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INTERPERSONAL DEPENDENCY IN MARITAL RELATIONS: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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The social role of marriage covers a wide context – it is determined by the norms, values and expectations of society regarding gender roles, family, raising children and the status of spouses in society. In society, marriage performs many functions: family expansion, inheritance transfer, emotional support, social protection, economic growth, status recognition by society, etc. In modern Ukrainian realities, under conditions of social crisis, many families are faced with relocation, separation, restructuring family roles; marital relations also undergo changes.

Marital relations, as a type of interpersonal relationships, include all aspects of communication, cooperation and interaction between a man and a woman in various spheres of life. Interpersonal dependency is seen as a destructive, pathological relationship between people in which one party is excessively dependent on the other party, resulting in a loss of identity, autonomy, and independence. Interpersonal dependency can become a serious problem for a marriage and have negative consequences for both partners. Dependent relationships greatly affect the interaction and role of the individual in marital communication and satisfaction with the relationship in general.

J. Gottman believed that dependency is a normal part of interaction in a couple, but its level and way of manifestation may vary. He distinguishes between healthy "interdependency" and unhealthy "codependency" [3]. Interdependent partners sympathize with each other, support each other, while the relationship itself brings satisfaction and joy to both partners. Codependency includes control, manipulation, getting a pleasure from the partner without taking into account their interests or needs. As a result, a person who is dependent in a relationship becomes indecisive and finds it difficult to define their own needs and desires, which leads to stress, depression, hypochondria and burnout in partner relationships. They lose their identity, as all attention shifts to the needs and desires of the other partner. The ability to take responsibility for oneself and make one's own decisions is lost, which leads to the loss of one's own orientation in life and values. In marriage, an addicted person has a specific condition in which they feel the desire to transfer important life decisions to their partner, subordinate their needs to the partner's wishes, feel helpless alone due to excessive fear of being unable to live independently. Codependents seek to be involved in all aspects of their partner's life, which results in excessive control, jealousy, and suspicion.

Often, in codependent partners one can observe a cycle of codependency, the so-called "Karpman Triangle", which includes the roles of "Victim", "Rescuer" and "Persecutor" [2]. The "Persecutor" excessively cares about the life of the "Victim", which

turns into excessive control and manipulation. As a result, they believe that their concern is underestimated and show anger and aggression. The "Victim" is unable to live their own life, to find ways to solve their own problems and to change their life independently, to show their emotions, willpower, their own desires and needs, while maintaining contact with the person on whom they are dependent. The victims tolerate while accumulating negative feelings in themselves, keep silent about their dissatisfaction, instead they look for a Rescuer who listens to them and supports them. After hearing the complaints of the "Victim", the "Rescuer" offers their help and support; their leading emotions are pity, sympathy, resentment, anger at the "Persecutor". Karpman noted that the participants of the Triangle can change roles, which forms a vicious circle of interaction between individuals and forms destructive relationships. In such a relationship, the personal boundaries of the partners are dissolved, while healthy relationships involve both common spheres of life for the couple and separate spheres in which the partners do not try to control each other's personal lives. In a dependent marital relationship, in addition to the spouse, third parties may be involved in Karpman's Triangle – relatives, friends, etc.

The stages of development of codependency between partners were described by R. Hemfelt, F. Minirt, and P. Meier. According to them, the movement of codependency occurs in a spiral and has five stages. At the first stage, the partner feels pain and suffering, which is often an obstacle to understanding codependency, as it is perceived as a feeling of love. The second stage – the partner uses the other partner for their own self-affirmation and satisfaction of their own needs. During the third stage, there is a temporary relief of suffering, because stable defense mechanisms are formed, in particular, displacement, denial, and rationalization. The fourth stage involves the consequences of the previous stages, namely: negative emotional states (depression), psychosomatic disorders, distortion of interpersonal relationships, feelings of helplessness, instability and, as a result, suffering. The fifth stage includes guilt and shame; a codependent person again plunges into negative experiences and looks for already familiar ways of distraction and, as a result, completely loses herself/himself as an individual.

The results of empirical study [1] showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between codependency and satisfaction with marital relations, as well as sympathy, that is, the higher the level of codependency in a relationship, the less a person is satisfied with it and feels sympathy for partner. On the other hand, the more pronounced the reliable type of attachment, the more love, sympathy and satisfaction with marital relations are present in the relationship.

Therefore, interpersonal dependency has certain dynamics and various manifestations, its negative consequences are felt by both partners. Marital relationships, which are built on interpersonal dependency, lead to deformation and destruction of the spouses' personalities, suffering, mental disorders, etc.

References:

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