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ARRANGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES LIVING IN NEUROPSYCHIATRIC NURSING HOMES OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

Abstract. The article discusses possible ways of education for people over 18 years with marked mental and physical disabilities. These ways imply the creation of educational environment for their socialization involving the following conditions: scientific substantiation and development of curricula for neuropsychiatric boarding houses, designing supra-disciplinary, generalized modes of life, introduction of life communication and applied content of training.

Keywords: people with marked mental and physical disabilities, educational fields with life content, life prospects of nursing homes residents, feasible work about the house, secure working conditions.

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Preparation of persons with special psycho-physical needs for life so that they might be employed and occupied in the way capable of improving their material and social status becomes of primary importance in the Republic of Belarus, the same as in the whole world.

Children, teenagers and adults with marked psycho-physical disabilities living in neuropsychiatric nursing homes represent a problem-ridden group characterized by various conditions in of clinical character (due to organic lesions of the central nervous system) and complex impairments of physical, psychological, intellectual

and emotional properties (I. M. Bgzhnokova, S. D. Zabramnaya, K. S. Lebedinskiy, V. I. Lubovskiy, A. R. Maller, M. S. Pevzner, G. V. Tsikoto, etc.). It is necessary to start with the definition of "persons with marked psycho-physical disabilities". Using professional jargon and the terminology of the normative documentation of the Republic of Belarus these are persons with moderate and severe intellectual disability and severe and/or multiple disorders of physical and/or psychological development [5]. The main criterion of uniting these persons in one category is a marked (considerable) degree of

intellectual underdevelopment. The existing psycho-physical peculiarities of development have different impact the formation of their social ties and cognitive abilities.

In the 20th century, the question of capability of persons with marked psycho-physical disabilities was a debatable one. Until recent times (early 2000s), **education** for children with marked psycho-physical disabilities at children boarding houses under the Ministry of Labor and Social Security was not provided. The work of personnel of the given institutions was aimed at providing **treatment and care** of such children. Boarding houses for adults do not provide education even now. The leading type of institutions providing support is still represented by a neuropsychiatric nursing home for the elderly and disabled persons; it is a stationary institution whose main task, according to the Order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of the Republic of Belarus (#5 of January 10, 2013) is to organize care of people who are recognized as disabled and provide daily activities support and medical treatment for them [11]. But the problems of inclusion but not simple placing an adult with psycho-physical disabilities at a boarding house creates new challenges or, namely, **educational tasks** connected with the opportunity to realize **vocational education** – training of an adult person for maximally independent but professionally guided living [6].

Creation of condition for **continuing** (life-time) further education after 18 targeting realization of the right to work for persons with intellectual dis-

ability living both in the families and boarding houses for adults is one of the goals of improvement of special education in the Republic of Belarus.

Success of continuing education depends on a number of factors and conditions. The society should reach the necessary economic and social level of development. The concept of continuing education has undergone certain transformation in the history of education of many centuries. Strictly speaking, “continuity” in reference to education is interpreted as constant repeated contacts of a person with the sphere of education during all his life cycle. The main condition here is constant and incessant growth of the level of education and culture of the student’s personality.

We define continuing education as a system of vital activity of a person realizing the person’s right to education, guaranteeing the creation of adaptive-developing environment and individualized according to the content, time, tempo and needs and abilities of persons with marked psycho-physical disabilities. The urgency of the topic is determined by the legal, political, economic and social necessity.

The purpose of continuing education of a person with marked psycho-physical disabilities over their entire life is constant (lifelong) development of such a person with the help of education aimed primarily at the improvement of their life quality in the conditions of cooperation and support by other people providing a sphere for positive imitation, which would facilitate acquisition of social experience and overcoming of social barriers.

Today, medically fit persons with intellectual disability can get a profession at institutions of secondary vocational education after finishing special schools (special boarding schools) [3]. But this concerns only people with **mild** intellectual disability.

A number of special secondary school leavers (especially persons with moderate and severe intellectual disability, multiple disabilities mostly consisting in impairments of the musculoskeletal system, and other deviations) cannot get a “profession” because they medically unfit for it. It is not incidentally that the word is put in inverted commas: its meaning in reference to the given category of persons can be transformed. Thus, they are deprived of the chance to get a job, additional material provision, integration in society and, consequently, become social outcasts [8].

Many of them have no access to day care groups of territorial centers of services for the population which are subordinate to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of the Republic of Belarus and have been functioning since 2007 due to age qualifications – from 18 to 31 years of age [12]. Some pupils on completion of grade 9 which is a senior form in the second division do not reach this age range. Social workers of the centers are not always duly prepared for work with persons of the given category. Not all education institutions possess the conditions for placing people with moderate and severe intellectual disability. The graduates don't have proper preparation for showing independence, their resilience is inadequate.

For a 17 year old person, a year of being left without education is equal to the loss of a decade; they quickly lose the acquired habits and skills in conditions of absence of their demand. The question of the future of their child is rather painful for the parents. The prospect of sending their child to a closed neuropsychiatric nursing home is not attractive. All that has been said above brings us to the thought about the urgency of prolonging the term of study at a special school for preparation for social, daily living and labor activities with the purpose of employment of separate school leavers [7].

The situation with adults not living in the family but in neuropsychiatric nursing homes, i.e. in conditions of a closed society is even worse. These persons have very low motivation for self-development, display personality deformation and underdeveloped sense of responsibility for their actions. Due to diagnostic tools imperfection or some other reasons neuropsychiatric nursing homes may have persons with typical psychological development, with disorders of psychological development and deviant behavior which is the result of the social situation in institutions of a closed type. Many residents of boarding houses have never received any education and as a result are “incapacitated” and stand no chance to be employed as their working capacity is still determined by the diagnostic approach. Many of such people living in boarding houses for adults cannot read, write or count because they have never been taught those skills or

taught them unsystematically, from time to time.

Awakening motivation necessary for restoration of typical abilities would allow us to include persons living in boarding houses in support activity, to train their level of independence and keep it active, which would facilitate socialization and social integration of persons with psycho-physical disabilities living in neuropsychiatric nursing homes and would also reduce state expenditure for their upkeep.

We look at the capacities of residents realistically and do not think that typical abilities can be restored for all persons with psycho-physical disabilities, but equal educational conditions should be provided for all, each person should be given a chance to restore their abilities. In this connection we believe it possible and necessary to create educational conditions for socialization and social integration of persons with psycho-physical disabilities living in neuropsychiatric nursing homes.

We believe that it is urgent to start creating educational conditions with the scientific foundation and design of the curriculum for neuropsychiatric nursing homes including such academic disciplines as daily living independence, development of communication, reading and writing, practical mathematics with elements of computer literacy, man and his health, fundamentals of creative artistic activity, etc.

The curriculum is the basic normative state-approved document which designates the academic disciplines and the number of hours of

weekly study of a subject.

While designing and working out the scientific foundation of the curriculum for neuropsychiatric nursing homes we took into consideration, first of all, the modern level of development of our country, life prospects of the residents and guarantee of their resilience.

The education content is defined in general pedagogy as “a system of scientific knowledge, methods of activity and social relations to be mastered by the students” [15, p. 40]. The education content becomes the subject of study in many countries. The Kazakhstan defectological science finds it rational “to think over again the goals, content, methods, means and organization forms of education of persons with special educational needs” and work out “a conception of the new content of special education of children with various developmental deviations” (Z. A. Movkebaeva) [10, p. 14].

We tried to design the content in such a way that the student’s resilience be improved. The education content is also correlated with the further life of school leavers. Those who live in the families may pass over to territorial centers of social services for the population; those who are left without parental care enter neuropsychiatric nursing homes for adults. Wherever the person might be, they must have sense of life, which turns life into conscious being. The sense of life helps one to see living perspectives and make plans for the future. It sets the tempo of living.

In relation to persons with psy-

cho-physical disabilities, we can speak of rehabilitation developing education which primarily ensures formation and development of the personality, accumulation of social experience and acquisition of activity skills: the bigger the social experience, the more successful the socialization and social integration of such persons in society will be.

We tried to define the components of the education content for persons with marked psycho-physical disabilities with the help of the comparative method. The cognitive, practical, creative and value-based components of education are distinguished in the general education school [1, p. 153]. Based on the existing experience of teaching children with moderate and severe intellectual disability under 18, the analysis of the curriculum and educational programs for classes of the second division of the special school, the learning potential of such pupils and patho-biological mechanisms of the disabilities, we selected other components and in a different hierarchy than those in the general education school [7].

Priority is given to the emotional-value-based component: emotionally positive educational environment, formation of emotional-friendly attitude to the surrounding people, and emotional-value-based orientation. The given component became the reason of inclusion of such subject as "Fundamentals of Artistic-Creative Activity" in the curriculum.

The practical component reflects the acquisition of skills and methods of doing something; they constitute

and enrich social experience. The practical component is the basic one in the curriculum for neuropsychiatric nursing homes. It is realized in all disciplines of the curriculum but the subjects "Daily Living Independence" and "Practical Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy".

The cognitive component is not a major, but an additional one. It forms vitagenetic vitally important knowledge meeting the practical demands of the students.

The creative component is distinguished in the education of adults with psycho-physical disorders for the first time. It is supported by the subject "Fundamentals of Artistic-Creative Activity". Many scholars at different times (V. A. Barkov, L. B. Baryaeva, I. M. Bgazhnokova, L. A. Golovchits, E. K. Gracheva, S. D. Zabramnaya, T. L. Leshchinskaya, T. V. Lisovskaya, E. T. Loginova, A. R. Maller, V. I. Radionova, A. M. Tsarev, G. V. Tsikoto, L. M. Shinkarenko, V. A. Shipitsina, etc.) noted that the motor and emotional spheres of children with marked psycho-physical disorders are tend to be close to typical [4]. Working together with talented children and adults under certain circumstances and with the help of special technologies such children are capable of creating new things and ideas and achieving considerably high results. We transferred the given results on the education of adult people. The general character of a person with marked psycho-physical disabilities changes due to application of compensatory mechanisms of the central nervous system. Thus, a complimentary remark or demonstration

of achievements produces a positive response; the range of performed actions widens and new nervous structures get involved in activity in the process of creative work. Good mood and involvement of emotions enhance the feeling of success; higher mental functions restore and develop.

Let us give a brief description of some academic subjects of the curriculum for neuropsychiatric nursing homes.

Introduction of the discipline “Daily Living Independence” is determined by the orientation of education towards formation of ability and preparation for activity in everyday situation which needs mastery of generalized abstract actions and not only concrete object-oriented methods of activity. The system of urgent generalized methods of activity is determined by the spheres of the person’s living and necessary life competences [9]. The content of the subject includes the list of typical living situations which are reproduced, and the algorithms of their solutions are trained. The situations are included in the life of the residents of nursing homes. The formation of methods of living activity will also make it possible to work on daily living, process-focused supported behavior of persons with psycho-physical disabilities.

The introduction of the subject “Development of Communication, Reading and Writing” is intended to expand the ties between the students with marked psycho-physical disorders and their inclusion in social interaction in the form acceptable to them. Communication can be carried out not only with the help of speech

(words) but by means of pictures, gestures, tactile symbols, telecommunication, graphic symbols, pictograms (pictures or groups of pictures expressing a certain meaning), and gestures which are used as gesture support of oral speech or as an independent means of communication (gesture speech). Communication may supplement speech (supplementative communication) or expand cognition (augmentative communication). Some scholars identify supplementative and augmentative communication [14, p. 20]. We believe that augmentative communication is broader and deeper than supplementative communication because it broadens the vision. A specific form of communication can be chosen in reference to concrete needs of the people with marked psycho-physical disorders – life communication. The content and character of the life communication is determined by the necessity to satisfy the living needs individual capabilities of the person. Life communication gives life to interaction between people, orients it towards a concrete person and a specific life situation. Various communication means can be used in different situations. Their use is determined by life significance. The pedagogue watches and assesses the degree to which the given communication means improves the working capacity and the quality of life.

While teaching reading, **sense comprehension** consisting in understanding the incoming perceived information becomes of primary importance. **Collective reading** of the pedagogue and the student is used for

this purpose; it is an inclusive, sequential, explanatory reading. Focusing on the content and understanding of what is being read will ensure consciousness of the learning activity of all pupils. The perceived information acquires practical significance in daily living activities. The process of learning writing and its purpose will be changed. Learning writing will include writing words, sentences and texts with the help of computer. The students get acquainted with the aim and general content of some official papers: announcements, applications, receipts. It is advisable to use the Russian language adapted to the capabilities or needs and matching the life purposes of the persons with marked psycho-physical disorders.

The subject "Practical Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy" is also included in the curriculum. The word "practical" is defined as "being practical in a *целесообразный* kind of activity, ... developing skills, habits and experience [13, p. 772]. The subject "Practical Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy" includes the teaching material about actions with numbers, about values, forms and spatial relations having practical significance and used in everyday life. "Practical Mathematics with Elements of Computer Literacy" allows widening the received training of students by supplementing arithmetic numbers with geometric material of practical nature. The pragmatic orientation of education is enhanced as typically practical problems directly dealing with everyday life will be solved in the process of learning fun-

damentals of applied mathematics. Special role is allotted to electronic educational resources which acquire special symbolic significance and allow using color and sound for creating certain emotional background and sensory stimulation by means of polar stimulators. Teaching the elements of computer literacy will facilitate social contacts of the students living in boarding houses and will raise their quality of life. We believe that the use of new contemporary information computerized materials will enhance the pupil's motivation, and set the individual tempo and volume of performance, i.e. will personify the process of learning and will allow us to promptly see and evaluate the result of the pupil's work and will make the process of education interactive.

The subject "Man and his Health" is called upon to form knowledge and skills responsible for execution of health-preserving life activity, measure the basic health indicators, support health and improve it. Health is interpreted in a broad sense, i.e. as bodily, physical and psychological well-being. The aim of the subject "Man and his Health" is to preserve health in the broad sense of the word. The subject forms the skills and habits of healthy life-style. The students study and master the medico-hygienic rules of preservation and improvement of health. Individual health of the student is analyzed on the basis of concrete data. Certain practical skills of health-preserving behavior are formed. The students can: a) diagnose their health by the most general symptoms; b) follow the main health-protection prescriptions; c) mas-

ter the rules of behavior in case of illness or trauma; d) know how to ask for help in case of illness or threat to safety.

The subject “Fundamentals of Creative Artistic Activity” may include musico-rhythmical classes, art (painting, drawing, and sculpture), and dramatic sessions. The given subject will help realize the interaction between pedagogy and art and use them in rehabilitation taking into account the person’s interests and abilities. The subject has a therapeutical load. It lowers anxiety and fear and raises self-evaluation; it discovers hidden talents and develops personal features. Classes in creative artistic activity are based on the traditional Belarusian techniques (tsatskovanie, flyandrovka) [2]. Non-verbal language helps understand things which usually remain unnoticed. Dramatic art has powerful rehabilitation potential. Directors say that dramatic and witty humorous works of art possess strong rehabilitation potential. Rhythmical dances develop movement and reform the motor sphere of activity of students. The students can be successful in creative activity when they are provided the proper conditions for interpretation of the happening events and while watching and independent identification of the methods of their doing. The use of emotions in exercising motor activity is of great importance, too. So, inclusion into collective activity on the basis of execution models constituting a new didactic support of the education process open up new vistas for the development of students.

Conclusions

The novelty of the proposed content of education consists in the following:

a) in recognition of the possibility of creative activity of persons with marked psycho-physical disabilities given the corresponding conditions are created; these conditions are determined by new subject areas which allow teachers to use the unity of pedagogy and art and the emotional and motor potential in rehabilitation programs;

b) in defining a new subject area “Daily Living Independence” forming super-subject generalized ways of living enhancing resilience and manifestation of guided independence;

c) in introduction of life communication widening the scope of communication, exchange of opinions on the basis symbols and expanding the range of stimulating the nervous system;

d) in a great variety of applied content of education (daily living independence, practical mathematics) which allows one to use their abilities (in full or partially), realize their importance and usefulness and raise their self-assessment.

In future, we are going to work out assessment scales of the level of independence (level of self-service, level of adequate behavior, level of speech, reading and writing comprehension, elementary level of practical mathematics, etc.) and educational programs for the singled out academic subjects.

The scientific research and practical activity of the Belorussian defecologists demonstrated evident limitations of the monistic approach to a person with psycho-physical disorders

and the obvious ineffectiveness of marginalization of special education. The image of a person with marked psycho-physical disorders is being changed by the combined effort of various specialists. It has been proved that such person may become more self-dependent, resilient and develop his own personality.

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