



# Teenagers' maladjustment problem



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## Abstract

The review raised the theoretical analysis of the growing mental development problem, egocentrism formation, and methods of its adjustment. The school maladjustment problem in Russia paid attention to the personality formation process of teenagers. In this way, the analysis focused on the personality formation process of teenagers; on the one hand, it was the formation of peculiarities in the egocentrism prevention context in general, and on the other hand, the cognitive activity egocentrism as one of the personality properties. The review emphasized the role of different learning techniques to develop decentration and to reduce egocentrism. The interrelation between personality properties and cognitive processes implied the influence of teenagers' personality egocentrism in speech and thinking rigidity as well as the maladjusted forms of behavior formation. The pedagogical correctional healthcare and school psychological services took into account when figuring out a teenagers' strategy of education and upbringing issues.

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## 1 Introduction

In teens' ages, personality, self-esteem, and level of claim are forming actively. The character features' co-recognition and the most critical moral sphere components of the consciousness concept appear in these periods. Based on the teenagers' peculiarities and development, the primary attention pays to the emerging individual's peculiarities and egocentrism prevention in the education process, which relates to one of the possible traits of the individual. Since all the personal traits are connecting to all mental processes like upbringing and education, it is advisable to pay attention to the teenagers' speech and way of thinking (Belova, 2003). Maturity, cognitive development is rapidly changing when teenagers learn to think logically. It depends on how much teenagers are familiar with the abstraction in theoretic reasoning. By the age of thirteen - fourteen teenagers can use hypotheses, and in high school, they form hypothetical and theoretical thinking on this basis. Any delay in new mental formation threatens the cogitative egocentrism. The cognitive egocentrism of teenagers revels when school students do not use a teacher's indication while solving tasks.

Egocentric teenagers are "tied" to one method of action or one point of view. According to Lachinzov's methodology, it has been empirically established that the cognitive rigidity connected with solidly fixed intention to solve arithmetic tasks in one previously developed way occurs among teenagers at a high level of egocentrism. The findings suggest that training of cognitive flexibility by the tasks having different ways of the solution is an essential means of personality development without significant egocentric tendencies (Belova, 2003).

## 2 Materials and Methods

It is also desirable to teach the high school students the way to make a discussion. In discussions, school students develop logic due to persuasive arguments and facts selection to convince opponents in the correctness of their point of views. The mechanism of decentration is fundamental in overcoming egocentrism in general and egocentrism of cognitive activity in particular. Due to the necessity of grouping and expressing a reasoned personal opinion, school students develop self-reflection as another essential mental formation. Self-reflection allows teenagers to consider thoughts, feelings, and actions. The mechanism of self-reflection, which is decent rational, not only provides jumping into consciousness, into the inner world of another person, but also helps teenagers understand themselves.

Apart from mentality, egocentrism reveals in speech. Its primary forms are egotism and reflection. Egotism is a drive to discuss and to tell about oneself to others. School students realize the needs in recognition, raise the status in the relations' structure as well as develop the speech. However, the insignificant predominance of a monologue about oneself over dialogue is the evidence of egocentrism. A proportion sense is essential in this case and an interest not only to one's person but to the interlocutor's personality as well. Thus, it becomes clear that much attention should be paid to the speech development and core skills training of interaction and dialogue during the school years.

At the Language and Literature lessons, teachers can help school students correct the speech rigidity traits and draw attention to egotism. Speech rigidity reveals in repetitions of the words and besides to such words as "Hmm," "a...," and the like. In such cases, it is necessary to replace the repeated words by synonyms (Grishchenko & Almazov, 2004). However, the effort of a teacher alone is not enough to develop interlocutory skills. That is why a school psychologist or specially trained teachers can help. In high school, the Rhetoric lessons and a course on public speech can be helpful.

During the discussion practice like role-playing games or business games, the participants learn how to focus on mates' opinion, and develop the coordination and cooperation ability in collaborative activities. When students solve difficult tasks, the decentration mechanism performs, and the feedback takes its course in collaborative activities. These types of activities contribute to the reduction of participants' egocentrism.

Not only high school students but also senior and junior students can learn the rules of the conduct of a disputant. A discussion method is a solution of controversial issues and a particular method of obtaining knowledge for school students. All the participants should accept the means of a discussion because the influence of the elaborated collective opinions, ideas, and attitudes plays a significant role in life. Other means

of encouragement, such as individual ratings, are advisable with teenagers. The rules are stated in the following way,

Table 1  
Stages of the psychologist's actions in the rehabilitation program preparation

Stages	Actions
Discussion	- It is a peculiar interchange of the views, so a student should be active and speak up the mind;
Opinion	- It is better not to wait for someone to respond. - All the participants are equal in expressing the opinion. It is reasonable to remember about the mates and do not turn dialogue into a monologue;
Facts, Logic, Evidence	- Speak the statement, and then let the others express it too. - It is the most important in the discussion for all participants; - Follow the arguments, and be patient to express the judgments and conclusions.
Listening	- It is essential for a student not only to speak up but also to listen required;
Stay in Touch	- Do not try to interrupt each other and do not speak altogether. - Do not get out of the point of the discussion and do not go into personals.
Agree or Disagree	- If a student disagrees with someone, he/she should give the statement back, and try to avoid the direct judgment; do not refer the statements back to the participants.

The use of these rules disciplines disputants favors the concentration of dialogue principles in communication, improves understanding, and activates control over verbal communication. The skills to coordinate opinions, judgments, opinions, intentions can also be developed in the role and business games. Strict distribution of roles and the rules of acting favor the training of coordinate communication, determined, in this case, not by a personal request, but by a role-based standpoint. Role expectations and norms of acting make the group itself influence the members' activity, giving feedback, and improving the behavior.

Situational, personal egocentrism is provoked by the situations of test and conflicts, for example, during examinations. A high level of egocentrism is observed among excellent students and school students with increased anxiety. It is crucial to forming an adequate motivation earlier to prevent situational egocentrism and to teach school children the techniques helping to reduce anxiety if the situational egocentrism results from conflicts, the training of collaboration as the method to adjust conflicts are necessary in this case.

However, even a simple self-reflection of conflict helps to avoid the so-called 'over-focus.' That is why the habit of analyzing the meaning of types or phases of conflict is useful in egocentrism prevention. It is especially useful to act out inevitable conflicts that happen between teachers and school students, husbands and wives, parents and children, superiors, and subordinates (Makartycheva, 2007).

In comparison with the egocentrism of thinking and speech, as well as with the situational personality conditions, correction of egocentrism at the level of the concept-forming components of consciousness is complicated. The conceptual level is closely connected with such personality components as the level of the claim, self-esteem, attitude to each other, or life values. This egocentrism results from a variety of individual's social adjustment conditions.

Egocentrism came from family education when the tactics of protection, non-interference, collaboration, or dictation are used. It requires teachers and psychologists to do a scrupulous explanatory work with parents. It is imperative to show the teenagers' parents to what consequences excessive protection and overpraising it may lead. Most parents opt to inertness in relations; they are especially intensely influenced by the model of family upbringing. That is why it would be useful for school psychological services to work with parents and,

in the form of a role-playing game and discussion, teach some communication and interaction methods with teenagers, and establish a confidential atmosphere at home.

The views' exchange plays a significant part, and teachers' experience builds a democratic management style in classrooms. This style has a favorable effect on the leadership development, consciousness, and responsibility of school students to take action. Correction of egocentrism connects with the inadequacy of self-esteem, and the level of claim should deal with self-esteem in the first place. For some degree, the claim level is a self-esteem detector and a motivation component that leads to achievements. Based on self-esteem, a person defines the difficulty level of tasks, general purposes, responds to success or failure in the course of selection of the next task. The claim level is realized not only in the complexity degree of a selected task or goal but also in the desired level of self-esteem and estimation of oneself by others.

Since self-esteem depends on real success, concrete achievements of a person, other people's praise, and opinions, its correction in teenagers can be realized in two ways. The first one is to correct inflated self-esteem to make the tasks complicated so that school students would solve it with difficulty. This method creates conditions for school students to compare the abilities that objectively favors the reduction of self-esteem. The second one is "*dosed praise*." In some cases, it is crucial to leave a school student's achievements without attention, but it should be done carefully in order not to offend a student.

There are rare cases when the high level of egocentrism reveals because of low self-esteem. Students with this type of egocentrism overemphasize the public demands, opinions, and introject them turning their "self" into 'the battlefield' of everything that they paid. In this case, a student's condition may become restless; lack of self-confidence is generated by scare not to cope with the task. The individual stays in condition of intrapersonal conflict, unnecessary and obstructive stress. It is important to make school students sure that they are not alone, that there is someone ready to help. The main thing is to involve the school students in teamwork with their mates so that they could develop communication skills.

Children should go through certain stages of emotional relations with mothers, fathers, and people around while growing up. If it does not happen, teenagers have an interruption in emotional development, and they become pre-disposed to delinquency. Children's' problems should be dealt with in the view of a concrete case, and affected emotional state mechanisms should be reconstructed. It is the approach that gives a chance to keep teenagers away from delinquency. The most challenging thing is to create an atmosphere where teenagers feel comfortable and safe, where teachers understand the problems and can accept teenagers the way they are, certainly wishing to help. Therefore, the training of qualified staff for rehabilitation institutions is of primary importance.

No matter how well the institution works, it is not enough to solve the problem of a single teenager. After finishing school, teenagers return to the same family and environment; that is why there should be a regional rehabilitation program that helps teenagers. It is necessary to develop a network of institutions, and these institutions will support the families. There are social workers and teachers, medical and psychological services there. The mechanism that encourages enterprises to hire underage is also essential. If it is efficient, it becomes a useful measure for the prevention of teenagers' criminal behavior.

Statistics prove that the number of teenagers with deviations in mental and intellectual development increases every year. If medicine cures diseases, the goal of pedagogics is to teach how to live with these children if it is possible to use pedagogical methods to reduce the condition of these children, who cannot be educated, taught, or developed in common, conventional conditions. "Special Education" is defined as the system of medical, psychological, and pedagogical aid directed to "special needs" and upbringing of genuine, humane attitude to those who can hardly find full and dignified life in the society.

The Special Education serves the goals; it takes into account possible situations of risk in teenagers' development, violations in interaction with the situations outside, facts of social and psychological maladjustment, special attention on the part of tutors, teachers, and parents. The medical model of diagnosis turns into psychological and pedagogical. In these conditions of work with "children at risk," the specialized education staff is much needed. It is also essential to learn to work with parents ([Pashukova, 1998](#)).

Over the last years, one of the most severe problems of the educational system is the problem of school maladjustment. This definition implies the impossibility of adequate school education following inborn aptitude, as well as an adequate interaction of a student with other people in conditions of the individual micro-social environment in which the students live.

The school maladjustment impacts from various factors like social, medical, psychological, and pedagogical spheres. Ecological, economic, demographic, and other negative social factors of the last years have led to considerable changes in teenagers' health. The majority of children under one-year-old have functional and pure brain inefficiency within limits from the easiest, discovered only in conditions of the corrupt society or co-existent disease, to apparent defects and abnormalities of psychophysical development. The heightened attention of educational institutions and public health services to the issues of health protection of school children has a strong foundation. The number of children with defects in development and bad health among newborns reaches 85%. Over 60% of children entering the first form are at risk of school, somatic and psychophysical maladjustment. About 35% of children have neuropsychic disorders, even in junior kindergarten. The number of primary students, failing to meet the requirements of a standard school program, doubled over the last twenty years and reached 30%. In many cases, the violations of health have a boundary nature. The number of teenagers with mild health problems is continuously growing.

At the same time, school maladjustment should be dealt with as one of the forms of a much more complicated phenomenon, such as the social maladjustment of teenagers. Over one million under ages are tramps. The number of orphaned children exceeds five hundred thousand, 40% of children are subjected to family violence, and the same number experience violence at school. Teenage suicide death-rate has increased. More than 20% of teenagers have experience of using narcotic and toxicological substances. Delinquent behavior among the underage rises twice faster than among adults. 95% of socially maladjusted children have mental abnormalities. Only 10% of those who need the psychological correctional assistance can get it.

Over the last years, the number of teenagers with dysfunctional behavior continues growing. The underage is the most criminally active category of the population. One of the underage categories, who are the most subjected to the school maladjustment risk, is the children without parental care. Nowadays, the rehabilitation of hard-to-teach and maladjusted teenagers is the task of educational institutions and public health services, agencies, social, culture, and sports development, law-enforcement agencies, public, religious, and private organizations. The government coordinates this activity through some federal target-oriented programs.

In the educational sector, there is a tendency to create the system of rehabilitation of children with school maladjustment, in the context of which the correctional and preventive work is done in many aspects. In pre-school and school educational institutions, remedial groups and classes are formed. In recent years, it has become widespread to integrate children with defects in development to comprehensive schools. The psychological service is being developed. Psychological and pedagogical centers, medical and social children's aid are gaining the necessity; most of them render diverse assistance to children, parents, and educational institutions staff.

A significant role is allocated to specialized educational and pedagogical institutions for teenagers with deviant behavior while coping with school maladjustment. The supplementary educational institutions have excellent opportunities in managing school maladjustment. These institutions develop various educational programs and provide conditions for social adjustment and rehabilitation of teenagers' personality in individual and group creative activities. In the educational system, a psychologist provides a significant core part of the maladjustment prevention and correction through the practice that the isolated work of the psychologist generally turns out to be inefficient.

Owing to the impossibility to define the leading factor in the origin of the school maladjustment, a specialist who is responsible for its origin or elimination cannot be determined. Only a similar function and responsible distribution of different specialists will support the preventive and correctional work, with the emphasis on functions and responsibilities of particular specialist independence to the peculiar case of school maladjustment and the stage of its overcoming. Therefore, a critical, but mainly conceptually and practically unsettled task is an understanding problem and practical teamwork of an administration, teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, speech pathologists, and social workers in the process of diagnostic and correctional work with maladjusted teenagers.

Well-grounded principles of the credible interdepartmental service structure, organizational supervision, and professional control of different specialists have not been worked out and approved yet. Thus, work efficiency depends almost entirely on professional and personality traits. The prevention and correction of school maladjustment are possible only on the significant reconsideration principal of the entire system of teenagers' personality defense at school.

The process of social rehabilitation usually consists of three steps. There are as follows: *diagnostics, a rehabilitative program compilation, and programs' development*. To get a diagnostic decision and useful correctional program compilation, it is rational to use the procedure, which includes contact screening checks that are suitable for the examination of several teenagers, and the range of corresponding techniques in standardized and in non-standardized variants if clinically indicated. However, it is better to remember that in the examination program, it is impossible to use purely quantitative or purely qualitative methods of diagnostics.

The teenagers' differentiation into high-risk groups, comparative assessment of the maturity of various mental features and mental function, and their compensatory abilities are taken from quantitative data. The mutual influence research on various sides in the teenagers' educational activity structure should lie in qualitative analysis. Since the academic failure can be conditioned not only by the intellectual development delay but also by an insufficient level of teenagers' "social maturity," it examines the level of teenagers' motivation readiness either to the systematic school education or to the implementation of the norms connected to behavior regulation (Pashukova, 1998).

While compiling a rehabilitation program, it should be considered that medical and pedagogical (health-improving) impacts used either in educational or in particular medical and pedagogical rehabilitation institutions serve as preventive and correctional measures for a group of teenagers with pathogenic maladjustment. Deviations in the teenagers' behavior with the psychosocial maladjustment are efficiently overcome by an individual, differentiated approach to teenagers' personality at school, when recovering relationships in the family, taking into account the age-related psycho-physiologic laws development, and psychological support from the practicing psychologists.

The generalized stages of actions of a psychologist while compiling a rehabilitation program are presented in the following order:

Table 2  
A rehabilitation program for teenagers with psychosocial maladaptation

Stages	The content of the psychologist's steps
Establishment	- Pre-interview with a teenager and contact.
Examination	- When the locus of teachers' complaints and individual peculiarities of a schoolchild is taken into account (if a teenager reserved it is rational to use drawings at first if the school child is active and sociable a verbal oriented questionnaire may be used).
Identification	- Identification of mental development peculiarities and psychological factors of risk, as well as compiling of examinee's psychological portrait with the specification of possible directions of correction.
Compilation	- Compilation of an individual psychological decision about a teenager for every addressee. For example, not all information which is meant for parents can be presented to the teachers, and vice versa. - Compilation of a program with significant correctional impacts.
Participation	- Participation in the sophisticated correctional program, cooperation with the staff of special preventive services, and centers of social rehabilitation.

A teenager whose behavior can have primary conditionalism connected with neuro-dynamics peculiarities is in the work focus of different services. Psycho-Neurologist (a nurse) works with teenagers. In the case of secondary conditionalism reflecting inadequate ways of teenagers' compensatory response to difficulties in school life, a psychologist joins the work and finds out the source of maladjustment impacts on a teenager. Furthermore, regarding object should be the teenagers not with episodic, often situation-conditioned behavioral disorders, but with stable and sufficiently expressed behavioral disorders revealing in different teenagers' mental life aspects.

Useful information about a teenager can be received from the analysis of anamnestic data, which are most often presented in a small, formal, and fragmentary way. It is efficient to accumulate the information with individual questionnaires, for example, the questionnaire suggested by Y. Shvantsar, for parents, followed by

the specification of some data in a direct conversation. It is necessary to carry out particular psychological work with some parents on familiarizing them with the teenager's disease and raise their competence concerning a teenager. The psychologist's work with teachers also has a specific character. A teacher should be aware of the psychophysiological difficulties of a teenager to build up an optimum system of relationships and requirements.

### 3 Results and Discussions

Thus, in work with teenagers who are deviant from the physical standard, a psychologist mostly accomplishes the functions of an adviser, a kind of mediator between the teenager and a doctor, a teacher, parents, and classmates (see Figure 1). Of course, one should not exclude the abilities of a proper psychological impact on a teenager when a school psychologist works with particular behavior patterns and personality display. Though, this work is considered only as a part of a general process of a teenage treatment.

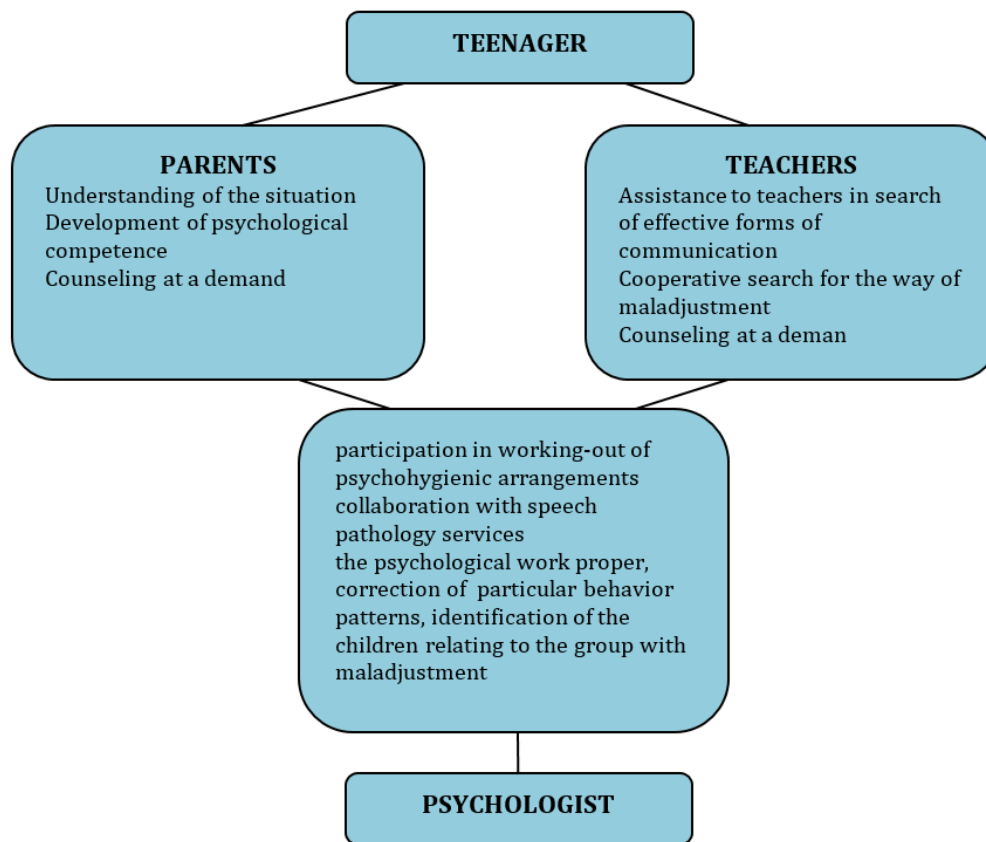


Figure 1. The model of psychological and pedagogical work with teenagers on the social maladjustment correction

The analysis of the cognitive activity of a teenager is the next stage in work with teenagers of the given group, which follows the accumulation of anamnestic data. As a result, this stage gives a psychologist the evaluation of the level of a teenagers' intellectual development (in comparison with the developmental norms), the structure of the teenagers' intellectual activity with the description of its most and least formed functional formations, the characteristics of the general organization of mental activity like mental capacity, affective-

personal and motivational peculiarities, the prediction of potentialities (Shakirova, 2003). It is also necessary to consult the specialist of the medical profile to exclude the probability of violation of neuro-dynamic nature. Unfortunately, programs of remedial teaching are realized in a few schools, so a considerable number of teenagers facing difficulties in a learning activity for various reasons have no necessary additional psychological and pedagogical, diagnostic, and remedial assistance. It results not only in the school teenagers' unsatisfactory progress and academic failure but also in ever-increasing discomfort which teenagers with poor grades experience at school and prompting them on the search of another out-of-school sphere of communication and another peer group, who begins to have a dominant influence on their social adjustment. First of all, this group of children needs assistance in social adjustment, acquirement of the social roles, cultural and moral codes and values, general social support in general.

The theoretical analysis of personality development suggests that understanding oneself in the world of relations with other individuals, oneself, as one out of many others rather than the center of the Universe, is fundamental to overcome egocentrism of conceptual sphere of consciousness. The study of causes of egocentrism in adolescence demonstrates that since this age is a maturing stage of a personality, then such understanding of one's place in various systems of relations is necessary not only for a person with accentuations of a character or some psychological deviations but also for everybody because due to the demand of self-acceptance youngsters quickly shrink into themselves if this necessity is not satisfied.

#### **4 Conclusion**

The review of techniques preventing egocentrism clearly shows that, in some cases, training based on the procedure of psychosynthesis is indicated to provide self-acceptance. To avoid psychological traumas at the process of mental development which can seriously disturb the relations with the surroundings, it is necessary not only to have stable and efficient social processes in the society but also, and that is more important, to have a psychological and pedagogical literacy of the population, especially among adults who take part in educational impact on the youth. An expanding psychotherapeutic practice gives some hope for the possibility of assistance that is most important for the youth. In the absence of necessary social conditions, egocentrism may not decline with age. The high level of egocentrism becomes a problem for teenagers and intensifies social maladjustment. Thus, the issues of correction and prevention of social maladjustment are a primary objective for a school psychologist. The successful work is impossible without a complex involvement of psychologists, teachers, parents, and agencies that work with troubled teenagers into the process of social rehabilitation.

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