Features of the self-concept of the elderly

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Abstract.
The study of the self-concept in late adulthood seems an essential topic. This happens since people's lives are becoming longer. The number of older people is increasing, and the correct interaction with the younger generation is possible with a deep understanding of the specifics of their age psychology. The self-concept develops throughout a person's life and absorbs everything that was the most significant in each of the periods of personal development. Therefore, the self-concept of late adulthood and old age is a complex formation in which information about the many self-images that arises in a person in various variants of his self-perception and self-representation is "recorded." This is a selective memory of the individual, reflecting events so as not to disturb prominent personal positions. Therefore, it is challenging to investigate the self-concept of a particular person in his life transformation.

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Introduction. It is noteworthy that retrospective self-images are rarely accurate in reflecting the most significant life events. The passed historical space is indicated in the Self-concept by the stages of some discoveries, positive and negative upheavals, breaking (if this happened) old personal canons, and mastering the "new" ones.

Social stereotypes and patterns affect a person's personal relationship, not only with society but also with himself. They significantly affect the self-perception of older people since the evaluative criterion in their self-concept has been marked in other social conditions.

Nevertheless, most older people (due to the age characteristics of their psyche) find it challenging to take the "form" of the largely unacceptable for them "historical being," which affects the system of their relationship, as well as the "upheavals" of the self-concept. Another important point that should be taken into account in the analysis of the specifics of the self-concept of the elderly is the cultivation of patterns of the social status of this age group in society. The results of empirical studies show that many of the characteristics of middle-aged people are due to the negative stereotypes of perception of the elderly as useless, intellectually degrading, helpless people in society. Moreover, many middle-aged people internalize these stereotypes, reduce their self-esteem, and are afraid to confirm negative patterns in their behavior.

Main text. Some older people conceptually do not understand such "social interventions" in their psychophysical self-awareness. However, without finding the resources to resist negative thoughts and, on the other hand, to experience anxiety and fear to confirm these social clichés with their behavior, they seek, if possible, to isolate themselves from society (which is, in their opinion, unfriendly and aggressive).

This is a rather characteristic argument of the elderly, who are still strong and healthy physically, but due to living conditions, are not very confident in their capabilities (for example, crossing the street on ice or entering crowded transport). They experience the fear of being reproachful, hearing offensive remarks addressed to them, and outright
antagonism. They experience such situations as a "social decline" (and more significantly, if these people in their youth had a significant social status and felt confident and free).

Naturally, among the elderly, many people have retained activity (including social) due to resilience and a "spirit of perseverance." This may be due to the general positive sign of their self-concept, with its creative self-affirmation.

Thus, in a person who has passed the stage of integration, the self-concept will be more balanced than in any of the previous age periods and prepared for a new stage of "awareness" in the broad sense of this concept.

The latest theoretical and empirical materials give reason to believe that a person's capabilities at a later age remain significant. The use of these potentials is possible with an exceptionally positive and active self-perception, and the self-concept of personality provides a person with this optimistic approach to life in later years.

The first theory: modern psychogerontology, refutes the previously existing medical and biological position, in connection with which, in old age, there is necessarily a psychological degradation of people, a decrease in the productivity of their consciousness, which was associated with functional and organic pathological changes in the brain.

Modern neuropsychology claims that there is no unequivocal connection between the degree of damage to the human brain and its intelligence capabilities. In the practice of these specialists, there are many cases when, with an extensive violation of brain tissue, a person's face is subject to storage, and a person demonstrates his dissimilarity and creative activity.

Therefore, age-related changes in nerve cells (as well as the rest of all organic matter) are not grounds for considering late age as a period of "extinction" in a psychological and spiritual sense. Consequently, the physiological processes occurring in old age can only partially affect the self-concept of the individual, namely when, for some personal reason, a person's attention is fixed on this kind of manifestation of his body. To some extent,
this may be due to such a personal education, which in modern medical and psychological vocabulary is designated as the "internal picture of the disease," and this is a psychosomatic aspect of the self-concept.

The second theory can be designated as an activity approach to the development of personality. The essence of this approach is as follows: people, by their actions, change their environment, develop the ability to cope with difficult situations, and pave their life path. An active life is a condition for the progressive development of the individual in later years—the cognitive and behavioral components of the self-concept "plan" such a life strategy.

Representatives of the third theory consider one of the essential factors in updating the potencies of the subject to his ability to resist the negative stereotypes of old age that are widespread in society.

A person who has retired without achieving a high position in society is demobilized by his belief that he has lived a "small" life.

There is a reason to assume that the early manifestation of the quality of developing autonomy in a person, that is, self-reliance and independence, allows a person to resist the pressure of society and develop his criteria for assessing his life, and therefore continue his state of youth. This is achieved with the favorable development of the evaluative component of the self-concept.

In later years, a person focuses not only on his inherent attitudes and subjective relations to the world but also on the manifestation of previously hidden personal properties and positions. Unconditional self-acceptance and congruence for oneself will allow one to exclude from the unique set many who have already exhausted themselves and have disposed of individual protection (however, this is the basic principle of ensuring spiritual well-being at any age).

One of the main factors determining the continuation of the progressive development of the individual in later years is the content and creative nature of the person's lifestyle. A person leading a fruitful life does not become a scratchy older adult; on the contrary, the mental and emotional qualities developed by him in the process of life are
preserved, although physical strength weakens.

In the case of a disagreement between the ideal (expected) self-image and the capabilities of the individual (social or psychological), he begins to model new self-images. When the expected self-image is embodied, the previously created promising models do not disappear but are stored in their inner world as "images-sketches."

There is reason to assume that in later years, these fragmentary self-images help the person to find himself in a new capacity and productively change his life. This hypothesis is especially true of those who, as a result of retirement, find themselves in an uncertain, poorly structured situation. Under these conditions, a person must organize his present and future and outline a new life program. At such moments, actualizing previously unrealized self-images can help a person start a new active life.

Another essential condition for a fruitful life in later years is a positive anticipation of the future (a positive self-image in old age can be modeled in youth). The prerequisite is successfully resolving regulatory crises, life tasks, and conflicts in previous life stages.

At the same time, the actual integration of the past with the present occurs when a person rises above the past from the standpoint of the present and considers the stages passed in the system of actual relations and problems. Then he can bring to the system not only the achievements that were at the center of his consciousness but also experiences that were perceived in the past as insignificant and, in the present, have gained new meaning as an essential way to achieve goals. A person can make positive discoveries in himself, which sometimes occur at a very respectable age. Guidelines in the creation of self-images served for them the instructions, requirements, and thoughts of the people around them, that is, the mirror self-image, which reflects how significant others perceive these individuals. Due to the peculiarities of their perception, they also assimilate concerning themselves those "medium-social" characteristics that contain stereotypical characteristics of old age. Such an "old position" can sometimes be a defense mechanism or a technique for absolving oneself of responsibility for one's
Scientists have analyzed several types of Self-concepts of people in the late adulthood stage and identified conditions that contribute to and prevent the progressive development of their self-images. Productive aging is promoted by self-actualization of the "self," an overwhelming focus on creativity, or implementing spiritual and ethical relations.

Conclusions. So, the Self-concept of the period of late adulthood and old age is a complex formation in which information about the many self-images that arises in a person in various variants of his self-perception and self-representation is "recorded." This is a selective memory of the individual, reflecting events so as not to disturb prominent personal positions.

The self-concept in old age is driven by the desire to integrate one's past, present and future to understand the connections between the events of one's life. The conditions that contribute to the individual effectively integrating their lives include the successful resolution by the individual of normative crises and conflicts, the development of adaptive personal properties, the ability to learn valuable lessons from past failures, and the ability to accumulate the energy potential of all stages passed.

The self-concept in the late period of a person's life is enriched with all that was most significant in each period of personal formation. The positive and active self-concept ensures the continuation of personal development and an optimistic approach to life in later years, allows one to slow down physical aging, and brings excellent spirituality and creative radiance to the individual's self-actualization.

Productive aging is promoted by self-actualization of the "self," an overwhelming focus on creativity, or implementing spiritual and ethical relations. Such negative personal formations as self-confidence and underdevelopment of autonomy and initiative cause maladaptive aging of a person.