

Resources of a specialist's personality in counteraction against negative impacts of professional stress

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Abstract. The article deals with the definition of personal resources of a specialist that contribute to counteracting professional stress. It has been proved that the determinants of stress resilience are such structural components of a personality as: orientation, experience, mental processes, neurodynamics, temperament, character and abilities. It has been found out that an important resource of a personality in counteracting against professional stress is the social factor, namely: social network and social support. It has been established that a high level of stress resilience is stipulated by self-confidence, self-assurance, low level of personal anxiety, high level of volitional self-control, self-command, internal control locus, readiness for activity.

Keywords: professional stress, resource, resilience, determinants, counteraction.

Introduction. In modern world in the conditions of crisis economy, social and political instability under the influence of permanent stress factors the long stay of a human being in emotional stress leads to a feeling of fatigue, chronic fatigue, worsening of various diseases, decreased work capacity. It is thanks to the resistance to the action of stress factors that a person is able to maintain mental work capacity and physical health and professional efficiency. Nowadays, stress at work is a significant problem that is related to professional health and professional well-being. Therefore, the search for resources that would avoid the negative effects of professional stress is extremely important.

A brief overview of publications on the topic. Leading scientists around the world (L. Lazarus, R. Lanier, S. Folkman, A. Kitaev-Smyk, A. Suvorova, V. Marishchuk, V. Bodrov, G. Nikiforov, N. Tarabarina) studied various aspects of professional stress – its causes, consequences, development, stress-management, psychological techniques of overcoming. The research of psychological peculiarities of behavior in overcoming stress was carried out by V. Viliunas, Y. Wittenberg, T. Kryukova, L. Kulikov, A. Libina, S. Nartova-Bochaver, N. Syrota, J. Billings, S. Sohen, N. Endler, C. Holahan, R. Moos, M. Perez, J. Schaefereta, etc.).

Ukrainian school of psychology directed its research on the stressful impacts of the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe (V. Molyako, S. Yakovenko, A. Kulazhenko); psychological support of the activities of specialists in common and special conditions (V. Krainjuk, M. Korolchuk, A. Timchenko, S. Myronets, S. Lebedeva, L. Pereligina); overcoming professional crises, burnout (N. Bulatevych, L. Berezhovska); overcoming the professional strain of specialists in power structures (M. Korolchuk, V. Stasyuk, V. Osyodlo, N. Ivanova, S. Myronets, V. Shevchenko, O. Timchenko).

The purpose of the article is to characterize and analyze the resources of the personality, which enable to counteract against the impacts of the negative effects of professional stress.

Results and their discussions.

In modern psychological literature, professional stress is seen as: experiencing of mental tension in conditions of high responsibility for decision making (G. Nikiforov, [6]) the discrepancy of the requirements of the working environment to the individual resources of the worker, which poses a potential threat to the success of professional work and health (A. Leonova, [6]); a stressful state of the worker, which arises under the influence of emotionally negative and

extreme factors in the performance of their professional activity (N. Samoukina [7]).

On the basis of our own experimental research, we identify professional stress as an integral mental state, the result of the impact of short or long-term stress-related (external or internal) factors that, in interaction with the integral system, were excessive from the side of the environment or peculiarities of the organization, or inadequate with regard to the requirements and capabilities from the side of the overcoming coping strategies of a specialist. This leads to negative manifestations and consequences in the structural components of the personality at the psychological, social, biological (physiological) or professional levels, which significantly reduce the effectiveness of professional activity.

Negative effects of stress on the personality can be professional crises, professional deformations, and professional burnout.

Resilience of the personality to counteract stress depends on many factors. Thus, the important personality's resource in counteracting professional stress is the social factor, namely the characteristics of the social environment that are moderators of stress. This includes social networking and social support. In psychology, the social network is a system of social relations of a personality, for example, a network of relatives, friendship or a working network [1, p. 49]. In this case, the size of the group, the duration of relationships, support, the frequency of contacts have a great significance.

Social support provides satisfaction of specific social needs: in intimacy, protection, information, practical assistance, relaxation, calming, etc. This concept describes the main functional aspect of social relations and networks of relationships. The components of social support are: perceived support, i.e., understanding that you are supported; received or actual support (enacted support) and mutual support; support network, or support resources that make it possible to appeal to those who support and help. Sources of support are carriers of certain social roles (partners, relatives, etc.). There can be psychological support (emotional, cognitive, self-esteem, etc.) and instrumental support (tips, information, work, money, etc.) [1, p. 49].

According to S. A. Cohen and T. A. Wills the mechanism of action of social support is that the subject is convinced that he is loved, appreciated, cared about and he is a member of the social network and has mutual obligations with it. Four types of social support are distinguished by C.A. Hill: 1) emotional or intimate – care for the others, trust and sym-

pathy for him; 2) instrumental or material – assistance from colleagues at work, financial assistance, provision of resources; 3) information – assistance in solving the problem by providing important information and advice; 4) feedback or support in the assessment form – performance evaluation after the problem is solved. Components of social support by definition of T.A. Wills are the structure (family status, number of friends, relationship with relatives, members of formal and informal organizations, etc.); functions (emotional, appraisal, informational, resource); effect (satisfaction with the support) [1, 8, 9].

It has been found that social support can reduce the negative effect of stressful events. Integration into the social network improves well-being (the main effect). Knowledge and confidence that in difficult life situations you will be given support (cognitive, emotional support and self-esteem support), as well as the presence of significant people that support you in stressful situations, contribute to "buffering" of the negative effects of stress [1, 8, 11].

Scientists have identified the possible effects of social support. Thus, the buffering effect implies that the impact of high intensity stress is mitigated by social support and acts as a buffer between the stressor and the person. The effect of low intensity stress does not include the actions of social support, and the body overcomes stress without participation. High social support neutralizes the negative effects of high intensity stress and ensures good health. Low social support at high intensity stress does not have a buffering effect, which leads to deterioration of health. The directed effect is characterized by the fact that the very existence of social support has a beneficial effect on health. The presence of weak social support, its absence leads to deterioration of health. The non-directional effect, high level of social support boosts self-esteem that contributes to the preservation of health. Low social support lowers self-esteem, resulting in health deteriorating [1, 8, 10].

Mechanisms of the positive influence of social relations and support are manifested in the following effects: **Social effect of the "shield"**. The effect is transmitted in a social environment: the social structure of relationships contributes to the reduction of stress events and the increase of positive events that can stabilize and even improve competence in overcoming stress and the general condition of the personality. **Cognitive effect of the "shield"**. It is assumed that the perception of social support blocks relevant stress-related negative judgments about the events and, at the same time, increases the favorable assessments of the surrounding world. This contributes to the positive assessment of objective evidence of the situation and their subjective significance. **The effect of emotional relaxation and buffering**. Only knowledge of the existence of the close people, moreover, their personal presence can reduce emotional reactions, especially fear and uncertainty caused by the future or present stressful situation, and thus – to counteract it. On the other hand, the lack or shortage of close people and support can worsen the general state and increase the tendency to stress. **Cognitive effect of overcoming the problem**. This mechanism of influence is associated with the cognitive process of secondary assessment, chosen goals and strategies to overcome. Knowing that it is possible to involve someone in solving a problem or counseling may change the perception of stress and the possibilities to overcome it. **Social overcoming**, or help in overcoming stress relates to the functions of the received support. The help in overcoming

has three functions: maintenance of specific, relevant psychological systems of overcoming (for example, strengthening of morality, self-worth, self-productivity); active support in overcoming and solving problems (for example, help in making possible solutions); direct intervention in overcoming (providing psychological help) [1, 8, 9, 10, 11].

It has been determined that social support reduces the negative effect of stress and increases its positive effect by the type of buffer system by increasing self-esteem, growing the strength of the immune system, resulting in reduced susceptibility to illnesses. Social support helps to overcome stress through boosting self-esteem; at the expense of other people's help with the change of the stress situation; by including the appraisal of a significant person in the person's system, that changes the affective response to the action of the stressor and allows us to see the situation "in a different light" [1, 9, 11].

According to the results of the own experimental studies, it has been determined that the counteraction of a person against professional stress has a multi-level determination and is stipulated by the characteristics of the environment as well as personal factors. So, I-concept is the basic resource for overcoming stress. It reflects a person's perception of himself, his Self. I-concept is a complicatedly-constructed entity. It reflects both age and individual characteristics, it is included in many relationships and relations with other phenomena of individual development, each of which contributes to its formation and, at the same time, characterizes and directs its straight interaction. I-concept is the most important personal resource to overcome stress; individual styles of overcoming stress relate to certain types of I-concept; the mutual influence of the I-concept and the coping mechanisms allow preserving the stability of the I system and to mitigate the negative impact of stress on the body; the formation of active coping strategies and the positive self-concept potentiates mutual development, contributes to the successful stress resilience of the personality; the formation of passive strategies for overcoming stress and the negative I-concept makes a negative inter-impact and reduces the level of a person's stability to professional stress [4, p. 365].

Subjective control of the own behavior and situation – locus control is an important personal resource, on the basis of which the behavior that overcomes stress is formed. The internal locus of control serves as a predictor of successful adaptation, healthy behavior, adequate family and other interpersonal relationships, ensures achievement and prevents failures. The internal control locus ensures responsibility in decision-making, social activity, certain dominance, emotional stability, moral normality, expressed cognitive activity, a sense of control over the environment.

There are a lot of scientific publications that confirm that the internal control locus allows reducing the negative effects of acute and chronic stress that the higher the personal control over the situation, the lower the level of anxiety under pressure; externals are less capable of using social support for regulation of assistance. Subjects with external control locus receive social support more than subjects with internal control, but subjects with internal control use it more effectively, and therefore the stress-buffering effect of social support is more expressed in subjects with internal control than with an external one [1, 2, 4].

The expressed internal control potentiates cognitive and social activity, boosts self-esteem and strengthens the stability of the I-concept, allows realizing the goals, forming pro-

fessional-educational aspirations purposefully and binding them with a remote temporal perspective. It also promotes the establishment of adequate interpersonal relationships, manifestations of openness [1, 4].

The development of cognitive capabilities influences the development of skills to overcome problems and skills for interpersonal, communicative effectiveness. Self-respect and self-efficacy, that are the product of the development of cognitive processes, provide the opportunity to respond adequately to stressful situations and cope with them, lead to the formation of stress-resilient high-functional behavior.

The development of the communicative sphere is the next important personal resource of resilience to professional stress. The communicative personal resources that influence behavior of the personality include affiliation and empathy.

It has been established that personal peculiarities that mediate stress resilience include: emotional stability and endurance. Endurance is seen as a personal attribute, which includes a comprehensive system of beliefs about itself and the outside world that supports the person in the interaction with stressful events. The following dimensions as commitment, control and ability to accept the challenge are typical of this system of beliefs. These elements change the influence of stressors, influencing their cognitive assessment, and thus contribute to stress resilience, supporting the sense of self-worth, activating resources to overcome. This includes the internal harmony of the personality, self-efficacy and optimism.

It has been found out that stress resilience of a personality can be determined by the degree of mastering special skills and knowledge, internal sense of duty, responsibility, self-control, the character of assessment of the reality, high level of self-esteem, low level of anxiety, having experience of overcoming stressful situations. Among the factors of individual development of the body the greatest importance in formation of stress resilience is the experience acquired with prolonged stressful influences. This experience contributes to the adaptability of the organism to stress, which allows you to maintain stability in the implementation of various forms of activity and adequately regulate behavior in stressful situations.

According to our experimental data, stress resilience, as an integral characteristic of mental development, is formed in the process of human ontogenesis based on genetically predetermined individual characteristics in the context of a particular social environment. The basis of stress resilience is the primary stress resilience, which we define as a biological component of it, which includes the whole complex of features of the functioning of the brains: emotional tone, endurance, accuracy, functional mobility, reliability, basic characteristics and features of the main nervous processes, the level of activation, the complex of constitutional-genetic, physiological, endocrine and other systems that provide its adequate and stable functioning under stressful conditions [4].

In general, stress resilience depends on both the genotype (primary stress resilience) and the characteristics of external, personality and social influence or experience. We distinguish three types of interaction: preservation, amplification and induction. The first type of interaction is characterized by the fact that if there is a high level of indicators of the primary stress resilience, even without relevant experience, this level provides an optimal stress resilience of the personality.

In the presence of a certain social impact, experience, training and the appropriate level of the primary stress resilience, a personality's stress resilience will increase. In the presence of a minimum level of the primary stress resilience (corresponding typological peculiarities), its development is possible with the accumulation of experience and targeted social impact.

High rates of the primary stress → natural high stress resilience.

Minimal level of the primary stress resilience + social experience → optimal stress resilience.

High level of the primary stress resilience + social experience → high stress resilience.

We have established the following regularity: the higher the primary stress resilience the higher the probability of normal functioning of the body and effective activity with increasing the intensity of stress factors of the environment. The higher the index of the primary stress resilience the more a person can successfully and dynamically act in severe conditions, and can resist and overcome stress, the higher probability of maintaining efficiency and health after the impact of negative environmental factors.

The primary stress resilience significantly affects the overall level of stress resilience. At the same time, personal, social and behavioral components and properly organized external influences can compensate weaknesses of the nervous system to some extent. Although, stress resilience depends on the typological factor of personality, the critical importance in its formation is given to the personal, social, behavioral components and learning, that is proved on the basis of analysis of literary sources and the own empirical studies [4].

Consequently, a personality's stress resilience to professional stress includes the following characteristics: the ability to adequacy of cognitive representation of stress factors; the ability to analyze and associate the perception of the real characteristics of a stressor with functionally adequate responses; the presence of appropriate effective beliefs or professional rules of conduct (since consciousness processes are included in the choice of response methods); the presence of feedback information as to the subjective and objective effectiveness of the result of coping.

Conclusions. It has been determined that stress resilience is a dynamic, integrative characteristic of a personality. The adequacy of the assessment of the situation and the own resources determines the intensity of reactions directed by the personality to change the components of the stress situation, the change of cognitive representation, attitude, motivation, volitional orientation, coping behavior. Stress resilience of the personality to professional stress ensures the efficiency and reliability of the activity, mental and physical health of the personality.

Stress resilience of the personality has a multi-level determination. It has been proved that a high level of stress resilience is stipulated by even-temperedness, self-confidence, lack of shyness, low level of personal anxiety, volitional self-control, self-command; the characteristics of the motivational sphere – motivation of social significance of work, professional skills, achievement; high level of internal control locus, readiness for activity. Stress resilience as an integral characteristic of mental development is formed in the process of human ontogenesis on the basis of genetically predetermined individual characteristics. It is the primary stress resilience that is the base, the basis on which the exter-

nal influences are formed and through which they are transformed. On the basis of our research, the speed of information processing, the lability of nerve processes, reliability, endurance, accuracy and efficient performance of the activity are determinative.

It has been revealed that the leading resources that determine the resilience to professional stress are assertive actions, activity in interaction, prosociality, activity of a personality, search for social support, and entry into social contact.

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