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COACHING SUPPORT IN VALUE-SEMANTIC DECISION MAKING FOR PROSPECTIVE SUBSTITUTE PARENTS

Abstract*: the role of coaching support in the process of making value-semantic decisions for potential substitute parents is described. The study aims to identify and analyze different candidate profiles. Specialized coaching modalities are given attention – narrative coaching, existential coaching, and value-based coaching, adapted to address the unique needs and value systems of potential substitute parents. The author suggests that aligning coaching strategies with the differentiation of candidates' semantic strategies can significantly increase trust in technological solutions and child-rearing outcomes.*

The results can be used by practitioners to support clients throughout the entire path to substitute parenthood, thereby significantly reducing the risks associated with value conflicts and cognitive dissonance. The study highlights the need for coaching interventions that take into account the hidden potential in different candidate profiles.

Keywords*: substitute parents, foster parents, adoption, life meaning strategies, value-semantic decision.*

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КОУЧИНГОВАЯ ПОДДЕРЖКА В ПРИНЯТИИ ЦЕННОСТНО-СМЫСЛОВЫХ РЕШЕНИЙ ДЛЯ ПОТЕНЦИАЛЬНЫХ ЗАМЕЩАЮЩИХ РОДИТЕЛЕЙ

Аннотация: описана роль коучинговой поддержки в процессе принятия ценностно-смысловых решений для потенциальных замещающих родителей. Целью исследования является выявление и анализ различных профилей кандидатов. Особое внимание уделяется специализированным модальностям коучинга — нарративному коучингу, экзистенциальному коучингу и ценностно-ориентированному, адаптированным для решения уникальных потребностей и систем ценностей потенциальных замещающих родителей. Результаты могут использоваться специалистами-практиками для поддержки клиентов на протяжении всего пути к замещающему родительству, тем самым значительно снижая риски, связанные с ценностными конфликтами и когнитивным диссонансом. В исследовании подчеркивается необходимость коучинговых вмешательств, учитывающих скрытый потенциал в различных профилях кандидатов.

Ключевые слова: приемные родители, усыновление, замещающие родители, смысложизненные стратегии, ценностно-смысловое решение.

Introduction

The existing forms of placement of a child left without parental care in the Russian Federation are divided into family and non-family. Of the family forms of placement possible in the Republic of Crimea, adoption, guardianship and foster family are distinguished, and each of the forms implies a different degree of responsibility, rights and obligations on the part of the future substitute parent, various rights and status of the child, various support, including financial assistance, from the state. According to D.A. Leontiev, «the responsibility of a mature personality is an internal regulation

mediated by value guidelines» [5]. In addition, some forms of placing a child in a family, in particular, the organization of a foster family, imply a remunerative basis, while others do not, it can be assumed that the psychosemantic aspects of the idea of responsibility in candidates choosing different forms of placement will also differ. Thus, the choice of the form of placement of a child is a responsible step for the candidate, affecting his value-semantic sphere and individual personal meanings for each.

The emerging interest in coaching as an intervention strategy has been prompted by the limited time available for full-fledged psychocorrective and, especially, psychotherapeutic interventions during the training of candidates in substitute parenting schools.

A review of the literature on the topic revealed several key coaching modalities that show promise for this demographic. The use of narrative coaching includes candidates' past experiences. Rethinking the past from a different perspective helps develop a deeper understanding of their own values. Existential coaching, based on the core principles of existential psychology, promotes resilience and acceptance of uncertainty, helping to reframe the path to substitute parenthood as a way to existential growth.

Values-based coaching as a technique works on the premise that the discrepancy between personal values and life choices is a major source of distress. Values-based coaching helps people align their decisions with their core beliefs, ensuring that the path to alternative parenthood is consistent with their broader life purpose and ethical outlook.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical basis of this study combines modern research on substitute parenting with coaching strategies that emphasize the value-semantic aspects of personal and social development. The works of Russian scientists, D.A. Leontiev [5], I.V. Abakumova [1], J.Yu. Kara, L.Yu. Kruteleva [3, p. 114–115], emphasize the importance of life-meaningful orientations as the most important indicators of mature personality traits. I.V. Abakumova's research on meaning-making provides an idea of how educational processes can contribute to personal development [1]. N.V. Oslon [7] and co-

authors described the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful substitute parenting. A.V. Makhnach [6] and co-authors analyzed various psychodiagnostic approaches to assessing candidates for substitute parents and psychological readiness for substitute parenting, and described two approaches to readiness: competence and risk assessment. In addition, the contributions of N.V. Tarabrin, N.V. Main [8], E.A. Gapchenko [2], T.E. Kotova [4] and O.G. Yaparova [9] offer different empirical approaches to studying the socio-psychological determinants of effective substitute families. A review of the literature shows that the integration of narrative coaching, which facilitates the restructuring of personal life stories, with existential approaches that address deeper motivational and value dimensions is important for the preparation of substitute parent candidates. Values-based coaching additionally supports the identification and strengthening of positive life meanings, promoting both personal and family resilience. This interdisciplinary approach informs the development of coaching protocols specifically tailored to each candidate typology.

Methodology

The research adopted a mixed-methods design aimed at capturing the intricate processes underlying value-semantic decision making in prospective substitute parents. Initial candidate selection was conducted in two stages. From an initial pool of 794 applicants, a refined sample of 151 respondents (65% women and 35% men) was obtained based on predefined criteria. The selection process was designed to capture a diverse range of psychological profiles and life-meaning strategies.

Data collection methods included: standardized interviews according to Oslon – to collect qualitative information about personal motives and life stories, psychometric testing (FPIb, GSE, EQ) to assess emotional intelligence, self-esteem and reflection, semantic essays – to delve deeper into candidates' life meaning strategies, which are subsequently assessed by experts and psycholinguistic analysis – to analyze language patterns that reflect basic psychological states.

The study utilized a two-stage respondent selection process, including standardized interviews, psychometric tests, semantic essays, and psycholinguistic analysis. Hierarchical cluster analysis, as well as the Kruskal-Wallis test and Bonferroni correction,

were used to categorize candidates into six different typologies. In addition, the methodology included focus group discussions and case studies to examine the effectiveness of different coaching methods. The data collected through these diverse methods contributed to the development of an integrative model. This model links candidate typologies with appropriate coaching interventions, which include narrative, existential, and value approaches. The resulting framework helps coaches design customized interventions that address each candidate's strengths and weaknesses holistically.

Results

The results of the cluster analysis made it possible to identify six groups, their percentage distribution and distinctive characteristics of which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The results of the cluster analysis

Group	Quantitative indicator	Characteristic
Native	16%	Characterized by high emotional stability, adequate self-esteem, and strong emotional intelligence, this group represents the lowest risk in child placement
Experienced Family	14%	These candidates exhibit high emotional intelligence but may have inflated self-esteem and limited reflective capacity, necessitating enhanced support for social-psychological development
Status-Oriented	24%	With a focus on social status, these individuals are emotionally stable but tend to exhibit lower levels of self-reflection compared to other groups
Idealist-Rescuers	28%	Highly altruistic and emotionally intelligent, these candidates may overestimate their capabilities, requiring coaching that promotes realistic self-assessment and balanced goal setting
Inexperienced	9%	They are characterized by emotional stability and reflexivity, but have increased irritability compared to other subgroups. Often, representatives of this group consider alternative ways of having a child in the family (for example, they are simultaneously in the IVF protocol or use other reproductive technologies), which creates additional risks
Timid	9%	Timid 9% in which the absolute number of those undecided on the form of the device. The group is characterized by low self-efficacy and average indicators for most characteristics. They are more shy and emotionally labile than representatives of other clusters, with higher rates of neuroticism, situational aggression, depression, shyness and lower self-efficacy

The identification of six distinct typologies among prospective substitute parents provides substantial evidence that coaching support must be individualized.

The identification of six different typologies among prospective substitute parents provides substantial evidence that coaching support should be individualised depending on the individual's membership in the identified group.

It can be concluded that the same approach for everyone is not enough when making important value-semantic decisions. Coaching strategies should involve the candidate's life-meaning strategies and be suitable not only for their true needs, but also compare the resources, opportunities and risks of a particular subgroup. With representatives of the «Native» group, coaching based on values can be used as part of the training to strengthen their strengths and as support, in fact, for the decision that has already been made. While candidates from the «Status-oriented» group may need to change their focus from seeking social approval to personal internal value structures, by touching on existential issues. For example, discussing a semantic essay with a coach. For the «Idealist-rescuers» group, narrative coaching can be used to review their life stories in order to see and recognize not only altruistic ambitions, but also the need for adjusted self-esteem. For candidates in the Inexperienced and Timid groups, combined coaching options can be used, following the candidate's semantic strategies and not pushing towards a specific solution

Incorporating various coaching methods is useful for developing the reflection necessary for the role of substitute parent. Coaches can help candidates manage their strengths, highlight their weaknesses and work on them.

Conclusion

Using hierarchical cluster analysis and pairwise comparison of the identified clusters using the Kruskal-Wallis criterion for independent samples,

six different types of foster parent candidates were identified, which describe different motivational and dynamic components for each subcategory.

The introduction of coaching practices in supporting candidates, starting from the foster parenting school, seems to be a promising way to strengthen reflective abilities and ensure readiness for the inevitable difficulties of foster parenting.

Future research could focus on improving coaching models through longitudinal studies and controlled experimental designs to further test their effectiveness.

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