

Peculiarities of Application of Metaphor in Group Psychological Correction

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Abstract: *The article analyzes the peculiarities of psychological method of metaphor application in group psychocorrective work on a theoretical and methodological level. An attempt to define metaphor in the context of the basic tasks of rendering psychological assistance, especially as a method of psychodiagnostics, neuropsychology and group psychocorrection is undertaken. The resources of metaphor in group psychocorrection are described because of its properties. The definition of metaphor as a neuropsychological means of activation of the right hemisphere of the brain is argued. The functions of fairy tale metaphors for the purpose of correction and development of personality are considered. It is underlined that metaphor is the psychological mechanism of integration of components of self-consciousness: self-understanding (the cognitive aspect), the attitude to itself (the emotional aspect), self-regulation (the behavioral aspect) in a context of group psychocorrection. Practically confirmed that the metaphor in the process of group work has a positive impact on changing the strategy of competition to a strategy of cooperation through the adoption of individuality of self and another. The criterion for the effectiveness of metaphorical psychological correction is the feedback of the group participants through trust, acceptance and self-acceptance. Recommendations for conducting group psychological correction with the use of metaphor are developed.*

Keywords: *Psychodiagnostics; emotions; thinking; brain; neuropsychocorrection; conscious and unconscious; fairy tale; psychological approach; self-knowledge; psychotherapy.*

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Introduction

Psychological assistance is becoming an increasingly popular service in today's world, which can cause numerous psychological problems associated with acute emotional distress, cognitive and behavioral disorders, which often require psychocorrective help. Present-day psychocorrection uses metaphorical resources in the context of all psychological approaches as an effective way of psychological support of the client, creating psychological conditions for him to discover internal resources of acceptance of himself and others, elimination of defects and difficulties in personal development. The relevance of the problem under study is connected to the metaphor of the psychological resource of the client as a practically successful psychocorrection method, as well as a valuable psychological tool of personal development of participants of group interaction.

The purpose of the article is to study features of application of metaphor in group psychologically corrective work. The novelty and practical significance of the article consists in the attempt to define metaphor in the context of the main tasks of psychological assistance, especially as a method of psychodiagnostic and psychocorrective work; to expand understanding of the methodological techniques of applying metaphor in psychological assistance practice, in particular in neuropsychocorrection. The results of the study of the peculiarities of the application of the psychological method of metaphor can be used in consultative, neuro- and psychocorrective and psychotherapeutic practice.

Theoretical analysis of the peculiarities of the application of metaphor in group psychological correction work

Spiritual experiences and transformations are quite often inherently impossible to define, but there are many metaphorical descriptions. Parables and metaphors united by the common name of "stories" illustrate qualitative aspects of spiritual development and are a good means of forming a meaningful context in the group and regulating the emotional atmosphere (Maksymenko et al., 2015, p. 87).

Consciousness and the Unconscious have a "common language" that allows them to "understand each other"- it is a metaphorical language or superlanguage. In a situation of obscurity, when awareness of contradictory feelings and sensations is difficult or too painful, a person reflects it in a symbolic form (for example, through comparison with objects) with the help of a metaphor. Metaphor (from Greek μεταφορά "transfer") is "allegorical" -

"a word or expression used in figurative sense, based on a comparison of one object with any other on the basis of their common feature (Kosarevska & Kutkina 2021).

Metaphor analysis is a good method of psychological research. Metaphors are abstract models of reality just as mental models and schemata are in cognitive psychology. The multifaceted properties of metaphors allow us to study the micro-interactions between cognition and culture in open-ended and qualitative research plans. They also bridge the gap between quantitative-experimental and qualitative approaches in psychology (Moser, 2000). Metaphors are indispensable heuristic tools for practicing, communicating, and understanding science (Taylor, & Dewsbury 2018). Metaphors are multidimensional in their interdisciplinary meaning (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). Conceptual metaphor theory helps explain the cognitive strategies people use to understand life meaning, purpose, and values. Among the many strategies for finding meaning in life, the use of metaphors is excellent because it suggests a unique ability for people to understand how two concepts have a similar structure despite outward differences (Landau, 2018).

The figurative world of stories allows one to approximate their contents to the inner "Ego" of the person and facilitates identification with him or her through the function of a mirror. Use of Oriental stories, fairy tales and parables in the course of psychologically corrective work helps relieve tension in the group, the atmosphere becomes warmer, and relationships become more relaxed, pleasant and trusting.

Using parables and metaphors, the leader can control the attention of the group, utilize situations that arise in it, and actualize the necessary substantial context. The right stories, told at the right moment, meet practically no resistance in the group. From them the person receives that understanding to which he is ready for the present moment, which has its reflection in his "world model" (Maksymenko et al., 2015, pp. 242 - 243).

The psychocorrective process can be metaphorically described as special "flickers," clots of experiences. Bright, emotionally colored experiences create the possibility of a new vision of old problems, a new view of a life situation, close people, a system of relations and activity. As a result, elements of consciousness and self-consciousness are restructured as a creative process (Artyukhova, 2019). Individual groups use metaphor - often unconsciously - to comprehend abstractions, make judgments and decisions, communicate and organize their behavior. Metaphor conditions social cognition and understanding of motivation, culture, interpersonal relationships, and intergroup dynamics; explains how social behavior is

formed and reflected in our bodies, cultural context, and speech (Landau, 2017). Thus, foreign researchers have studied the COVID-19 metaphorical representation of an emergency situation, associated with danger, negative emotional experiences (Panzeri et al., 2021).

Group psychological correction encourages the client to become aware of what situations in the group and in real life cause tension, anxiety, fear, negative emotions, peculiarities of their behavior and emotional response, internal and interpersonal conflicts and their causes (cognitive aspect) (Osyka & Osyka, 2016, p. 16). In view of the fact that metaphor is a method of thinking, we consider its harmonious element to be the sphere of psychological assistance, especially group psychological correction, because group "participation" accelerates the thought processes regarding the effective psychological effects of the metaphor method in self-discovery, creative self-expression.

We define metaphor in group psychologically correction as a diagnostic tool - a projective method of research of psychic life of the client, as his projection on subjectively significant values and problems; a psychotherapeutic strategy for resolving a personal crisis, both in individual counseling practice and in group psychocorrective work; a psychological motivator of cognition and positive personal change. Metaphor can be considered a neuropsychological means of activating the right hemisphere of the brain, due to which personal creativity and creative thinking in changing attitudes to problematic situations, a positive vision of a new context in them is manifested (Demchenko et al., 2021; Sarancha et al., 2021). Dreams, needs, desires, fantasies are presented and regulated by metaphorical language (in the form of images) at the neuropsychological level through the right hemisphere, which is associated with the influence of metaphors on changes in human behavior and life.

The resources of metaphor in group psychocorrection are determined by its following properties: metaphoric language of mental images, high information content, resourcefulness in psychodiagnostics and overcoming problems, safety of expression, subjectivity, universality in methodological techniques and psychological techniques, creativity, developing potential for reflection and personal growth, integrality, imagery.

Methodologically applied analysis of the peculiarities of the use of metaphor in group psychocorrective work was carried out on the basis of works on the organization of psychocorrective work in a group and the specifics of the use of metaphor in training sessions (Maksymenko et al., 2015); Fundamentals of psychocorrective work (Osyka & Osyka, 2016); methods of group psychological influence by Rudestam (1990);

psychological approaches in understanding psychocorrection (Artyukhova, 2019); features of metaphorization in psychological training (Vachkov, 2007); basic psychocorrective trends and approaches with a system of corresponding techniques and exercises (Andrushko, 2017); metaphorical interventions to improve psychodynamic, Eriksonian and family systems approaches (Kopp, 1995).

According to the psychosemantic structure, metaphors of consultants and clients as participants of group psychologically corrective work can be grouped and analyzed by the psychologist according to mental processes, states and properties, as well as personality components, for example, metaphors connected with evaluation, cognition, behavior, emotions, thinking, stress, depression etc. Metaphors primarily represent the characteristics of the emotional and cognitive sphere of the client's personality and behavior. Consequently, application of metaphors (through bypassing of resistance and transference of the client) in psychological practice can successfully carry out functions of psychodiagnostics and simultaneously promote a better comprehension by the client of own psychological problems and revealing and resolution of internal contradictions. As a rule, it is especially appropriate to use tests-metaphors for the purpose of psychodiagnostics at the beginning of the basic stage of group psychologically correction.

Metaphors (in the form of fairy tales, parables, stories, poems, jokes) are deliberately used by psychologists to help clients make the desired changes. In group work, the psychologist assumes that the experience of another person in overcoming problems similar to the client's problems will give him or her, directly or indirectly, a way by which he or she can cope with the situation. Work with metaphors can be presented in the following sequence: identify the problem and find a situation similar in structure; point to a logical solution, identify what needs to be learned, and find contexts where these points will be evident; to embody these structures into a story that will be interesting and will conceal the intention, contacting the client with the metaphorical image; acceptance, integration and formation by the client of a new self-image. The following psychological mechanisms of metaphor construction are distinguished: comparison of incomparable - establishing a relationship of similarity between equal realities; possible impossibility - assuming the possibility of similarity of entities incomparable in reality; incompatible compatibility - the metaphor consists of dissimilar objects; multiple unity - the metaphor consists of several plans: literal verbal expression and new meaning (Hordeeva, 2013).

Creation of an individual fairy tale by each member of group in the metaphorical form reflects the client's inner world and indirectly promotes his or her personal development. Author's fairy tales have a lot of personal projections, so they can be a flexible means of influence in experienced leader hands of a group session. From the point of view of fairy tale therapy, myths are important because with their help, it is possible to show that living objects of the surrounding world, capable of acting independently, have the right to their own life. This idea is important for forming a sense of acceptance of the other. One of the major goals of fairy tale therapy is to stabilize mental processes, develop the emotional sphere, develop self-regulation and self-control, develop flexibility and free-will behavior, eliminate fears, anxiety and lack of self-confidence; increase flexibility and mobility of nervous processes; development of fine motor skills and coordination of movements; removal of physical and mental tension; increase work capacity; improvement of volitional qualities; training of breathing; overcoming barriers in communication etc. (Maksymenko et al., 2015).

The following corrective functions of a fairy tale are also singled out: psychological training for stressful emotional situations; symbolic response to physiological and emotional stress; acceptance of physical activity in a symbolic form (Osyka & Osyka, 2016). Fairy tale therapeutic metaphors can be distinguished by an existential search for meaning, the process of transferring fairy tale meanings, which have personal meaning for the client, into real life. In modern psychological approaches, fairy tale metaphors are often used for personality correction.

The tasks of group psychological correction are associated with the three components of self-awareness: self-understanding (the cognitive aspect), attitudes toward oneself (the emotional aspect), and self-regulation (the behavioral aspect) (Osyka & Osyka, 2016). In psychologically corrective practice, the method of metaphor successfully combines work in accordance with these components of self-awareness, flexibly translating unconscious aspects of the mental life of the group participant into awareness and understanding. It is an interesting scientific fact that each of psychotherapeutic directions reveals the specificity of psychological influences of structural components of self-consciousness on the individual (theoretical aspect), but their appropriate and complete combination is carried out by metaphor in the process of group psychological correction (applied aspect) - it integrates them as a psychological mechanism.

It is with the help of the language of metaphors that one reaches the level of awareness of the problem; metaphors allow a person to recognize

and designate his experiences and his attitude toward life's difficulties, to understand their value. Metaphor expands the boundaries of consciousness, touching certain layers of the subconscious. The perception by group members of the literal content of each other's metaphors is perceived by the conscious mind, while the subconscious is engaged in a more subtle and laborious business: unraveling and processing metaphorical messages, deciphering the hidden meaning, the second plan, the non-obvious content (Vachkov, 2007).

P. Thibodeau, L. Boroditsky (2011) explore the role of metaphor in reasoning. The researchers believe that metaphors are not just rhetoric, but have a profound effect on how people understand important problems, as the use of even a single metaphor can lead to significant disagreements in thinking about how to solve problems.

V. I. Shebanova (2012) analyzed the possibility of using body metaphors in corrective work with people suffering from eating disorders. Metaphoricity of the inner essence is its central characteristic. The functional significance of the metaphoricality of inner essence lies in the possibility of translating from the unconscious language of interoceptive sensations into the conscious language of exteroceptive sensations. The metaphorical image dissociates (builds distance) between the subject and his/her interoceptive sensation. This often alleviates discomfort, negative feelings, as they (feelings) are retransformed. Discomfort (in the form of feeling, pain, tension, feeling bad) becomes something that can be talked about, that can be understood, reconstructed, and thus transferred from terrible, uncontrollable to something else (at least less terrible, and ideally - to something good, pleasant). The possibility of transforming interoceptive sensations is unconsciously perceived by the subject as a possibility of controlling sensations and experiences (the possibility of controlling the inner essence).

From experience of participation in psychologically corrective groups, we confirm that the use of metaphor by practical psychologists effectively influences a change of strategies of competition into strategies of cooperation through acceptance of individuality of the self and the another person, which is very important for the formation of practical skills and skills of working in a team. Metaphorical stories presented in the group encourage to know the other and to reflect on one's participation in interaction with him/her. Thus, group work in accordance with the key tasks "metaphor - discussion - actualization of acceptance - readiness for cooperation" contributes to the formation of the business orientation of the specialist's personality and increases trust in the group.

Thus, the features of application of metaphor in group psychologically corrective work are as follows: multivariability of possible solutions to problems with the help of their projective transfer to metaphorical objectification; metaphor acts as a method of actualization of trust and successful communicative interaction between participants of group; allows to bypass the mechanisms of psychological defense to explain one's positions and to clarify the best options for solving a psychological problem; the body metaphor can be successfully combined with neuropsychological correction, to be used with neuropsychological purposes as a means of activating the right hemisphere of the brain, a method for correction of emotional and cognitive disorders, relaxation and body-oriented work.

An important criterion of effectiveness of metaphorical psychological correction is the satisfaction of participants in a group session with the result of work and participation, which is verified by their feedback through trust, acceptance and self-acceptance. According to K. Rudestam (1990), feedback in an atmosphere of mutual care and trust allows individuals to control and correct inappropriate behavior, providing a better understanding of the participants in the group process of each other.

Technologies of using metaphor in group psychologically corrective work

The use of group psychocorrection metaphors is possible in virtually all psychological approaches, and is especially active in positive psychology and art therapy techniques. Geschalt therapy, narrative therapy, body-oriented therapy, psychodrama, hypnotherapy, and, more recently, cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy. According to the cognitive-behavioral psychological theory of change of opinions, a decrease in the intensity and depth of strong emotions due to a change in the meaning of the experience promotes a decrease in anxiety and normalization of the client's psycho-emotional state. According to Steve Killick, Vicki Curry and Pamela Myles (2016), metaphor is a central therapist tool for many therapies, and they are a special feature of cognitive behavioral therapy.

In the metaphorical approach Tomas Rihacek, Jan Roubal, and Katarína Motalova (2020) confirm that in psychotherapeutic work metaphor can be meaningfully reduced to three mutually independent components: a directive, mentoring approach focused on personal growth (i.e. mentor); a non-directive approach based on providing cognitive and/or emotional resources to the client (i.e. Resource Provider); and an expert approach in

which the client is perceived as a recipient of assistance (i.e. Remedy distributor).

We believe that for metaphorical group psychological correction, it is desirable to form groups in advance (taking into account the goal of psychologically corrective work) according to the similarity of psychological problems and social and psychological compatibility - accordingly individual data of preliminary psychodiagnostics; to develop the most successful metaphors in accordance with the psychological problems and personal characteristics of group participants that are capable of providing a change in the attitude of participants in a practical session toward a crisis situation or post-traumatic events; to develop recommendations for new experiences as a group when discussing the results of work with metaphors; in group psychological correction of emotional disorders, it is desirable to use metaphors of depression, anxiety metaphors, fear metaphors, etc. in accordance with the data of individual psychological consultations (conducted for a group session) and discuss them with the "psychotherapeutic" goal of weakening negative emotions.

I. V. Vachkov (2007) proposes such tasks of group work on the problem metaphor, which sets the necessary program of change in behavior, participates in the restructuring of values, attitudes and positions: 1) to depict for 30 minutes a complex problem in a metaphorical form to the accompaniment of meditative music, it is possible to suggest drawing with the left hand - this allows liberating figurative and associative thinking; 2) each participant is offered to visit an vernissage of metaphorical problems - you need to see in the pictures of your comrades their problems, understand the meaning of the proposed metaphor and choose the picture whose metaphor seems closest to your image of the problem, choose related metaphors - so subgroups with common metaphors are created; 3) translate the metaphor from the language of the drawing into the language of words, tell it to their group mates; form a common group metaphor to be presented both in drawing and verbal presentation; participants discuss a common metaphorical image of the problem, without revealing its real content, using only metaphorical language; at the end of developing a common metaphor, each subgroup presents a metaphorical image of their problem to the others; the facilitator should refrain from commenting and thank the participants for working together; 4) create a metaphor of victory over a problem to the accompaniment of major music. Instead of a general drawing, the leader can suggest creating a live "sculpture" or "sculptural group," metaphorically reflecting a problem common to group members. Such a technique is actively used by psychodramatists. It is desirable that the presentation of

metaphors (in drawings, aphorisms, sculptures) of each group be accompanied by applause (Vachkov, 2007).

The essence of the process of metaphorization consists, first of all, in thinking by analogy, thanks to which the information field of consciousness on the psychological problems of participants in a group psychologically corrective session is expanded, allowing a view of a problem situation from different points of view. The group as a catalyst of the thought process strengthens the efficacy of metaphor. Thus, Ya. S. Andrushko (2017, pp. 9-10) describes a step-by-step algorithm for using metaphor, which can be applied both in individual counseling and psychocorrective work (or guided psychological counseling at the initial stage of psychocorrection): 1. Reflection on the problem, concentration on it, association with the problem. 2. Reflecting on an enjoyable regular activity that is not labor for the person. This activity will be a resource for him. 3. Linking the problem and the resource by constructing analogies. 4. Transferring the problem to the resource by analogy, finding a way out of the problem. 5. Transferring the solution to the resource problem to the real problem.

The purpose of the "Metaphor solves problem" exercise is to: analyze what kind of thinking can contribute to problem solving according to the following objectives: 1. Think of a problem you have that you would like to solve in a new way. Take, for example, an inability to focus on work. Identify some physical space in front of you and focus your attention on it. Feel what is happening to you at that moment, what associations. 2. now step out of the problem situation in a meta-position. 3. Think about something you do regularly that has nothing to do with the problem. It should be a resource for you and enjoyable. For example, being able to draw beautifully. Now for this resource state, fix a new physical space in front of you. Take a step away from it and focus on the feeling of being able to get out of difficult situations. 4. Look at your problem through the lens of your resource. Think of a metaphor linking the problem and your resource so that the problem is expressed in the activity area of the resource. For example: not being able to concentrate on your work is like having a pencil break every time you draw. 5. Find a way out of the metaphorical representation of the problem during a state of resource activity. For example, focus on controlling the force of pressing the pencil on the paper, and drawing will go by itself. 6. Take a step back in the meta-position and think about how you would move the metaphorical solution to a real-world situation where you are facing the same problem. Now step into the space of the problem situation to see if you can get out of the impasse. For example, focusing on

controlling my pencil is similar to defining the goals and motivation of my work. I understand "why", so understanding of "how" and "what" will come by itself (Maksymenko, et al., 2015, pp. 242 - 243).

Metaphor in psychological group work promotes a clearer expression of one's opinions and positions, without fear of being judged by other participants; helps to open up to clients who find it difficult to express and talk about their feelings and themselves; a quick easing of negative emotions, in particular conflict, aggression, etc., which can impede open and trustful communication in a group; each participant of a psychologically corrective session sees his or her problem and others from different points of view; the removal of communication barriers and psychological defense mechanisms; gives participants of a psychologically corrective group confidence in managing training situations; promotes personal growth and the formation of life-constructing strategies.

Working with the client's life metaphor, it is possible to understand quite precisely what is going on in his life, whether he has the psychological resources to solve the problem and to help create a new metaphor and find new meaning. Through work with a metaphor, it is possible to unfold the client's subjective picture of the world, making it more complete; to return the client to an active (authorial) position in his life, to share with him responsibility for what is happening and the subsequent result; to connect the client's subjective perception and his practical experience in a real situation. The life metaphor defines a variant and way of identification (who am I in this metaphor?), a certain attitude towards myself and others around me (who are they in this metaphor?), a way of connection with others, an understanding of the situation, fixed static rigid patterns belonging to this metaphor, the statement of a personal problem, the client's contribution to its occurrence and the choices open to him to change his life (individually possible and committed way of solution), resources and intended way of action in the future. The exercise "Verbal life metaphor" with the following instructions is effective in accomplishing these tasks: 1) write the beginning of a sentence and finish it: "My life is..."; 2) group together with similar metaphors and tell partners about your metaphor; 3) group work in a circle (addressing the most frequently used metaphors, the main characteristics of metaphors, and questions to answer for self-awareness; 4) reflection (Kosarevska & Kutkina 2021).

Fairy tale therapy is a modern psychologically corrective method belonging to projective methods of self-knowledge and work with metaphor. The primary goal of using fairy tale therapy in group psychologically corrective work is to help participants rediscover the basic values of life and

to build a productive life program, to be reborn and given an incentive to further self-improvement. Playing out each personal tale in a psychologically corrective (psychotherapeutic) group occurs in accordance with the fundamental principles of psychodrama and consists of several stages: a psychological warm-up; psychodramatic action - playback of a personal tale by one of the group members in turn and in the roles of the director (the psychologist), protagonist (the author of the tale) and audience (other group members); discussion (shearing), which concluded the session and involved experiencing participants' own emotions and experiences as characters and the author (protagonist) as a spectator and analysis of the fairy tale. Spontaneous behavior of participants emphasizes the principle of "here and now", that is, problems and relationships are not discussed verbally, but are lived out in real action at an actual moment in time. Each participant gains real-world experience from the example of others, allowing them to identify, recognize, and find solutions to problems by building constructive and productive behavioral strategies. Thus, reproduction of a fairy tale displays the client's real problems rather than creating imaginary stage images. The final result of the psychodramatic process is a change in the structure of the organization of the perceptual field of participants, insight (Lytvynenko, 2016).

The consultant should apply metaphors taking into account the specificity of psychological problems of participants in a psychologically corrective session, the complexity of psychological traumatic situations and their emotional reactions, their expectations and values, psychological resourcefulness, individual psychological features, personal readiness, age and sex.

Conclusion

We define metaphor in group psychocorrection as an informational psychodiagnostic tool, a projective method of research into the deep structure of the psyche and a method of social perception, projection of the client onto subjectively significant values and problems; a psychotherapeutic strategy for resolving a personal crisis - both in individual counseling practice and in group psychocorrection; a way of successful dialogic interaction and communication between the counselor and the client; a neuropsychological means of activating the right hemisphere of the brain; a psychological motivator of cognition and positive personal change.

The features of application of metaphor in group work are caused by properties of metaphor as a method of psychological correction as an

activator of the thinking process and as a psychological means of self-knowledge. In psychological practice, metaphor as an express-diagnosis allows the consultant to cognize the inner world of the client, the expression of his sensations, feelings, emotions, associations and thoughts and relations to himself, other people and the world in order to implement effective corrective and developmental psychological interventions. Metaphor is a motivational tool for personal development, self-discovery, and creative self-expression. In the wider understanding of the psychologically corrective method, metaphor is a motivator of personal self-development as a psychological resource of the self-sufficiency of the subject of his or her own life in the context of metaphorical objectification of universal values - happiness, peace, love, freedom, trust, acceptance.

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