

# PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING METHODOLOGY FOR OVERCOMING A LIFE CRISIS

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**Received in:**

2021-06-11

**Approved in:**

2021-07-15

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.24115/S2446-622020217Extra-E1204p.359-368>

## INTRODUCTION

The saturation of life with crisis events negatively influences the basic beliefs of the person and at the same time positively correlates with the belief about the controllability of the surrounding world. The psychological counseling techniques for overcoming life crises are almost the most necessary from the point of view of practical psychology because they have the character of urgent help in narrowing negative and expanding positive contradictions for patients to get out of the crisis state using effective ways of dialogue, analysis and synthesis of the acquired experience. Thus, the necessity of finding effective methods of psychological counseling for overcoming life crises for patients of different ages is actualized.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

For a clear understanding of the scope of ways to help in crisis situations, it is necessary to clearly distinguish the concepts of "psychotherapy" and "psychological counseling", which are two different forms of psychological aid. Psychotherapy is a method of treating mental health disorders, while psychological counseling is a method of helping people who are experiencing various kinds of crises; a method of supporting individuals, families and groups in improving mental health (CZABALA, 2016).

As defined by Wei (2021), psychological counseling is the application of science and technique to change and improve a client's psychological state. Specific psychological care projects, such as establishing an organized system and developing a psychological program, should be done quickly to facilitate more active and effective counseling projects (CHO et al., 2019). According to Chen (2021), patients' psychological problems are predominantly reflected in cognition, emotion, or behavior.

Counseling psychologists in their work (Nasr, 2015) require an enrichment of skills and methods to guide the psychological counseling system through ongoing development of theoretical courses and access to training courses. The difficulties arising from cultural differences are evident in interpersonal dialogues. It seems that these social difficulties are also reflected in the psychological counseling process. Akalin & Türküm (2021) are convinced of the importance of the cultural factor in the counseling process and explain the psychological counselor's fears of being culturally sensitive, preventing false imprisonment effects, prejudice, micro aggressions, and client difficulties. According to psychological counseling, so-called professional knowledge is not privileged. In this process, the counselor must not just tell the visitor what is right but, must deconstruct the old description of the problem with the visitor, construct a new description of expectations, and put relevant information at some point in the new description. This relationship gives visitors a sense of power to face their lives (LILI & HAO, 2020).

Pomyliuko (2016) identifies the following types of crisis: adulthood crisis (20-23 years); youth crisis (27-33) midlife crisis (39-45) maturity crisis (55-65 years). Bushai (2018) analyzes the

methodological and practical approaches of psychological counseling of adult clients, summarizing the main psychological problems of this age category and substantiating the concept of rebalancing clients' image of the world and image of the self as the main internal mechanism of mental equilibrium. The scientist Lee (2020) points out that the system and methodology of psychological counseling for people with disabilities is insufficient. The disability can be viewed as a culture, so it is appropriate to approach counseling from a multicultural perspective.

Such counseling of people with disabilities considers people's unique experiences, their experience of identity as a disabled person and the socio-political context of their lives. The main task of specialists in their interaction with the family of a child with disabilities is not only to provide recommendations for the treatment and upbringing of the child, but also to create conditions that would stimulate family members as much as possible to actively solve problems (SUPATAYEVA et al., 2020). Counseling, psychotherapy and psychocorrection are the stages of a unified psycho-consulting and therapeutic process aimed at restoring and strengthening the mental health of the individual by normalizing family relationships. For a family that is raising a "special" child, such functions as correctional and developmental, compensatory and rehabilitative are important, with the goal of restoring the child's psychophysical and social status, achieving her material independence and social adaptation.

Understanding the family as a system, in turn, leads to an understanding of the need for a comprehensive approach to the organization of medical psychological and pedagogical correction of deviations in the development of children, the physiological system of the child's mother, and the family system as a whole. Zhurba & Dokukina (2020) consider the meaning-life crises of modern adolescents as a personality phenomenon characterizing the inability of the individual to be realized in life and blocking the humility processes, development of the inner world, productive activities. Manina (2016) considers the main types and functions of the psychological barrier offers a series of strategies and tactics to overcome psychological barriers in students.

The psychological counseling, as a modern clinical practice, is a way of psychoanalytic approach, through clinical listening, because its goal is to get patients to rethink their stories by becoming actors in the story, allowing them to enter a desired world (Oliveira et al., 2020). According to Bakalim et al. (2018), psychological counseling skills are an essential component of the psychology profession. Quantitative findings from studies describing the level of mastery of these skills indicate that the psychologist's self-efficacy is crucial in the implementation of help. Kim I.-G. & Kim S.-W. (2020) consider the importance of standardizing psychological counseling qualifications (establishing counseling postulates, reviewing current laws related to counseling qualifications, and developing NCS-based psychological counseling qualifications). An accreditation for the practice of psychological counseling draws on the content of CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) and EAC (European Association for Counseling) program documents, which are the competent associations for accreditation (KÖRÜK, 2018).

It is necessary to provide psychological counseling services in colleges and universities because with the constant development of society, students are concerned about learning, loving relationships, and caring about their future work and life (Li N. & Li Sh., 2020). Kaminska (2017) considers the implementation of counseling work with young people who are characterized by manifestations of Internet addiction as a process of influence on the personality through psychoprophylactic, corrective, developmental means to actualize its internal resources, corresponding changes in motivational-value, emotional-will, cognitive and conative spheres, provides constructive perception of virtual reality, and also as a means to correct addictive behavior.

Gorohova & Filippov (2021) consider one of the important areas of the practical psychologist-teacher in residential institutions - psychological counseling, the specific features of counseling of the teacher-psychologist, the features of interaction of the counselor with the pupils of the boarding school. In the case of any problem situations, pupils have an increased level of anxiety, based on which neurotic states, psychological overstrain may develop, manifested in numerous conflicts. For their objective prevention and resolution of any disagreements at each

boarding school, psychologist-teachers must organize consultations on topical issues of activity, relationships, and communication among students.

Can (2017) made an attempt to determine the expectation system of the psychological counseling and rehabilitation centers for students in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Rehabilitation and recommended activating the guidance service in HEIs. Matliwala's (2017) findings present that counseling is very beneficial for graduate students. They become more relaxed; they can focus on their goal by being aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Students can plan their schedule according to their goal. They learn to manage their emotions. Counseling services should be provided at every institution. A qualified person should be assigned to counsel students, and when they need help, it should be available for students to consult freely with their counselor.

Kassymova et al. (2019) point out the main methods of coping with stress: physiological, cognitive, behavioral, and psychological methods. Scientists believe that the source of resilience to stress is human creativity. Stress and human creativity interact in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, stress suppresses creativity, and on the other, it encourages people to seek new forms of response. The nature of creativity in a stressful situation has much to do with the type of stress. The more stressful a person is, the higher and greater their creative achievements.

Kutsenko & Yaroslavtseva (2021) consider the existential tradition in the methodology of psychological counseling to overcome life crises. Stages of interaction of the psychologist-consultant with the client are essentially phenomenological (providing for empathy, "presence", etc.), and the principle of dialogism is key. In addition, the psychologist's reference to the subjective experience of the client is of great value. Despite a considerable amount of scientific research devoted to the analysis of methodological recommendations for helping clients in crisis situations, there is a need to study elements of methodology for helping clients of all ages in overcoming life crises.

## AIMS

**The aim of the study:** to present the method of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of different ages.

### Research tasks:

Achieving of scientific aims involves solving problems, including

- identification of elements of normative crises in human life;
- providing guidelines for assisting a practical psychologist in conducting psychological counseling to overcome life crises for clients of different ages.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The methodological background is based on sociological and statistical research methods as well as systematic analysis of the importance of understanding the interrelated methods and techniques of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages.

Sociological methods (sociological survey, information analysis method); statistical methods (ranking method, descriptive statistics) allowed to identify the elements of methods of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages. The study was conducted among 182 Ukrainian psychologists-practitioners who develop methods of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages through the platform Google-forms. The respondents were asked to answer different types of questions in order to establish a system of linking methodological elements in order to overcome life crises of personality of different ages.

## RESULTS

A total of 182 Ukrainian psychologists-practitioners participated in the sociological survey. They were asked to rank the thematic categories of techniques for working with crises of clients of different ages based on their experience. The first question concerned the identification of positive and negative contradictions that led to a life crisis, patients aged 20-23 years. In the first place of positive consequences (contradictions) of life crisis with the result of 106 answers

came self-love, in the second place the respondents put self-control skills (45 answers) the zeal for independence came in the third place (18 answers), in the fourth place the respondents put optimism (13 answers).

The first place of negative consequences (contradictions) of life crisis with the result of 77 answers was taken by impatience, the second place was occupied by hypocrisy (55 answers), envy was in the third place (28 answers), and the fourth place was taken by greediness (20 answers). The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The identification of positive and negative contradictions of patients' life crisis at the age of 20-23

Positive Contradiction	Number of marks	Negative Contradiction	Number of marks
narcissism	106	impatience	77
self-control skills	45	hypocrisy	55
zeal for independence	18	envy	28
optimism	13	greediness	20

Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

The second question concerned the determination of positive and negative contradictions in the life crisis of patients aged 27-33. The first place of positive contradictions with the result of 78 answers was taken by the necessity to achieve new aims, and the second place was occupied by the striving for stability (53 answers); political activity was in the third place (51 answers). The first place of negative contradictions, with the result of 77 answers, was occupied by social isolation; the second place was occupied by the longing for loneliness (55 answers); depression and selfishness were on the third place (50 answers). The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The identification of positive and negative contradictions of the life crisis of patients aged 27-33.

Positive Contradiction	Number of marks	Negative Contradiction	Number of marks
the need to achieve new goals	78	social isolationism	77
desire for stability	53	desire for loneliness	55
political activity	51	depression, selfishness	50

Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

The third question dealt with determining the positive and negative contradictions of the life crisis of patients aged 39-45. Respondents equally divided the answers between two options - critical reassessment of their life and its meaning and life satisfaction (91 points each). The first place of negative contradictions with the result of 100 answers was occupied by the absence of life project, the second place was occupied by the worsening of health (45 answers), and the awareness of getting older was on the third place (37 answers). The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The identification of positive and negative contradictions of the life crisis of patients aged 39-45 years

Positive Contradiction	Number of marks	Negative Contradiction	Number of marks
critical reassessment of one's life and its sense	91	absence of a life project	100
life satisfaction	91	health deterioration	45
		recognition of getting older	37

Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

The fourth question dealt with determining the positive and negative contradictions of the life crisis of patients aged 55-65 years. Respondents gave equal answers between two options - high social achievements, exchange of experience with young people - 102 and 80 marks, respectively. The first place of negative contradictions with the result of 100 answers got the change of social status, with the result of 82 answers the death of close friends and relatives was in the second place. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The identification of positive and negative contradictions of the life crisis of patients aged 55-65 years

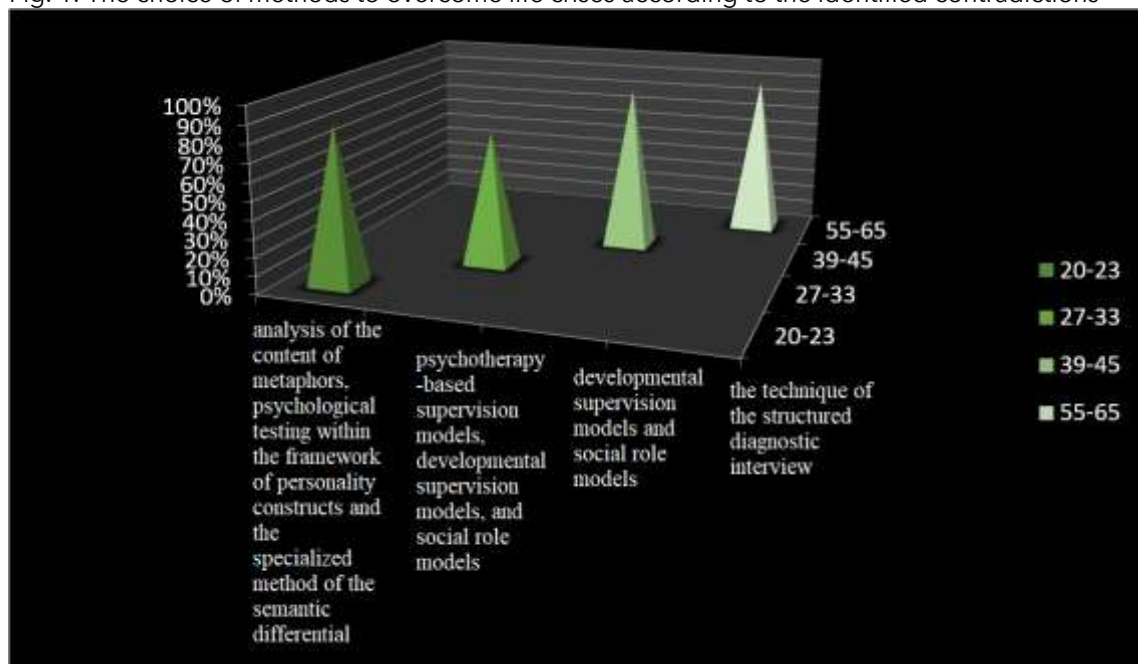
Positive Contradiction	Number of marks	Negative Contradiction	Number of marks
high social achievements	102	change of social status	100
exchange of experience with young people	80	death of close friends and relatives	82

Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

The last question concerned the choice of counseling techniques for overcoming life crises in accordance with the identified contradictions. Practical psychologists recommend resorting to the following methods to identify the life crisis of patients aged 20-23 years: analysis of the content of metaphors, psychological testing within the framework of personality constructs and the specialized method of the semantic differential. Practical psychologists recommend the following techniques for identifying the life crisis of patients aged 27-33 years: psychotherapy-based supervision models, developmental supervision models, and social role models.

For identifying the life crisis of patients aged 39-45 years, practicing psychologists recommend using the following techniques: developmental supervision models and social role models. For detection of life crisis of patients at the age of 55-65 years, practical psychologists recommend resorting to the technique of the structured diagnostic interview. Each of the techniques had these percentages of results: 87%, 74%, 91%, and 89%, respectively. The results are presented in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. The choice of methods to overcome life crises according to the identified contradictions



Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

**DISCUSSION**

Based on a large number of studies devoted to the discussed topic, we highlight the following provisions. Tavrovetska (2019) uses a set of methods and techniques to determine the level and content of stress: the method of structured diagnostic interview ("significant life events") to obtain a general picture of positive and negative events of autobiography, closed questionnaire "List of stressful events" with an assessment of the significance of their impact on the emotional, cognitive and behavioral levels and the "World Assumptions Scale" of basic beliefs.

Thus, the study clarified the concept of life stress, which covers the list of stressful events of universal character: natural and manufactured disasters, repeated economic crises, social and political upheavals, military conflict. Correlation analysis shows that the more the person's life



is saturated with stressful events, the less he/she estimates the significance of their influence on his/her own emotions, cognitions and behavior and the less he/she demonstrates the ability to overcome crises by personal growth. Types of meaning-life crises: acedia, existential frustration, biographical crisis, crisis of meaninglessness, crisis of purpose loss, virtualization of life, loneliness, boredom, mental turmoil and desperation (ZHURBA & DOKUKINA, 2020).

The conditioning of adolescents' internal meaning-life contradictions is generated by objective (specific situation, information, limited opportunities) and subjective (mood, desires, ambitions, emotions, dissatisfaction with themselves,  $\phi$ TB life) factors (ZHURBA & DOKUKINA, 2020)

Markowitz (2021) details the process of approaching the therapeutic treatment of crisis in three main cases: grief (complicated loss), role dispute, and role transition. Each approach covers a treatment paradigm divided into three treatment phases, including an initial questioning to identify recent affectively charged events; a communication analysis to help patients understand their feelings in a recent interpersonal situation; exploring options for dealing with interpersonal problems; and role-play to help patients practice these options.

Because of the diversity of clients' needs, there is no central theory of counseling. Psychological counseling offers a number of theories consistent with the goals of the counseling session. These theories offer a framework in which strategies emerge that may be most effective in meeting clients' needs. Person-centered theory was introduced when it became clear that all human interactions have directive components. Cognitive-behavioral and decision-oriented theories can be applied to cases where decisions are discussed to help clients weigh the potential consequences. Such counseling empowers clients to deal effectively with difficult circumstances. Such theories are contrasted with practical approaches that include bereavement counseling and crisis counseling. The counselor focuses on clients' needs for safety and leaving loved ones as they absorb devastating news (BIESECKER et al., 2019).

Krainyukov & Goryunova (2021) use metaphor content analysis, psychological testing within personality constructs, and a specialized semantic differential method as a psychological research technique.

Körük & Kara (2019), as a psychological counseling methodology offer supervision models classified into three categories; psychotherapy-based supervision models, developmental supervision models, and social role models. Psychotherapy-based supervision models fall into three subgroups. These are the working alliance model, the behavioral-analytic model, and the cognitive skills model. Developmental supervision models fall into four subgroups. These are the integrated developmental model, the reflective model, the conceptual model, and the comprehensive developmental supervision model. Finally, the social-role models are divided into two subgroups. These are the Discrimination Model and the Holloway Systems Approach Model. The models mentioned are discussed in terms of their functionality in the supervision process, their basic philosophies, and their stages.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, on the basis of the conducted research, it is possible to assert that a set of interconnected methods and techniques of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages is an integrated implementation of the practical experience of a psychologist, which will be successful only when a practical psychologist follows the recommended requirements for implementation of the method presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Psychological counseling techniques in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages

Age	Positive Contradictions	Negative Contradictions	Types of crises	Conditionality of contradictions	Approach methodologies
20-23 years old	selfishness, self-control skills, desire for independence, optimism	impatience, hypocrisy, envy, greed	adulthood crisis	specific situation, information, disabilities	personality-oriented approach to a person, obtaining another degree against the background of a professional crisis, finding good friends and living with a partner
27-33 years old	the need to achieve new goals, the pursuit of stability, political activity	social isolation, desire for loneliness, depression, selfishness	youth crisis	mood, desires, ambitions, emotions, dissatisfaction with themselves and their life	can be overcome by finding new opportunities to unleash potential
39-45 years old	critical reassessment of one's life and its meaning, life satisfaction	lack of project life, deteriorating health, awareness of aging	middle age crisis	reassessment of life attitudes, values, self-search recognition	development of creative abilities, revision of life values and goals
55-65 years old	high social achievements, exchange of experience with young people	change in social status, death of close friends and relatives	maturity crisis	review of life goals and life orientations	social activity

Source: Author's own; compiled from respondents' answers

Thus, the results report that the set of methods and techniques of appropriate psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of different ages in conducting conversations are interdependent and subordinate, since correctly chosen methodology is the key to helping the client. An important direction for further scientific research will be an attempt to outline methodological recommendations for overcoming life crises for people with special needs. The practical significance of the research was the presentation of methods for expedient psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages.

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### Psychological counselling methodology for overcoming a life crisis

Metodologia de aconselhamento psicológico para superar uma crise de vida

Metodología de asesoramiento psicológico para superar una crisis de vida

#### Resumo

O objetivo do presente estudo é determinar um conjunto de métodos interconectados e técnicas de aconselhamento psicológico na superação de crises de vida para clientes de todas as idades. Em uma pesquisa online, participaram 182 psicólogos-praticantes (Ucrânia). Para revelar a crise de vida dos pacientes com idade entre 20 e 23 anos, psicólogos práticos recomendam utilizar os seguintes métodos: análise do conteúdo das metáforas, testes psicológicos no âmbito de construções de personalidade e método especializado de diferencial semântico. Psicólogos práticos recomendam as seguintes técnicas para identificar a crise de vida de pacientes de 27 a 33 anos: modelos de supervisão baseados em psicoterapia, modelos de supervisão do desenvolvimento e modelos de função social. Psicólogos praticantes recomendam as seguintes técnicas para identificar a crise de vida de pacientes de 39 a 45 anos: modelos de supervisão do desenvolvimento e modelos de função social. Para revelar a crise de vida dos pacientes com idade entre 55 e 65 anos, psicólogos práticos recomendam o uso da técnica da entrevista diagnóstica estruturada.

**Palavras-chave:** Crise da vida. Aconselhamento psicológico. Ajuda psicológica. Questionário. Técnica de aconselhamento.

#### Abstract

The aim of the present study is to determine a set of interconnected methods and techniques of psychological counseling in overcoming life crises for clients of all ages. In an online survey, 182 psychologists-practitioners (Ukraine) took part. The list of positive and negative elements of normative crises in human life according to four life stages was outlined. It was determined, that in order to reveal the life crisis of patients at the age of 20-23 years practical psychologists recommend using the following methods: analysis of the content of metaphors, psychological testing within the framework of personality constructs and the specialized method of semantic differential. Practical psychologists recommend the following techniques for identifying the life crisis of patients aged 27-33 years: psychotherapy-based supervision models, developmental supervision models, and social role models. Practicing psychologists recommend the following techniques for identifying the life crisis of patients aged 39-45 years: developmental supervision models and social role models. For revealing of life crisis of patients at the age of 55-65 years old practical psychologists recommend to use the technique of the structured diagnostic interview.

**Keywords:** Life crisis. Psychological counseling. Psychological help. Questionnaire. Counseling technique.

#### Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio es determinar un conjunto de métodos y técnicas interconectadas de asesoramiento psicológico en la superación de crisis de vida para clientes de todas las edades. En una encuesta en línea participaron 182 psicólogos-profesionales (Ucrania). Con el fin de revelar la crisis de vida de los pacientes a la edad de 20-23 años psicólogos práticos recomiendan el uso de: análisis del contenido de las metáforas, pruebas psicológicas en el marco de las construcciones de personalidad y el método especializado de diferencial semántico. Los psicólogos práticos recomiendan las siguientes técnicas para identificar la crisis de vida de los pacientes de 27 a 33 años: modelos de supervisión basados en psicoterapia, modelos de supervisión del desarrollo y modelos sociales. Los psicólogos practicantes recomiendan las siguientes técnicas para identificar la crisis de vida de los pacientes de 39 a 45 años: modelos de supervisión del desarrollo y modelos sociales. Para la revelación de la crisis de la vida de los pacientes a la edad de 55-65 años, los psicólogos práticos recomiendan utilizar la técnica de la entrevista diagnóstica estructurada.

**Palabras-clave:** Crisis de vida. Asesoramiento psicológico. Ayuda psicológica. Cuestionario. Técnica de asesoramiento.