

# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PRACTICE OF WORKING WITH ADDICTIONS (ALCOHOL, DRUGS, GAMBLING)

**Jurayeva Dildora Nasirdinovna**

Scientific supervisor of the department of Pedagogy and psychology, Tashkent Medical Academy,  
Uzbekistan, Tashkent

**Sayfullayeva Kamila Odil qizi**

2nd year student, Faculty of medicine, Tashkent Medical Academy, Uzbekistan, Tashkent

**Abstract:** The topic of addictions in modern society is becoming increasingly relevant, given the growing number of cases of alcoholism, drug addiction and gambling addiction. These forms of addictive behavior have a destructive effect on both the personality of the individual and his social environment. The article discusses the key aspects of clinical psychology in working with addicted patients. Particular attention is paid to the psychological mechanisms of formation and maintenance of addiction, including impaired self-regulation, motivational deficiencies, features of the cognitive sphere and personality structure. Modern approaches to the diagnosis and correction of addictions are described, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational counseling, the Gestalt approach, as well as the role of family therapy in the rehabilitation process. The author emphasizes the importance of including a clinical psychologist in an interdisciplinary team of specialists and the need for individualization of psychotherapeutic programs. The article is aimed at substantiating the need for a comprehensive, psychologically oriented approach to the treatment of addictions and reveals the potential of clinical psychology as an important link in the system of prevention and rehabilitation of addictive behavior.

**Key words:** clinical psychology, addiction, alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, addictive behavior, psychotherapy, rehabilitation.

**Introduction.** In modern medical and social practice, the problem of addictions occupies one of the central places both in the clinical and social spheres. The increase in the number of cases of alcoholism, drug addiction and gambling addiction indicates that addictive behavior is not limited to aspects of physical health, but deeply affects the psyche, emotional state and social functioning of the individual. These phenomena are accompanied by serious consequences for the health of citizens, which often leads to social conflicts, loss of ability to work, maladjustment and degradation of interpersonal relationships. Timely detection and effective intervention in this problem require the integration of efforts of specialists in various fields: medicine, psychology, social work and rehabilitation.

The problem of addictions is relevant not only from the point of view of diagnostics and treatment, but also from the position of prevention and the formation of stable self-regulation mechanisms. Clinical psychology plays a key role in determining the psychological mechanisms underlying the formation of addictive behavior. It is the clinical psychologist, using modern diagnostic methods and psychotherapeutic approaches, who is able to determine not only the manifestations of addiction, but also underlying factors such as cognitive impairment, motivational deficits, emotional instability and personality traits that contribute to the development of addiction. Thus, the study and application of clinical intervention methods becomes a prerequisite for the creation of comprehensive rehabilitation programs and patient support.

The introduction of psychotherapeutic techniques such as cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational counseling, the Gestalt approach, and family therapy demonstrates high efficiency in the fight against

addictions. The success of treatment is largely determined by the specialist's ability not only to work with symptoms, but also to conduct a deep analysis of the patient's psychological structure, identify hidden emotional conflicts, and change destructive behavior patterns. Of particular importance is the interdisciplinary approach, in which a clinical psychologist closely cooperates with psychiatrists, narcologists, social workers, and rehabilitation specialists. This synergetic method allows for all aspects of the problem to be taken into account, from neurophysiological processes to social determinants of addiction.

The main objective of the presented article is a comprehensive study of the role of clinical psychology in the treatment of addictive disorders, as well as an analysis of the practical aspects of working with patients suffering from alcohol, drug addiction and gambling addiction. The article examines modern diagnostic methods, approaches to the correction of addictive behavior and rehabilitation strategies aimed at restoring the psycho-emotional balance and social adaptation of the patient. The effectiveness of psychotherapeutic interventions is analyzed, the main difficulties faced by specialists are identified, and prospects for further research in this area are discussed.

### **Theoretical foundations of addiction**

**Addiction** is considered a complex multi-aspect phenomenon, including biological, psychological and social components. The modern concept is based on the bio-psycho-social model, which helps to understand that no aspect can be considered in isolation from the others. The fundamental principles were laid by such scientists as E. M. Dzhelleinik, who developed a classification of alcohol dependence, and V. Khantzian, who proposed a self-medication hypothesis, according to which dependence is a way to compensate for internal emotional pain. These models influenced the further development of the theory of addictive behavior and served as a basis for the creation of complex diagnostic and therapeutic programs.

### **Classification of dependencies**

Within the framework of clinical psychology, addictions are usually divided into two large groups:

#### **Substantial (real) dependencies:**

- Alcoholism. One of the most studied types of addiction, characterized not only by the physical determinacy of the condition, but also by psychological mechanisms of denial of the problem, emotional instability and impairment of cognitive functions.
- Drug addiction. A condition in which drug use leads to changes in reward systems, deformation of motivational mechanisms and the emergence of concomitant mental disorders.

#### **Behavioral (compulsive) addictions:**

- Gambling addiction. A phenomenon associated with compulsive behavior without the participation of "material" substances; characterized by pathological excitement, loss of control, as well as disorders associated with emotional regulation and social maladjustment.
- Additionally, a number of studies examine the following addictions, such as addiction to the Internet, shopping, etc.

### **Alcohol addiction**

Clinical aspects and mechanism of development

Alcoholism is one of the most studied forms of addiction. Its clinical picture includes:

- Physical dependence, manifested in the development of withdrawal syndrome and physiological changes in the central nervous system.
- Psychological aspects such as denial of the problem, decreased self-esteem, emotional instability and impaired cognitive processes.

The works of E. M. Dzhelleinik, who developed a classification and model of the progression of alcohol dependence, laid the theoretical basis for understanding the pathology and developing psychotherapeutic interventions.

### **Gambling addiction**

Features and mechanisms of formation

Gambling addiction is a behavioral addiction and is manifested in the absence of physical dependence, but is accompanied by:

- Compulsive behavior and loss of control over gaming activity.
- The destruction of social and financial relationships, as well as emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression when trying to stop the process.

Research by L. Ladouceur, M. Shaffer and other specialists in the field of behavioral addictions has shown that gambling addiction is characterized by reward mechanisms similar to substance addictions and requires specific approaches in therapy.

Correction methods

The main psychotherapeutic approaches include:

- Behavioural therapy, which helps change habitual patterns of behaviour associated with gambling.
- Motivational counseling to strengthen the desire to change negative behavior.
- Family therapy, which helps restore communication within the family and support the patient during the rehabilitation process.

### **Discussion:**

The conducted analysis of various forms of addiction – alcohol, drug and behavioral (using gambling as an example) – allows us to state that the problem of addictive behavior is multifaceted and requires a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. The attention of clinical psychology to the psychological mechanisms of addiction formation helps not only to identify “superficial” symptoms, but also to better understand the motivational and emotional processes underlying addictive behavior.

One of the key advantages of modern psychotherapeutic methods, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, is their ability to work with internal beliefs and destructive behavior patterns. The experience accumulated in the studies of E. M. Dzhelleinik, V. Khantzian and A. Beck confirms that successful treatment of addictions is possible only if both biological and psychological aspects of addiction are taken into account. The integration of motivational counseling, group and family therapy allows for the creation of support not only for the patient himself, but also for his immediate environment, which significantly increases the chances of long-term remission.

Despite the positive experience, there are a number of significant limitations that make it difficult to achieve a stable result in addiction therapy. The high relapse rate reflects the difficulty of eliminating both the physical and psychological components of addiction. Often, patients, in a state of denial or rationalizing their behavior, resist deep changes. Another aspect is the need for continuous improvement of diagnostic tools that allow for an accurate assessment of the degree of addiction and associated disorders. Limited resources, both material and personnel, are also a significant challenge for specialists working with addicts.

The results of the study emphasize the importance of a clinical psychologist working closely with psychiatrists, narcologists, social workers, and rehabilitation specialists. Only the integration of various areas of medical and psychological care can ensure the completeness and complexity of intervention. Current research indicates the positive effect of such synergistic approaches, which make it possible to take into account the neurobiological changes that occur during addiction and to correct the emotional and behavioral disorders characteristic of addictive behavior. One of the most important

tasks of future work is to develop individualized therapy programs that take into account the personal characteristics of each patient and the specific aspects of their addiction. The introduction of digital technologies, such as online platforms for psychotherapy and mobile applications for patient support, opens up new opportunities for timely diagnosis and monitoring of the effectiveness of intervention. The integration of neuroscience methods with traditional psychotherapeutic approaches also seems to be a promising direction that can improve the accuracy of diagnosis and the effectiveness of therapy. Despite the successes achieved, the path to complete rehabilitation of patients suffering from addictions remains difficult and requires constant development and adaptation of treatment methods. The approaches discussed in this article demonstrate their effectiveness, but require further refinement taking into account the individual characteristics of patients and the specifics of each type of addiction. It is important to remember that clinical psychology integrated into an interdisciplinary system of care is capable of not only providing support during a crisis, but also significantly improving the quality of life of patients by working on deep personal problems.

### **Methods of treatment and prevention of addictions:**

Addictive behavior is not just a bad habit, but a complex mental and physiological condition that requires a comprehensive and individual approach. Clinical psychology plays a key role in both diagnostics and treatment and prevention of addictions. The main methods and approaches used in this area are discussed below.

#### **Psychotherapeutic methods**

##### ✓ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

One of the most effective and widely used methods. CBT is aimed at identifying and changing distorted beliefs, automatic thoughts and behavior patterns that underlie addiction. The patient learns to recognize triggers, control cravings and develop alternative strategies for responding to stress.

##### ✓ Motivational interviewing

This is a short-term therapy aimed at strengthening the patient's internal motivation for change. It is especially effective in the early stages, when the person does not yet realize the full seriousness of his or her addiction or is in denial.

##### ✓ Group psychotherapy

Support groups (such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous) provide patients with the opportunity to share experiences, receive support, and see examples of successful recovery. Group dynamics help develop communication skills, self-analysis, and mutual assistance.

##### ✓ Family therapy

Addiction almost always affects the patient's family. Working with relatives allows you to improve family relationships, eliminate codependency, and create a healthy emotional environment for recovery.

#### **Drug therapy**

##### ✓ Detoxification

The first and important stage of treatment, especially for drug and alcohol addiction. It is aimed at removing toxins from the body and stabilizing the patient's condition. Includes infusion therapy, vitamins, sedatives.

##### ✓ Supportive therapy

Drugs that reduce cravings for the substance (for example, naltrexone, acamprosate) or cause aversion (disulfiram for alcoholism) are used. Antidepressants and anxiolytics are also prescribed in the presence of concomitant disorders.

✓ Replacement therapy

For example, methadone therapy for heroin addiction. It helps reduce the harm from use, reduce the risk of infection, and keep the patient in a relatively stable condition.

Psychological rehabilitation

After the main treatment, it is important to continue working with the personal and social aspects of the patient's life. Rehabilitation programs include:

- ✓ Stress Resistance Training
- ✓ Art therapist and occupational therapy
- ✓ Life Skills Training
- ✓ Assistance in social adaptation and return to normal life

**Prevention of addictive behavior**

Prevention is divided into three levels:

Primary prevention

Aimed at preventing the formation of addiction. It includes:

- ✓ Educational work in schools and universities
- ✓ Formation of a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Developing Critical Thinking in Teenagers
- ✓ Improving stress tolerance and skills self-regulation

Secondary prevention

It is carried out at the early stages of addiction. Includes:

- ✓ Early diagnosis
- ✓ Individual consultations
- ✓ Motivational programs
- ✓ Brief intervention programs

Tertiary prevention

Aimed at preventing relapses in patients who have already been treated:

- ✓ Supportive psychotherapy
- ✓ Participation in sobriety groups
- ✓ Social support (help with employment, restoration of social connections)

**Conclusion.** The problem of addictions in modern society remains one of the most acute and relevant, affecting both the individual and his immediate environment. Clinical psychology plays a vital role in this context - not only as a diagnostic and correction tool, but also as a support on the path to recovery and return to a full life. As the analysis showed, addiction treatment requires a comprehensive approach: a combination of psychotherapy, medication, rehabilitation and work with the family. Of particular importance is the psychological motivation of a person, his readiness for change and support from professionals. The contribution of scientists such as A. Beck, E. Dzhelleinik, K. Rogers made a huge contribution to understanding the psyche of an addicted person and the development of effective therapeutic strategies.

In addition to treatment, prevention is no less important: from educating young people to social support programs. Only through the combined efforts of specialists, society and the patient himself is it possible to achieve stable remission and recovery

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