

Theory versus practice

In the theoretical assumptions of contemporary rehabilitation pedagogy, the phenomenon of deviant behaviors and the possibilities of counteracting them is to a lesser extent the subject of analyses resulting from the already classic behavioral approach, which recognizes that man in the course of their personal and social development learns their behaviors and reactions through a system of positive and negative reinforcements, i.e. through a system of educational penalties and rewards.

Unfortunately, in education (minors) and penitentiary (convicts) practice, there is a reverse phenomenon, exposing the psychodynamic trend, which until recently has been criticized in the socialization influences, and which has its roots in Freudian psychoanalysis, and its similarly oriented contemporary version – humanistic psychology and pedagogy, assuming the “dark” and “light” sides of every human being.

Thus, it can be concluded that contemporary rehabilitation pedagogy in its theoretical layer loses its importance and is “not translatable” into methodological dimensions realized in institutional practice.

Therefore, it may be worthwhile, once again, to briefly present the two theoretical trends characterized by different methodological approaches, but similar pedagogical reflection, which nowadays appear in the theoretical space of rehabilitation pedagogy. I am thinking here of interactive concepts, closely related to symbolic interactionism, and cognitive concepts related to personality theories.

Social interactions stabilize the pro-deviation individual in its way of thinking about itself and thus solidify them in the social roles lacking content and scope,

leading to a process of deepening of their marginalization and exclusion. The individual's reaction to this state of affairs is, among other things, an escalation of the level of interpersonal aggression, socially unacceptable ways of satisfying needs, and pathological ways of reducing internal emotional tensions.

The concepts of destigmatization and the concept of positive deviation are relatively new and little analyzed in the context of social rehabilitation pedagogy. The process of destigmatization starts with an individual becoming aware of the previous improper life (their unfortunate fate), which causes the fulfillment of deviant social roles (criminal, aggressor, loser, etc.), and therefore with noticing the effects of the process of negative stigmatization.

The process of destigmatization is the negotiation or deletion of the deviant identity of an individual and the transformation of the deviant self into a normative self. Thus, it is a process that assumes the difficult experience of the fact that two identities – the “old deviant” and the “new positive” one – occur simultaneously. This phenomenon takes the form of a positive deviation, and thus reveals itself through a rapid manifestation of one's new beliefs (an alcoholic who stopped drinking and is an active member of the AA, a former drug addict who helps others to get rid of the addiction, etc.).

It should be assumed that the concept of destigmatization finds measurable support in cognitive psychology, according to which the primary element of the structure of the self is information which consists of personality constructs, i.e. coded scripts that transform into knowledge about the social environment, attitudes towards it, respect – or lack of it – of social and legal norms. These scripts are generated and developed during the interaction with significant persons, i.e. both in the process of socialization and social rehabilitation.

In the case of people who are poorly socialized, information about the social environment (scripts) is falsified and usually do not comply with the applicable social norms. This is expressed through final complex cognitive structures in the form of the so-called hostile distortion of the attribution involving the dominant perception of interaction partners' attitudes as hostile and detrimental to the interests of the individual.

The “hostile distorted attributions” function in the form of the so-called coercive behavior – the individual feels compelled to behave in a hostile manner. Such an attribution links the effects of behavior that are unpleasant to the individual with the hostile intentions of other people.

Correcting or eliminating distorted attributions can be done in the course of a properly conducted reinterpretation of social situations, i.e. both in the course of pedagogically created self-presentation (presenting the self in interactions) and visualization of corrected identity parameters (attributive autopresentation).

Social rehabilitation based both on the assumptions of cognitive theory and the interaction concept leads to a process of destigmatization, as this process takes place in the context of social interaction. Creative methods of social rehabilita-

tion are best suited to achieve this condition. This type of impact is justified by the fact that the destigmatization process develops under the influence of unconventional experiences and the participation of temporal factors (the individual perceives that their previous life was a disaster, but has not ended yet), and interpersonal factors (of the nature of social support).

From the point of view of contemporary social rehabilitation pedagogy, the process of destigmatization will consist in a kind of “superimposition” (assimilation) by an individual of new identity costumes, instead of the previous attempts to deplete or delete (remove) them. As it seems, this “depletion or deletion of identity” dominating the practical impacts of institutional rehabilitation is one of the main reasons for the lack of sustainability and effectiveness of the impacts in this area.

The process of skillfully modifying the fossilized deviation identities by supplementing them with new cognitive scripts and attributes, competences and skills opens up a new space of personal and social development for the future ex-deviants. The content of this space, i.e. the subject of educational influences are their potentials (personal and social resources) created by applying methods of creative social rehabilitation in institutional and non-institutional practice.

Within the framework of the above theoretical reflection, the concept of creative social rehabilitation as a new and original peculiar direction of development of the pedagogy of social rehabilitation is fully contained. Creative rehabilitation recognizes that the social environment largely creates and abolishes human identities. In the first case, this occurs during the process of socialization of the individual, in the second case – during their other numerous life experiences.

Identity can be a source of satisfaction or worry for people. It could also be a stigma. This statement takes on real form in the case of the socially maladjusted. The stigma they bear prevents them from having proper interpersonal relations, excludes them from fulfilling certain roles, and thus, in principle, eliminates them from wider social life. The parameters of their identity are not included in the collections of self-presentative features commonly accepted by culture.

Personal (individual) identities result from the development of cognitive structures and the initiation of creative processes, ways of solving problematic situations (the individual self), while the change of image is their derivative and has the advantages of features constructing social roles (the social self). The latter means the functioning of the socially ill-adapted person in roles that are seen not as the role of a deviant, but as the role of a person solving their problems, perhaps in a different but socially accepted way. Therefore, the theoretical and methodical concept of creative rehabilitation is a chance to overcome the existing rehabilitation impasse.

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