

Larisa Telnova:

Puppet therapy with juvenile offenders



Juvenile offenders are special category of convicts, requiring more attention, since adolescence in itself is the age of becoming an individual, characterized by emotional instability, conflict and a tendency towards self-affirmation. Adolescents in conflict with the law have a number of specific characteristics:

- intellectual insufficiency,
- the propensity to take risks, the need for thrills,
- narrowness of interests,
- lack of system of values,
- the rigidity of behavioral stereotypes,
- weak prognostic abilities,
- violations of emotional-volitional regulation of behavior,
- susceptibility to the influence of the group and at the same time the presence of nonconformist attitudes, the tendency to "disturb peace",
- violations of the system of social relations,
- the perception of themselves as unsuccessful people, and the world - hostile, unjust and insecure, etc.

However, these features or the living conditions of adolescents do not always cause delinquent behavior of the adolescent. Many scientists agree that the identity crisis as a result of the breakdown of the "child's Self" and the synthesis of the new "adult Self", rather than environmental factors, are the primary sources of all adolescents' difficulties. That's why help in overcoming this crisis becomes the main goal of working with delinquent teenagers. The knowledge of one's own self, the search for internal and external development resources, the formation of constructive behavior strategies contribute to the process of resocialization of the offenders.

The following tasks become topical at each stage of life of a teenager in a closed institution:

- Adaptation the adolescent to the conditions of life in a closed institution.
- Resolution of traumatic situations through their restructuring.
- Prevention of destructive behavior of pupils in isolation.
- Correction of the negative aspects of the personality that interfere with prosocial behavior.
- Support in finding external and internal resources for personal teenagers' development.

In our opinion, art-therapeutic technologies, in particular puppet therapy, are effective assistance to minors who are serving their sentences in a young offender' institution to change their view of the world, their attitude to themselves and others, in the mastery of its own behavior.

The choice of materials and the type of dolls is conditioned by the conditions of the institution, which we provisionally divided into four categories: regulations of the institution, safety, cognitive and emotional characteristics of pupils. Some of our observations are presented in the table below:

Category	Conditions	Features of sessions
Regulations	- number of classes - the duration of the class	Work in thematically oriented group is preferable. Puppets with simple structures are used.
Safety	- the number of teenagers in the group - safe materials	Work in a small group. Paper, soft foil, plasticine, clay, textiles.
Cognitive characteristics of pupils	- developmental delay of various origins - low concentration of attention, rapid exhaustion	Use non-verbal techniques, visual metaphors. Strictly defined duration of the class; the material should not cause loss of interest; the process of making a puppet can take

		time, so it needs a simple design of one.
Emotional characteristics of pupils	- proneness to conflict	Safe materials are required.



The choice of materials adequate for the purposes and conditions is a necessary condition.

M. Naumburg called for the use easy-to-master and easy-for-manipulate materials. Some art therapists warned against "using an unnecessarily wide range of pictorial means, believing that this could distract patients, "dilute" their immediate creative expression". It is necessary to take into account not only the advantages and disadvantages, but also the effect that the material has on the client, on the therapeutic process, when you choose a material. Another important factor is the availability of material for the client, i.e. a level of his physical and mental state that allows him to interact with the material, and the safety of the material. Additional conditions for choosing the material using the methods of puppet therapy become the possibility to make changes to the puppet without losing the overall aesthetic impression, the possibility of a greater degree of improvisation in its production.

Let's consider some of the materials from which you can make therapeutic puppets (I note that the advantages and disadvantages are relative):

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Textiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility; - safety; - low cost; - the possibility of manufacturing a three-dimensional image; - variety of textures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the color range is limited by the manufacturer
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility; - safety; - low cost; - possibility of use in combination with other materials; - material, familiar from childhood; - variety of styles and formats; - ability to give different colors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mainly used for two-dimensional images; - limitation of amendments
Soft foil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility; - safety; - low cost; - one-color allows you to concentrate on the form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the inability to give color
Natural clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility; - safety (and even the usefulness to some extent); - the ability to manufacture both two-dimensional and three-dimensional images; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stain hands, which can cause rejection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you can use different colors; - the ability to make changes without changing the aesthetics of the image; - one-color allows you to concentrate on the form 	
Polymer clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility; - the ability to manufacture both two-dimensional and three-dimensional images; - the ability to make changes without changing the aesthetics of the image; - the ability to give any colors (paint); - one-color allows you to concentrate on the form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hardens quickly; - relatively high cost

We are guided not only by the available materials, but also by the effect that puppets have, when choosing the type of puppets. So, marionettes are useful for forming emotional-volitional self-control, communicative skills, development of spatial orientation, glove puppets - for speech development, expression of feelings, shadow puppets - for correcting and preventing fears.

Thus, an algorithm for choosing the strategy of puppet therapy is built:

1. Definition of goals and objectives of psychological care.
2. Definition of conditions in which this assistance will be provided (including, whether it will be individual or group work).
3. Select the type of puppets and materials (if the puppet will be made).
4. Choosing of a method for assessing the effectiveness of puppet therapy.

I give an example for understanding the algorithm. It is necessary to show an idea of balance for the pupils, and not just tell, but show, give a try, use all the modalities.

Since we are talking about a person's balance, we decided to use a doll, because it most accurately reproduces the appearance of a person. Guys will make a doll for "connecting" kinesthetic on their own. The next step is to select the material. Here you can use soft foil, sculptural (one-color) clay or natural clay. If you additionally need to reduce the level of emotional tension, aggression, in our opinion, the best material will be sculptural clay. The task is put simple: it is necessary to fashion the figure of a person and put it without using additional support means. Further discussion of the process of accomplishing the posed task makes it possible to understand what equilibrium is, how it can be achieved.

An obligatory stage for us is an evaluation of the effectiveness of puppet therapy. Naturally, the choice of the evaluation tool depends not only on the goals and objectives that we set, starting puppet therapy, but also on the availability of this tool to under-age convicts. As mentioned above, the mental development of many of them does not correspond to age. We use both standardized and projective methods. In addition, observation of adolescent behavior plays an important role.

The standardized techniques used by me have the following characteristics:

- a small number of questions that prevent a teenager from feeling tired and losing attention;
- questions are concise, understandable;
- questions suggest answers "yes", "no", "do not know" or "maybe" (many deviant teenagers have scant speech).

Since the main attention is paid to the attitude of adolescents to themselves and the environment, to the formation of their own "Self", I use the technique of diagnosing the propensity to deviant behavior (author A.N. Orel), designed to measure the readiness (inclination) of adolescents to implement various forms of deviant behavior, "World assumptions scale" of R. Yanoff-Bullman (a modification of M.A. Padun and A.V. Kotelnikova), which allows to measure the depth representations of the personality about the surrounding world and about "Self", which influence the thinking, emotional states and behavior of a person, the Pierce-Harris scale for studying the Self-concept.

I can offer a test "Who Am I?" by M. Kuhn and T. McPartland (modification of T.V. Rummyantseva), "Self-portrait" (authors E.S. Romanova, O.F. Potemkina) from

projective techniques. However, making puppets, manipulating them become projective methods for evaluating puppet therapy.

In 2016, my colleague Olga Vladimirova and I conducted a study of the effectiveness of puppet therapy in changing the image of the "Self" of delinquent teenagers with a delay in mental development. The study involved 27 juvenile convicts aged 15 to 17 years. The minors under investigation were randomly divided into 2 groups (we took into account the pupils' wish to participate in the work of the art-therapy workshop). The first, control group included 13 adolescents who did not take part in art therapy classes. The second, experimental group consisted of 14 teenagers. We used both projective and standardized diagnostic methods. Measurements were made before and after classes. The methods of mathematical statistics were used for assessing the reliability of the differences obtained in the tests. The results obtained by us showed the efficacy of puppet therapy.

A comparative analysis of the data showed changes in several components of the Self-image of adolescents engaged in puppet therapy. So, after classes the tendency to give socially desirable answers decreases; juvenile convicts become more honest. Evaluation of one's own behavior becomes more realistic. In addition, the self-esteem of minors becomes more realistic. The perception of themselves as a member of a group of friends and evaluation of interaction with people increases, the level of physical identity is growing. Probably, the boundaries of the realized inner world expand. We also found changes in the "Prospective Self" of the teenagers juveniles appear (and, perhaps, are aware of) their own desires, intentions, and prospects. Adolescents begin to perceive the surrounding world more benevolent and fair, conviction in their own ability to control the events happening in life events and luck is growing. In general, the Self-image becomes more realistic.

The study of the identity of convicted minors with delay in mental development after art therapy sessions showed that they more highly appreciate their interaction with people, than teenagers who did not participate in classes. The designation of their physical identity significantly increases. Juvenile convicts who participated in art therapy, in contrast to minors who did not take part in it, are more convinced of the safety and goodwill of the surrounding world, its fairness and controllability.

In general, the used developing methods have made it possible to change the perception (cognitive component) of one's own behavior, the school situation and self-esteem, the perception of one's own identity, the perception of the surrounding world and self-relation. As a result of participating in the preparation of cartoon, boys are awakened by interest in themselves and others, they become more active, more confident, more independent, and cooperation skills are formed.



Larisa Telnova