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Iwona Niewiadomska
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Inclusion
– psychosocial aspects

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– Part II**
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Chapter 5

The adjustment of convicts to prison confinement – an overview of selected concepts

Anna Wójciuk

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the article is to analyse factors affecting the adaptation of prisoners to prison conditions. Early studies suggested that imprisonment had mostly negative psychological and physical effects on inmates, leading to their psychological deterioration. More recent research, on the other hand, suggests that imprisonment is not as detrimental as first believed to be. The article first defines total institutions, a term coined by Erving Goffman, and describes main methods of prison adjustment. Goffman identifies four lines of adaptation to prison confinement, namely withdrawal, rebellious line, colonisation and conversion. There is also cold calculation, which is a compilation of all the above-mentioned alignments. Next, the paper presents some of the most important variables of prizonization such as one's background, the type and character of the correctional facility, overpopulation, and previous criminal record. For some people prison is "a school of criminal life". Other factors that can have influence on prizonization are social support, coping strategies and locus of control.

Keywords: prisonization, prison adaptation, total institution, locus of control

Life in the 21st century can be rather stressful for an average individual. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rehe, psychiatrists from the Washington University in Seattle, have developed a scale based on a list of stressful life events which create a need for readjustment (as cited in: Kader, Borys, Wiktor & Bianga, 2009). The first four such events include, in descending order of their impact, Death of a spouse, Divorce, Marital separation, and Imprisonment. Other events include Personal injury or illness, and Pregnancy.

Detention in a correctional facility, as a new and initially alien place, requires the individual to adjust to those conditions. No wonder that such conditions tend to be perceived as unfavourable, since prison itself is a total institution. The term *total institution* was coined by Erving Goffman (2006). He argued that total institutions were the ones that influenced

the life of the individual comprehensively. While staying in such institutions, people share every moment, whether it is work, entertainment or sleep, with others. For a substantial majority of time, people stay together in one place – they sleep, rest, work, and eat together. Each day has a specific schedule and is well planned, and many of the activities are performed under duress. Goffman argues that total institutions try to restrict the freedom of their members, e.g., using physical barriers, such as closed doors, high walls, plexiglass windows, and barred windows, which largely hinder contact with the outside world (Goffman, 2006). A characteristic feature of total institutions is supervision – there are the staff (who guard, educate, punish, and reward the inmates), and the subordinate inmates. The beginning of the stay in a total institution is always similar. First of all, the individual is deprived of nearly all personal possessions, provided with an institutional ID (usually a reference number in the system) and a uniform, and notified about the local rules and regulations. But in addition to the formal rules in force at the facility, there are also informal rules, established between inmates, and between inmates and the staff. It takes new residents some time to familiarise themselves with all the rules and to adjust to the new situation. Goffman identifies the following five types of total institutions (Goffman, 2006):

- institutions established to care for persons thought to be both incapable and harmless (e.g., nursing homes);
- places established to care for people felt to be incapable of looking after themselves and a threat to the community, albeit an unintended one (e.g., mental hospitals);
- institutions organized to protect the community against what are thought to be intentional dangers to it (e.g., jails, penitentiaries, juvenile detention centres);
- institutions purportedly established the better to pursue some technical task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds (e.g., army barracks, work camps);
- establishments designed as retreats from the world or as training stations for the religious (e.g., monasteries, sects).

Total institutions differ in terms of their permeability, i.e., the degree to which standards enforced within the institution are different from those applied in the outside world, which, in turn, affects inmates' coping after they leave the total institution. As a rule, the less permeable the institution, i.e., the greater the disparity between the rules inside and outside of it, the more difficult it is for the former inmate to deal with the outside world. This causes people leaving prisons, mental hospitals or monasteries to often have some initial problems with dealing with the "new, free" reality, so in many cases they go back to the institutionalised setting, as a place they "know well". Moreover, they might be stigmatised and labelled as "a convict", "a thief", "a psycho", or "a nun".

Moreover, Goffman identifies four main adjustment approaches, or *adaptation alignments,* as he calls them; these include withdrawal, rebellious line, colonisation, and conversion (Goffman, 2006).

Withdrawal is a type of adjustment involving radical cutting off from the environment, and focusing solely on oneself, one's matters and anything that concerns the individual directly. It means indifference to other people's affairs, social disengagement, lack of interest in what happens around, "switching off". This line of adaptation can lead to the overuse of defence mechanisms, and in particular to escaping into one's dreams and idealisation, and, subsequently, to excessive self-centredness, prison infantilism, and even severe depersonal-

isation. In psychiatry, it is known as "regression", and in prison confinement conditions as "prison neurosis" or "prison infantilism", and in concentration camps as "severe depersonalisation".

The second adaptation alignment identified by Goffman is the rebellious line, where inmates completely refuse to cooperate with staff, either through uncompromising, determined and open resistance and hostility to staff, or a more subtle aversion to the management, manifested in participation in a second life, e.g. prison subculture (Goffman, 2006). However, usually both of those forms occur concurrently. Paradoxically, often a firm and implacable negation of the total institution leads to a much greater need for the involvement of that institution's management in the inmate affairs. The readiness of prisoners of war to riot is a typical short-term reaction, observed especially during the early stages of their stay at a P.O.W. camp, which is later replaced, e.g., by withdrawal.

The third standard alignment takes the form of colonisation and involves attempts to achieve within the institution a certain freedom to act, and relatively stable and decent living conditions. People who take this line too obviously can be accused by their fellow inmates of "having found a home", which, in turn, engenders mixed feelings. In prison confinement conditions, this line is characteristic of habitual offenders. Moreover, it is assumed that the majority of such inmates are psychopaths. On the outside, such people seem cordial, winsome and accommodating, which helps them win fellow inmates and staff over.

Conversion is when inmates appear to completely take over the staff or institution's views, they are obedient, disciplined, meet the institution's expectations, in short – they act out the role of perfect inmates, who cause absolutely no trouble. Contrary to colonisation, converts take a more disciplined and moralistic line.

In addition to the above-mentioned adaptation alignments, Goffman argues that the majority of inmates use "cold calculation", which is the combination of all the aforementioned lines of adaptation, mainly colonisation, conversion, and loyalty towards fellow inmates, depending on circumstances, as it increases the chances of leaving the institution without any major physical or mental damage (Goffman, 2006). For example, they take advantage of secrets and weaknesses of the staff, various legal loopholes and chicanery, as well as habits of other inmates, only to obtain some officially forbidden benefits.

A study by Iwona Niewiadomska (2004) shows that the most popular line of adaptation among habitual offenders is withdrawal (Niewiadomska, 2004). This is associated with emotional, intellectual and behavioural problems of such inmates. As an adaptation alignment, withdrawal can be compensated through integration with an informal inmate group and/or colonisation. The third type of adaptation to prison confinement is conversion. The inmate denies any difficulties and fails to acknowledge the selfish motives behind the actions of the prison staff.

Another adaptation approach used by inmates is suggested by Jadwiga Sikora. She describes it as slowing down the process of experiencing a painful situation, which, in the case of convicts, would involve them trying not to think about home and freedom, avoiding conversations on those subjects, taking the approach of indifference to the life outside prison walls, and spending their time in the penitentiary on other available forms of activity (as cited in: Kanarek-Lizik, 2013). This way, they defend themselves against some painful emotions in a situation which they cannot change for the better.

The term *adjustment* has been approached in many different ways in psychological literature. Zbigniew Skorny (1976) treats adjustment and adaptation as equivalent terms, while

noting their external aspect, which boils down to considering adaptation as assimilation to the environment and as adjustment to serving various social roles; and their internal aspect – concerning the individual themselves, whose personality is developed in the course of adjustment. Many other authors also emphasise the internal transformations that take place in human personality during the process of adjustment and allow the individual to keep up with the changing world. The state in which human personality does not undergo any changes, or these are not appropriate to the situation, can be considered as maladjustment. Andrzej Lewicki and Ondrej Kondas argue that this makes it impossible to fulfil the regulatory function of behavior (as cited in: Aleksandrowicz, 1998). Tadeusz Tomaszewski (1975) claims that, in addition to action, adjustment is one of the most important psychological regulatory processes. ICD-10 emphasizes the importance of personality in the process of adjustment, defining it as a set of fixed thought, experience and behaviour patterns characteristic of individual lifestyle and adaptatio (as cited in: Aleksandrowicz, 1998).

Adaptation to prison confinement is determined by a number of variables, from sociological to psychological.

An important role is played by one's background. Many people who border on crime, and so-called "small-time criminals or petty thieves" in particular, are aware that, sooner or later, they will have to face the consequences of their "easy money" approach to making a living, and are less scared of the imminent imprisonment, compared to average law-abiding citizens. The very fact of hanging around with dissolute people, who often have already been in a correctional facility, makes the individual familiar with its specific subculture, norms and rules, and teaches them how to cope on the inside. Consequently, it is easier for them to accommodate themselves to prison conditions (Crank, 2010).

In recent years, there was no overpopulation in Polish prisons, but cells provide room for two to thirteen people, which negatively affects the adaptation of inmates, and there is hardly any space for intimacy, which might lead to increased violence and feeling of alienation, despite staying in the cell with many people. Shover claims that adjustment is also affected by age and previous time served (Crank, 2010). Older people, given their age and experience gained during their stay in a correctional facility, are better adjusted to those peculiar conditions, because, thanks to their life experience, they are able to identify and avoid possible threats better. Convicts who had received long sentences develop a certain "sixth sense", or "third eye", if you will, which allows them to recognise potentially dangerous situations and serious threats. Moreover, young age often provokes violent behaviour, mainly due to the tendency to act impulsively and the love of freedom in all its forms, which might be perceived by older inmates even as self-destructive. Older people, who have been in a correctional facility before, will handle their next stay in such a facility better, since they have at their disposal the mental and physical coping methods they have developed or learned earlier, which gives them an advantage over younger people, who have not been in such a facility before (Crank, 2010).

People who have a criminal record are less likely to perceive prison as a harsh or hostile environment. When they go back to criminal activities, they are well aware of the possible consequences of their decision, they understand that their lifestyle and the choices they have made come at a cost of future incarceration, which they often start to perceive in positive terms, since prison provides them with regular meals and contact with "old friends", while also offering a certain stability, compared to the unpredictable life on the streets. Given their

lifestyle, standards and values, imprisonment itself is treated as part of their criminal world, or a norm (Crank, 2010).

People who strongly identify themselves with the criminal subculture and prefer this lifestyle over the conventional one, tend to perceive imprisonment as a satisfactory alternative to their previous lifestyle. Akerstrom notes that criminals develop a new identity, comparing themselves to other criminals and people living the traditional, conventional lifestyle, which has nothing to do with the correctional facility (as cited in: Crank, 2010). They tend to consider the life of the average Joe to be boring, believing their lifestyles, as criminals, to be much more appealing and attractive, which makes them consider themselves not as prisoners, but quite the contrary, as free people, who do whatever they like. People who have not assimilated into the criminal subculture, or who have received short sentences, usually isolate themselves from other inmates, whom they might consider dissolute convicts, and perceive the correctional facility as a hostile and scary place, and they are the ones for whom the imprisonment might actually serve its purpose.

People who do not perceive the correctional facility as a powerful deterrent, are much more likely to go back to prison, i.e., to become recidivists. They tend to consider the possibility of going back to prison in terms of "professional risk", which is problematic for the judiciary, as it makes it impossible for the punishment to serve its purpose, which, as stipulated in Article 67 of the Criminal Enforcement Code, is to "*encourage the convicted person to cooperate in the development of their socially desirable attitudes, and in particular the sense of responsibility, and the need to abide by the law, and, consequently, to stop committing crimes*" (Act of 6 June 1997 – *Criminal Enforcement Code*).

Imprisonment can be considered "a school of criminal life", a place where one can learn criminal skills, which, paradoxically, constitutes a springboard for further criminal activity. The correctional facility is a place where inmates communicate, learn adjustment, improve and develop their criminal skills, which will later bring them some major benefits, such as climbing up the criminal ladder, as an element of their "criminal maturity" (Crank, 2010).

Gendreau suggests that juvenile detention facilities and correctional facilities should assess prisoners against their attitudes, values and behaviour during their stay in prison in order to determine which of them are more likely to be negatively affected by the prison life (as cited in: Crank, 2010). It is believed that auxiliary factors, such as fellow inmates, might have a negative effect on adjustment, and this, in turn, can lead to increased recidivism. Moreover, Gendreau further notes that there is little knowledge about what happens inside the "black box", without the supervision, and outside the control, of the staff, which can contribute to recidivism.

Initially, research on the adaptation to prison confinement focused on its negative consequences, both mental and physical, and on the reasons for the deterioration in inmates' mental well-being. Studies conducted over the last dozen or so years have shown that prison is not as deleterious as initially assumed. There is a correlation between coping strategies, adjustment and well-being in convicted men. Initially, scholars argued that prison led to mental deterioration. Such deterioration included emotional withdrawal, depression, suicidal thoughts or attempts and increased unfriendliness. The most difficult period for prisoners is at the beginning of their imprisonment. Recent studies show that convicts are more likely to be affected by the loss of their previous, unrestricted, contact with the outside world, and more difficult family relationships, than by the imprisonment itself or the conditions in the correctional facility, to which inmates gradually become accustomed (Picken, 2012).

In prison, the individual is more likely to experience uncertainty, stress, depression, anger, and loneliness, which can lead to lower self-esteem. Previous studies show that inmates tend to have higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as lower self-esteem, compared to the general population. Liebling confirmed the existence of a correlation between imprisonment, feeling of injustice, self-mutilation, and suicide attempts (as cited in: Picken, 2012). The greatest risk is observed at the beginning of imprisonment, when the individual receives first instance sentence of imprisonment, especially if it is a long sentence. There are certain factors that can encourage suicide in a crisis situation, such as imprisonment. These factors include excessive drinking or drug or substance use, loss of social support, especially from one's loved ones, feelings of guilt and shame, mental disorders, suicide attempts in the past, and upcoming trial. Coping and adjustment can also be negatively affected by the fear of the unknown, distrust of authoritarian environment, apparent lack of control over the future, isolation from the family, shame associated with imprisonment, and consequences of having a criminal record.

The locus of control concept developed by Rotter is reflected also in the way convicts function (as cited in: Bielniak, 2014). Other-direction/outer containment can be observed in people who believe that things that happen to them are independent of them, as a result of which they feel no responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour, blaming various external circumstances; they experience uncertainty, fear the future, and take a fatalist attitude. They have a lower self-esteem and a deeper discrepancy between *the real self* and *the ideal self*, compared to inner-directed/inner containment inmates; they avoid social interactions, show symptoms of emotional maladjustment, and exhibit higher levels of anxiety than people with an internal locus of control. Inner-directed/inner containment inmates, on the other hand, believe that they have control over what happens to them, and that it is all up to them. As a result, in failure situations, they tend to blame and criticise themselves heavily, and in the event of a success they would present themselves in an overly positive way. They like to have everything under control, and if they do not, they fight to regain it. The lack of inner locus of control in inmates negatively affects the way they function, as it impairs their feedback system. Based on external information, observations and specific values and beliefs, experiences and knowledge, the individual develops various strategies and their own ideas about the way they should live their life, the individual feels inhibited when it comes to expressing and defining emotions, they have problems with anticipating the consequences and results of their actions, which can make their behaviour significantly more brutal and increase the number of violent acts. A study on the sense of control in violent criminals, as conducted by Katarzyna Belniak (2014), shows that inmates do not have the sense of self-agency and do not acknowledge the relationship between their own actions and their consequences. They perceive their lives as a string of unfortunate coincidences. Research further shows that the loss of the ability to decide and retain control leads to helplessness and the abandonment of all efforts to regain control over one's life. In addition, study findings portraying inmates as discouraged confirm that the lack of positive reinforcement and difficult experiences prior to conviction cause inmates to clam up.

Imprisonment forces inmates to adapt to those new, stressful conditions. Erving Goffman identifies four lines of adaptation to prison confinement, namely withdrawal, rebellious line, colonisation and conversion. There is also cold calculation, which is a compilation of all the above-mentioned alignments. There is a number of factors which can affect adjustment, from demographic variables, such as age, background, previous life history, and

experiences, to psychological variables, such as attitude to imprisonment, social support, emotional coping, perceived quality of life, and locus of control. Moreover, educators identify other variables, such as the way inmates influence one another, the attitude of the staff, the type and character of correctional facility, the stage of imprisonment, and participation in various forms of penitentiary interventions, such as work, cultural and educational programmes, and therapeutic interventions.

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Chapter 6

An innovative training programme for the staff of social integration and assistance institutions, supporting their professional qualifications for working with persons at risk of social exclusion

Maria Beata Nowak

ABSTRACT

This article outlines a proposed innovative training programme for people who work with groups at risk of social or professional exclusion. It is based on extensive empirical research, expert opinions, and social consultations.

Keywords: professional competences, risk of social and professional exclusion, court-appointed probation officers, training

Introduction

At the European level, support for the development of qualifications and competences was initiated by the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002, adopted in Copenhagen by European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission. In the light of the Declaration, competences can be defined as a dynamic conglomerate of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also identifies key competences, meaning skills that are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge society, including (European Union, 2007, p. 3):

- *communicating in mother tongue and foreign languages* (these competences regard effective communication);
- *mathematical, scientific and technological competence and digital competence*, designed to develop skills such as logical thinking, formulating and examining hypotheses, drawing conclusions on the basis of assumptions made, and adaptation to computerised world;
- *entrepreneurship and ability to learn independently* – competences that facilitate life-long learning;

- *interpersonal, intercultural, social, and civic competences* that support efficient functioning in social groups;
- *cultural expression and creative thinking competences* – oriented at the adaptation to creative universe, characterised by continuous self-organisation, where it is important to control one's future (Kenny, 2003).

Many international organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and supraregional institutions, recognise the importance of competences in the fields of both economics and economy, and social activities. OECD argues that competences perceived from the social perspective significantly increase social cohesion, sense of justice, and participation of individuals in democratic institutions, as well as being a countermeasure for social inequality and marginalisation of individuals and social groups, on both small and large social scales (http://www.oecd.org).

In readaptation work, such as support for ex-prisoners, as a group facing special risk at the labour market, it is important that support-providers have specific personal, social and professional competences.

Professional competences are referred to as "hard competences", because they guarantee the fulfilment of specific functions and determine one's work performance (Smółka, 2008). So-called "soft competences", meaning psychosocial (personal and social) skills, are different in nature. Generally speaking, a high level of personal competences is crucial for efficient self-management, and that of social competences – for interpersonal effectiveness.

Personal competences are developed on the basis of one's personal disposition. They constitute human capital, which, when combined with motivation understood as the pursuit of more and more ambitious goals, leads to self-realisation and brings people satisfaction from the things they do and the family or work-related responsibilities they fulfil.

In the literature on the subject, personal and social competes are described as personal resources that are significant for coping (Hobfoll, 2006). From a professional perspective, the most desirable skills include:
- flexible thinking,
- creativity,
- openness to change,
- decisiveness,
- coping with stress,
- solving problems,
- conscientiousness,
- analytical thinking,
- independence,
- good own work and time management,
- enthusiasm for learning.

These competences are conditional on having specific *life competences*, such as feeling of social support, openness, internal locus of control, sense of agency, high self-esteem and self-acceptance, optimism and sense of humour (Poprawa, 2001).

Personal and social skills, jointly referred to as psychosocial skills, determine the performance of, i.a., social workers (Kaczmarska & Sienkiewicz, 2005; Cherniss, 2000).

Social competences have been recognised by the European Commission as a key element that contributes to the welfare of European societies and as reliable indicators of their well-being (European Union, 2005). From this perspective, such competences are perceived as a capacity (interpersonal and intercultural) that allows people to live a happy social life (Putnam, 2000). This aspect of human competences has been of interest to many scientific disciplines, which consider them to be skills which are extremely important for adaptation to new conditions and situations, and crucial for the quality of social interactions and relationships between people, and also our effective performance in various contexts and stages in life.

Competences of people who implement rehabilitation interventions

The problem of social maladjustment and rehabilitation under a non-custodial sentence is addressed by the institution of probation, which serves auxiliary and executive functions to courts. This is one of the most often adjudicated legal measures, used as an alternative to social isolation. Generally, it is optional, but for juvenile delinquents it is obligatory (Gromek, 2002). The general and, at the same time, constitutive purpose of probation is education and prevention. But its rehabilitation (learning desirable behaviours or unlearning undesirable ones) and support purposes (restoring disturbed balance by satisfying the needs of the recipients of rehabilitation interventions) are equally important (Kalinowski, 2007; Kotlińska, 2007).

While performing their statutory duties, probation officers provide family and criminal courts with feedback, carry out correctional and educational interventions in relation to offenders who have been given sentences involving didactic means (minors) or punitive probation means (adults), and who, due to their personal characteristics or the type of offence or crime, either do not have to or should not be isolated from their environment. A related role is played by guardians, who provide support to children, whose parents have had their parental authority limited in relation to the fulfilment of corrective and educational functions. [Translator's note: In the Polish legal system, the functions of probation officers and guardians are covered by a single term (*kurator*). For the purposes of this article, any reference to probation officers should be understood as reference to either probation or guardian *ad litem* services] Probation officers also perform various control functions in relation to people convicted for crimes or offences, who remain in foster families or social care institutions. Within the broad spectrum of tasks carried out by court-appointed probation officers there is room for cooperation with corresponding associations, organisations and institutions on the improvement of living and health conditions of, as well as employment and training for, people subject to enforcement proceedings (*Ustawa z dnia 27 lipca 2001 r. o kuratorach sądowych*, see: Article 174 of the Executive Penal Code; Marek, 2007; Śpiewak, 1999).

The effectiveness of probation officers is affected by their personal characteristics, such as natural aptitude, professional background (reasons for choosing their profession, and their level of education) and professional competence (knowledge and skills), as well as external, legal/organisational, and social/environmental factors (Machel, 2007; Opora, 2006). However, these factors can hardly be prioritized in terms of the strength of their impact on the quality and effectiveness of probation work. It is because they form a complex structure

of interrelated elements. In addition, it is important that probation officers have a sense of responsibility for their wards and the outcomes of interventions undertaken in relation to them, as well as for themselves (their own attitudes, behaviour and professional competences). Indeed, the sense of responsibility is the basis for professional conscientiousness, or reliability, honesty and integrity in human interactions, truthfulness, decency, and self-worth, all of which constitute, in addition to the required professional competences, a set of characteristics that make up the basic indicators of constructive professional conduct.

I conducted a study on, i.a., the identification of the levels of social and professional competences among probation officers (Nowak, 2011). Its findings show that there is a need to create a coherent system of specialist training for probation officers, especially in relation to the development and enhancement of their professional and social qualifications and competences. This is due to the fact that professional education varies significantly and a considerable proportion of such professionals (one third of all respondents) have poor social competences. Only 18% of the studied probation officers proved to perform well in close interpersonal contact that fosters the establishment of deeper relationships with people. The majority of them exhibit average (59%) or low levels (23%) of competence. On a scale describing the effectiveness of behaviour in situations that required assertive responses, scores achieved by a substantial majority of respondents (72%) were average. Low (19%) and high scores (9%) proved marginal. Only 5% of studied probation officers were highly effective in social exposure situations and in terms of coping with opinions of others. The majority scored average (69%) or low (26%). These results show that social competence training is indeed required for the enhancement of the professional qualifications of probation officers.

On the other hand, a study by E. Wysocka (2011) shows that probation officers struggle with the proper fulfilment of their professional role. In particular, they show poor assessment skills (Wysocka, 2011). Their knowledge about the essence of assessment is seriously lacking, especially in aspects that are important for the job and related to individual and environmental assessments. The assessment skills they lack include mainly their inability to link assessment to prognosis and recommendations, sporadic linking of assessment and corresponding recommendations, making partial diagnoses (incomplete assessments), and failing to give positive assessments. The examined probation officers were ignorant of the preliminary assessment stage, did not make observations during interventions, and did not review their assessments. What was characteristic of them, was that they focused on collecting information.

A study by A. Karłyk-Ćwik (2009) concerning the self-assessment of professional competences of special education teachers, who often work as probation officers and provide support as part of rehabilitation interventions, shows that they tend to perceive the level of their professional competences to be rather high. The skills they believe they have mastered the best are the ability to create the atmosphere of acceptance and kindness, to control the behaviour of their wards, and to understand, and show empathy to, them (Karłyk-Ćwik, 2009). In turn, a study by M. Heine (2008) shows that probation officers tend to have the highest regard for their competences related to giving and receiving feedback, and to understanding themselves, their wards and their mutual relationships (Heine, 2008). Competences concerning understanding, and giving meaning to, their own actions were assessed as average, while the abilities to reflect on the moral and legal legitimacy of their own actions, and to create the atmosphere of acceptance and kindness, were considered lacking.

A study by A. Witkowska-Paleń demonstrated that a substantial majority of probation officers believed their work produced intended results. However, many studies on the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions undertaken in relation to offenders on probation show that it is rather limited (Gogacz, 2002; Kotlińska, 2007).

Major factors for successful rehabilitation and social readaptation of ex-prisoners are (Witkowska-Paleń, 2008):
- natural aptitudes of probation officers,
- theoretical background,
- frequency of contacts with wards,
- applied methods and forms of work,
- scope of assistance provided,
- cooperation with the environment,
- personality traits of offenders (how demoralised they are, where they live).

Given that competences are dynamic in nature and require updating and enhancement, it is necessary to improve the professional qualifications of probation officers in terms of theory, assessment, communication and organisation.

Programmes that support the development of people employed with aid institutions, including probation officers, in personal, social and professional terms, should be adjusted to their resources, attractive – encouraging them to become personally involved and internally motivated to change, and accurate in relation to their needs and social roles.

And readiness to change is indicated by knowledge, skills, preferences, aspirations, values, and development needs.

Therefore, training opportunities should be comprehensive and diverse enough to meet the needs of all employees, and training strategies should be aligned with human resource management policies.

Proposed support programme

Training in personal and social competences (60 hours)

SOCIAL COMPETENCE IMPROVEMENT COURSE
Social competences are important for efficient self-management (ability to motivate oneself and ability to control one's emotions) and high interpersonal effectiveness, which is helpful in many personal and social situations.

Efficient interpersonal communication and establishment of close interpersonal contacts
The ability to communicate effectively is of fundamental importance for both one's everyday functioning and professional work. Communication competence improvement workshop covers basic skills that ensure efficient interpersonal communication:
   1. Basic **non-verbal communication** skills (Smółka, 2008):

- *emotional expressiveness* – ability to express one's interpersonal attitudes (communicate one's status in a relationship or group, or interest in others) using the tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body;
- *emotional sensitivity* – the ability to receive and understand non-verbal messages from other people;
- *emotional control* – the ability to control one's emotions and their expression (feigning, concealing, disguising).

2. Basic **verbal communication** skills (Smółka, 2008):
- *social expressiveness* – the ability to start conversations and to draw people into social interactions;
- *social sensitivity* – conforming to the norms related to the behaviour accepted in specific situations or social roles;
- *social control* – the ability to play various social roles (self-presentation) and to be flexible about adapting one's behaviour to specific situations;
- *social manipulation* – the ability to intentionally (on purpose and according to a plan) affect the course and effects of social interactions.

3. **Other skills** that are worked on:
- recognising the responses of one's interlocutors to one's messages and anticipating their responses to messages one wants to convey next;
- successful persuasion – mainly for social workers;
- focusing on what one's interlocutors say and how they behave, and sharpening the ability to read between the lines;
- responding flexibly to verbal and non-verbal communication in various social contexts to achieve one's objectives in the course of interactions;
- communicating in situations involving language and cultural barriers;
- communicating with addicted, older, and mentally disabled people;
- establishing close interpersonal contacts.

Effective coping in situations that require assertiveness

The assertive training course helps develop assertive attitudes and learn the associated assertive behaviours. An assertive attitude means that you are aware of your own rights and you assert them, while also respecting the rights of others. In the course of this training, its participants work on their ineffective behaviours to make them more beneficial for themselves and their relations with others – **learning how to deal with situations involving interactions with colleagues and ex-prisoners**, who often exhibit aggressive and entitled attitudes in assistance/support relationships.

1. Essential preconditions for assertiveness include (Poprawa, 1998):
- knowledge of behaviours appropriate for specific situations;
- ability to assert one's rights and express one's beliefs and feelings;
- cognitive and affective readiness for assertive behaviour – comparing one's requirements with situational requirements, a complex structure of fairly fixed beliefs and personal attitudes, ways of self-expression and coping with life's challenges.

The training should focus on interactions with colleagues and ex-prisoners, who often exhibit aggressive and entitled attitudes in assistance/support relationships.

2. After completing the training, its participants will know how to:
- distinguish between assertive and aggressive and submissive behaviours;

- build positive relationships based on expressing their emotions;
- effectively argue their views and opinions;
- evaluate problems, people, and relationships from the right angle;
- adjust their messages to specific situations and people;
- provide useful feedback instead of criticising;
- relieve stress that reduces self-esteem.

Effective coping in social exposure situations

In essence, self-presentation skills are about the ability to continuously build and articulate a positive self-image. Factors that hamper self-presentation skills are social anxiety and shyness. Training measures offered as part of this course should rely on Freestyle Repertory Theatre and should focus on:
- mastering methods related to effective self-presentation and professional image development;
- acquiring skills related to coping in social exposure situations;
- increasing the awareness of one's body language.

This training will also address strategies that are helpful in developing one's image through specific forms of self-presentation (as cited in: Szmajke, 1999):
- **ingratiation strategy** – gaining as much credibility as one wishes to be liked (exercises in expressing liking and agreement, and in creating one's attractiveness);
- **self-promotion strategy** – projecting oneself as a competent, effective doer, characterised by considerable general (intelligence, physical fitness) or specific talents;
- **moral perfection strategy** – projecting oneself as a role-model in terms of compliance with moral principles and norms.

Course in improving skills related to coping with stress – mainly for social workers

Excessive pressure experienced by employees, or the lack of competences associated with task performance, can significantly reduce both quality and effectiveness of such performance. Effectiveness depends on aptitude, knowledge, and personal, social, and professional skills.

High levels of intensive, prolonged stress, when generated internally and by relationships with other people, as well as organisational stress, require remedial measures, which, in turn, require specific skills in coping with stressful situations. Firstly, it is important to recognise one's stress responses and to determine appropriate remedial measures.

1. Major sources of stress at the workplace are:
- **not enough/too much work**, associated with the lack of competences or excessive workload compared to the time allowed for coping with it;
- **organisational changes** – lack of reliable information, abandonment of established behaviour patterns, difficult period of transition, requiring deep involvement;
- **ambiguous role** – an ill-defined scope of activities and responsibilities, and lack of sufficient knowledge of one's job description;
- **role overload** – perceiving one's professional role as difficult in relation to the perceived level of one's competence;
- **role conflict** – difficulties hampering task completion, lack of clear standards concerning task implementation, uncomfortable personal relationships.

2. In this respect, the following heuristic methods are recommended:

- Gordon Synectics,
- De Bono method,
- analytical techniques, forced associations, change of thought patterns, reversal of one's point of view, ideal projection.

In addition, it is important to use special ***training to reduce stress and improve self-efficacy*** in relation to planning, goal achievement, and time management.

Competence workshop on stress coping skills for readaptation intervention professionals involves workshop and training classes, including:

1. Development of mental resilience building skills

- building and nurturing constructive relationships with other people,
- building self-esteem and appropriate self-image.

2. Using coping techniques:

- ***Long-term strategies complemented by short-term techniques*** which ensure that specific behaviours are regularly repeated and contribute to self-discovery (identification of typical responses and the most stressful situations):
  — working on changing one's self-image (appropriate assessment associated with the level of criticism, positive attitude to other people and the world in general, proactive approach, stability);
  — changing stressful behaviours using "baby steps";
  — taking care of one's psychophysical comfort – choosing appropriate lifestyle, diet, relaxation techniques (Jacobson training and Schultz autogenous training);
  — maintaining a healthy work-life balance;
  — seeking social support and building alliances;
  — adopting assertive attitudes and using assertive techniques;
  — managing time.
- ***Short-term strategies*** designed to help the individual relax and alleviate the effects of stress:
  — taking action in risk situations to feel a sense of release (physical exercise);
  — distraction (seeking pleasure and enjoying life, e.g., by strengthening relationships, entertainment, and developing interests);
  — controlling one's thoughts and behaviour to reduce stress;
  — spontaneous relaxation intended to stop one's mind from racing and to calm one's nerves;
  — slowing down the pace of work – taking time to examine the situation and develop a plan of action in order to perform the same amount of work in the same amount of time in a more systematic and methodical manner;
  — using assertive techniques, such as broken record, drawing boundaries, negative inquiry, fogging, and changing judgements into opinions.

Workshop on professional competences for readaptation work (100 hours)

This workshop on professional competences for working with ex-prisoners is designed to improve participants' ability to work concurrently on readaptation and reintegration with

individuals (ex-prisoners), **groups** (ex-prisoners' families), and ***local environment*** (institutions and local communities) to initiate and manage social measures for people undergoing readaptation interventions (Fig. 1).
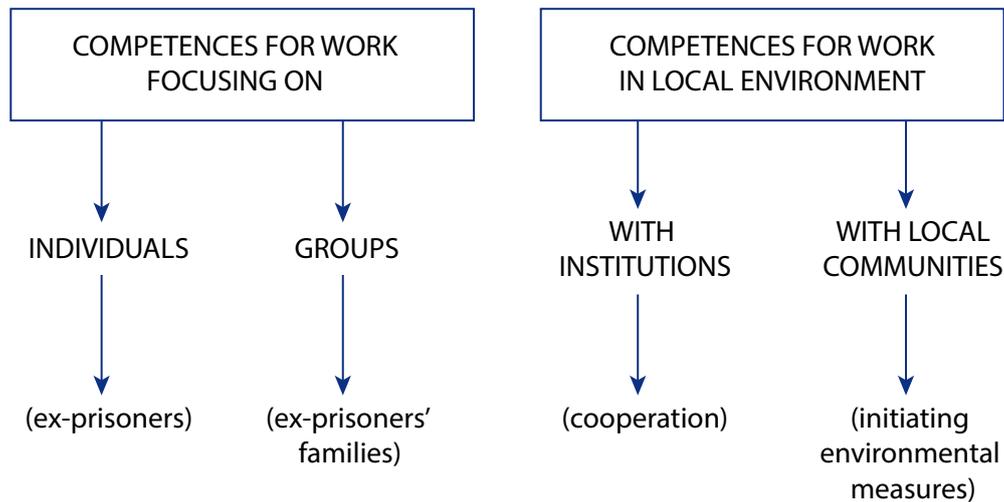
Figure 1. An overview of the workshop on competences for working with a group facing major risk at the labour market – ex-prisoners. *Source:* Own work.

The competence workshop is designed, in particular, to
- improve interpersonal and social skills and foster desirable professional attitudes;
- improve assistance/support provision skills;
- develop and improve analytical, planning and effective cooperation skills related to creating local assistance and social support systems (strategies, programmes, assessments) and to empowering and managing local environment.

The above-mentioned measures are part of various competence workshop courses, and the resulting value added is the counteraction and prevention of professional burnout
- a course in improving **the ability to establish and maintain contact** – 15h;
- a course in improving **the ability to assess the needs of ex-prisoners and support capital, to resolve problems in a creative manner, and to work together as a team** – 20h;
- a course in developing **the ability to handle conflicts while using team support techniques** – 10h;
- a course in developing **the ability to provide individuals and groups with competence training** – 15h;
- a course in improving **the ability to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion** – 10h;
- a course in improving **competences for working at the local level** – 20h;

- a course in improving **competences for undertaking and maintaining cooperation with positive peer environment** – 10h.

A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CONTACT

Empathy and appreciation

What determines the effectiveness of relationships based on partnership is the ability to empathise with one's partner to identify their emotions, understand their situation, and to show this understanding (Aronson, 1997; Fromm, 2001; Myss, 2000; Persaud, 2006; Seligman, 1995).

Empathy, i.e., the ability to sympathise with other people, is considered to be a key element in therapeutic interactions designed to provide help (assistance/support).

Words expressing interest or appreciation can increase other people's self-esteem, facilitate communication, and empower them.

Active listening

In order to ensure good communication and read other people's "maps of reality", it is necessary to be able to listen actively, or "listen to understand" (Egan, 1986). Interactions with wards/clients activate personal and cultural filters that distort the way support providers listen to them. Therefore, clients are often consciously (or unconsciously) labelled. This seriously impairs the ability to listen and understand them, especially when wards/clients and social support and assistance providers differ significantly in terms of their life experience and background.

Building trust

The process of earning wards'/clients' trust is as follows
- the extent of confidentiality (degree and conditions of confidentiality) is clearly defined;
- unreasonable expectations must not be created;
- projects that might not be successfully completed must not be permitted;
- all promises must be fulfilled.

A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ASSESS THE NEEDS OF EX-PRISONERS AND SUPPORT CAPITAL, TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS IN A CREATIVE MANNER, AND TO WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM

Assessing the needs of ex-prisoners and support capital

The improvement/compensation of skills related to the identification of the needs of wards/clients will include the following
- **social maladjustment as the focus of assessment** – how to perform a psycho-educational assessment, major assessment techniques, classification of assessment errors and their sources, assessment models and interpretation of assessment results;
- **tools and methods** used to evaluate life and professional situations;
- **family environment assessment strategies** – major indicators of family dysfunctions;

- **effective exploration of living environment** – community interviews (identification of expectations and life and professional goals of wards/clients);
- **SWOT analysis** (heuristic analytical technique used for information organisation purposes) to identify *strengths* (anything that can be considered an asset, advantage, or strength of the assessed person/situation), *weaknesses* (anything that can be considered a weakness, barrier, or disadvantage of the assessed person/situation), *opportunities* (anything that offers the assessed person an opportunity for positive change), and *threats* (anything that poses a risk of negative change in relation to the assessed person/situation).

Creative problem-solving

Designed to improve creative problem-solving and teamwork skills, this course is based on an interactive approach and focuses on
- experiencing advantages and disadvantages;
- realising barriers to problem-solving, including the development of skills related to overcoming thought patterns;
- improving the ability to identify and set goals during problem-solving, and opportunities for making the process more efficient;
- developing habits that foster innovative behaviour;
- developing creative approaches to professional tasks;
- improving the ability to create an atmosphere that supports creative thinking and teamwork, and the ability to come up with new ideas and to solve problems in a creative way;
- developing the ability to use techniques and tools for imaginative thinking and creative group decision-making;
- teaching about mechanisms that affect the reasonableness of decisions, and about various aspects of risk assessment;
- developing the ability to use techniques and tools for overcoming conventional ways of thinking and for generating ideas.

It is assumed that this competence training will produce the following outcomes
- acquired essential knowledge of creative thinking and problem-solving;
- knowledge of how to better apply creative thinking techniques to solving specific problems faced in everyday professional practice;
- reinforced positive attitudes to workplace innovation, supporting creativity and individual and group innovation;
- improved effectiveness of idea generation and ward/client problem-solving;
- flexible adaptation to novel and unusual situations;
- improved ability to create an atmosphere that fosters creativity within teams;
- improved creative potential in difficult problem situations.

A COURSE IN DEVELOPING THE ABILITY TO HANDLE CONFLICTS WHILE USING TEAM SUPPORT TECHNIQUES

Work with ex-prisoners and their families requires not only the ability to effectively establish personal relations, but also to negotiate and mediate. In each organisation (social group) there are conflicts, which are usually perceived as a fight in which there can only be

winners and losers. A natural response to a conflict situation is to ignore it or to use force, neither of which will lead to a reasonable solution and both of which can only escalate the conflict.

Conflict management is about active conflict handling by taking the following actions
- identifying pre-conflict and conflict situations,
- choosing and using appropriate conflict resolution strategies,
- stimulating constructive forms of competition.

The purpose of conflict management training is to master the dispute resolution methods that produce win-win outcomes and foster good relations between the involved parties. Workshop participants will learn about the nature of conflict, its structure and development, mediation stages, the role of mediator and possible benefits of mediation, as well as exploring such topics as
- improvement of the ability to identify the sources of problems leading to conflict and symptoms foreshadowing conflict, and to recognise mechanisms underlying the conflict;
- developing skills associated with discovering the actual causes of conflict;
- using various strategies for resolving conflicts, including strategies that address the needs of both parties to the conflict;
- developing skills associated with using win-win solutions;
- effective conflict handling with elements of negotiation and drawing up of agreements (contracts).

Team support training, on the other hand, should work on the following knowledge and skills
- teamwork methods and benefits;
- effective ways to motivate and support team members;
- ways of overcoming resistance and channelling passive behaviours;
- fostering open communication within the team and overcoming barriers to communication (relations between team members and their role in task completion);
- developing positive attitudes to cooperation;
- formulating questions, persuading, and controlling conversations;
- expressing and accepting constructive criticism;
- working on the cohesion of verbal and non-verbal messages and assertive behaviours.

After this training series its participants should acquire (among other things)
- the ability to focus on addressing the needs of their wards/clients;
- the ability to continuously review their own behaviour and effects of their role as team members (introspection);
- the ability to strictly comply with the norms and rules in force within the team;
- the ability to anticipate the consequences of their decisions;
- the ability to jointly develop the necessary tools and to propose changes.

A COURSE IN COMPETENCE TRAINING FOR GROUPS (WARDS/CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES)

Workshop on competences for working with ex-prisoners and their families covers the development of skills related to training provided on the basis of a creative rehabilitation method, namely Rehabilitation Drama Method[1]. The Method facilitates the destigmatisation of the family, i.e., a new, functional, identity is "superimposed" onto the old, dysfunctional, or deviant, one. The Rehabilitation Drama Method is a great tool for the management of all functional aspects of the family (cohesion, adaptability, disintegration, developmental problems, pathological family roles, mutual understanding between family members), i.e., for constructing its functional profile.

This type of training, based on the assessment of deficits and needs, focuses on the key elements of the creative process (emotions, motivation, perception, memory, thinking, and imagination; Konopczyński, 2006), and produces a series of changes that transform identity to support both individuals and groups in their effective social functioning.

Performances help the actors – family members – accurately define the dysfunctional or pathological roles they or their relatives play, discover adaptation deficits, communication barriers, and many other elements of their individual and family functioning.

The Rehabilitation Drama Method can serve to reorient insecure attachment styles[2], which in adults significantly affect their social functioning, and are associated with poor social competences and avoidance coping style (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997).

In this respect, it is useful to train ***conciliatory behaviour***, i.e.
- attention to good atmosphere within the family,
- ability to use reciprocity,
- ability to show that you care.

What further contributes to the reorientation of the attachment styles that hamper the development of satisfactory social relations is ***behaviour training*** (Kuczyńska, 1998; Wojciszke, 2002), which develops such abilities as
- providing support for community members,
- acting for its benefit,
- supporting the positive, social, image of the family.

The sense of security, in turn, can be heightened through the ***training in caring and nursing behaviour towards children, older people and people with disabilities***.

The trained skills should be adjusted to the specific situation of each ward/client and their family, and their current level of social functioning, and scenarios used during this training should be based on target situations.

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1   This course should be taught by people with considerable experience in hosting drama workshops and proficient in the methodological development of drama scenarios.

2   Attachment styles are internal working models concerning the mother as the attachment figure who provides the child with security, warmth, confidence and intimacy (Bowlby, 2007).

A COURSE IN IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO ANALYSE LEGAL DOCUMENTS
AND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT CONCERNING THE MARKET INTEGRATION OF
PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

This workshop on competences for readaptation work with ex-prisoners and their families includes a training course in improving competences concerning the analysis of legal documents and subsidies for the employment of wards/clients on the open labour market. These competences are crucial due to the fact that Polish labour market is transforming very rapidly, which is the result of the response from Polish economy to the developments on the global labour market, and these socio-economic transformations are followed by changes in legal regulations.

On the one hand, employers expect that employees will have appropriate skills and qualifications and will be able to create value added on this volatile market, during the periods of both economic growth and recession, and seek sources of cheap working and financial capital.

And on the other, job seekers need knowledge about the sources of information and local jobs, and easily accessible, up-to-date, and comprehensive information about the labour market, including details about job demand and supply, forecasts about the local demand for skills and qualifications, and opportunities for acquiring these desirable skills and qualifications.

In terms of the improvement of the abilities to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion, the course will cover

- laws on the formation and functioning of interdisciplinary teams,
- rules for the establishment and operation of interdisciplinary teams,
- standards concerning cooperation between institutions,
- communication within interdisciplinary teams,
- identification and assessment of social resources.

A COURSE IN IMPROVING COMPETENCES FOR WORKING AT THE LOCAL
LEVEL

This training course focuses on **social participation (initiation – supervision – evaluation)** to prepare its participants for providing support to ex-prisoners and their families in order to help people, communities, and institutions unlock their social energy, encourage them to take action, and reflect on the effectiveness of such actions.

The primary objective of those training interventions is to lay the groundwork for the development of partnership between various sectors (social welfare, education, culture, business) for the benefit of ex-prisoners and their families, for the establishment of local assistance and social support systems (strategies, programmes, assessments), and for empowering and managing local communities. The course in the improvement of the abilities to analyse legal documents and to provide support concerning the market integration of people at risk of social exclusion will include workshops on

- improving skills related to the interpretation and use of national and European laws;
- extending knowledge on the use of techniques for challenging social stereotypes;
- extending knowledge on social dialogue and cooperation with social partners;
- assessing the professional potential of people from risk groups and estimating their chances of growth and qualification improvement;

- improving and encouraging cooperation between institutions in seeking jobs for ex-prisoners;
- developing competences in assistance in the organisation of support and self-help groups;
- improving competences in professional advice and counselling on
  — assessing and strengthening the professional and psychosocial potential of wards/clients (ability to make choices, evaluate, create projects and life plans);
  — using motivation and empowerment methods and techniques;
  — helping people seeking advice adapt to the conditions around them, and to create their reality;
  — optimising individual professional development paths;
  — preparing wards/clients for job interviews.

Readaptation support providers will develop and improve their competences in
- assessing local communities while making them involved in the process;
- using methods, techniques, and tools designed to help plan and introduce changes to the local community;
- preparing local development strategies;
- social empowerment, with special focus on evaluation and supervision to establish local partnerships dealing with social problems;
- developing local self-organisation, solidarity, and social support networks;
- setting up participatory projects and using public participation tools;
- using supervision methods in readaptation work, and principles and course of supervision work.

In addition, training participants will learn how to use group supervision, and to use supervision to improve the outcomes of their work with wards/clients. This competence training will also cover the development of skills related to the assessment of the usefulness of undertaken measures and in-depth analysis and review of one's professional practice. This will be achieved through a follow-up workshop.

In order to address competences related cooperation between institutions, the course includes a workshop on the establishment and operation of interdisciplinary teams, which covers

1. **An ex-ante evaluation** (prior to project implementation) carried out for the purposes of identifying the needs and expectations of ex-prisoners and their families
   - identifying the needs and expectations of target groups,
   - evaluating the accuracy and consistency of established goals and planned actions,
   - identifying possible problems,
   - analysing the initial situation as the basis for comparison with the final situation.
2. **Mid-term/ongoing evaluation** (during project implementation)
   - assessing the quality of implemented measures,
   - assessing the achieved results.
3. **Ex-post evaluation** (after project implementation)
   - assessing the effectiveness, accuracy, and usability of the project,
   - assessing the degree and quality of goal achievement,
   - identifying the needs that have been insufficiently satisfied,

- drawing conclusions to serve as the basis for the effective designing of similar projects in the future.

A COURSE IN IMPROVING COMPETENCES IN UNDERTAKING AND MAINTAINING COOPERATION WITH POSITIVE PEER ENVIRONMENT

Due to the fact that peer influence is the strongest predictor of change, the training programme for readaptation providers includes a course in developing the ability of using social capital for producing constructive changes in ex-prisoners. Generally, it focuses on the ability to establish and maintain an informal peer support network in the local community. Moreover, alongside readaptation workers, this course will teach local young leaders – people who are esteemed in their peer environment.

The training will be provided in mixed groups (readaptation workers and young leaders) and will cover workshops on

- building a sense of trust in interpersonal relations (with peers and adults),
- assessing decision-making process and using it in assistance relations,
- using assistance skills in usual and unusual situations,
- building and developing effective teams, team identity, core values,
- developing team cooperation standards and situational assessment skills – defining mutual needs and expectations,
- developing social support networks – local resources, self-help organisations.

Conclusion

It is estimated that every fourth working-age person is socially incompetent, and the rest show serious deficits in their social competences (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). From the social point of view, this requires (in institutional terms) measures designed to develop the social competences of members of professional organisations (courses, training). The development of competences should include both instrumental measures aimed at providing people with professional skills, and measures related to personal development – training in social competences, workshops on time management and coping with difficult situations.

The improvement in social competences at the level of professional providers of social assistance and support will translate into the empowerment of the dysfunctional families of beneficiaries.

Well developed social competences, particularly in the area of interpersonal skills, constitute a foundation for processes leading to the development of strong community relationships. And these, in turn, largely determine the effectiveness of strategies (responses) used in the face of problem or crisis situations.

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CHAPTER 7

Distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school

Iwona Niewiadomska, Karolina Kos, Joanna Chwaszcz

ABSTRACT

This article addresses correlations between the distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school. The study covered 221 people, participants in school mobbing, using the following questionnaires: Demographic data questionnaire, Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations (authors' own method), and Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS). Respondents were divided into three 30-person groups: victims, perpetrators and observers.

Keywords: resources, distribution of resources, stress, mobbing, school mobbing

Introduction

Mobbing

School mobbing came into focus in the late 1960s/early 1970s in Sweden, and then rapidly attracted interest in other Scandinavian societies. But it was not until the 1980s that attitudes to mobbing at school changed dramatically (Olweus, 2007). Authors subscribe to the view advocated by Olweus, that *a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, an injury or discomfort upon another*. This term also covers violence and aggression. These can be verbal (threats, malice, accosting, slander) and direct, or physical, violence (hitting, pushing, restricting freedom). There can also be some negative actions without words or physical contact, e.g., grimacing,

threatening gestures, avoidance and other behaviour intended to hurt or irritate another person (Olweus, 2007). Psychological intimidation of a person or, less frequently, a group, by another person or group is intended to make the former miserable or even exclude them from their peer community. Victims suffer long-term psychological, economic and social violence, are intimidated and humiliated, and have their ability to defend themselves limited. This process has a number of stages, including manipulation, ranging from the most subjective and imperceptible to the victim, to the most drastic, causing social isolation, self-deprecation, feeling of injustice and rejection, helplessness, and, ultimately, severe stress, or even physical and psychological disorders (Orłowski, 2005). This type of violence is long-term in nature. Even if its individual cases could, in certain circumstances, be considered mobbing, the focus here is on the repetitive pattern of such behaviour and the fact that it continues for some time. The purpose of this definition is to exclude sporadic instances of minor negative actions, on one occasion directed at one person, and on another occasion at someone else. The importance of time is emphasised especially by Karl Gebauer (2007), who argues that school mobbing is only when humiliation and harassment are frequent and systematic. The imbalance of power between mobbing participants is emphasised by all scholars investigating the problem. Perpetrators are much stronger than their victims. Therefore, conflicts between one or more people who are more or less equally strong, physically or psychologically, do not constitute harassment (Olweus, 2007). *Bullying* is a similar term to mobbing, and, in practice, the two are often used interchangeably (Zajdel, 2004). The verb *to bully* usually means "to tyrannize in order to hurt someone". Such aggressive actions are not provoked and are repeated over a period of time. They are described as intentional, repetitive and not provoked aggressive behaviour of one or more perpetrators towards their victim. The purpose of such behaviour is to hurt, upset, humiliate, or terrify someone, usually in the presence of observers; there is a clear imbalance of power, which makes it impossible for victims to defend themselves, and causes perpetrators to think they can avoid punishment. The term *bullying* is much more popular in English-speaking countries, such as the UK, Ireland, Australia, the United States and Canada. The term *mobbing*, used in this article, is preferred in the Nordic countries, Germany and Poland (Orłowski, 2005).

Mobbing involves three groups, namely perpetrators, victims and observers. What is the most characteristic of perpetrators is aggression towards their peers, and often also towards adults, usually parents and teachers. Such people are usually fascinated by violence and ways of inflicting it. They tend to be impulsive and exhibit the need for domination. Characterised by the lack of empathy, they do not sympathise with their victims. They tend to think of themselves as being average or slightly better than average students (Olweus, 2007; Kalinowska, 2014). However, this is not always the case, as some authors argue that perpetrators have high self-esteem and a thirst for personal prestige (Orłowski, 2005). In addition to having positive self-worth, perpetrators tend to be very assertive (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008). Other studies show that young perpetrators tend to become bored easily, feel insecure, and be jealous, especially when it comes to sport or school performance, or their younger siblings or newborn babies in their family. Moreover, they are active, energetic and cheerful children. On the other hand, they are more likely than other children to feel humiliated or angry because of violence they have experienced from others (Janowski et al., 2006). Boys who engage in mobbing are usually physically stronger than their peers, and their victims in particular (Olweus, 1978). Psychologists and psychiatrists often believe that people who are stronger on the outside, tend to use this façade of toughness to hide

their fear and insecurity. Nevertheless, a study by Olweus, focusing on the analysis of precisely those characteristics of perpetrators, does not support this common belief. In fact, its findings seem to indicate something completely opposite, suggesting that perpetrators tend to have a very low, or average, at most, level of fear and insecurity (Olweus, 1981). Many studies by Olweus, conducted on upper primary school children, show that perpetrators tend to enjoy average, or slightly-below-average, popularity (Olweus, 1978). They are often accompanied by a small group of friends (two or three), who support and like them. Their lower popularity might be due to the fact that perpetrators are liked more than their victims, but much less than their peers who are not involved in school mobbing. Studies on the school performance of perpetrators show that, compared to their class as a whole, they tend to be average or slightly below average (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008), and they are likely to have learning problems, which makes them angry or frustrated (Janowski et al., 2006; Lovegrove, Henry & Slater, 2012). Physical strength plays a significant role in mobbing. Perpetrators are usually stronger than their victims. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that stronger boys generally oppress the weaker ones. Reality is much more complex and there is no simple correlation between physical strength and aggressiveness. A huge proportion of strong boys are not aggressive at all. What is typical of school perpetrators is the combination of strength and aggression. Moreover, strength is important for increased popularity, which, in turn, makes the person who enjoys respect from their class less likely to be bullied. In addition, strength facilitates successful defence, which is the most effective way to protect oneself against mobbing (Olweus, 2007). These conclusions generally apply to boys, because among girls physical strength is much less important.

Victims of mobbing are usually more timid and less self-confident than their peers. For the most part, these are careful, sensitive, shy, and reticent children. When attacked by their peers, they usually cry and withdraw or run away. They tend to have poor self-esteem, which is often based on their negative self-image as stupid and unattractive. In many cases, they have an erroneous idea about their situation, are unhappy and filled with shame (Olweus, 2007; Guerin & Hennessy, 2008; Kalinowska, 2014). They tend to be gentle and good-natured. Studies show that they are intelligent but lack some social skills, which, in turn, is associated with the fact that they are unable to understand why they have been singled out as victims. Their sensitivity causes them to take all negative comments about them personally (Janowski et al., 2006). At school, such children feel lonely and lonesome. Usually, they do not have any good friends in their class. They are not aggressive or annoying, so mobbing cannot be explained by provocation on their part. Victims denounce violence and any ways of inflicting it. When it comes to boys, they tend to be physically weaker than their peers (Olweus, 1978). Bullied children are usually described as ones that differ physically from others, e.g., they are overweight or wear glasses. In such cases, violence is more likely to take intermediate forms, such as spreading rumours or social isolation. While the fact of being physically different does not always have to incite direct violence, it is often used by perpetrators to maximise the psychological effects of violence (Janowski et al., 2006). Interesting insights are afforded by studies that have focused on similarities and differences in the physical performance and appearance of perpetrators and their victims. Admittedly, in the majority of cases, victims are characterised by some sort of physical disability or obesity, but these were also observed in perpetrators themselves much more frequently than in other children in the classroom. In terms of learning performance, no significant differences were reported between the two groups. Performance of both victims and perpetrators

was average or slightly below average. There are, however, some significant differences between these groups in relation to physical strength. As mentioned earlier, victims tend to be much less assertive and self-confident (Guerin & Hennessy, 2008). This applies especially to the victims referred to as *passive*. Their behaviour shows that they are timid, unhappy, and, when attacked, will not be able to defend themselves. Such people typically respond in a passive and fearful way, and, in the case of boys, also exhibit physical weakness. Another group of mobbing victims are *provoking victims*. This attitude is much less frequent. Such schoolchildren usually find it difficult to focus, are restless, and create an atmosphere of irritation and tension. Their frequent mood swings provoke frequent conflicts. Some of them are referred to as hyperactive. Their behaviour might be perceived by the majority of their classmates as provocative and can cause other classmates to respond negatively. Sometimes, this provocative behaviour involves direct insults to an individual or a group of people. Their quick temper leads to situations, in which mockery and aggression cause conflicts and fights to gradually escalate. If violent behaviour is to some extent provoked by the victim himself/herself, we are dealing with a slightly different problem than in the case of passive victims (Lawson, 1994; Olweus, 2007). Perpetrators are generally easily triggered off by such provocative behaviour of their potential victims. It does not even have to be socially unacceptable behaviour. What is characteristic of adolescence is that sometimes actions that are generally undesirable in society are approved or even strongly encouraged by peer pressure. This can lead to situations in which schoolchildren who do not want to comply with such requirements are bullied, harassed, or even forced to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or take drugs. At this point, potential victims face quite a dilemma, because by choosing to be true to themselves, they are likely to be hurt, and by giving in to pressure, they might have to suffer other negative consequences, which they are not fully aware of. In the latter case, they enter the destructive group, or even change their role from being a person at risk of harassment to being a perpetrator (Kmiecik-Baran & Cieślak, 2001). As is the case with most classifications, here, too, it is important to be careful about attributing certain traits to children that can make them more likely to become victims. Especially with the provocative type personality, it is crucial to avoid labelling young people as "natural victims", which can sometimes be used to excuse mobbing, and, as a result, to shift the blame onto the victim (Lawson, 1994).

Observers are the participants in school mobbing who have received the least attention in literature. There is no doubt that this group participates in mobbing and is probably the most numerous of all three. Still, it is difficult to find studies that would directly characterise observers. These are schoolchildren who passively participate in mobbing and do not take the initiative or any other action that could either cause damage to, or help, victims. There is a special group of observers, who could be referred to as *accessories* (Gebauer, 2007). They are blackmailed by perpetrators, who threaten to stop being friends with them, or even to use violence. In order to avoid this, they support perpetrators and protect them against consequences. What is worse, mobbing is usually common knowledge within the class, who keep it secret from their teachers. When teachers fail to notice this problem, their authority is undermined and the position of the perpetrator is strenghtened. One of the reasons why victims and accessories do not ask teachers for help is because they perceive them as weak and helpless. In any discussion about mobbing, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between perpetrators and passive accessories. This is because the group undergoes dynamic processes, as a result of which perpetrators can switch roles with accessories, or

the other way round. They appeal to force to gain control and often use, or threaten to use, violence (Gebauer, 2007). The passive attitude adopted by observers is sometimes explained by their having an external locus of control. Interesting insights about this are offered by studies on correlations between the locus of control and responses to problematic situations. Scholars who have conducted a series of experiments concerning such correlations argue that people with external locus of control are more likely to respond with fear when faced with tasks in which there is a gradual increase in uncertainty. People with external locus of control are more likely to exhibit fear or depression in potentially stressful situations. When this phenomenon is considered from a broader perspective, not only those who directly participate in mobbing, but also any young person who has contact with any victim of mobbing, can be considered as witnesses of peer violence. Those who witness violence often do not even realise that they can be the first, and sometimes the only, person who can confront the perpetrator and protect the victim against continued harm. Depending on the difficulties faced by them, there can be many reasons for the passive attitude of those who witness violence. These include, in particular, not being sure whether the individual is actually the victim, not being confident of the success of one's intervention, considering oneself as having poor skills in, and knowledge of, counteracting violence, not wanting to become, and being afraid of becoming, involved in conflicts, and feeling many strong emotions, ranging from compassion for the victim to a deep fear of the aggressor. On the other hand, inaction on the part of witnesses can also lead to negative consequences for them. Observers who, for various reasons, decide not to respond to the harm suffered by another person, can be haunted by guilt, regret and resentment against themselves. Moreover, this can make them more and more helpless and unwilling to respond appropriately in other difficult situations in life (Majchrzak, Wierzbicka & Cielecka-Kuszyk, 2009).

COR Theory

From the point of view of Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, mobbing is a threat to the resources of all the people involved, including victims, perpetrators and observers. Hobfoll distinguishes between four types of resources which, when limited, can cause stress, and if available, bring people happiness. Firstly, there are *object resources*, which are usually just objects. Their availability or lack decide about the socio-economic status of a person (e.g., house, books, clothes). Another category is *personal resources*, which generally include the structure of one's personality (self-esteem, hope, optimism, temperament, effectiveness) and one's skills (social and professional competences). *Condition resources* are the circumstances that provide access to other resources, so they are desirable and valued (e.g., health, friendship, being well-established at school, inheritance). The fourth type are *energy resources*, which are derived not only from one's effort but also three other types of resources and can be used to accumulate other resources (e.g., knowledge, money). Participants in school mobbing experience stress resulting, i.a., from the actual or expected loss of resources. In line with the rules governing the distribution of resources, they try to protect and gain resources, which, in turn, encourages them to use specific coping strategies.

Resources are used by people to regulate their behaviour, function in social relations, and adjust to organisations and culture (Hobfoll, 2011, p. 117). According to COR theory, distribution of resources is, first of all, about evaluating their importance in human life to

determine whether they are necessary or not; secondly, about gaining resources, and thirdly, about losing them (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 181). Steven Hobfoll formulated two main principles governing the distribution of resources. They are particularly important from the perspective of the research problem addressed here, because they directly show how resource management affects the stress experienced by people, including participants in school mobbing. Hobfoll argues that, in the first place, human efforts are aimed at conserving the available adaptation capital, and only then at collecting it (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182). The first principle in the Conservation of Resources theory is that *resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain.* In other words, when the perceived gain and loss are the same, the loss will have a much more powerful impact on the individual. It is impossible to specify how much stronger this impact of loss (and motivation to avoid loss), compared to that of gain (and motivation to make gain), really is, but the COR concept stipulates that the difference is significant and depends, i.a., on the type of resources (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 79). In view of this principle, people are much more motivated to protect themselves against loss than to make gain. Consequently, people would employ various strategies to protect themselves against the loss of their adjustment capital (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182). The second principle in COR theory is that *people must invest resources in order to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources.* There are a few different mechanisms for investing resources. The first involves the use of resources. For instance, people invest their time or money to prevent the loss of other goods, protect themselves against greater loss, or gain more resources. Another type of investing is risk-taking. In this case, certain goods can prevent further loss, but, in order for this to work, people have to make returns on their investments. Examples of resources include money and real estate but also trust and friendship. Resources can be invested either directly or through substitution. The first type, direct transaction is a "resource-for-resource" kind of investment. However, resource substitution is more frequent. Failure in one area of life encourages people to seek fulfilment somewhere else (Hobfoll, 2006, pp. 90–91). The principle described above shows that people will invest disproportionately much to compensate for the loss of the goods they value. This, in turn, generates motivation for building up capital reserves (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 182).

In addition to the presented principles, there are several corollaries that particularise COR theory. These corollaries are a set of principles that provide detailed prognoses about the development of resources over time (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 97).

Corollary 1: *Those with greater resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of orchestrating resource gain.*

Corollary 2: *Those who lack resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and initial loss begets future loss, and those who possess resources are more capable of gain, and initial resource gain begets further gain.*

Corollary 3: *Those who lack resources are likely to adopt a defensive posture to conserve their resources* (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 100; Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, pp. 182–183).

Stress and coping

According to COR theory, people can experience stress in three situations. Firstly, when they might lose their resources; secondly, when they actually lose their resources; and thirdly, when they fail to gain resources following significant resource investment (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 71). A particularly high level of stress is experienced when the individual invests a lot of resources but can only gain little. If such situations happen frequently, the individual starts to struggle with adjustment. This is the case because as the individual realises their unfavourable position, they lose control of their own life and are likely to exhibit destructive behaviour (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 183). Loss of resources does not necessarily have to cause stress, because any lost resources can be compensated for with other resources. And when such compensation is not sufficient, resource replacement in order to meet challenges is stressful in itself (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010).

In his Multiaxial Model of Coping, Hobfoll describes three coping styles. These have been identified on the basis of factor analysis and are as follows (Hobfoll, 2006, pp. 169–177):

1. Active-Prosocial Coping. This style covers four adjustment strategies, namely Social Joining, Cautious Action, Support Seeking, and Assertive Action. These actions follow the observation of the environment. Cautiousness and assertiveness are determined mainly by individual characteristics and environmental requirements. Depending on changing circumstances, in a stressful situation, the same individual might, on one occasion, take more aggressive action, and on another occasion, be rather cautious. All four strategies serve protective functions in the process of coping, and also suggest the anticipated positive impact of the cautious-prosocial style (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

2. Active-Antisocial Coping. This style covers such strategies as Instinctive Action, Aggressive Action, and Antisocial Action. It involves disregard for the needs of other people, and sometimes even aggression, which can be either unintentional or planned (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

3. Asocial Coping. This style is independent of social interactions. Usually, it can be observed in individualistic groups, or during the implementation of individual tasks. Its only strategies are Avoidance and Indirect Action (Hobfoll, 2006; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

Coping can be described in more detail by considering it as a strategy. In his model, Hobfoll identifies nine coping strategies. These are (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 169):

- Assertive Action (efforts to change the situation or its consequences).
- Avoidance (refraining from taking action).
- Seeking Social Support (advice and emotional support).
- Cautious Action (careful planning of how to solve the situation).
- Social Joining (focusing on satisfying the needs of other people, efforts to establish alliances, actions in partnership with others, expecting assistance).
- Instinctive Action (being driven by impulse and one's opinion only, usually rash and recless).
- Aggressive Action (focusing on speed, dynamics and strength, directly attacking the source of the problem to dominate).

- Antisocial Action (behaviour that does not consider the possible harm to other people, concerns coping based on betrayal, deceit, or intrigue).
- Indirect Action (coping by manipulating others to maintain harmony).

Methodology

The study asked the following exploratory research question: What are the correlations between the distribution of resources and the stress suffered by the participants in mobbing at school?

Four hypotheses were formulated:

HYPOTHESIS 1 – PERCEIVED GAINS IN CONDITION RESOURCES CORRELATE WITH LOW PERCEIVED LEVEL OF STRESS IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AMONG OBSERVERS OF MOBBING AT SCHOOL.

Condition resources are a value which determines access to other adjustment options. Such resources may include the position of students in their peer group and their status in class hierarchy. Research shows that observers of school mobbing tend to be blackmailed by perpetrators who threaten, e.g., to stop being friends with them, or even to use violence. This is why they adopt passive attitudes to mobbing or even protect perpetrators, e.g., from teachers (Gebauer, 2007). Therefore, the reason why teenagers assume the role of observers of mobbing at school can be that they believe they might gain condition resources, such as position in their class or just friendship. According to Hobfoll's COR, which considers gains in, and protection of, resources as a major principle governing their distribution (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 79), the gains in condition resources perceived by observers might be associated with lower perceived level of stress in difficult situations. As observers, they focus on subjective benefits, which, in turn, mitigate the negative consequences of their participation in mobbing at school.

HYPOTHESIS 2 – GAINS IN RESOURCES CORRELATE WITH FREQUENT USE OF AGGRESSIVE AND ANTISOCIAL ACTIONS IN PERPETRATORS OF MOBBING AT SCHOOL.

The use of aggressive and antisocial strategies can be perceived by perpetrators as a way to meet their needs. If a person copes with a difficult situation using such actions, they prove to be effective for that person and he/she is more likely to repeat them. This way, perpetrators achieve real benefits, e.g., object resources, such as money (Leszczyńska, 1998).

HYPOTHESIS 3 – RESOURCE LOSS CORRELATES WITH FREQUENT USE OF CAUTIOUS STRATEGIES IN VICTIMS OF SCHOOL MOBBING.

Victims of peer violence are a group that probably suffers the greatest losses in various categories of resources, so the study was not limited to examining their relation with any selected group of resources when it comes to their preferred coping strategies. This helped identify correlations between deficits in various categories and the most popular ways of coping among victims, i.e., avoidance strategies. Overview of literature shows that victims tend to literally avoid the problem by moving to a different school (Boledovičová & Machová, 2014). Moreover, a typical coping strategy is substance use (Sung Hong et al., 2014).

A significant number of students experience psychosomatic symptoms (Boledovičová & Machová, 2014), and, in extreme cases, long-term health problems (Sigurdson, Wallander & Sund, 2014).

HYPOTHESIS 4 – THERE IS A CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVED RESOURCE GAINS AND FREQUENT USE OF CAUTIOUS STRATEGIES BY OBSERVERS.

Since observers are the least studied group, and, as a result, the most "unexplored", the hypothesis refers to all groups of resources, so that all categories can be considered. By definition, the role of an observer implies the use of cautious strategies. But the choice of this response can be based on perceived benefits. These can involve gains in condition resources, as mentioned in Hypothesis 2, but not only (Gebauer, 2007). When perpetrators offer instant rewards, e.g., for remaining silent, we are dealing with gains in energy resources (money) and object resources (e.g., valuable items, gadgets).

In order to examine these hypotheses, the study surveyed 221 people using the following questionnaires:

- Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations (Niewiadomska, Kos & Chwaszcz);
- Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire – Part B, developed on the basis of the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation (COR-E) questionnaire by S. E. Hobfoll;
- Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS) – Situational Form by S. E. Hobfoll; and Demographic data.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEASURING PERCEIVED STRESS LEVEL IN PEER VIOLENCE SITUATIONS (NIEWIADOMSKA, KOS & CHWASZCZ)

This questionnaire was developed on the basis of the Evaluate Your Life questionnaire by I. Niewiadomska, and specifically its part concerning the current perceived level of stress in difficult situations. This modification was designed to adapt the method for teenagers aged 16 or more, and to make it appropriate for assessing difficult situations, such as peer violence. For this purpose, we added questions about the frequency of mobbing experiences and specific roles adopted in mobbing situations. Some items were added or extended, while others were removed. All modifications were based on the review of literature on mobbing at school. Based on findings from studies on the problems faced by young people participating in peer violence, we removed items concerning physiological needs and increased the number of items related to the deprivation of psychological needs (Zajdel, 2004; Janowski et al., 2006; Olweus, 2007; Szyszka, 2007). Moreover, under each question concerning respondents' attitudes to specific questions, we added an open-ended question about the supposed reasons for it. Answers to those open-ended questions provided valuable input to the qualitative analysis of the questionnaire. Respondents answered questions concerning the frequency of difficult experiences using the following five-point scale: 1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – often, 5 – always.

TEENAGE ADJUSTMENT RESOURCES QUESTIONNAIRE – PART B, BASED ON THE CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES-EVALUATION (COR-E) QUESTIONNAIRE BY S. E. HOBFOLL

The distribution of resources was evaluated using Part B of the Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, which was adapted by I. Niewiadomska and R. Zajkowski (2013)

from the Conservation of Resources-Evaluation questionnaire by S. E. Hobfoll for the purposes of assessing young people. This tool is based on the Conservation of Resources theory and measures resource management. The questionnaire comprises 74 items, which are assessed by respondents in terms of resource importance, loss and gain over the previous year. Resources are divided into the following four categories:

1. Object resources (11 items).
2. Personal resources (26 items).
3. Condition resources (28 items).
4. Energy resources (9 items).

Respondents were asked to assess individual resources using a five-point scale. The importance of each group of resources was assessed using the following scale: 1 – marginal, 2 – minor, 3 – average, 4 – major, 5 – utmost. And resource losses and gains were assessed using the following scale: 1 – slight, 2 – minor, 3 – modest, 4 – major, 5 – huge. Conclusions were drawn from the average score for the list as a whole, which helped determine the overall importance of losses of, and gains in, resources for each respondent.

Psychometric characteristics: Internal consistency of "Importance of personal resources" was 0.90. Reliability of the measure concerning perceived "Gains in personal resources" was 0.95. Internal consistency of "Loss of personal resources" was 0.93. Reliability of the measure concerning the importance attached to condition resources was 0.91. Internal consistency of "Gains in condition resources" was 0.94. Reliability of the measure concerning "Loss of resources" was 0.93. Internal consistency of "Importance of energy resources" was 0.67. Reliability of the measure concerning "Gains in energy resources" was 0.83, and that of the measure concerning "Loss of energy resources" was 0.83. Each of these comprises 9 items (Niewiadomska & Zajkowski, 2013).

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO COPING SCALE (SACS) – SITUATIONAL FORM BY S. E. HOBFOLL

This tool was developed by S. E. Hobfoll to measure preferred coping strategies. Its statements, which describe possible behaviour in the face of problems, refer to both individual and collective coping strategies. The choice of any statement reflects the individual's approach to the problem and resource management (Hobfoll, 2006).

The study uses the situational form of SACS, which consists of 52 statements describing behaviour in stress situations. They have the form of sentences in the past tense, thus referring to respondents' previous experiences. Respondents provided answers to each statement using the following five-point scale: 1 – Didn't do this at all, 2 – Didn't do this, 3 – Don't know if I did this, 4 – Did this, 5 – Did this a lot. Nine sub-scales were identified for each strategy to calculate results for the following five dimensions: 1) Assertive Action, 2) Social Joining, 3) Seeking Social Support, 4) Cautious Action, 5) Instinctive Action, 6) Avoidance, 7) Indirect Action, 8) Antisocial Action, 9) Aggressive Action. These sub-scales can be used to identify three factors, described by Hobfoll as coping profiles/styles (Hobfoll, 2006), namely:

1. Active-Prosocial Coping.
2. Active-Antisocial Coping.
3. Asocial Coping.

Reliability of this method was calculated on the basis of tests on a sample comprising 1697 respondents. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for each sub-scale is as follows: Assertive Action ($\alpha = 0.53$), Social Joining ($\alpha = 0.66$), Seeking Social Support ($\alpha = 0.77$), Cautious Action ($\alpha = 0.70$), Instinctive Action ($\alpha = 0.71$), Avoidance ($\alpha = 0.76$), Indirect Action ($\alpha = 0.47$), Antisocial Action ($\alpha = 0.67$), Aggressive Action ($\alpha = 0.53$), (Niewiadomska, Chwaszcz & Augustynowicz, 2010, p. 32).

Results

HYPOTHESIS 1 PREDICTED A CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVED GAINS IN CONDITION RESOURCES AND LOW PERCEIVED LEVEL OF STRESS IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AMONG OBSERVERS OF MOBBING AT SCHOOL.

Table 1 *Pearson's r for the correlation between the perceived gains in condition resources and perceived level of stress in difficult situations in observers of mobbing at school*

Observers

	Gains in condition resources	
Variables	Pearson's r	p
Perceived level of stress in difficult situations	−.262	.163
Perceived level of stress in relation to obstacles	−.406*	.026

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

Based on conclusions drawn from literature, the study assumed that individually perceived gains in condition resources correlated with low perceived level of stress in difficult situations. The analysis of the total score for our own method, i.e., Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level in peer violence situations, and Gains in condition resources from Teenage Adjustment Resources Questionnaire, showed an insignificant correlation ($r = -0.262$; $p = 0.163$). However, a careful examination of the scores showed that there was a significant correlation between the gains in condition resources perceived by observers and Attitude to obstacles, a sub-scale of our own method ($r = -0.406^*$; $p = 0.026$). The correlation is negative, moderate, and significant at 0.05 (two-tailed). This means that the more condition resources observers gain, the less they perceive peer violence as an obstacle. Obstacles included in the *Questionnaire for measuring perceived stress level* were obstacles to plan implementation, and performing tasks that are beyond one's physical or psychological capacity. This conclusion seems particularly valid for understanding why young people who act as observers chose to be passive participants in mobbing at school. On the one hand, by being neutral, they can gain condition resources such as good peer relations and companionship of both other observers and, most likely, perpetrators. On the other hand, by remaining "uninvolved" they do not suffer the direct consequences of participating in mobbing, i.e., they do not have their plans hampered or are forced to do tasks that are beyond their physical or psychological capacity.

HYPOTHESIS 2 PREDICTED THAT PERCEIVED GAINS IN RESOURCES CORRELATED WITH FREQUENT USE OF AGGRESSIVE AND ANTISOCIAL ACTIONS IN PERPETRATORS OF MOBBING AT SCHOOL.

Table 2 *Pearson's r for the correlation between perceived gains in resources and frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school*

Perpetrators		
	Gains in resources	
Variables	Pearson's r	p
Aggressive Actions	.376*	.041
Antisocial Actions	.363*	.049

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (two-tailed)

In perpetrators of mobbing at school, perceived gains in resources correlate with the frequent use of such coping strategies as Aggressive Action ($r = 0.376$) and Antisocial Action ($r = 0.363$). This correlation is weak but statistically significant at 0.05 (two-tailed). The correlation is also positive, which means that as perceived gains in resources increase, so does the frequency of using Aggressive and Antisocial Actions by perpetrators.

It is important to take a closer look at this correlation to consider the above-mentioned strategies as a way of gaining resources. This method of satisfying one's needs can be considered by perpetrators as an effective coping strategy, especially given that as their position is strengthened, the amount of resources gained might increase. This, in turn, might strengthen their conviction that Aggressive and Antisocial Actions bring the expected benefits and should be repeated, which creates a vicious circle and encourages perpetrators to identify more with their role.

HYPOTHESIS 3 REFERRED TO THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVED LOSS IN RESOURCES AND USE OF CAUTIOUS COPING STRATEGIES BY VICTIMS OF MOBBING AT SCHOOL.

Table 3 *Pearson's r for the correlation between perceived resource loss and use of cautious strategies in victims of school mobbing*

Victims		
	Resource loss	
Variables	Pearson's r	p
Use of cautious strategies	−.500**	.005

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

There is a correlation between perceived resource loss and use of cautious strategies in victims of school mobbing. The correlation is moderate and significant at 0.01 (two-tailed). It is also negative, which means that as the frequency of using cautious strategies increases, the perceived resource loss in victims of mobbing at school decreases. COR theory argues that people with low resources will focus on protecting them and shy away from opportunities which could cause the loss of but a part of their resources (Hobfoll, 2006, p. 72). It can be expected that, having made unsuccessful attempts to defend themselves, and, consequently, losing resources, victims of mobbing opt for cautious strategies to protect their resources. They refrain from taking actions that could expose them to further losses. The level of the resources available to the victims is probably too low for them to risk losing them. This model of resource distribution in mobbing victims could be associated with learned helplessness on the part of victims, but this requires further study.

HYPOTHESIS 4 PREDICTED CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEIVED RESOURCE LOSS AND USE OF CAUTIOUS STRATEGIES IN OBSERVERS OF SCHOOL MOBBING.

Table 4 *Pearson's r for the correlation between perceived resource gains and use of cautious strategies in observers of school mobbing*

Observers		
	Gains in resources	
Variables	Pearson's r	p
Use of cautious strategies	.536**	.002

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

Perceived resource gains correlate with frequent use of cautious strategies in observers of school mobbing. This correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed), moderate, and positive, which means that as gains increase, so does the frequency of using cautious strategies. A subjective gain that observers can make by using cautious behaviour is, above all, the feeling of safety resulting from not being exposed to attacks from the perpetrator or their consequences. By remaining passive, they protect their resources, as stipulated in one of the fundamental rules of resource distribution.

Conclusion

The analysis of the results of this study confirms that participation in school mobbing, whether as a perpetrator, a victim or an observer, is associated with group-specific correlations between the distribution of resources and the use of certain coping strategies. Both among perpetrators and victims, the greatest losses are suffered in condition resources. This

is consistent with findings from other research which emphasised health problems faced by young people suffering peer violence (Wolke & Lereya, 2014; Mooren & Minnen, 2014).

The study confirmed a significant, positive correlation between gains in resources and frequent use of aggressive and antisocial actions in perpetrators of mobbing at school. Both literature on the subject and the findings of this study point to an inevitable conclusion. School perpetrators benefit from their role by using violence and aggression (among others Gebauer, 2007; van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen & Bukowski, 2014; Benedict, Vivier & Gjelsvik, 2014). In addition, they use the same methods to cope with the pressure they are put under in difficult situations. Peer violence proves to be the less harmful for observers, the higher their perceived gains in condition resources. Therefore, their passive attitude can be explained by subjective benefits, such as protecting their resources by remaining seemingly neutral about mobbing (Gebauer, 2007). A similar explanation can be proposed for the fact that an increase in gains is accompanied by an increase in the frequency of using cautious strategies in observers. Victims of school violence focus on protecting their resources by using cautious strategies.

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Chapter 8

Occupational therapy and its role in the social inclusion of older people

Dorota Rynkowska, Małgorzata Artymiak

ABSTRACT

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines lifelong learning as efforts aimed at personal and social development in all forms and contexts (Budzyńska, 2004). Lifelong learning is the process of continuous renewal, development and improvement of individual and professional qualifications throughout one's life; it is the whole of cognitive activities undertaken during one's lifetime. From the lifelong learning point of view, physical fitness and psychological well-being of older people are key to encouraging active living and social integration. Health, personality traits, education, living environment, and, above all, activity, are the elements that determine either positive or negative positioning of older people in the social space, and their preference for specific lifestyles. The purpose of this article is to present selected forms of occupational therapy, which prevent social exclusion of older people.

Keywords: old age, promotion of active living, active ageing, social inclusion

Old age and ageing, and social exclusion of older people

Old age is the last of the seven stages in human life cycle. Often, it fills people with the fear of the unknown and, at the same time, the inevitable. Depending on individual traits, this period can be experienced in a variety of ways. The term *old age* is generally associated with reduced efficiency, in its broad sense, loss of certain social roles, deteriorated health, and decreased number and strength of social bonds. All this results from biological, mental and social changes. The biological and mental processes, and changes in the social domain, especially in relation to behavioural traits, are dynamic, and at the same time synergistic, in nature. This dynamism particularly concerns the time frame of events. Synergy is represented in the concurrent ageing processes, which can lead to a complete exclusion

of the individual from society over a short period of time (Szatur-Jaworska, Błędowski & Dzięgielewska, 2006, p. 45). Biological changes affect significant transformations in functioning, professional activity, and participation in various areas of social life.

In addition, this is an individual process that affects each person differently, so it is difficult to accurately estimate the time when an individual becomes old. The dominant position in the literature on the subject is that old age refers to 60–65 year-olds. Until recently, this age was the retirement age in Poland. However, there has been a discernible upward trend in respect of this age. More and more societies are "growing old", as a result of which the proportion of older people in the social structure has been gradually on the rise (Błaszczuk & Rynkowska, 2016, p. 28). Older people often have to struggle with physical and mental problems, which affect their social functioning, independence, and ability to take care of themselves. In addition to the impairment of their social functioning, older people suffer from geriatric syndromes, which include cardiovascular disorders, neoplasms, diabetes, dizziness, motor impairment, falls, dementia, depression, insomnia, urinary and faecal incontinence, constipation, poor vision and hearing, night leg cramps and pressure ulcers. Usually, the above-mentioned disorders and their symptoms are chronic, which makes treatment very difficult.

Psychological symptoms of ageing affect one's personality. It is difficult to distinguish between the traits that are associated with biological factors resulting from ageing, and those that are associated with individual traits of older people. Based on a number of studies, it has been established that impairment affects the majority of mental functions. Such changes usually involve poorer short-term memory. Older people struggle more with remembering new information and tend to have difficulty focusing and committing things to short-term memory. Moreover, ageing is a serious challenge for everybody and requires some adjustment. The situation of older people in society has been changing, or actually deteriorating, significantly. Contemporary society venerates youth, vitality, and physical fitness. Old age appears as the dark side of life – infirm, difficult, diseased, and frustrated. Numerous manifestations of ageism signify dread and fear of the consequences of the natural process of ageing and old age. Older people experience many difficulties and consequences of their old age, also in the social sphere. It is a volatile time and there are many changes related to one's position, social role, and family, friendly and professional relationships. In this late stage in their life, people tend to decrease their activity, for various reasons, and limit the number of social interactions, which makes relationships with others weaker and more difficult. Old age is also the time when people retire. When older people retire, they gradually lose a number of their social roles they have had throughout their whole life. The end of professional career is usually connected with the losing of contact with colleagues and friends. This withdrawal from social interactions causes the individual to lose emotional contact with society and to clam up, weaken and think about dying. During this period, older people often struggle with many traumatic experiences, progressive disorders and psychological and social problems.

S. Richard identifies five types of adjustment to old age:
- Constructive attitude – the individual shows integrity, enjoys their life, and their relationships with others are positive. They have a good sense of humour, they are tolerant, and accurately assess their weaknesses, achievements and failures. Such individuals accept their old age and approaching death, they enjoy the moment, and do not reject assistance from their loved ones.

- Dependent attitude – such individuals are passive towards their milieu. While they retain physical fitness and psychological well-being, they demand continuous support, compelling the attention of their loved ones and carers. They resemble children in their behaviour, they are distrustful and unable to meet life's chalenges. They continuously seek to be the centre of attention. They enjoy the privacy of their home. Their relationships with others are based on the lack of tolerance and suspicion.
- Defensive attitude – taken by people who fear novelty and have problems adapting and accepting any innovative solutions. They are jealous of other people. Usually, they are self-sufficient.
- Hostility directed outward – is adopted by people who are unable to accept their old age, and are irritable, aggressive and confrontational. They consider old age as the end of their life. They are unable to deal with it.
- Hostility directed inward – such people tend to criticise themselves and are ill-disposed to their own life, but they do not want to change their lifestyle and to live their life more ambitiously. They bemoan their own fate, feel lonely and not needed, they are pessimists and have no purpose in life (as cited in: Steuden & Marczuk, 2006, p. 186).

For older people who successfully adapt to old age and can appreciate its good sides, old age can be the beginning, not the end, of their lives (Wiśniewska-Roszkowska, 1989, p. 61). Major problems faced by older people include, i.a., loneliness, chronic diseases, disability, poverty, and the feeling of being useless. The above-mentioned problems show a certain marginalisation of older people as a group. It manifests itself with their gradual elimination from active professional and social lives when they retire. Technological advancements have contributed to a significant increase in life expectancy. The number of older people in society is growing. Unfortunately, as people age, not only their physical but also mental performance deteriorates, leading to some disabilities. These, in turn, directly affect their lifestyles and quality of life. It is important to note that, depending on one's lifestyle, old age and quality of life are closely correlated. Quality of life is associated with life satisfaction. People who are characterised by high quality of life are happy and have satisfactory social relations (Racław, Rosochacka-Gmitrzak & Tokarz-Kamińska, 2012). However, health does not always allow the individual to choose any lifestyle they like, thus preventing them from consciously deciding about the quality of their life. At more advanced stages, diseases and disorders usually lead to disability or invalidism, making the older person dependent on other people and institutions (Pabiś & Babik, 2007, pp. 62–65).

Importance of activity in the lives of older people

One of the most popular methods of positive transition to old age is to be active. People who lead an active life will feel the symptoms of ageing later than their passive peers. An active life is a positive one. It influences communication with society and perception of the world. According to the definition developed by the World Health Organisation, active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. The idea of active ageing has been accepted,

and is currently promoted, by the European Union (Zgliczyński, 2012, p. 131). In line with EU objectives, active ageing has three dimensions:

- active ageing on the labour market – encouraging older employees to remain on the labour market;
- independent life – living as long as possible in a relatively good health, and improving older people's fitness, so that they can be independent participants in social life for as long as possible;
- social activity – based on providing older people with more opportunities, and better conditions, for contributing to social life, either through voluntary service, or taking care of family members, and for participating in social life, which should help prevent their social isolation and many related problems and risks (Zgliczyński, 2012, p. 132).

In old age, active attitude is not only recommended, but necessary, for having a satisfactory life. If there are various dysfunctions related to advanced age, such broadly defined activity can help alleviate the negative consequences of ageing, and bring out the positive aspects to ageing. In principle, the following types of activity among older people can be identified:

- recreational activities – there are many various forms of active recreation, whether for individuals or for groups, and its intensity needs to be aligned with one's preferences and capabilities;
- dancing – it can take the form of dancing lessons, dancing parties, etc.; as a natural form of movement, and in addition to some physical activity, dancing integrates people and provides opportunities for meeting new people;
- treatment and rehabilitation activities – such activities are designed primarily to help people recover, for instance after an illness, or prevent the loss of fitness (exercises); this includes rehabilitation camps, stays in health resorts and sanatoriums;
- holidays and trips – such activities require social interactions, are rejuvenating and give the individual a feeling of change, provide opportunities for visiting interesting places, walks, hiking, swimming, cycling, and other attractions, all of which help improve one's mood;
- family activities – frequent contacts with one's family can be the source of emotional balance and security;
- hobbies – passions, interests, hobbies; such activities contribute to rational time management and improve manual dexterity and intellectual skills;
- social activities – in some cases they naturally bridge the gap between one's professional career and retirement; they can take the form of various senior clubs and community organisations;
- cultural activities – culture, considered as art, music, literature, etc., is needed in society, as it provides opportunities for active participation in various forms of cultural life, such as old time dance ensembles, dramas, and choirs;
- educational activities – learning is a lifelong process, and it is important to exercise one's intellect regardless of one's age; a particularly popular form are universities of the third age. Other forms include various courses, which usually broaden or extend one's knowledge, education and skills;
- allotment gardening – it is a special form of recreation, as it involves some movement in the open air, which is particularly important for the improvement of the respiratory system; it offers a great way to relax (Rynkowska & Błaszczuk, 2014, pp. 72–73).

Ageing is also a time when one either gradually withdraws from, or redefines, one's social and professional roles. Changes in one's social roles and the end of professional career leave the individual with a lot of free time, and in need of changing the dominant form of instrumental activity (associated with work, where the individual tries to achieve specific goals, deriving benefits and satisfaction from it) to expressive activity (chosen in order to satisfy one's needs and desires).

Social relationships in old age depend on one's mental and physical condition, environment, and the nature of one's activities. Older people are family members but also spouses, parents, and grandparents. They are also close friends, neighbours, members of religious communities or other associations, usually old age pensioners, and less frequently permanent employees. Some of those roles constitute follow-ups to their previous lives, while others are assumed when they reach a certain age, and others still simply disappear. Indeed, there is a certain role reversal, and the older person, who used to be professionally active, now needs help and support from their family. It creates a difficult situation, which leads to many negative emotions and events. Difficulty defining new roles in late old age tends to entail the risk of an identity crisis, negative life history, and mental disorders (Krzyżowski, 2005, p. 30). The quality of life among older people is significantly affected by their health and degree of independence, which allow them to function both within their families and environments. In addition, activity among older people is determined by various factors that can predispose them to either be active or not when they retire:

- education – university graduates are more aware of the positive impact of activity on life, so they are more likely to engage in various activities;
- family environment – family, its ancestry and inter-generational relationships all have a considerable impact on activity;
- shape and health – these are crucial, since good health and psychological well-being/physical fitness facilitate activity;
- financial standing – it determines the types of activities the older person can afford, e.g., travelling, stays in sanatoriums, participation in cultural events;
- gender – women represent the majority among old age pensioners, so they are more likely to be active;
- place of residence (urban or rural areas) – the number of opportunities for older persons living in rural areas is much lower;
- cultural institutions – if the town has a cultural institution that offers some activities for older people, this age group is more likely to show interest in such activities (Szatur-Jaworska, Błędowski & Dzięgielewska, 2006, pp. 161–162).

Increased activity contributes to improved mood, higher self-esteem, and reduced anxiety, while also helping to come to terms with this last stage in life, and leading to increased frequency and intensity of interactions with other people. Generally speaking, activity during each stage of growth helps develop one's personality, boosts self-confidence, and expands one's horizons. These elements build up a positive self-image, and, ultimately, improve one's ability to cope with any problems that one might encounter in life. When faced with a crisis, active persons do not clam up, but tackle it head-on. An important role in the development of such an attitude is played by such factors as personality type, health, family situation, financial standing, education, and access to cultural institutions.

Occupational therapy and its preventive function

A serious risk in the lives of older people is their discrimination, which affects many areas of their lives and ultimately leads to loneliness and social isolation (Słowińska, 2015). The term *social discrimination* means an unequal treatment of members of a social group or groups, compared to other people. Usually, it manifests itself in the deprivation or restriction of human rights, harassment, prejudice or bias. Social discrimination is usually based on nationality, race, religion, social background or class (Zych, 1999, p. 59).

Older people are usually discriminated on the following grounds:

- conviction and accusation that older people are a liability and a burden for the State budget, the employed, and society as a whole;
- perpetuating stereotypes about the burdensomeness of old age;
- theory prevailing in developed societies about the primacy of two-generational family over the multi-generational one, which led to the popularisation of institutional care.

This causes mental barriers in older people and those who are only approaching old age, which are difficult to overcome. The negative image of older people, coupled with the actual deterioration in their psychological well-being and physical fitness, and the real loss of previous social roles, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to psychological and social breakdown. Their mood drops, initiative and activity decreases, and, as a result, quality of life deteriorates. The discrimination of older people is connected with the phenomenon of an old age subculture, which isolates itself from younger generations. Through this subculture older people express their opposition to the rest of society. Its members share the awareness that they are members of a discriminated group. Members of this subculture are critical of the young, lack interest in current events, and withdraw from helping their families (Zdziebło, 2008; Borczyk, 2012).

We are dealing with marginalisation when some part of society does not participate in its social institutions, and when the dominant type of the social order is either rejected or ignored by that group. Main reasons for the social marginalisation of older people are related to economic factors (small retirement and disability pensions) and socio-cultural conditions (disintegration of global, national, and family communities, technological development, which older people are unable to keep up with). Moreover, the social marginalisation of older people is aggravated by their unwillingness to fight for their rights and privileges, characteristic "humility" and "pride" of the older generation (seeking assistance from institutions suggests that the individual lacks resourcefulness and did not raise their children right), limited access to information, older people and old age being neglected by the media, lack of interest in the rights and needs of older people, lack of social integration and attitudes towards old age. People, as members of society, inherently need the presence of other people. This has its roots in the need for affiliation, which should be addressed from early childhood to very old age. However, rapid socio-economic and custom-related changes have made people spend less and less time with others, including older people, who feel lonely and abandoned. The fear of loneliness is one of the most painful problems faced by older people. Loneliness is often experienced by older people and it has its source in the actual social isolation, which is fostered by advanced age, gender, difficult financial situation, poor education, and widowhood (Błaszczuk & Rynkowska, 2016, p. 100).

The end of professional career and withdrawal from social life, too, can limit social interactions, and, ultimately, lead to social isolation. Of all the currently identified social issues and areas at risk of social exclusion, problems of older people deserve special attention. While social exclusion is more and more often caused by poverty and its associated dysfunctions and limitations, not all poor people are excluded and, conversely, not all socially excluded people are poor. Older people are a group in which, despite guaranteed regular income coming from social services, the risk of marginalisation is much more common than in other social groups. Due to various limitations, older people are considered, both by themselves and by society in general, to have a low social status (Leszczyńska-Rejchert, 2007, p. 77). The rapid development of universities of the third age clearly shows how a wide range of university opportunities can effectively cater to the needs of older people (Turek, 2011; Marcinkiewicz, 2012).

An example of an active approach among older people is their participation in various forms of occupational therapy (Panek, 2007; Spyrka-Chlipała, 2013). Occupational therapy and its methods promote active living among older people and give their lives a meaning, as they allow them to be part of society. This is essential for social inclusion, as it is important to bear in mind that older people are not a separate social group, but are members of society in general. All measures, including integration and culture creation, can change not only social mentality, but also the self-image of older or disabled people (Baum, 2008, p. 11). Iinstitutions providing care and assistance offer various forms of occupational therapy, such as occupational therapy workshops, nursing homes, centres for people with special needs, and vocational development centres.

Overall, occupational therapy involves treatment and empowerment on the basis of specific activities, classes and work, which can serve educational and treatment purposes. In other words, it is treatment "through work". Occupational therapy can have a beneficial impact on the general physical and mental performance of the individual, or on the topical improvement of the fitness and strength of a specific muscle group or limb. Occupational therapy professionals (occupational therapists) should have special qualifications. Usually, occupational therapy is used for the rehabilitation of the following groups of people:

- physically disabled people; occupational therapists work closely with physical therapists, they know their patients' condition and help them exercise, e.g., to strengthen their legs and/or back; in relation to people with physical disabilities resulting from accidents, birth defects, or old age, occupational therapists focus on:
  — strengthening muscles,
  — improving coordination,
  — reducing joint stiffness,
  — taking care of physical fitness,
  — empowering them and increasing their self-confidence,
- older, chronically ill, and intellectually disabled people; occupational therapy is beneficial also for older and intellectually disabled people, and helps:
  — protect them from inactivity and staying at home,
  — prevent or slow down the loss of skills and fitness,
  — reduce loneliness and depression (Kozaczuk, 1999, p. 42).

Occupational therapy is particularly beneficial for older people who have problems with everyday activities. Occupational therapy workshops provide training in cleanliness, hy-

giene, social skills, food preparation, shopping, money management (so-called budget training), literacy, appropriate self-assessment and life plan evaluation; as well as opportunities to have a go at new activities to test one's skills, and to recognise the barriers that might prevent the individual from performing the task at hand. The therapy can be an incentive, or a stimulus, for increased independence, while also improving self-esteem and teaching patients easier ways to perform various activities. Such workshops put emphasis on such elements of social therapy as:

- improving self-esteem,
- frequent praising,
- learning tolerance to stress,
- changing the entitlement mentality,
- helping find a soulmate (Kozaczuk, 1999, p. 42).

Occupational therapy is a way for older people to take advantage of their time in nursing homes. Older people have quite a lot of free time, and often do not know what to do with all that time. In nursing homes, occupational therapy can help residents integrate and fosters close contacts through conversations and joint problem-solving. The awareness of one's skills, the feeling of being needed, and the ability to do something useful all have a positive impact on the self-regard of older people, while also helping them rise in esteem and feel more needed.

The first, very important, stage in occupational therapy is the accurate assessment of the performance of the individual and the identification of any deviations from the norm. The assessment should focus on their physical, cognitive, emotional and social performance. The evaluation of cognitive performance includes communication, speech development, reasoning, skills, attention span, memory, emotions and their expression, and interests. The assessment of social performance requires the following elements to be taken into account: the impact of impairment on social roles, interpersonal communication, self-control, and activities of daily living (using the bathroom, washing oneself, eating, cleaning, etc.).

A correct diagnosis is the basis for preparing an individual, tailor-made, occupational therapy programme. Efforts by the personnel should be designed to support nursing home residents who have become helpless against life's challenges. It is about showing them kindness and respect to support them in the areas in which they cannot cope on their own. This also requires assistance from doctors, psychologists, educators and carers. Those professionals make up a therapeutic/educational team, which, based on the observation and knowledge of each individual, as well as their expertise, work together on the development of programmes aligned with the needs of each person (Kott, 2005, p. 151). Occupational therapy, as a major component in social rehabilitation, is designed to overcome the boredom and hospitalism, which can be observed in nursing homes, as well as to include as many people as possible in the normal flow of life at home and in society, and to improve their mental and physical performance. Therapy should be organised and tailor-made in such a way that each individual participates with pleasure and enjoys it. The most popular forms of occupational therapy used with older people are ergotherapy, art therapy, sociotherapy and psychotherapy.

1. Ergotherapy – patients create various objects of everyday use. Possible forms include sculpting, sewing, wickerworking, weaving, embroidering, toy-making, leather craft-

ing, woodworking, pottery, gardening, cooking, photography, etc. The techniques used during the therapy of each person depend on their individual capacity.

2. Art therapy – or therapy through art, based on creating and embracing art. In other words, active and passive art experience. Passive experience is when the individual is exposed to various forms of art, such as painting and music, etc. Active experience, on the other hand, is when art is created by the individual, e.g., through painting, drawing, embroidering, weaving, making music, performing/acting, composing poetry. Such forms of therapy help the individual develop on the emotional, intellectual and social levels. The types of art therapy identified by E. Konieczna (2013) include "*music therapy, bibliotherapy, dance therapy, dramatherapy, film therapy and visual arts therapy*" (Konieczna, 2013, p. 26).

3. Psychotherapy – focuses on positive psychotherapy, which helps the individual learn how to handle and solve conflicts. Positive psychotherapy teaches the individual how to bring out their natural kindness, benevolence and friendliness. Contemporary trends in psychotherapy can be described as follows – there is an increasing focus on the flexibility and openness of personality structures, importance of awareness, and in particular the understanding of emotional phenomena, there is interest in patients' life history, importance of childhood and developmental disorders, psychoanalysis is no longer considered unilaterally and psychotherapy is associated with plans for the future and with supporting the patient in their efforts; individual psychotherapy is more and more often supplemented with group therapy, and psychotherapeutic techniques are improved to include various games, psychotherapeutic role-play, and discussions in psychotherapeutic community.

4. Sociotherapy – gaining recognition in work with older people, sociotherapy is adjusted to the needs, abilities and interests of its participants. This form of therapy is generally intended for people who have problems with their behaviour and adjustment. Sociotherapy is considered to be one of the ways of mitigating or eliminating negative, or socially undesirable, standards and habits related to social behaviours. It is a form of assistance for people who struggle with personal problems and life's challenges. It helps develop the mental skills necessary to interact with other people, such as empathy, openness to oneself and others, and ability to express one's feelings (Kott, 2005, pp. 249–250).

Individual functioning disorders are usually the consequence of unsatisfied mental needs. Recurring difficult situations reinforce inaccurate cognitive judgements, negative behaviour and emotional disorders. In the sociotherapy of older people it is crucial to strengthen personality through the achievement of developmental and educational goals. Social milieu significantly impacts on the improvement in the knowledge about oneself and the establishment and development of the perfect self-image.

The application of the above-mentioned forms of therapy substantially contributes to the development of personality and self-expression, constitutes the basis for group integration, supports the establishment of relationships, and helps develop the ability to socialize. The therapy is beneficial as it makes it possible to relieve negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear and agression, and to exercise self-control, which helps the individual function better in society.

The lack of activity, interactions, and support from others, makes the individual feel helpless, wronged, isolated and lonely. Participation in occupational therapy helps disabled and older people feel accepted and makes them realize that, despite certain dysfunctions, they are valuable members of their communities. They learn to solve their problems on their own, overcome difficulties, and control their emotions to express them appropriately. Participation in occupational therapy encourages the individual to take action, learn new skills, and focus on themselves and their everyday activities (Kott, 2005, p. 130).

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