, finding a job, and possibly starting a family can fuel fears, worries, and negative emotions. Turiano et al. (2020) empirically confirmed that neuroticism can lead to poor health and reduce life expectancy, or can perform a protective function of the psyche depending on individual personality traits, life circumstances, status, cognitive abilities and gender. Thus, people with higher levels of neuroticism are more likely to seek medical help to solve problems than people with low levels of neuroticism. Weiss & Deary (2019) in their turn say that among people with high neuroticism, people with high levels of anxiety and mental stress are at greater risk of deteriorating mental and physical health, and

those who suffer from anxiety and vulnerability are more prosperous because they take more care of health. However, according to Khan et al. (2021) the detection of neurotic personality traits contributes to the successful choice of treatment methods.

The problem of neurotic individual development is the inability of the subject to realize the absurdity of his own behavior and break the vicious circle of identical emotions; in the language of physiology it means to reach the stage of inhibition of the nervous reaction. Exit from the situation of forced repetition becomes possible in the case of either external coercion (external instruction) to inhibit the focus of arousal after the paradoxical stage (such tasks are often solved by pedagogical means, behavioral psychotherapy) or gradual desabsurdization of the absurd (psychoanalysis, cognitive psychotherapy), minimization of emotional ambivalence (client-centered therapy, existential psychotherapy) (Maziar, 2017).

The results of the research on thenational level confirm interesting empirical facts: situationally conditioned reactions of mental maladaptation (asthenic, somatoform, depressive, emotionally arousing) of employees of special units of the bodies of internal affairs of Ukraine in the first 5 years of service were more common than short-term psychological reactions and the indicators of such reactive anxiety is out the norm limits. The study identified individuals prone to conversion-type neurotic reactions, hypochondria, depression, individuals with intrapuncture reactions and autoaggression, with astheno-neurotic personality type. The most optimal methods for the correction and prevention of the above disorders are short-term psychotherapy in the form of emotional and volitional training, personality-oriented psychotherapy, supportive cognitive psychotherapy, valeological programs, educational and didactic activities lasting up to 1 year. Modern methods of psychocorrection are used to improve personal qualities and skills required in operational and service activities, as well as training in methods of psychological self and mutual assistance in trauma (Zyvzakh, 2007). Thus, neurotic reactions to severe stress and disturbances in adaptation, which are associated with all the structural components of personality at the emotional, cognitive, motivational and behavioral levels, indicate that conditions of uncertainty are the cause of a person's mental disorder.

Individual disorders on an emotional level are associated with a change in self-esteem of neurotic reactions to the experiences themselves under the influence of strong stressors, increased anxiety, emotional instability, which only exacerbates neurotic reactions to long-term stress. The socio-psychological content of personality disorders is associated with

changes in behavior, attitudes toward themselves and others. Behavioral disorders can be accompanied by verbal and physical aggression or avoidance of solving any problems, unwillingness to overcome difficulties. Nervous and mental stress and mental strain are associated with cognitive impairment: inattention, poor memorization of necessary information, inability to focus on the task at hand.

Neurotic traits are a system of neurotic symptoms accepted by a person as traits of one's own personality. Neurotic character as a personality disorder becomes so stable that under its influence there is a restructuring of the whole personality, including the system of its values. In a neurotic personality, pathological self-actualization is expressed in the preservation of the usual stereotype of action, in the departure from overexertion and stress, unwanted contacts. Neurotic personality does not reflect its neurotic traits, so its relationship with society is disharmonious (with egocentrism, inconsistency, impulsiveness). The neurotic nature and disturbances of socialization of the individual mutually condition and reinforce each other. The program for psychocorrection of a neurotic nature should include both individual and group work, a special place should be occupied by logotherapy (Pavlik, 2013).

Representatives of the humanistic trend in individual psychology, in particular in W. Frankl's logotherapy and K. Rogers' phenomenological theory, consider the consideration of personal means of activating the responsibility of the individual in difficult life situations. Freedom, according to the theory of W. Frankl, is closely linked to the responsibility of man for the right choice and realization of the meaning of his life. Lack of meaning creates a state of existential vacuum in humans, which is the cause of neurosis. Exploring the possibilities of behavior correction, representatives of humanistic psychology focus on the development of people's awareness of their responsibility for their own behavior, which is based on awareness of themselves and their place in the world. However, K. Rogers believes that we need to help people deal with daily demands, help them understand that they are not helpless victims, they have a choice and should be responsible for their actions even when they are unable to change the situation (Stoliarenko, 2012).

Reactions to stress depend, on the one hand – on the intensity and duration of stress, and on the other hand – on the current state of mind and adaptive capacity of the individual. Genetic heredity also plays a role, for example, in patients with low resistance to stress, an anomaly of gamma-aminobutyric acid of the benzodiazepine receptor complex is detected. According to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and

Related Health Problems 10th revision (ICD-10), complex stress responses are classified as: severe stress response and maladaptation (F43), acute stress response (F43.0), post-traumatic stress disorder (F43.1), adaptation disorders (F43.2), short-term depressive reaction (F43.20), prolonged depressive reaction (F43.21) mixed anxiety and depressive reaction (F43.22), with a predominance of other emotions (F43.23), with predominance of behavioral disorders (F43.24), mixed disorder of emotions and behavior (F43.25), other reactions to severe stress (F43.8), reaction to severe stress not specified (F43.9). Anxiety disorders are included in section F4 “Stress-related neurotic and somatoform disorders” and cover diagnoses F40-F41. These disorders include panic disorder, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, specific phobias, mixed anxiety and depressive disorders. Muscle relaxation, meditation, self-hypnosis, biological feedback and exercises are used to reduce anxiety. The method of curation (From Latin Curatio – is care, treatment; synonym – is patient’s support) also uses explanations of anxiety symptoms, switching training and exercises to balance anxious thoughts intelligent and calming. Anxiety symptoms are reduced by systematic desensitization, cognitive-behavioral therapy (Kokun et al., 2018).

It is known that a demobilized combatant will never be able to return to his own past. It is a changed personality that needs the acceptance of a new state by others, which leads to a change in the lives of him and his loved ones. Veterans need to be taught self-regulation techniques and in particular emotion regulation techniques. It is necessary to find out what helped the veteran to traumatic events, and what remains effective even now. When organizing the psychological rehabilitation of a war veteran, it is necessary to clearly distinguish the levels of his needs, which determines the level of psychological rehabilitation and, accordingly, the range of communication strategies and methods of psychological assistance. In the organization of social and psychological assistance to prisoners and victims of torture, an effective help to a person in case of acute pain is the method of trauma focus (Thomas Weber) – an effective neuropsychotherapeutic procedure in the psychotherapy of acute and chronic pain. With the help of the traumafocus method, chronic pain can be removed in a few sessions (knee pain, back pain, headache, chronic regional pain syndrome, polyneuropathy, fibromyalgia, etc.) (Hrydkovets, 2018).

Khairulin (2015) proposed a practice-oriented, structural-functional model of psychological prevention, covering a set of general and special measures in working with personnel, the conditions for optimizing the psychosocial climate in the combat units of border guards. At the same time, a methodologically balanced system of criteria, parameters and psychological

tools for the effective prevention of burnout of servicemen is described, which increases both their personal tolerance and prevents the emergence of excessive psychogenic stress during border service. In this regard, the following types of psycho-practical activities were used: diagnostics, psychological examination, psychological prognosis, prevention as an organizational procedure, socio-psychological rehabilitation, psychological and pedagogical correction, counseling and methodological assistance, psychological education and personal assistance.

Foreign researchers claim that the symptom complex of neurotic reactions, including signs of increased anxiety or fear of death, depressed mood, difficulty breathing, manifestations of negative emotions through the body, sweating, sleep disturbances, hypochondriac thoughts, etc. are associated with psychosomatic reactions, cardiac diseases persistent neurotic states (Horst-Eberhard & Beckmann, 2004). The association of neuroses with maladaptive behavioral defenses and psychosomatic disorders was confirmed by Hamida Xardel-Haddab (2009). The model of neurotic conflict is considered not only through intrapsychic manifestations, but also through the interaction of the individual with the environment in terms of object relations, neurotic reactions, body language (Köpp & Deter, 2006). Leitner (2018), in turn, argues that integrative therapy, in particular the integration of four cognitive methods – phenomenological, dialectical, empirical-analytical and hermeneutic one, which are practically activate the potential for overcoming life problems, the ability to self-regulate and the ability to maintain health.

### **Psychological correction of individual neurotic problems: psychotherapeutic means, principles and conditions of conduction**

The purpose and objectives of psychological correction of individual neurotic problems is the selection of neuropsychological methods of relieving mental stress; work with fears, high personal anxiety and internal conflicts; exercise in overcoming neurotic response, normalization of health; introduction of neuropsychological means aimed at overcoming the manifestations of neurotic disorders; correction of self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. Psychological correction of personality problems of a neurotic nature should combine elements of individual and group work, be systemic, comprehensive and personality-oriented one.

In our opinion, the most effective for the psychological correction of individual neurotic problems in uncertain situations will be methods of logotherapy, forcing the client to look at events from another angle, to find their meaning for himself; positive psychotherapy and gestalt therapy – lead to

the understanding that each person has not only problems but also resources to overcome them; personal-oriented therapy – allow to change the attitude to the traumatic situation and to show responsibility first of all for themselves and adaptive situational transformations; methods of body-oriented psychotherapy – is for the implementation of mental self-regulation, muscle relaxation, relief of symptoms of stress and anxiety; cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy – allow to rethink maladaptive thoughts and change behavior. Clients can gain experience in dealing with psychotraumatic situations with the help of psychotherapeutic (psychocorrectional) methods in the training of activating personal resources in order to overcome personal disorders on emotional, cognitive, motivational, behavioral levels. Psycho-corrective influence on the components of all personality disorders should be carried out in stages and comprehensively.

The peculiarities of the methods choice of correction of the individual sphere of a person are related to the orientation to a certain approach. There are not enough specialists in Ukraine who would deeply specialize in various psychotherapeutic areas (a specialist in psychoanalysis, Gestalt therapy, behavioral therapy, etc.). As a result, man as a single psychological reality seems to be divided between different psychological areas, in the possession and competence of which are different planes of this reality: behavior – in behaviorists, mental formations – in cognitivists, existential values – in humanistic psychologists, etc. If we turn to the situation of providing psychological assistance, then a person appears before the psychologist as a whole, in the unity of their behavior, cognitions, motivation, and so on. The possible way out is to address all the accumulated, but rather disparate potential. Given this, all methods of corrective action should complement each other. None of them can be considered in the abstract as the best, unique or all-encompassing. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of each method of corrective action in relation to a particular person (individual and age characteristics) and a particular problem. There is no two people who are the same. Everyone reacts to the same psychological problem, difficulties in their own way. Ideally, the psychologist, having a variety of methods of psychotherapy and psychocorrection, should choose the most suitable of them for each client (Kuzikova, 2020).

Psycho-correctional work with individual neurotic problems should involve the practical application of the following principles: emotional – taking into account the emotional state of the client (completion of the gestalt in experiencing neurotic reactions), emotional complexity of tasks (they must have a positive emotional background); cognitive – taking into

account the influence of thoughts on the conditionality of emotional states, activation of mental processes through the formation of adaptive cognitive style of thinking in a stressful situation as a prevention of neurotic personality development; comprehensive – the use of various techniques and techniques from the arsenal of practical psychology in order to exercise psychological and comprehensive influence on the emotions, thoughts, behavior, motives and needs of the client's personality.

Complementing the latter principle is the mandatory use of neuropsychological methods and techniques. Neuropsychological technologies not only successfully complement the above principles, but are a connecting link in the integrated personal system of mental processes, properties and states. For example, breathing exercises can stimulate clarity of thought, well-being emotions and adequate behavioral actions, relieve muscle tension and prevent the emergence of persistent neurotic states, neurotic personality development. The neuropsychological content of psychotherapeutic techniques is present in many psychotherapeutic methods and psychological approaches: body-oriented psychotherapy, Gestalt-therapeutic approach to personality correction, holotropic therapy and more.

The following concepts are considered as the main categories of the Reichian body-oriented model of psychological personality correction: character – habitual reactions to different situations (include conscious attitudes and style of behavior, physical postures, habit of movement – their detailed analysis allows to understand physical postures as a way to suppress feelings in certain parts of the body); armor of character as a mechanism of behavior that provides energy blocking at the mental and physiological levels as protection against anxiety and fear; loosening of the muscular shell – work with clamped muscles, as a result of which a person becomes free, the conflict of a neurotic personality is resolved, which usually tends to subdue authority and power; mature character of a person capable of self-control. For the purpose of neuropsychological correction, it is necessary to perform the following exercises alternately: to understand the style of breathing; develop the skill of natural breathing; exercises to activate the muscles of the throat; abdominal relaxation exercises; mobilization of aggression (after a strong inhalation, on the exhale a blow is applied to the pelvis on the couch, while allowing the head to listen to his body). In the psychological correction of personality from the standpoint of "transpersonal psychology" holotropic approach, in particular holotropic breathing techniques, allow a response associated with the removal of emotional and somatic stress (Zlobin, 2005).

The quintessence of bodily psychocorrection is work with bodily sensations and its integration with other psychotherapeutic methods. The

bodily sensations can be seen as “signals” of the subconscious, the awareness and comprehension of which creates the basis for resolving internal conflicts. According to Sandomyrskyi (1995), the integration of different psychocorrectional approaches based on objective, psychological and physiological patterns must be combined with technologies of psychological self-help and personal growth. The researcher believes that the mechanism of formation of physical and psychological problems is psychological maladaptation. The mechanisms of violation of psychological adaptation are internal causes (emotional, cognitive, spiritual and motivational levels) and an external trigger (stress, uncertainty of the future, conflict, changing life circumstances, etc.). At the emotional level – this is a negative emotional “baggage” as a consequence of trauma and conflict, postponed the future; on the cognitive – maladaptive beliefs, errors of thinking; on the spiritual – the lack of constructive life goals and existential meaning of life; on motivational – perfectionism as a function of Super-Ego. Thus, in the cognitive mechanism of formation of a psychological problem under the influence of stress there is a return to the right hemisphere, “childish”, evolutionarily ancient subconscious way of cognitive information processing.

To enhance the effect of physical psychocorrection in solving personal problems, the researcher proposes to accompany it with the mental utterance of positive self-instructions (affirmations), which is carried out during breathing exercises. At the same time various physiological mechanisms of psychocorrection are involved: sensory awareness thanks to what the left hemisphere exercises control over breath and awareness of bodily sensations; abdominal, diaphragmatic breathing, which activates the relaxation reaction due to the natural physiological stimulation of the vagus nerve; observation of the asymmetry of sensations in the right and left hand and the right and left parts of the body, which helps to synchronize the activity of the hemispheres; observation of sensations of heat in certain parts of the body relative to respiration, which activates the processes of self-regulation by the autonomic nervous system. The state of the nervous system when performing such exercises corresponds to an altered state of consciousness (kinesthetic trance) or a transitional state in which there is a relative activation of the right hemispheric mechanisms of the psyche, self-suggestion is perceived as a guide to action (Sandomyrskyi, 1995). After “unloading” the left hemisphere with physical exercises, it is appropriate to connect cognitive methods to make the client aware of their desires to perform social roles, personal dissonances and ambivalence to find optimal ways to solve personal problems at the neurotic level.

Khodayarifard & Fatemi (2013) offer therapeutic interventions of spiritual practices with a combination of cognitive-behavioral and family therapy to psychologically correct anxiety disorders.

## Conclusion

In the structure of individual neurotic problems, it is advisable to consider in detail neurotic reactions to a complex uncertain situation as one of their main components and a trigger that actually are triggers of a neurotic experience of an uncertain situation. Individual neurotic problems are subject to psychological correction at the stage of interaction of activation of the internal resourcefulness of the client's personality. However, acquired stable neurotic states under the influence of primarily social factors with complex professional and life unpredictable living conditions and hereditary at the same time need more complex – psychotherapeutic assistance. Personality changes can be experienced only by those neurotics who can be aware of the inadequacy or protective mechanism of their own neurotic reactions to unpredictable situations and successfully use personal resources for psychological development. The presented model of psychological correction of personality problems of neurotic nature is not exhaustive, but it is able to make an effective corrective effect.

Individual neurotic problems are associated with disorders in the emotional, cognitive, motivational and socio-psychological spheres of personality. Psychocorrection of individual neurotic problems must be carried out comprehensively, systematically and personality-oriented, purposefully influencing the restoration of the functionality of mental activity of the individual and personal development.

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