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WORKING WITH REQUESTS REGARDING SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN COUPLES APPLYING THE SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY METHOD

Hupalovska V. A.

*Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Psychology Department
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv
Lviv, Ukraine*

The problems that concern sexual relationships have recently become quite common among today's young people, who belong to the age of early adulthood (20-40 years). Teenagers are experiencing the stage of identity formation, thus they address mainly existential, self-understanding, personal identity issues, conflicts with parents, lack of support, etc.

14 out of 18 couples, who approached us in the years 2018-2020 for psychological counseling with a request regarding sexuality, voiced as a request the reluctance of one of the couple to have more sexual contacts, which would be desirable for the other. Two persons (women) declared a lack of sexual desire, which was their request, and still two others (women) reported their reluctance to have sexual relationships with their spouse in the context of regular sexual gratification, which was a problem for them.

As a result of therapy, it became clear that sexual reluctance is the 'tip of the iceberg', the main part of which constitutes the problems in relationships (smoldering interpersonal conflict, power struggle, a specific way of 'not giving' something to another person as a kind of mini-revenge for some hidden insults) or is a consequence of a life situation. In two cases, when we observed a higher desire of a woman to have a sexual contact with a partner, it was an attempt to find emotional contact with him: 'If no other way, then at least this way' (in the words of the client).

SFBT, brief psychotherapy, focused on finding the solution has been shown to be effective in dealing with problems that were initially declared by the clients to be sexual ones. To start with, the very first questions, typical for this method, proved to be effective: 'What should we discuss for you to know that your coming here was for a reason?' [4; 6], and concerning the purpose: 'What should change after our conversation so that you understand that you did not waste your time?' [1; 2; 5]. In the process of

formulation of answers, it usually turns out that it is not sexual contacts that are viewed as the primary need of clients. Women usually lack partner's emotional reaction to themselves: contact, kindness, support, approval, admiration, and sometimes just being listened to. In the case of men, this need (demand) declared a request for greater dedication of a woman to the family (a wife was engaged in important projects in her professional activity), a request for more attention to the relationships, trying to control the partner, her emotions, anxiety about rejection, dissatisfaction of a wife with her husband, his achievements, ability to self-realize, provide for the family. This becomes clear after the best question asked during the Solution-focused brief therapy – ‘What else?’: for instance, ‘And what else can bring you what you get through sexual intimacy? How else can you get what you want?’ The clients usually name other behavior repertoires that are also important and are considered to be a resource in the relationships.

Sometimes finding out the purpose is already a way of solving the problem [1; 2; 3]. When the clients answer the leading questions ‘What exactly would you like to improve?’ or ‘What could be better in your relationships (in your life)?’, there appear other, more integral needs, where sexuality is only part of the system. Among them are the following: the need for acceptance, the need for attention, intimacy, appreciation, admiration, the need to be heard, the need to resolve the conflict. In this way clients rather quickly develop alternative ways to meet these needs. It is often that after the first changes in behavior towards alternative actions, sexual relations are also improved.

And sometimes defining the purpose is already the answer to the question that the couple came up with [1; 4; 6]. For example, the question ‘So, what do you want?’ helped to find out that it is important for the wife to spend more time at work now, she is striving for career growth. The following conversation turned to how to organize it so that the needs of the husband and family are met as much as possible, how the husband can help and support her, what part of the family responsibilities he can take on.

The questions concerning the ‘exceptions’ proved to be very effective. In the Solution-focused brief therapy, they are the following: ‘Could you recall the cases where there was no problem or when it was smaller, less noticeable?’ [1; 2; 5]. The more such ‘cases’ the clients are able to remember, the better it is, the more resources and ways to meet their needs in alternative ways they have. At least, to start with. Because it is often that problems are a vicious circle in which someone has to start doing something differently to get the situation off the ground. For instance, a male partner in a civil marriage does not want to have sexual relationships because the woman is mostly dissatisfied and angry. And the woman is dissatisfied and

upset because he does not show affection, does not show emotions at all, reacts little to anything, does not want to have even sexual relations with her, which seem to be necessary for men ‘by default’, so she is angry. In this situation, the «exceptions» for a woman were the moments when a man makes breakfast and serves her to bed, when he makes unexpected gifts, buys flowers, and for a man – situations when a woman comes happy, when she smiles and does not criticize him. As a result, the question arose as to what he would like to have instead of criticism and a bad mood of his wife. In this situation, the ‘exceptions’ for the woman were the moments when her man makes breakfast for her and serves it in bed, when he makes unexpected gifts, buys flowers, and for the man these are the situations when a woman comes happy, when she smiles and does not criticize him. As a result, the question arose as to what he would like to have instead of criticism and a bad mood of his wife.

Sometimes clients do not declare a request for sexual relationships immediately. However, in the course of the conversation it turns out that ‘And we also don’t have sexual relationships already (two months, half a year)...’. Sometimes it is quite often that after that one partner assumes that the other has someone (lover), clients are often upset that they are no longer so attractive to the partner or not attractive at all.

It should be noted that working with sexuality is quite specific and delicate. This is often due to the silence of the topic of sexual relations, misunderstanding of the peculiarities of sexual functioning of a person and the relationship between men and women, focus on common gender and sexual stereotypes.

If the request was a lack of sexual desire in general, it often turns out that 1) a person has a prejudice, according to which a healthy adult should always have sexual desire; 2) a person has objective life circumstances due to which the lack of sexual desire is adequate rather than abnormal. For example, the death of a loved one, sharp conflict, severe resentment, job loss, complete uncertainty in life.

In general, sexuality in the relationships of couples acts as a kind of ‘prism’, which clarifies, often exacerbates existing problems, and sometimes confuses and complicates the situation even more. On the other hand, the discussion of sexual relations of a couple, helps to ‘get out’ at the root of the problem rather quickly. Harmony in the sphere of sexual relations indicates the availability of resources in the couple, that the problem is not generalized, does not cover all areas of the relationships. Improving a sexual sphere in relationships has a beneficial effect on solving a couple’s problems.

Founded by Steewe de Shazer and Insu Kim Berg SFBT [4; 6] – solution-focused brief therapy – is an effective method of dealing with sexual aspects in couples.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СТАНОВЛЕННЯ ОСОБИСТОСТІ ДІТЕЙ З ПОРУШЕННЯМИ СЛУХУ

Дмітрієва О. І.

*кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри корекційної педагогіки та інклюзивної освіти
Кам'янець-Подільський національний університет імені Івана Огієнка
м. Кам'янець-Подільський, Хмельницька область, Україна*

На сучасному етапі радикальної соціально-політичної трансформації українського суспільства, коли постають проблеми збереження державності, відродження багатогранного культурно-історичного досвіду та традицій виховання, надзвичайно активізувалася проблема становлення та розвитку особистості підростаючого покоління. Нині українська держава надає особливої уваги вирішенню проблем, пов'язаних із створенням умов для становлення та розвитку творчої,