



# Interpersonal Problems of Younger Adolescents

## Problemas interpersonales de adolescentes

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#### ABSTRACT:

This study aims to detect and discuss the main interpersonal problems of younger adolescents. Diagnostic work was done using the methodological approaches developed by Timothy Leary, Jacob L. Moreno and William C. Schutz. A program consisting of ten 45-minute classes to be held twice a week has been developed to shape and develop interpersonal relationships among adolescents. The program's content includes acquisition of social and psychological knowledge and skills that are necessary to have an adequate perception of the world around and to overcome difficulties related to interpersonal relationships. The first class, 'Let's know each other better', aims to develop social cohesion, empathy and partner relationships in groups. The second class, 'My personality', aims to develop communicative skills and good social and psychological atmosphere. The third class, 'Myself through other people's eyes', aims to develop self-presentation skills, empathy and relationships of trust. The fourth class, 'Confidence when communicating', focuses on developing open relationships. The fifth class, 'Interpersonal communication', aims to develop adolescents' teamwork skills. The sixth class, 'Communication styles', focuses on developing the participants' verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The seventh class,

#### RESUMEN:

Este estudio pretende detectar y debatir los principales problemas interpersonales de los adolescentes más jóvenes. El trabajo de diagnóstico se realizó utilizando los enfoques metodológicos desarrollados por Timothy Leary, Jacob L. Moreno y William C. Schutz. Se ha desarrollado un programa que consiste en clases de 10 45 minutos que se realizarán dos veces por semana para dar forma y desarrollar relaciones interpersonales entre los adolescentes. El contenido del programa incluye la adquisición de conocimientos y habilidades sociales y psicológicas que son necesarios para tener una percepción adecuada del mundo alrededor y para superar las dificultades relacionadas con las relaciones interpersonales. La primera clase, ' vamos a conocernos mejor ', tiene como objetivo desarrollar la cohesión social, la empatía y las relaciones de pareja en los grupos. La segunda clase, ' mi personalidad ', tiene como objetivo desarrollar habilidades comunicativas y un buen ambiente social y psicológico. La tercera clase, ' yo a través de los ojos de otras personas ', tiene como objetivo desarrollar habilidades de auto-presentación, empatía y relaciones de confianza. La cuarta clase, "confianza en la comunicación", se centra en el desarrollo de relaciones abiertas. La quinta clase, ' comunicación interpersonal ', tiene como objetivo desarrollar las habilidades de trabajo en equipo de los

'Role-playing', aims to develop the adolescents' communication skills. The eighth class, 'Us together', will sharpen the group's interactive and communication skills. The ninth class, 'Friendship' will foster positive mood in the group. The tenth class, 'Conclusion', aims to analyze the changes in adolescents' interpersonal communication skills. The correctional program contributed greatly to resolving a number of issues in interpersonal communication among younger adolescents in the examined group (acquisition of necessary socio-psychological knowledge, development of adequate perception skills, elimination of difficulties in interpersonal communication, improvements in younger adolescents' communication skills). Upon completion of the program, 9 adolescents (36%) showed high results, 12 persons showed average results (48%) and 4 persons showed low results (16%). The study detected the main problems, the solution of which would contribute to the development of communication skills, good communication, trust and adequate assessment of communication skills, to decreasing fear to make mistakes and be evaluated by others, and to fostering of adequate self-assessment.

**Key words:** younger adolescent, interpersonal relationship socio-psychological knowledge, perception, empathy, communication.

adolescentes. La sexta clase, ' estilos de comunicación ', se centra en el desarrollo de las habilidades de comunicación verbal y no verbal de los participantes. La séptima clase, "rol-Juego", tiene como objetivo desarrollar las habilidades de comunicación de los adolescentes. La octava clase, ' nosotros juntos ', afinará las habilidades interactivas y de comunicación del grupo. La novena clase, ' amistad ' fomentará el estado de ánimo positivo en el grupo. La décima clase, ' conclusion ', tiene como objetivo analizar los cambios en las habilidades de comunicación interpersonal de los adolescentes. El programa correccional contribuyó en gran medida a resolver una serie de cuestiones en la comunicación interpersonal entre los adolescentes más jóvenes del grupo examinado (adquisición de conocimientos socio-psicológicos necesarios, desarrollo de habilidades de percepción adecuadas, eliminación de las dificultades en la comunicación interpersonal, mejoras en las habilidades de comunicación de los adolescentes jóvenes. Al finalizar el programa, 9 adolescentes (36%) mostraron altos resultados, 12 personas mostraron resultados promedio (48%) y 4 personas mostraron resultados bajos (16%). El estudio detectó los principales problemas, cuya solución contribuiría al desarrollo de las habilidades comunicativas, la buena comunicación, la confianza y la adecuada evaluación de las habilidades de comunicación, a disminuir el miedo a cometer errores y a ser evaluados por otros, y para fomentar la autoevaluación adecuada.

**Palabras clave:** joven adolescente, relación interpersonal conocimiento socio-psicológico, percepción, empatía, comunicación.

## 1. Introduction

The interpersonal relationships' system as a social phenomenon and an integral part of human life is one of the social processes taking place in society and influencing the development and everyday activities of the individual. The above determined the goal of this study: to determine and discuss the main problems of interpersonal relationships among younger adolescents.

Setting the stage of the socio-psychological approach to issues in education were various research studies focusing on the child's communication, personality and mentality (Lisina, 1997); the development of child psychology (Elkonin, 1999); and the schoolchild's personality development in a team (Mudrik, 2003). Acquisition of communication skills is a highly complicated process determined, among other things, by the role of the family in shaping the adolescent's sociometric status among his or her peers (Varshavskaya, 2015) and by types of interpersonal relations (Dolgova, Rokickaya et al., 2016). This process depends on the nature of younger adolescents' moral standing being shaped in the school-family relationship (Derecha, 2015). The above-mentioned interaction extends to dealing with issues related to younger adolescents' social development and to their joint educational (Kotina, 2016) and extracurricular activities (Baranova, 2015), influenced by age-related specificities and coping strategies (Luyeva, 2015). The range and types of communication skills are varied, and they are determined by development situations, by age-related, psychological and individual characteristics (Patrikeyeva and Ivontyeva, 2015), by the relationship between cognitive development and value-based attitudes towards oneself (Nikolayeva, 2015) and by the adolescents' interpersonal tolerance and self-related aspects (Skutina and Velicheva, 2014).

The following are the points that helped us develop a model of professionally important qualities of younger adolescents necessary for the establishment and development of their interpersonal relationships: the study of specific reasons behind conflicts in young adolescents' interpersonal relationships and pedagogic ways to deal with them (Varfolomeyeva, 2014); the

study of specific features of training received by future psychologists, which is aimed to handle with aggressive younger adolescents (Yatsenko, 2015) and hyperactive children (Yurkshat, 2013); our own research on the psychological adaptation of adolescents in school (Dolgova, Kutepova et al., 2017); educational processes in gifted children (Zhakupova, 2017), children with special needs (Dolgova, Rokitskaya et al., 2017) and children from substitute families (Dolgov, Vasilenko et al., 2017); and training for teachers who are able to take these specific features into consideration (Emelyanova et al., 2017; Dolgova, V. I., Rokitskaya et al., 2017). Undertaken practical work also relied on the specialists' conclusions about the three-factor model of elementary school and adolescents' socio-emotional intellect (Semyonov, 2015) and the pedagogic model of younger adolescents' ascent to selfless risk in their extracurricular activities (Napadiy et al., 2015).

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## 2. Methods

Diagnostic work among younger adolescents was done using the methodological approaches developed by Timothy Leary, Jacob L. Moreno, William C. Schutz and the Wilcoxon t-test.

The research study was conducted in the city of Chelyabinsk, at school No 6 among 25 4th A graders, including 9 boys (26%) and 16 girls (64%). Most adolescents live in two-parent families. The children's extracurricular activities include optional courses, sports groups and music schools.

The Correctional Programme includes ten 45-minute classes to be held twice a week. Each class aims to develop a specific quality and ends with the Reflection exercise, that is, a review.

Class 1. 'Let's know each other better'. This class develops social cohesion, empathy and partner relationships in group. Exercises include: 1.1. 'Mushrooms' – interaction; 1.2. 'An Hour of Communication' – openness, attention, social cohesion, emotional comfort; 1.3. 'A Judgment Staircase' – communication skills; 1.4. 'Puzzles' – ability to coordinate one's actions with those of others and to meet challenges.

Class 2. 'My personality'. This class develops communicative skills and good social and psychological atmosphere. Exercises include: 2.1. 'A Cap' – main non-verbal information transmission methods: gestures and pantomime, mimics and intonations; 2.2. 'Associations' – communication skills; 2.3. 'Myself' – understanding and compassion; 2.4. 'Fingers' – verbal and non-verbal perceptions.

Class 3. 'Myself through other people's eyes'. This class develops self-presentation skills, empathy and relationships of trust. Exercises include: 3.1. – 'Crosses and Parallels' – group interaction and cooperation; 3.2. 'Let's line up' – verbal and non-verbal communication and self-regulation; 3.3. 'A Drawing on the Back' – communication skills and responsibility; 3.4. 'Good Things and Bad Things' – the participants' becoming aware of interactions between one's acts and inherent values.

Class 4. 'Confidence when communicating'. This class focuses on developing open relationships. Exercises include: 4.1. 'Greetings' – attention; 4.2. 'Going through a Labyrinth Blindfolded' – trust; 4.3. 'A Blind and a Guide' – development of interpersonal relations and self-confidence among group participants; 4.4. "Big Deal! And I..." – study of rules and conflict-free communication.

Class 5. 'Interpersonal communication'. This class develops adolescents' teamwork skills. Exercises include: 5.1. 'Compliments' – highlighting the group participants' importance and self-respect; 5.2. 'Brownian Motion' – self-dignity and respect for other people's dignity; 5.3. 'Get Me Right' – interacting people's mutual responsibility for common understanding; 5.4. 'A Circle' – attention to other people; 5.5. 'A Gift' – increasing one's self-esteem with positive feedback and support from the group.

Class 6. 'Communication styles'. This class focuses on developing the participants' verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Exercises include: 6.1. 'A Pantomime' – coordinated

interaction skill development; 6.2. 'Bumps' – communicative culture; 6.3. 'A Communication Style' – creating conditions for the group participants' analysis of various communication styles and their effectiveness.

Class 7. 'Role-playing'. This class develops the adolescents' communication skills. Exercises include: 7.1. 'Compliments and Surprises' – highlighting the group participants' importance and self-respect; 7.2. 'Detectives' – developing skills to pay attention to various details of the surrounding world; 7.3. 'Get into Character' – developing skills to differentiate social roles and to determine empathetic orientation.

Class 8. 'Us together'. This class sharpens the group's interactive and communication skills. Exercises include: 8.1. 'Compliments and Wishes' – mastering the group participants' interaction and communication skills; 8.2. 'Alone and Together' – enhancing cooperation through joint activities; 8.3. 'Giving and Receiving' – compassion, empathy.

Class 9. 'Friendship'. This class fosters positive mood in the group. Exercises include: 9.1. 'Compliments' – developing the group participants' importance and self-respect; 9.2. 'Friends Unlike Me' – developing skills to appreciate differences between people and to accept each other; 9.3. 'A Thank You Card' – interaction and understanding each other; 9.4. 'Goodbye' – improving relationships within the group.

Class 10. 'Conclusion'. This class analyzes the changes in adolescents' interpersonal communication. Exercises include: 10.1. 'Wishes' – attention; 10.2. 'A Suitcase for Traveling' – holding a discussion on a set of questions (What are the most important things you have learned together with your group? What have you learned about yourself? What can you be proud of now? How will you apply what you have learned in real life?).

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### **3. Results and Discussion**

By Leary's methodology, most 4th graders (48%, or 11 students) showed high results, 44% (9 students) showed average results and 28% (7 students) showed low results. By Moreno's methodology, 24% (6 students) were the 'preferred ones', 24% (6 students) were the 'accepted ones', 16% (4 students) were the 'stars' and 36% (9 students) were the 'outsiders'. By Schutz's checklist, 40% (10 students) showed an average level of communicative culture.

Upon completion of the program on psychological and pedagogical relations with schoolchildren, the majority of younger adolescents (36%, or 9 students) showed high results, 48% (12 students) showed average results and 16% (4 students) showed low results.

By Moreno's methodology, in terms of the schoolchildren's social statuses, 32% (8 students) were among the 'preferred ones', 24% (6 students) were among the 'accepted ones', 20% (5 students) were among the 'stars' and 0% were among the 'outsiders'.

By Schutz's interpersonal relations checklist, adapted by A. A. Rukavishnikov, 56% (14 students) showed average interpersonal skills, 20% (5 students) showed low level of interpersonal relations and 32% (8 students) showed high level of empathy.

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### **4. Conclusion**

The study detected the main problems, the solution of which would contribute to the development of communication skills, good communication, trust and adequate assessment of communication skills, to decreasing fear to make mistakes and be evaluated by others, and to fostering of adequate self-assessment. The extent to which the solution of problems related to interpersonal relations among younger adolescents depends on how well the subjects of the implemented psychological and pedagogic correction programs are able to improve the status of students in class by creating success situations for every child and by making use of their interests, hobbies and useful skills, while involving him or her in situations of joint emotional experiences with other classmates; to cooperate with the team's 'emotional center' and with cognitive labor leaders; to deal with such an important pedagogic challenge as giving personal

significance to work in class and studying, while gradually collectivizing relationships in the educational environment and developing business relations in class; to teach children to find and appreciate their peers' attractive sides, to accept other people for who they are, and to find constructiveness – or usefulness – for themselves in their relations with each team member.

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